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"I have received a message from Licinius, madam."
"I understand you, Faustus!—how much time still remains for me?"
"To-morrow, at this hour, you shall have ceased to live."

V A L E R I A ;

OR.

J329

THE FIRST CHRISTIANS,

AND OTHER STORIES.

MONTREAL:—COR. OF NOTRE DAME AND ST. FRANCIS XAVIER STS.

From the French of Baileyaier and Madame Bonzon.

BY MRS. J. SADLIER.



D. & J. SADLIER & CO., 38 BARCLAY STREET

MONTREAL:—COR. OF NOTRE DAME AND ST. FRANCIS XAVIER STS.

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Margaret's School Alexandria, Ont.

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RED, BLACK, GREEN AND BLUE.

I.

ONE evening Father Faivre received the following letter :

LYONS, July 12, 1850.

MY DEAR AND HONORED FATHER:—The consolations I have found near you are so much like happiness that I have the greatest desire to have them shared by a beloved friend. For that purpose you must grant me a conversation. Permit me to solicit this from your kindness, and to hope it from your inexhaustible charity towards your *good friends the soldiers*. Being off duty to-morrow I shall be free the whole day, and will receive with gratitude the hour you may choose to appoint, from six in the morning till ten at night.

ADOLPHE,

Sub-officer of Carabineers
in the 6th Regiment
of Light Infantry.

Whilst *the friend of soldiers* seeks his note paper and mends his pen to answer the missive which he

had just received, permit me, dear readers, to introduce to you Adolphe —, sub-officer of carabineers in the 6th Light. You will not be sorry to make his acquaintance.

The son of an old officer of the Empire retired from the service in 1815 to seek from Mercury's wand the fortune he had not found in the sword of Mars, he had commenced studies in the College of Grenoble. Always the first in his class, in exercises as in translation, he cultivated with equal success the language of the gods, so poetically rendered by Homer and Virgil. Intending to embrace the career of arms he received at the end of each scholastic year laurel crowns that made his heart beat with the hope of one day gathering others, elsewhere than on the dusty benches of the college. He was finishing his rhetoric and preparing to enter the school of St. Cyr, when numerous commercial disasters ruined the fortune of his family. Alas! trade, like war, has its cruel wounds! The old officer of the Empire found himself one morning completely ruined—ruined to such an extent that the unhappy Adolphe was forced to renounce the project so dear to his heart, that of entering the school to come out with the sub-lieutenant's epaulettes. The same day, the gates of the College of Grenoble and those of the Saint Cyr School were closed for him. To crown his misfortune, his old father, so cruelly tried in his military and commercial career, lost his sight almost suddenly. A new Belisarius, he would have found himself on the road to

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beggary, had not Adolphe, placing himself with the whole force of his will between misery and alms, secured for a time, at the cost of his liberty, the material existence of the poor old man. The martyr of filial piety, Adolphe sold himself as a substitute and gave his father the money thus obtained. This pious sacrifice was, doubtless, agreeable to God, for the same day on which the generous son left Grenoble to join his regiment, the blind father received the grant of a pension which some unknown, but powerful friends, had obtained in his behalf as the just reward of numerous and loyal services rendered to his country.

Reassured, henceforward, as to his father's position, the young substitute set out bravely, on foot, his heart content, but his eyes a little moist, and turning his head from time to time to look again upon the fair mountains of Dauphiné.

Some days after his incorporation in the 6th Light, the colonel sent for him; that officer held a letter in his hand. "I have just learned," said he, "the circumstances that have induced you to serve as a substitute: you have done a good deed; I have taken note of it. Be sure it will bring you good fortune, if you are, as I doubt not, as good a soldier as you are a son. Go, my child, do your duty well, be submissive to your officers, shun bad advice, keep clear of bad example; in a word, discharge your duties faithfully—I shall not lose sight of you."

Some months after this conversation, Adolphe, who

every day followed the wise counsels of his colonel, received the stripes of a non-commissioned officer. It was at this period that chance, that mysterious handmaid of Providence, brought him in contact with the Abbé Faivre. Those two men were made to understand each other, so they failed not to become excellent friends; the Abbé proved the affection he felt for his young comrade by completing his classical education with that of religion, of which he knew not, so to say, the very first elements. In a little time, Adolphe became as fervent a Christian as he was a brave soldier and a good son.

II.

THE Abbé Faivre has mended his pen; a sheet of paper is on his table; an old cuirassier, whom he is preparing for his first Communion, repeats, by himself, in a low voice, a lesson in the Catechism.

“*Question* : Why did God create us and place us in the world ?”

“*Answer* : To love and serve Him faithfully, and our country, too.”

“Very good, my friend,” said the Abbé Faivre holding his pen ready to write, “you complete the thought of the holy legislator, for the service due to the country is in some sort the complement of that which is due to God. Your *adjutorium* reminds me of a certain village of Burgundy, composed entirely of vine-dressers. These worthy people, good Christians in their way, have but one fault, that of culti-

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vating with too much ardor *the vines of the Lord*. They make over free with their juice, it is true, but they never fail to invoke God morning and evening; they do not even content themselves with written prayers, they complete them at need: so it is that, according to them, the Lord's prayer is truly divine, for to the words 'Give us this day our daily bread,' they have added these: 'And our little bottle to drink.'

"Those good wine-dressers are no fools," said the cuirassier laughing, whilst the priest wrote these lines:

"MY DEAR SERGEANT:—If you do not fear the poor fare you have only to expect at my table, come and breakfast with me to-morrow morning, when we can have a long chat. Always yours, ———."

"Cuirassier," said the chaplain, sealing his letter.

"Present, cap——, I mean, father!"

"Would you oblige me by taking this letter?"

"To the end of the world, to serve you."

"That is too far, you would not have time to get there to-night."

"Must wait, then, till the railroad is made."

"It would be too long to wait, so take the carriage nature gave you, and go to Fort Vitriolerie."

"All right, father! your letter shall be there within an hour—good night, reverend father!"

"I shall not have time to lie down to-night."

"Well! good-bye, then!"

"Till to-morrow!" The cuirassier set out imme-

diately, and the priest remained hard at work till five o'clock in the morning. Then he threw himself dressed on his bed, and slept the sleep of the just till the hour for his Mass.

Punctual to his appointment, Adolphe presented himself at the modest presbytery known to all Vilherbonne as *God's own house!* The breakfast was served and done ample justice to, and being over, the good chaplain said :

"Now I am at your disposal, my brave friend!"

"You know my story, and that of my father," replied the sergeant, "but there is one thing of which you are ignorant, yet ought to know, for it was the cause of my writing to you yesterday, and procures me the happiness of seeing you now."

"What is it?"

"My father is not only blind in body, but in mind."

"Explain yourself, my child!"

"His eyes are not only closed to the light of day, which cheers us here below, but his heart is closed to the sun of grace which shines above. My father, an honest, upright man in a human point of view, is completely ignorant of the elementary principles of the good Christian. In a word, my father, thrown in camps at the period when religion, banished from its temples, was stricken with death in the person of its ministers,—has, perhaps, never raised his heart to God."

"I understand——"

"My grief and my wish, is it not, father? You

will do, I am sure, for the father what you have done for the son; you will save his soul by enlightening it! O you, whose ardent charity is unceasingly inspired by the rays that come from heaven!—Promise me, father!" said the young soldier with clasped hands and tearful eyes.

"I am ready," answered the priest, "to do all that man can do to satisfy your wishes."

"You will go to Grenoble?"

"Yes, I promise you; I will go next month, during vacation."

"Oh thanks, father, thanks! I shall then owe you more than life—I shall owe to you the salvation of my father."

III.

ACCORDING to promise, the Abbé Faivre set out, on a fine morning in the month of August, for the pretty little town of Grenoble. His first care, on reaching the glorious birthplace of the *knight without fear and without reproach*, was to pay a visit to the old blind officer, blinder even than he thought in regard to things divine. During two hours of a conversation which turned on all sorts of things, the priest could not find the least opportunity of broaching the subject nearest his heart, or attaining the essential object of his journey into Dauphiné.

"I know," said the poor blind man, "all you have done for my son; I thank you for it, my good sir, and I beg of you to dispose of me in any way you

may require during your stay in Grenoble. My state of blindness will not prevent me from serving as a guide in the exploration of the places which I know by heart." The Abbé, on his side, gladly accepted the proposal which might furnish him with the opportunity for a first attempt. "What monument would you like to visit to-day?" asked the veteran.

"We will commence, if you please, with the cemetery; for we know a town by its graves as we do a man by his books."

Grenoble is a pious and holy city; it reckons within its bosom thirty-two benevolent societies, and possesses as many Sisters of Charity as it has ladies. Hence, one does not see beneath the funereal shades of its cemetery the inscriptions met in bronze and marble in Pere-Lachaise, the shop-signs or the *incon-solable* widow making known to the passers-by that she continues her husband's business, Rue St. Denis, the catchword that demands a customer instead of a *De Profundis*, the ignorance that denies, the atheism that blasphemes, the lying and hypocrisy displaying their luxury in letters of gold. No impious epitaphs in the little cemetery of Grenoble; all there breathes an aroma of regret for those who are no more, a perfume of hope for those one is sure of finding again in a better world, a pure incense that heals and consoles. In the Dauphinese city the cross is not as in Pere-Lachaise a mere article of fashion, it is the chain of love which, made fast on our graves, binds earth to heaven.

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Amongst the monuments that most struck the eyes and heart of the Abbé Faivre, there is one before which he long stopped, and instantly found the text he had been seeking ever since his interview with the veteran. That simple monument was raised to the memory of two sisters, who left at their death two young daughters who, made sisters themselves by a common misfortune, had thus expressed their touching sorrow :

“ Good mothers,
Two poor children, on earth,
Think of you,
In heaven, pray for them.”

This simple inscription was traced in letters of different colors :

Good mothers,	(red letters.)
Two poor children, on earth,	(black letters.)
Think of you,	(green letters.)
In heaven, pray for them,	(blue letters.)

The Abbé explained, with an emotion so much the truer that it sprang from the heart, the different symbols contained in the pious arrangement of the colors.

Fervor, indicated by the red characters on the words : *good mothers* ;

Grief, characterizing in black letters the words : *two poor children, on earth* ;

Hope, translated in green letters : *think of you* ;

Perfect happiness, designated in blue letters by the words : *in heaven pray for them*.

Emotion is communicative; that of the good Abbe found an easy echo in the heart of the old officer, who had him repeat thrice over the explanation just given. His eyes were wet with tears at the name of mother, that name which God has made the most beautiful on earth as in heaven, by giving it to the most perfect of virgins. The breach was made;—the priest threw himself into it with his whole heart. At the words of hope and better life, the eyes of the old man's soul opened as before a sudden light; the shades of error vanished from his soul before the rays of truth; faith had replaced doubt.

A fortnight after, the happy *believer* received, in the chapel of the Bishop of Grenoble, the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is difficult to say whether he, his son, or the excellent priest who had led him into the ways of truth, was happiest on the auspicious occasion.



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CHINESE FLAG IN FRANCE, FRENCH MIS SIONARY IN CHINA.*

I.

HAVE you never heard some guard-room philosopher, some barrack free-thinker, exclaiming with a theatrical air: "What is faith? what is faith?"

Dear comrades, I am going to tell you, not as a theologian, for in matters of religion I am very simple, but perfectly well convinced. Faith, in a general thesis, is the *alpha* of human sciences, and the art of being as happy in this world as one can be in a land of exile.

In a particular thesis, faith is the sacred fire which makes of a poor peasant a marshal of France, of a little scholar a great poet, which of a simple country priest makes a Bossuet, of a shepherd, Sixtus the Fifth, of a poor missionary a martyr, and of a martyr a saint. Faith gives courage to the cowardly, intelligence to the ignorant, strength to the weak, success

* There is here a play on words which may prevent readers who do not understand French from catching the *point* of the story: *Pavillon Chinois* means *Chinese Flag*, but it is the name given, oddly enough, in France, to the trumpet-bell used in military bands.

to the struggle, resignation to trial, and to resignation hope.

A. Bernom, the hero of this story, was the most timid and the most inexperienced of the young people of his age, when, called to take his place under the banners of France, he left Pauillac, his native place, to be incorporated in the regiment that was keeping garrison in Bordeaux. His was a maiden's heart concealed under man's attire. Modestly brought up in the privacy of home in the peaceful exercise of the Christian virtues, he was all at once to find himself transported to a new sphere, an unknown world. In fact, the drum soon replaced for him the loved sound of his parish-bell, the barrack replaced his church, the smoke of the pipe the perfume of incense, and the every-day drinking songs the pious hymns of Sunday. The transition was terrible; but Bernom was a Christian; his heart inaccessible to the fear of human respect, for he believed, and was ready for the struggle.

Sustained by faith, he entered, then, the lists of human raillery like those warriors of the middle ages who went down into the arena armed at all points for the fight.

Without ostentation, but without weakness, he showed himself from the first days of his military life frankly; squarely Christian. The beginnings were difficult; the way of good is always more precarious than the way of evil; but what obstacle can be powerful enough to impede virtue walking in faith?

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Disarmed by the manly firmness of Bernom, the scoffers were much surprised to find themselves one fine day impressed by the prestige that belongs to virtue and changes sarcasm into admiration.

Provoked to fight a duel one day by a *bad subject*, who had insulted him to *try* him, Bernom answered :

“ I accept ; but as I am the aggrieved party, I have the choice of weapons.”

“ Granted—your day ?”

“ This very day.”

“ The hour ?”

“ In ten minutes.

“ The place ?”

“ The military hospital, where the epidemic that is raging so violently requires a reinforcement of nurses.”

“ So it is an apothecary’s cartel you propose to me ?” cried the provoker, putting himself in an attitude ; “ don’t know that weapon.”

“ It is a Christian duel,” answered Bernom coolly ; “ a duel that will have charity for its seconds.”

“ That is to say, some beggarly nuns, who smell camphorated brandy. I beg to be excused from that, I prefer cognac.”

“ Do not speak ill of Angels,” replied Bernom, and looking up at the clock, “ it is five minutes past one, I shall expect you at the hospital.” Standing on sentry at the bedside of the dying, Bernom waited in vain three days and three nights.

II.

VIRTUE, like the violet, blooms in secluded paths far from the glare and tumult of the world; it loves the silence of solitude and the shade of the lonely fern. It is not always seen, but it is often guessed at by the modest perfume it sheds around it. Bernom, the simple and timid conscript, finding in faith the courage that defies human respect, and the strength that enlarges the heart to the level of the contest, had soon discovered at his side comrades who, after having passed through the same ordeal had received the baptism of the military apostolate. By a rare exception, the band of the 44th Line, specially protected, doubtless, by St. Cecilia,—was in great part composed of excellent and pious young men. It was, in some sort, a religious oasis in the midst of the regiment, united from morning to night in a perfect harmony, to which Bernom resolved to add his *la*. Now, as he had acquired at Pauillac a certain artistic renown, and played an air or two on the flageolet, he availed himself of the first vacancy to fill, first, the office of substitute; the band-master gave him soon after the place of first *pavillon chinois*, or trumpet-bell. Bernom consoled himself for this worse than secondary part, with the thought that if every road leads to Rome, the trumpet-bell might lead him to a more important instrument, the ophicleide, for instance, which he took to practising, in the hope of being able to take part in the sacred mu-

ic of the Church. . Meanwhile he found means to
et off the humility of his instrument, saying to his
the comrades: "I am the bell-ringer of the regiment."
The garrison of Bordeaux is, as you know, dear
comrades, both easy and pleasant; the soldier is not
here overburdened with duty, and can easily find
time to turn his leisure to account. Bernom, who
had early learned the maxim that *Idleness is the*
mother of all vice, applied himself so devotedly to the
study of the ophicleide, that he soon mastered all its
secrets. Our young artist was, for all things good in
eal themselves, endowed with the happiest disposition:
he resolved to learn Latin. For that purpose, pro-
vided with a grammar which he had bought on the
ing quay, he went one evening to the first pastor of the
ng cathedral and made his wish known to him. The
he priest, far from representing to him the difficulties of
ht a language which, alas! we remember cost us many
to years, hastened to encourage him in this project and
e a promised him his assistance. Bernom profited so well
on by his master's lessons, and applied so well the whole
y energy of his mind to the study of Latin, that in
er fifteen months he read Tacitus and Titus Livy fluently.
s, This progress seemed so prodigious to the master,
is that the good priest often said to his pupil: "It is
f impossible but the Holy Ghost has some mysterious
at designs upon you.

i- At that period, the excessive sensibility of a power
n suspicious in regard to holy things, exercised an oc-
- cult persecution against military works of charity

One regulation had been sanctioned, the effect of which was to deprive soldiers of divine service on Sundays; by an ingenious stratagem, Bernom and his comrades contrived to elude it; provided each with a pitcher, bought for the purpose, they passed the sentry, each in his turn, under pretence of fetching water, and left the camp to go hear Mass in the nearest church, and there receive the bread of the strong.

At this time it was that they enrolled themselves in great numbers in the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and found in their generous sacrifices the secret of new merits. Bernom, at the head of every good work, was in some sort the leader of the religious colony of the 44th Regiment. His comrades, confirmed by his eloquent words, sustained by the force of his example, called him their military apostle, and walked resolutely in his footsteps in the way of good.

Meanwhile, the regiment received orders to set out for Paris. It was not without tears that Bernom left the excellent priests who, from a common conscript, had made him, first a good Christian, then a well-instructed man. His Latin master, engaging him to perseverance, gave him several letters of recommendation, one to a priest, a friend of his, belonging to the church of St. Sulpice, others for the principal members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. The military association in Paris was in the first days of its formation; Bernom, energetically assisted by his

Comrades, gave it a rapid impulse, and thus commenced on a limited scale the difficult mission he was soon to work out on a vaster field, on a boundless and unlimited stage. To form him, doubtless, for the sublime trials of the apostolate, he even gave him a foretaste of the perilous joys of persecution. In fact, the authorities had not seen without suspicion the bevy of Christian heroes forming under his eyes, and growing, full of sap and vigor, under the folds of the flag of France. That government, scared by the *bunderilleros* of liberalism, ominously shaking its head at the imaginary terrors of the priest-party, allowed Jesuits even in the uniform of the soldier who, by accident or design, entered a church. The military association, obstructed from its very outset by covert persecution, was obliged, for the time, to operate quietly, avoiding publicity, and taking refuge in the shade of its good works, just as of old the primitive Christians took shelter from the persecutors in the darkness of the Catacombs. Practical Christian soldiers continued to assemble every week, but on different days and in different places. An officer of the Municipal Guard who knew all his Beranger by heart, and who, being averse to religious worship, had shown himself openly hostile to the soldiers' association, introduced himself one evening into one of those pious assemblies which he called *varieties*. What his object was we know not, but what we do know is that the officer was so touched by the piety of those young soldiers, so penetrated

by the words he heard, so astounded by the happiness that spoke in the voice and shone in the look of the Christian troopers, so surprised by the difference which existed between a verse of a holy hymn and a snatch of an amorous song, that without perceiving it he knelt down, blended his voice with that of the soldiers singing the praises of God, and made the sign of the cross on his forehead, when at the close of the meeting a young priest pronounced the words of the Benediction.

Another time, a sapper who never in his life, as he boasted, had uttered the name of God except by way of blasphemy, and had blasphemed as often as he had hairs in his beard, was presented at one of the meetings by a corporal of voltigeurs; what was his surprise to meet, instead of the beardless boys he expected to see, a collection of long and superlative moustaches of all colors and to suit all tastes.

"Welcome amongst us!" said Bernom.

"How now, friends," cried the sapper, "do you give fellows anything to drink in this canteen?"

"Yes, we do," spoke up a sergeant of dragoons "*to the eye and the heart*;" and he added laughing—"That drink doesn't intoxicate."

"A proof that it is not unwholesome," said the sapper.

"You can judge, old fellow!"

"Silence in the ranks!" cried a quartermaster—and, at the same moment, a priest from St. Sulpice beginning to speak, showed with so much unction

happened under such brilliant aspects the happiness procured by the practice of religion, that, when he had ceased speaking, the sapper, going up to him, said: "A child of Marceau's suburbs in Paris, born of parents invisible to the naked eye, it is the first time I have heard a religion spoken of which I thought was only good for friars, old women and babies; it appears I was mistaken."

"That is certain, my brave friend," replied the priest. "See all these comrades: they are neither friars, old women, nor babies: they are the best soldiers of their regiments, gay and light-hearted, too, as any amongst you."

"Faith! reverend father, if I wasn't so old, and if I thought it was not too late to learn a trade of which I don't know even the A B C, I would ask you to teach me that of Christian."

"One is never too old to do their duty, and it is never too soon to learn the truth."

"But I never made my first Communion."

"A reason the more for making it well and as soon as possible."

"I only know how to swear like a bad Pole drinking."

"Another reason why you should learn to pray like a good Frenchman at church. Let us see, my friend, do you really wish to return to God?"

"Do I really wish? A thousand millions of — excuse me, reverend Father! the habit is too strong

for me. You see I can't speak a word without repeating out an oath."

"If you really wish to amend, you shall soon not say one that is not mentally a prayer."

"By your leave, reverend father, I'll do as you say."

"Well! my friend, come to me to-morrow; and before a month, I promise you, you shall mount your first Christian guard, taking your place at the table of the divine banquet."

Three weeks after, the sapper made his first Communion, and from that day, he not only swore more, but he became one of the most zealous members of the military association.

Let us return to Bernom; who, meanwhile, receiving promotion, exchanged his trumpet-bell for the saphire, and resumed his Latin grammar to continue the course of his classical studies, under the direction of a generous clergyman of St. Sulpice.

The time of his military discharge was drawing near; some months more, and freed from the service he was to return to private life. This approaching change of position was for Bernom a subject of serious reflection. Should he follow the career of arms which had given him so many consolations? Crammed with science, and master of Latin, should he resume the humble instrument of his first profession? Was he to exchange the soldier's sword for the carpenter's plane? the studies of the learned for the labor of his hands? Paris, the great city, for his humble

down of Pauillac? Such were the questions that Bernom asked himself every hour of the day, such was the problem to be solved the solution of which he asked of God.

Nothing is more difficult than the choice of a state at that period of life when the heart, ripened by reason, hovers uncertain between youth and mature age, and finds itself still too young to have a position made, too old already to make itself a new one. In that state of things Bernom, forced to decide, and more undecided than ever, undertook a novena to Our Lady of Victories, to ask of the Holy Ghost the ray of light that was to enlighten his understanding.

The ninth day being expired without the Holy Ghost having revealed Himself by the slightest manifestation, Bernom thought he saw in the mysterious confidence of grace, a serious motive for persisting in the career which the lot of conscription had made for him, a position sweet and easy, for he had found in his regiment a family, under the flag his parish, and in every soldier a brother—

That day, then, decided on renewing his term of service, he was preparing to go through the necessary formalities, when, passing along the Rue du Bac, he entered the little chapel of the Foreign Missions. It was evening. The silence and solitude of the sanctuary were favorable to meditation. Bernom knelt before the Virgin's altar and prayed—One that saw him at that moment motionless in the shade as the image of a saint on canvass, might have chanced to

invoke him, such holy unction was diffused over his countenance. The pious soldier prayed for some twenty minutes; when he arose his brow was radiant; the fire of his glance, the firmness of his step announced an immovable resolution. He rapidly directed his steps towards St. Sulpice, and presented himself before the priest who, since his arrival in Paris, served him at once as spiritual father and professor. That worthy man was not ignorant of the state of uncertainty to which, for three weeks, his penitent and scholar was abandoned; it was by his advice that Bernom had commenced a novena in the church of Our Lady of Victories. "Well! my friend," said he, holding out his hand, "we are at the ninth day; has the Holy Ghost spoken?"

"Yes, father, at the last moment, twenty-five minutes ago, in the chapel of the Foreign Missions."

"What was your inspiration?"

"An immovable resolution."

"What is it, my child?"

"That of embracing the ecclesiastical state, if you deem me worthy of such an honor."

For all answer, the priest threw himself into the soldier's arms and said:

"Come, my friend, come with me to thank God."

III.

THREE weeks after, Bernom changed his tunic for a soutane, and made his entrance into the Seminary of St. Sulpice. There, as in the barracks, he soon

ver hained, by the sweetness of his disposition, the friend-
ship of his new comrades and the esteem of his new
superiors. Although abnegation and servitude are
identical, the theory of the priest is different from
that of the soldier. Bernom had to overcome his
old habits, and bend his understanding to exercises
all unknown to him; but his desire of learning, aided
by the good talents wherewith Providence had en-
dowed him, even exceeded in fruitful results the hopes
of his professors in theology; it was, therefore, with-
out any favor or privilege that, after having gone
through the different degrees of the clerical hierarchy,
he rapidly arrived, even before the time appointed
for the ordinary promotions, at the grade, I mean
dignity, of priest.

Nothing was so solemn and imposing as the cere-
mony of the day on which, saying his first Mass in
presence of numerous soldiers, his old comrades, and
numerous ecclesiastics, his new brethren in arms, he
enrolled himself under the standard of the cross.
The very day after his entrance into orders, Ber-
nom,—like those conscripts of the empire who, for
the first attempt, demanded Marengos, Austerlitzes, or
Wagrans,—solicited and obtained the perilous honor
of going to seek in China the labors of the aposto-
late, and, if need were, the glories of the martyr.
Six weeks after, he embarked and departed from
France, praying to God.

After a long and painful voyage, the intrepid mis-

sionary at length perceived the promised land of his F. and
zeal. and

"*Terra, terra!*" he cried like Virgil's hero, and than
moment after, kneeling on the shore, he kissed as one for w
kisses a good mother, and watered with his tears head
soil which he was to fertilize with his successes, and
who knows? perhaps with his blood.

IV.

You have sometimes read, dear comrades, in the with
Annals of the Propagation of the Faith, edited a a poo
Lyons by a priest of great merit and of rare modesty apost
—the evangelical labors of those missionaries with posit
hearts of gold and bodies of iron, who with so much me ev
ardor sow the divine word on distant shores. You to ble
have followed them in thought in their life of strugg abund
gle and of trial, you have associated yourselves in
their sorrows and in their consolations. You have
admired them in their devotion and in their sacrifices
and you have applauded the efforts of the pious re count
cruits who, like Bernom, walked bravely in their the dis
footsteps. Bernom, from *pavillon chinois* (Chinese the wc
flag) in France, had become French missionary in arid n
China, and started right soldierly in the evangelical village.
career. Then, making the cross his rallying sign, he traced
carries by assault, under the cross-fires of his burning "Ur
eloquence, hearts the least accessible to grace; he the det
operates on the pagan idols of the razzias to have the morals
arms taken from the devils—to strike the turning dition;
tables with immobility. as the

From time to time he addresses to his superiors and his soldiers accounts breathing edification : and thanks to M. Germainville I am able to give you word for word the last bulletin which he dated from his headquarters :

“ Province of Canton—Tchao Theon-Fou, }
September, 1855. }

* * * * *

“ As often as my memory returns to France, I recall with happiness the pious military meetings which, of a poor regimental musician, have made an evangelical apostle. To these assemblies it is that I owe a position, perilous, indeed, but enviable ; since it brings me every day nearer to heaven ; hence, I never cease to bless them and call down upon them the most abundant graces of the Lord.

* * * * *

“ As I told you in my last letter, China is not a country *gilt on porcelain*, as Europeans imagine it ; the district I am charged with clearing to sow it with the word of God, forms a vast zone—studded with arid mountains and abrupt rocks. The towns and villages, which are very numerous, rise in valleys traced by the mountains and along the rivers.

“ Unscrupulous or very ignorant writers have, to the detriment of the Christian religion, extolled the morals and belief of Chinese civilization. Their erudition is notoriously at fault ; nothing is so hideous as the whole and the details of the life of a Chinese,

brought up,—the word is just,—brought up, not in the love of the Lord, but in fear of the blows of a stick. The power and authority of the mandarins consist in the strength of their following; their justice is subject to the value—of right? no, but to the value of a dollar. In all cases, they exercise no authority but with the most iniquitous forms. One day, two Chinese presented themselves at the dwelling of a mandarin to submit to his decision the subject of a grave dispute; the illustrious magistrate was just sitting down to table. ‘Let each of them,’ said he, ‘get twenty-five blows of a stick; that will do till I am ready to see them.’ This expeditious sentence was put into execution notwithstanding the cries of one of the patients, and the protestations of the other. When they were introduced into the presence of the judge, one of them asked him boldly why he had, without hearing either of them, caused the innocent as well as the guilty to be bastinadoed.

“Because at that moment you were both in the wrong,’ gravely replied the mandarin, ‘one for being really not in the right, the other for being wrong in sending to disturb the digestion of the dinner I was going to take.’

“What say you to this way of administering justice? Proud, thievish and jealous, the Chinese are the most superstitious men on the globe; does an eclipse of the moon take place? The Chinese, convinced that it is a winged dragon, or a hungry dog devouring the night-star, makes a hellish noise with pots and ket-

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bles, and utters diabolical cries to put the animal to flight.

“ Their temples, true devil-shrines, are a hideous thing to see, and disgusting to smell. The fetid odor they exhale would knock down our stoutest pioneer ten paces off.

“ Contrary to the common idea which, of the Divinity makes the most finished type of beauty, they have invented monstrous ugliness wherewith to bedeck their idols. Inasmuch as the Chinese plunged still in the darkness of Paganism are wicked and depraved, even so are the Chinese converted to Christianity good and virtuous. Admirable power of Catholicity! It requires only a drop of water and some sacramental words to work such marvels! There, in that Pagan village, the son beats his father, the brother beats his sister, the husband beats his wife first and sells her afterwards; the friend robs and cheats his friend; here, on the contrary, in this Christian village, the wife, the mother of the family, is respected by the husband and by her children as a creature made to the image of God. In this Christian district, the population, sheltered from human vices and passions, shows the example of every virtue, and is distinguished by the liveliest faith. Morning and evening, the members of the family assemble before a crucifix or a holy image reciting their prayers to God; very often, even, all the families form but one before the Lord, and sing pious hymns which I accompany with my ophicleide. In

a word, the difference between the two worships is as decided as that which exists between heaven and hell.

"All considered, I am happy and content—God blesses my efforts and fructifies my toil. I should be the happiest of men if the memory of the seminary and the barracks did not come to remind me that no joy is perfect in this world. Speak of me, I beg, to my old comrades, tell them to pray for me as I pray for them, as I pray for you who pray for me. I leave you now to go see a sick person who resides twenty leagues from here. My parish is larger than a diocese of France. I should be, indeed, very lonely if God were not with me.

"Wholly yours,

"A BERNOM,

"Missionary Apostolic."

As you see, dear comrades, your old brother in arms has preserved the French heart and mind in China. The mind and heart of the French soldier constitute an inalienable property of which glory has taken the lease for fourteen centuries. Sheltered from the ruinous politics and the revolutionary cataclysms which have blotted out so many nations from the geographical map of the world, this property is guaranteed by an insurance company formed in heaven under the patronage of St. Louis, King of France.

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THE 25TH JULY, 1809, AND 1842.

I.

THE 6th of July, 1809, three hundred thousand warriors and eleven hundred pieces of artillery were found together on the plains of Wagram; the eagles of France and of Austria, engaged in a final struggle, were about to fight a decisive battle under the command of two captains on whom glory had long conferred the baptism of heroes. On the side of France the Emperor Napoleon! on the side of Austria the Archduke Charles.

The sun shone bright on the glittering helmets and waving plumes of the brave men who, with placid brow and merry hearts, in full dress, bedecked like victims for the ancient sacrifices, gaily prepared for the greatest battle of modern times. After a night of storm, illumed by heaven's lightning and by the fires of a formidable artillery,—a light breeze played amongst the ears and corn-flowers of a rich harvest, which the sickle of the reapers, replaced, alas! by the sickle of death, was not to touch.

What different thoughts those corn-fields, trampled by the feet of men and horses, must have inspired in

the hearts of your seniors in glory, dear comrades! What memories, overleaping space, suddenly revert to the home and friends whom so many of them are never to see again! What melancholy and mysterious images pass then before their eyes; that of a mother kneeling before a blessed palm, and praying for her son; that of a young sister sporting carelessly amongst the flowers of the little garden modestly framed by a sweetbriar hedge; that of a sweetheart, perhaps, pale and thoughtful under the willows;—but, above all those figures, the image of France, standing erect, her brow crowned with laurels, ruling with all the power of patriotism memories, hopes, regrets.

Like you, dear comrades, if to-morrow your country appealed to your heroism, the veterans of Austertlitz were ready to make the sacrifice of their life; wherefore it is that on that vast plain, three leagues in length, and which the sword, the bloody stiletto of battles, is to register in history under the name of Wagram; wherefore it is that the soldiers of France await proudly, but calmly, the signal for fight.

The signal was not long delayed. The plain of Wagram soon disappeared in a vast atmosphere of smoke and flame; the earth shook under the charge of the cavalry; and eleven hundred fiery mouths belched forth balls and death.

Under the banners of France, and under the eye of Napoleon, taking in with its eagle glance that grand scene, Oudinot, Massena, Davoust, Bernadotte,

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Molitor, Saint Cyr, Lauriston, MacDonal, Friant, Bessières, La Salle, Marulaz, do prodigies of valor, and advance boldly with their troops through a shower of iron over roads where the corn, set on fire by the bursting of the shells, present at every step, as it were, rolling waves of lava. Under the Austrian standards, and under the eye of the Archduke Charles, demanding from his genius the sudden inspiration that saves empires, the Prince de Leichtenstein, Kollorwrath, Klenau, Royenberg, Bellegarde, d'Aspre, Hesse-Homburg, Ronvroy, Nordmann, Notzen, rival each other in bravery, and resist with the energy of despair. On both sides they think less of capturing flags or taking prisoners than of conquering or dying. On every point where the cannon thunders, where cavalry is in motion, where squares form, where columns deploy, the combat takes the proportions of an immense carnage. Forty thousand dead or wounded cover the field of battle.

At three o'clock the Archduke Charles, convinced that his troops could no longer hold out against the irresistible energy of the French, and fearing to lose the Moravian route, decides on giving the order for retreat. At four o'clock, after a furious struggle of twelve hours, the God of armies had added another leaf to the military history of France.

* * * * *

After this preamble, dear comrades, and without other transition, let us follow together, in thought,

the victorious army on the road to Hollabrunne; let us journey with it to Znaym. We are in the longest days of the year, the 25th of July; the heat is excessive, the sky has no breath of air to give the brave fellows who are panting and parched after the long continued fire of the contest; the country, exhausted by numerous and incessant wants, has no provisions to offer to the hungry victors. The strength of the young soldiers, enfeebled by long marches, begins to betray their courage—it required nothing less than the immense ascendancy of Napoleon over the spirit of his troops, to maintain in their integrity the laws of discipline and submission. But what young man is that lying stretched beside a ditch on the road side? He is a child, so to say, for he is not twenty and the long fair hair whose curls would delight a mother's heart, would give him more the aspect of a young girl than that of a soldier. Nevertheless, on his brow prematurely pale from study, and contracted then by suffering, an observing eye would trace the lines which constitute choice natures, and reveal minds marked for good. He wears on his uniform the embroidered collar of the military surgeons; that soldier is, in fact, a disciple of Hippocrates attached to the Emperor's staff, yet he is not twenty. He is not twenty, yet professional zeal has put him in practice, on the field of Wagram, the learned theories of the school.

Before having lived, so to say, he prolonged and preserved numerous lives. Nevertheless, at the

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"Yes,

moment reckless of his own, he invokes death, he ardently calls upon it, for, poor lad, harassed, dying with hunger, exhausted by privations of every kind, he no longer feels his strength equal to his courage. "I will go no farther," said he, placing himself on the edge of a ditch which he chose for his grave, and, recommending his soul to God, after having given a thought to his mother, to his country, he disposed himself as best he could to meet the wish for death! He had lain thus for about an hour, deaf to the voice of the comrades who greeted him as they passed, some with sarcasm, others with encouragement, all with a jest, when suddenly a man in the prime of life, of athletic figure, surrounded by several superior officers, and wearing himself the noble uniform of a military surgeon, rode by on the road where the poor young man had lain down to die. Struck by the beauty of his young confrère, and the deep dejection visible on his face, inspired, perhaps, by a mysterious sympathy, the surgeon-general suddenly stopped, alighted from his horse, and, taking the poor boy's hand, immediately recognized the symptoms of the profound sadness that had taken possession of his soul.

Able practitioner as he was he saw at a glance that it was necessary to re-establish the physical strength to operate more surely on the moral weakness.

"You suffer much, my child?" said he to him.

"Yes, I feel that my life is going fast."

"You are hungry, perhaps?"

"I have eaten nothing for four-and-twenty hours."

"For want of better, eat slowly these two hard eggs." Saying so, the doctor drew from a little wallet which he wore suspended from a shoulder-belt the only provisions that remained to him, and generously shared them with the poor lad. When the latter had finished this frugal repast the surgeon offered him a gourd and made him take a few drops at a time, about a small glassful of excellent brandy.

"Well! my friend," said he, "how goes it now?"

"I feel better, doctor!"

"Do you still wish to remain on the edge of that ditch, like a wet hen before a duck-pond?"

"I am so exhausted, doctor!"

"Imagination, my brave lad; when one has passed the 6th of July, with Wagram, laurels don't fatigue. Besides, you wear on the collar of your uniform emblems that never permit weakness; when one has like us, the honor of belonging to the army by the holiest laws of humanity, one ought always to show the example of firmness. You appear to me a noble young man; arise, then, stir up your courage again, march on, and, believe me, you *shall make your way*."

Encouraged by these words, each of which had a sympathetic vibration, the young man rose and said "Now I will follow you to the end of the world;" then, in a firm voice, he exclaimed: "Long live Dr. Larrey!"

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II.

THIRTY-THREE years later, on Monday, 25th July, 1842, at seven o'clock in the morning, a physician whose name, dear to the Lyonese, had become synonymous with goodness and with talent, was invited by Dr. Delocre, surgeon-general of the military hospital of Lyons, to repair in all haste to the Hotel de Provence, where Baron Larrey, who had arrived the evening before in a deplorable state of health, was supposed to be in a most critical position. The physician sent for hastened to repair to the patriarch of military surgery. He found him surrounded by his worthy son (now chief surgeon of the Val-de-Grace), the army surgeons Delocre, Poulain, Ducroquet, and Doctor Durand, army physician.

After having pressed the illustrious hand, every throb of which, corresponding to the noblest pulsations of the heart, had concealed a benefit, he said to him: "Do you remember the 25th of July, 1809?"

"It seems to me that I do—it was some days after the battle of Wagram."

"That day, doctor, a poor young man, whom the love of glory had driven into camps at an age which still requires the tender care of parents, found himself exhausted by hunger, worn out with fatigue, exposed between the despair that often precedes death and the roadside ditch that is often the grave of demoralized soldiers. He wished to die when Providence sent him one of its noblest interpreters on

earth; the latter, touched, doubtless, by the lad's mute despair, took pity on his youth, and addressed him in consoling terms, he revived his courage so that his weakness vanished, he elevated him in his own eyes, in a word, he saved his life."

"That man did no more than his duty," said the doctor.

"As he discharged it every day," replied the visitor, "that is to say, with the most absolute devotion, with the most generous disinterestedness, under the eyes of the army which idolized him, under the eyes of the Emperor who admired him."

"What was his name?"

"Baron Larrey."

"And the young man who wanted to die, what was he called?"

"Polinière."

"Polinière!" cried Larrey; "I rejoice in having that day preserved to science and to humanity a man so every way noble and distinguished. I should like to see him, as he resides in Lyons."

"He is before you—happy and proud that he is able to press the hand of his benefactor." Baron Larrey replied by a silent but expressive shake of the hand.

The condition of the illustrious surgeon-general of the imperial armies was most critical; the Baron de Polinière, struck by the alarming change in his features, the torpor of his intellectual faculties, his general state of prostration and anxiety, saw that there was

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not a moment to lose. M. Hippolyte Larrey gave the assembled doctors a clear and circumstantial account of all the phases of his father's disease, a complicated one, which had then reached its twenty-fifth day. Requested by his colleagues to give his opinion, Baron de Polinière could not conceal the fear he felt, and his opinion was in conformity with that of the others. M. Hippolyte Larrey alone, sustained by the hope that never abandons filial love, refused to coincide with all the others. It was in the midst of these racking doubts and this torturing suspense that he was stricken by a fatal and unexpected blow—the precursor of that which was soon to follow—he learned suddenly and without any preparation the news of his mother's death.

In this state of things, Baron de Polinière, less eager to acquit himself of the debt of gratitude he had contracted thirty-three years before towards the illustrious patient, than jealous of fulfilling one of the most sacred duties of medical science, that of having recourse to religion when art is powerless, and to save the soul when the body is doomed, suggested the idea of calling in a priest. This opening, favorably received by his colleagues, especially Doctor Deloere, met no shadow of opposition except from M. Hippolyte Larrey.

“Far from me,” said that noble young man, “the thought of excluding from my father's bedside the aid of a religion which I have always loved and respected, but do you not fear, gentlemen, that the sight of a

priest might be fatal to my father, unprepared to receive him?"

Baron de Polinière refuted this opinion and succeeded in having his own adopted, by accepting the consequences of a step the responsibility of which he took wholly upon himself. Left thus to use his own discretion in the matter, Baron de Polinière, returning to the patient's chamber, said to him without any preamble: "Baron, the medical staff of the military hospital have deputed me to ask a favor of you."

"What is it, doctor?"

"That of being permitted to pay their respects to you."

"I am in too much pain to receive them now, we shall see to-morrow——"

"There is one amongst them whom this delay will afflict, baron, for he is anxious to see you, and pretends that he has rights to be admitted immediately."

"Who is he?"

"A brave and worthy friend of the soldier who has made the African campaign, a doctor who, like you, has cared for the dying on the field of battle, who has sought out the wounded amid balls and bullets, who has relieved and cured them with his unflinching scalpel, the cross! that man is the Abbé Sève, the chaplain of this hospital."

"I suffer much," answered Baron Larrey; then in a feeble voice he added: "No matter, let him come."

"Thanks for him," said Baron Polinière. And

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some minutes after he introduced the Abbé Sève, who at his request Ducroquet had sent for.

"You are welcome, reverend father," said the patient holding out his hand, "I am happy to see you, for you are a brave and worthy priest, the soldier's true friend."

Like Baron de Polinière, Abbé Sève perceived, by the ghastly hue of the sick man's features, that no time was to be lost.

"We shall speak of Africa when I am better," resumed Doctor Larrey. Then after a moment's silence, during which the priest had been collecting his thoughts to ask of God those words which penetrate and touch hearts, he exclaimed: "Oh! how I suffer!" The way was open, the Abbé Sève immediately set about proposing to the dying man a certain relief for his sufferings.

"What is it?" demanded Baron Larrey quickly.

"That to which the Emperor Napoleon had recourse in St. Helena—religion!"

"Religion is a good and holy thing which I have always respected."

"When it had blessed Napoleon," replied the Abbé, "the great captain, sanctified by the sacraments of the Church, felt so much better in mind and body that, turning to one of the companions of his exile, he said to him: 'General Montholon, when, like me, you shall be ready to appear before God, I wish you a similar happiness.'"

"I know that anecdote, reverend father!"

“ Well ! baron, do as the Emperor did— confession never kills, it often cures.” The illustrious patient bent his head in token of assent, and began the confession of a life ripe for heaven.

“ You were right, father,” said he, after having received the absolution which gives eternal life, “ you were right—as the Emperor said in St. Helena, in a situation analogous to mine : ‘ the consolations of religion always do good.’ ”

The Abbé Sève spoke to him yet a while of the celestial joys, and admonished him, during his short absence, to commune with God who created us all immortal ; Baron Larrey smiled with ineffable sweetness as he bent his head and pronounced those words true from all eternity : “ *God is good.* ”

“ Yes, God is good,” replied the Abbé Sève, with tearful eyes, “ yes, God is good, and He will be good to you, who have been so admirably good to all during your whole life.”

An hour had scarcely passed when the worthy chaplain returned to Baron Larrey, whom he found better.

In fact, under the influence of skilful medical treatment, and especially, under the influence of the peace of the soul, reconciled with the Author of all things, a slight amelioration was perceptible in the patient's state. Abbé Sève took advantage of this remission of symptoms to give the Christian's last unction to the good man who might thenceforth present himself without fear and without reproach before the Sovereign Judge.

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At a quarter to five, Baron Larrey, his eyes dim, but his voice still strong, called his son, and asked for a cup of broth, part of which he drank—the vital force was failing fast; Abbé Sève, assisted by Doctors Delocre, Boissat (of Vienna) and M. Hippolyte Larrey, whose filial piety, at that final moment, was truly sublime,—commenced the prayers for the dying.

At five o'clock, Baron Larrey again called his son, who had never left him, but whom he no longer saw; some minutes after five he exclaimed several times: "Oh! my God! oh! my God!" then without any convulsion, he gently yielded his soul to God, whom he invoked to the last.

Baron de Polinière, religiously bent over his mortal remains, kissed his hand. His eyes were moist, his brow was stamped with profound sorrow, but finding in the accomplishment of a pious duty the consolations that religion alone can give, he addressed the illustrious dead in these words, which, doubtless, reached him in heaven:

"Thirty-three years ago you saved my life, to-day I have saved your soul. Blessed be God!"

III.

Pious was the death of Baron Larrey, Christian were his obsequies. The verbal process of the embalming, placed in a glass tube hermetically sealed, and laid in the leaden coffin, certifies that the surgeon-general of the imperial armies died furnished with the Sacraments of the Church. "One day,"

said the worthy priest who administered them to him, "should this tomb be opened in a remote futurity, will it not be edifying to see the care that was taken in the XIXth century to make known to posterity that the illustrious deceased died as a Christian?"

Thereto might have been added, on parchment, by way of funeral oration, those touching words spoken by the Emperor in St. Helena :

"Baron Larrey is the most virtuous man I have met; a constant and heroic friend to the soldier, vigilant, always on foot, always caring the wounded, visiting, consoling them. I have seen Larrey on the fields of battle, followed by his young surgeons, seeking unceasingly a sign of animation in the bodies stretched on the ground.

"Larrey braved all: cold, rain, sun. He never slept after the fight, amid the lamentations of the wounded; with him, the generals could never abandon their sick. They were obliged to furnish exactly the supplies demanded for the support of the ambulances. Otherwise, that man, whom many superior officers dreaded, would have come to me to complain, and in their presence; he paid court to no one, and hated the contractors."

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The numerous visitors who come every day to the private office of Baron de Polinière, some to visit an esteemed friend, others to consult an eminent practi-

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tioner, may see, in a small case, a lock of gray hair, a many-colored ribbon, and a shirt pin. The lock of gray hair was cut from off the forehead of Baron Larrey, the ribbon was taken from his last coat, and the pin is the last that was used by him. Baron de Polinière preserves with veneration these touching mementoes which were given him by the son of the illustrious deceased. The worship of great men, sanctified at their death by religion, also possesses its relics.

Methodist School,
Alexandria, Ont.



CAPTAIN RICARD.

IN the very interesting *Reminiscences of a Chaplain*, published in 1852 by a priest who, under his soutane, bore a soldier's noble heart, the Abbé Sève has a remarkable article on the oath. His mind, inspired by holy and courageous convictions, furnished him, on that subject, with eloquent pages which recalled to our mind a fact no less eloquent in itself, which shall make the subject of this *Evening*.

You know, dear comrades, three thousand officers, faithful to their sworn faith, broke their sword, in 1830, and proudly wore mourning for an illustrious monarchy driven into exile. Amongst these brave men, Frederick Ricard, with no other fortune than his cape and sword as a captain of cavalry, hesitated not a moment to sacrifice them to the banner of Marignan and of Fontenoy. Then, with a free heart and a light purse, but satisfied with having faithfully discharged his duty, he set out on the road to the Vigan.

Before going to seek on foreign soil a security against the vicissitudes of the future, he would see once again the country that gave him birth.

Those amongst you who knew him, dear comrades,

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must remember that our brilliant captain was of medium height, and good figure; his square shoulders indicated strength, as the strongly marked lines of his face revealed a very uncommon strength of will. Of an impetuous disposition, but with sufficient self-control to check at times the fierce ebullitions of his southern nature, Captain Ricard possessed instinctively the sentiment of just and holy things; he had an arm of iron, but a heart of gold; he was strong as a lion, but gentle as a lamb; a lamb, however, that would have broken with his teeth the shears that attempted to cut the wool from his back.

Surprised by the revolution of July at Provins, where his regiment was in garrison, he traversed a portion of France, purposely avoiding the high roads, so as neither to see nor hear the things which recalled the worst days of the first revolution. He studiously avoided, too, the great centres, so as not to expose to insult the blue riding-coat, the military fashion of which produced, at that time, on the revolutionary masses, the effect of the red flag on the wild bulls of the Camargue.

He had, nevertheless, to pass through Avignon, which city, although protected by the good sense of its population, was still in a very excited state; it was not without difficulty that Captain Ricard, making his way through the groups assembled before the Loule Gate, succeeded in reaching the Hotel St. Yves.

Seven or eight young people, whom the practised

eye of the captain recognized immediately as travelling clerks, were assembled round a table loaded with glasses of different sorts and bottles of different colors. At sight of the new-comer, hermetically enclosed in his long blue riding-coat, buttoned to the neck in military fashion, the revellers exchanged meaning glances which might be interpreted: "There is an *ultra!*"

At that period, *ultra* and *Jesuit* were the two great war-horses which the liberals bestrode day by day to attack soldiers who knew nothing beyond the worse than light songs of Beranger, and priests who forgot their duties to the extent of recommending the respect due to authority and the laws.

The captain took his place at a vacant table and asked for a glass of *absinthe*, his usual tonic before dinner. "*Absinthe!*" said one of the travelling clerks in a low voice, "a green liquor! we are not mistaken, he is a Carlist; who knows? an ex-minister in disguise, perhaps Polignac? suppose we arrest him!" All this time the captain, the subject of these various conjectures, slowly sipped the liquor he had ordered. The travelling clerks, on their side, accustomed by their trade to a great consumption of spirits, and becoming more excited every moment, agreed upon a system of annoyance in regard to the new-comer, which they speedily began to put in execution, singing this chorus:

En Avant, marchons
Contre leurs canons,

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A traveis le fer, le feu d-s bataillons ;
 Courons a là victoire.*

At each couplet the singers, glancing askance at the captain, added this version forgotten by the author, M. Casimir Delavigne : "*Liberty forever ! Down with the Jesuits ! Death to the Carlists !*" The captain was impassible. Encouraged by his silence, perhaps attributing his reserve to a sentiment of fear, the half-tipsy travellers redoubled their boldness ; their hints even became so direct that the captain resolved to put an end to them : the lamb's wool was changing under insult to the lion's mane. Frederick Ricard, his brow pale with anger but calm and firm like a man who is conscious of his strength and his right, rose from the table and bent his steps to that at which the others were seated, then addressing the one who appeared the leader : "Sir," said he, striking him on the shoulder with his right hand, "I suppose you do not mean to insult me, for you are eight to one ; I think you are too good Frenchmen to suppose you cowards—However, gentlemen, you will permit me to call your attention to the fact that well-bred persons who respect themselves, ought to respect those whom chance has brought under the same roof with them : now, as your songs are not pleasing

* Which may be thus translated :

On let us march
 Against their cannons,
 Through the steel and fire of batallions,
 Let us hasten to victory

to me, and that we are here neither in the theatre nor the street, you will oblige me infinitely by leaving off singing them."

"Sir," answered the spokesman sharply, "we are grieved that we cannot make ourselves agreeable to you in this matter; we are neither in the theatre, nor the street, it is true; but we are in a public place, where every one that pays has a right to do as he pleases—we sing; you can dance if you have a mind."

"It is perfectly fair," replied Frederick Ricard; "then, every one for himself and God for all;" so returning to his place he finished his glass of *absinthe*, rang for the waiter, and requested to have his dinner served. It was on a Friday.

"I am certain," said one travelling clerk so as to be heard, "I am certain that the Jesuit in the blue riding-coat is going to abstain from meat."

"That will be droll to see," added his neighbor.

"How we shall laugh!" said the leader, and giving the signal once more, he began a song from Beranger's repertory.

At this moment a hurdy-gurdy struck up, in the square without, the overture to Gulistan; Ricard whispered in the waiter's ear as he set his cover, "Go out to that organ-man, that is playing just under the windows, and bring him here immediately; there are five francs that you can share with him."

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"All right, sir," said the boy aloud; "you shall be served immediately."

"What a laugh we shall have," said the facetious traveller, thinking of the fish dinner he was preparing to ridicule.

At the same moment, the organ player, his face radiant with joy, entered the room, and, turning the crank of his instrument, he played the first bars of a chorus from the *Dame Blanche*.

"Will you get out of this, you scoundrel?" cried the singers, interrupted at the finest moment of their song.

"Stay," cried the captain in a voice accustomed to command. And he added: "Gentlemen, I detest vocal music without an accompaniment; on the other hand, I adore harmony; excuse my little organ, I will excuse your songs."

"But, sir, we are not in the street."

"I grant you that, but we are in a public place, you know, where every one that plays has a right to do as he likes."

There was no answering this; the complainants had to bear the consequences of the law they had made. They resumed their songs on a higher key; but the shrill sound of the organ so drowned and confused the voices, that, at the end of a long flourish, the Barbary instrument remained master of the field. Not satisfied with this first victory, the captain turned towards the *dilettanti*, whose extinguished fire threatened to break out again with an anti-religious song

of Beranger, "Gentlemen," said he to them, "do you like duets? you don't answer, and they say silence gives consent; so we are going to regale you with a piece together that will give you great pleasure." At these words, spying in a corner of the room the town-crier's drum, he took possession of it, gave a signal again to the organ-player, and together they executed in glorious discord a popular air from one of the operas, making a most infernal hubbub, a real *charivari*. In less than five minutes, Ricard had obtained such a success that, as a generous adversary, who does not wish to abuse victory, he dismissed the organ-player and his instrument.

The travelling clerks, beaten on their own soil, awaited the opportunity of taking their revenge. It presented itself at the very moment they feared to see it escape; in fact, they had prepared their batteries against the fish dinner of their adversary; what, then, was their surprise when they saw quite the contrary. "Could we be mistaken?" they said, regarding each other with a mystified air.

"We are *sold*," said the leader, seeing the captain attack with a vigorous thrust of his fork a splendidly roasted fowl.

"I would give something," added one of the clerks, whose red nose indicated jovial habits, "I would give a hundred sous to the boy to see the *bird* changed into a *carp*."

Touched to the quick by this wish which implied a challenge, Ricard pushed away the savory wing

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that perfumed his plate, and calling back the boy, he said to him :

“ Remove that fowl.”

“ Is it not sufficiently well done ?”

“ On the contrary, it is just as I would wish it.”

“ Then, why not have it ?”

“ Probably, because it does not suit me.”

The travelling clerks, their eyes fixed on the two interlocutors, awaited with anxiety the issue of this scene ; the officer resumed :

“ What day is this ?”

“ Friday, sir.”

“ Are you sure of that ?”

“ Perfectly sure.”

“ In that case, replace that *fowl* by a *carp*.”

“ Then you want a fish dinner ?”

“ Yes, my friend.”

“ All right, sir.”

“ Good, we shall have our laugh still,” spoke the travelling clerks, rubbing their hands ; “ we lost the first trick ; the second is ours.”

The officer was served with fish according to his orders. The carp, as you may well suppose, was greeted on its entrance with a grand ovation. We will spare the reader the scoffs and sarcasms wherewith the Voltairian singers seasoned the captain's fish dinner ; the latter, calm and impassible as an old trooper under fire, went on with his meal as though he heard not a word of what they were saying. It was amusing to see him, opposing the silence of con-

tempt to the silly jests invented by hatred of priests and of religion: the more directly the insults were aimed at him, the less he seemed to feel them.

"Decidedly, the holy man has made a vow of patience," said one.

"That's the reason they give him no desert."

"I bet," said the other, "he wears a hair shirt under his riding-coat."

"He puts on the airs of a soldier," added one, "and he never served, except Mass."

"His hand," replied another, "is more accustomed to the holy water sprinkler than it is to the sword."

"By Jove, I know him now," cried one who had hitherto kept prudently silent, "he was beside M. Dupin in St. Acheul's procession, and he carried his blessed candle, too!"

"Waiter!" cried the captain.

"Sir!"

"Let me have some coffee!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Waiter," cried out the chief spokesman of the opposition party, "don't forget the glass of holy water."

"Well hit," cried all the assailants at once, delighted with this last cut, which they considered as the finishing stroke.

The captain slowly discussed his cup of Mocha, then, when he had drunk the last drop of the Cognac the waiter had poured into it, he rose from table as

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calm as though he were still fasting, notwithstanding that he had drunk wine freely.

"Ha! ha!" said the ringleader, "we have the second trick."

"That remains to be seen," replied the officer, and eyeing from head to foot the tall figure of his facetious adversary, he asked him :

"What is your name, sir?"

"Chameron François Joseph."

"Mr. Joseph François Chameron, where do you come from?"

"From a place where the seed of Jesuits has no roots."

"In what religion were you brought up?"

"In the Catholic religion—but it is your turn, now, sir!—what is your name?"

"Frederick Ricard, at your service."

"Where are you from?"

"From a place where all convictions are respected when they are conscientious."

"Of what religion are you?"

"I am a Huguenot, sir!"

"A Huguenot!" cried the travelling clerk, at his wit's end, "a Huguenot! why, then, did you abstain from meat on Friday?"

"To give a lesson of toleration, in religion, to pretended patriots; to give a lesson, in politeness, to impertinent fellows—Mr. Joseph François Chameron, you are a scoundrel."

"Sir!"

"Mr. Chameron François Joseph, and all of you gentlemen, who have, for the last hour, been insulting a man who had given you no provocation, you are all cowards——"

The travelling clerks, astounded by this contemptuous epithet and by the kindling eye of the officer, kept silence. The captain resumed :

"Amongst you all, insulting bravos, there is not one who will muster courage to give me the satisfaction I demand——"

"Enough, sir!" cried one of the party, in his turn touched to the quick—"What are your arms?"

"Yours shall be mine."

"Your hour?"

"That which is about to strike will be the best."

"Well! let us go."

"I am at your service; but first you have an account to settle," resumed the captain, addressing the traveller with the red nose.

"What is that?"

"What you owe to this boy."

"François?"

"Who for a hundred sous granted your wish and transformed into a *CARP the fowl* that was placed before me."

"Ah! I forgot that," said the traveller, and with a tolerably good grace he gave a five-franc piece to François.

"Now let us go," said the captain.

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A moment after, the two adversaries stood face to face, sword in hand.

"Sir," said the officer, disarming the travelling clerk at the first pass, "when one can hold his sword no better than that, he ought to restrain his tongue: you want five good years' training yet. Go your ways!"

II.

FIVE years have passed, dear readers, since the scene just described, eventful years of strange vicissitudes, more or less dramatic. Frederick Ricard, the principal personage of this story, has gone through them with the stoicism that characterizes the strong man. From Vigan,—whither he had gone immediately after his duel to raise some funds by the sale of a little spot of ground he had there,—he set out again to seek his fortune on the highways open to his ambition. At one time he thought to find it in Portugal, under the banner of Don Miguel, who had just rallied a portion of the brilliant youth who, to remain faithful to their cause, had, as we have said, broken their sword in France. Vain hope! the courage of heroism does not always suffice to fix the capricious goddess, even on a battle-field. Grievously wounded at Santarem, by the side of the Marquis de Larochejacquelin, who was himself wounded mortally, he escaped, as if by miracle, the reprisals of the opposite party.

Cured of his wound, he recommenced the noble

trade of arms, and returned to France to seek a new position. Then he became, in turn, a lawyer without briefs, a doctor without patients; he tried all, and succeeded in nothing; he would have died of want and hunger, if one of his old regimental comrades, an officer who had resigned like himself, and retired to his rich vineyards by the Gironde, had not offered him a situation. Strange vicissitudes of human things! the brilliant cavalry officer is become a travelling agent for the sale of Bordeaux wines. He consoled himself for this metamorphosis, thinking, good royalist as he was, that Bordeaux was the *king* of wines. Now, as he was active, and enterprising, he rapidly gained ground in his new position, and distinguished himself soon amongst all his confrères by the choice class of customers he had succeeded in gaining and by the qualities requisite for a good commercial traveller.

The nature of his affairs often called him into that part of the province where the first scene of this story had taken place; he even spent some days at Avignon every year. One day as he was on his way to that city, he had for travelling companion, in the Marseilles coach, a priest whose frank countenance and interesting conversation at once attracted sympathy. In the first stage, the two travellers were on that footing of intimacy which no longer exists since horses have been replaced by the system of steam. Locomotion has now gained in swiftness what it has lost in pleasure. People now-a-days no longer travel

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they change places: they go more easily now from Lyons to Paris than they used to go from Paris to St. Germain. Notaries' charges must have lost considerably by this new invention. Where is the necessity, I ask you, of making one's will when the terminus is only separated from the starting-point by a mere hyphen? Our two travellers were making that reflection *à propos* to the railroad established at that time in the department of the Loire, when the coach stopped at the Loule Gate: they had reached Avignon.

"At what hotel do you stop?" asked the clergyman of the travelling clerk.

"At the Hotel St. Ives."

"If you permit me," said the priest, "I will stay at the same hotel as you."

"We shall do better still, we shall dine together."

"That is just what I was going to request of you."

"Unless—" resumed the lay traveller with marked reserve—"unless you have a reluctance to sit at table with a man who does not share your religious belief—I am a Protestant."

"I am a Catholic priest, sir," replied the clergyman, "that is to say, your brother, for all men, even those who are born in error, are sons of the same God. By that title, I love and esteem you; I love you more, perhaps, since I must pity you for living outside the pale of truth. We will dine together, sir, unless—" and, in his turn, the priest stopped—"unless you are afraid of a fish dinner."

"A fish dinner never frightened me," replied the Protestant, "and I once made a very good one in this very hotel; that was many years ago—but I will tell you the story over our dessert; perhaps it may gain me your esteem, as I have already given you mine."

The clergyman answered these words by a smile, the peculiar expression of which escaped his interlocutor.

As the commercial traveller had said, the dinner was a regular family meal. As he had promised, he related the story of his duel, and, as he had desired, he received in exchange the assurance of an esteem on which, although a Protestant, he set a high value.

"You acted nobly in your duel, sir," said the priest, "and you may be sure that the lesson which you, a Protestant, gave to a bad Catholic, has had its fruits. However it is, the jester you so wittily corrected must have often blessed your name, for you might have killed him, you had his life at your sword's point: may he make a noble and holy use of the life you spared him. Have you ever seen him since?"

"I have never met him; I should like to do so, however, as a brother in trade, for, like him, I travel for wines."

"Then, you are sure to meet him one day or another."

"I shall be really glad of the opportunity."

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"Very well, sir, you have a noble heart: we, too, shall, I hope, meet again, but until we do, you shall always have a large share in my prayers."

"For," said the traveller laughing, "he who, at the same table, one day changed a fowl into a carp, may make a Catholic of a Huguenot—is it not so, my dear Abbé?—but that would be a more difficult task, I warn you."

"Nothing is impossible to God."

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The two new friends separated after having exchanged cards and promising to see each other again in Paris, where both were expected: the priest to preach the Lent, the traveller to visit the customers.

III.

PASSING through Lyons, Frederick Ricard wished to ascend to Notre Dame de Fourvières to admire the magnificent panorama which extends at the foot of the holy hill: the picture which the traveller's eye contemplates from the top of the terrace is, in fact, magical. It is, first, the city of Lyons, with its fine quays, its old churches, its numerous bridges, its two rivers and its vast square de Bellecour, adorned with the equestrian statue of Louis the Great; then the rich plain of Grenoble, studded with elegant villas, and divided into two by the long track of the Dauphiné; finally, in the farther distance, the Alps, where

summits crowned with eternal snows serve as a barometer to the inhabitants of the Lyonnese city. When our ex-cavalry officer had gazed long enough to satisfy his curiosity, he mechanically entered the holy chapel; it was a day consecrated to the Virgin, and there was a great crowd at the foot of the privileged altar, whence the heavenly Mother of the divine Redeemer watches unceasingly over the children of her beloved city. The altar was decked with flowers; the image of the Immaculate Virgin, clothed in her robes of gold, shone through the light of a thousand tapers, and an old priest, with hair as white as snow, was proclaiming from the pulpit the praises of Mary.

At that name, Ricard, for the first time, felt his soul stirred; for the first time, perhaps, he understood what consolations, what hopes, what poetry there is in the worship of the Mother of God, and, for the first time, he secretly ventured, in the depth of his soul, to establish a comparison between the two religions, that was not to the advantage of his.

There was so much serenity on the calm faces of Mary's servants, such ineffable sweetness in the motion of their prayer-opened lips, that he could not prevent himself from pronouncing a name which his mother never taught him, a name that appeared to him sweeter than the sweetest honey.

On the following day Ricard went up again to Notre Dame de Fourvières, and, as on the previous day, he felt emotions there for which he could by no

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means account; was grace beginning to act in his soul? We know not; but we do know that, when he left Lyons, he put his head several times out of the coach window to look at the little white steeple planted on the holy hill like a beacon of mercy between earth and heaven.

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IV.

ON his arrival in Paris, the ex-officer of hussars went to the presbytery of St. Roch, where he was to get the address of the travelling companion he had promised to see again: the address was given him; he took a carriage to go to the place, and ordered the coachman to drive thither.

The priest had just gone out; Ricard inquired at what hour he was expected back. "Very late," he was told, "for he is to preach at six o'clock." Ricard looked at his watch, it was half-past five.

"Could you tell me," he asked, "where I might find him now?"

"In the sacristy of St. Sulpice, doubtless;—but it would be difficult to see him before the end of his sermon."

"About how long will his sermon last?"

"That depends; an hour—or, perhaps, an hour and a half."

"That is a long time," said Ricard; "no matter, I will go to St. Sulpice and wait for him."

The sacred orator had just ascended the pulpit.

by the animation of his voice and gesture, by the fluency of his words pouring forth like a stream from his lips and from his heart, it was easy to see that he was penetrated with his subject. He had taken for his subject "*The divinity of the Catholic religion proved by its works.*"

Ricard stood leaning against a pillar listening to language new to him.

After having rapidly sketched the first ages of Christianity, established so marvellously by twelve poor fishermen on the ruins of the old world, the preacher showed the cross, shining through the darkness of the middle ages, and shedding its sublime light over the new world; he passed in review the phalanx of doctors, philosophers, and saints, holding out a generous hand to civilization buried in the shroud of barbarism, and with the other raising man brutalized by ignorance and slavery; then following the course of ages, those sublime benefactors of humanity, ever unchanging in their faith, ever persevering in unity, that divine characteristic of Catholicity; in the second part, he proved with great power and clearness, that the Catholic religion alone, at the head of the arts and sciences, had had the initiative in all great ideas, that she alone claimed the glory of the amelioration of humanity, and the merit of the innumerable works created for the relief of the human species.

"Show me," said he, "in the thousand dissenting branches of the Lutheran tree, a single fruit that has

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not a Catholic origin; mention in the pantheon of great Protestants a single name which, pronounced by charity, echoes that of St. Vincent de Paul; show me, under the bonnet of the Quakeress, a devotion like that which the world admires under the veil of our admirable Hospital Sisters, then, and then only, shall I admit that Error can offer a parallel to Truth, between Catholicity and Protestantism."

Frederick Ricard, half hidden in the shade of the pillar, heard, with the liveliest attention, the brilliant, logical, irrefutable argumentation of the preacher. Passing over, on his side, in review the continual disputes and contentions of the thousand Protestant sects, divided into as many different camps, he understood that truth can be but *one, unchanging, immutable* as the Divinity whose essence it is; he understood, in fine, that the Catholic religion alone possessed that characteristic, one of the proofs of the divinity of the Roman Church.

The preacher ended his discourse with a short peroration, showing the necessity of belonging to the Catholic faith to merit, not only the felicity of the other world, but even to enjoy in this, the peace of mind, which is the surest indication of true happiness.

The eloquent preacher descended from the pulpit, and went into the sacristy. Ricard followed him thither, and said, as he shook him by the hand: "Your voice has touched my soul, my dear Abbé!"

The priest replied: "I should thank God if it had

opened the way to the grace which penetrates and converts.”

“We shall see each other again. Do you preach often?”

“Three times a week. Why that question?”

“So that I may lay out my accounts to come and hear you every time.”

Accordingly, our brave ex-officer did not miss one sermon of the good Father, whose enlightened zeal and devotion to the salvation of his brethren had not failed to change into affection the sympathy which had, from their first meeting, attracted them to each other. They saw each other often, for, in order to be nearer to his new friend, Ricard had left the Rue St. Honoré and taken a furnished apartment in the Faubourg St. Germain. The worthy clergyman avoided everything that resembled *propagandism*; he would leave to grace the time to act, with so much the more efficacy, that it was less influenced. On his side, Ricard avoided with equal care the opportunity of speaking of the progress that grace was really making in his soul. The Easter holydays were approaching, and Ricard had not said a single word in allusion to the struggle going on within him. The Abbé began to fear that the indifference to which Protestantism often leads was the sole cause of the continuance of a silence that was wholly unaccountable, when one morning he received the following letter:

“MY DEAR ABBÉ:—For the last two weeks two

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and irreconcilable enemies have chosen my heart for the lists of a furious combat; for two weeks they have been battling with superhuman energy and perseverance, and with an ardor that has yet obtained no decisive result.

“‘The truth is in Catholicity,’ says one: ‘be a Catholic.’

“‘To change one’s religion,’ replies the other, ‘is base and cowardly.’

“‘To persevere in known error is a folly.’

“‘Apostacy has always been considered a disgraceful thing.’

“‘Conversion has always been recognized as a praiseworthy thing by men of good faith, and meritorious in the sight of God.’

“‘Are not all religions good: why change yours?’

“‘To enter into the way of that, which gives every chance for salvation, and which, being the sole depository of unity, contests truth with all others. Be, then, a Catholic.’

“‘Remain a Protestant, for if you deny the faith of your fathers what will your brethren and friends say?’

“‘It is not denying the faith of your fathers to return honestly to that of your grandfathers. The unhappy man who is carried away by the torrent of error does a just and reasonable thing by seizing the branch of salvation held out to him by saving truth standing on the shore?’

“‘Remain a Protestant.’

“The sole witness of this struggle between two contrary influences, one of which, doubtless, represents the spirit of good, the other the spirit of evil, my heart wavers, hesitates, totters; come to my assistance, dear Abbé, two seconds are necessary to every regular combat; come this evening at nine o'clock, I shall be at home.”

As you may well suppose, my dear readers, the worthy priest was punctual to the appointment. His presence on the ground completely changed the character of the contest; the evil spirit, driven to his last intrenchments by the good spirit, gave up his arms and surrendered. “You told me truly,” said the ex-cavalry officer, throwing himself into the arms of the venerable priest, “that nothing is impossible to him who, in the Hotel St. Yves of Avignon, changed a *fowl into a fish*”—“And who,” replied the Abbé, “will to-morrow change a Huguenot into a Catholic.”

Grace, acting on a soil prudently prepared, had wrought the most consoling results; in fact, since his arrival in Paris, being only occupied with the one grand affair, Ricard had opened his eyes to the light and closed his soul on the darkness of error; he was ready to enter the bosom of the Church.

“My friend,” said the priest on receiving his abjuration, “my friend, on your breast, decorated, as it is, with a noble red ribbon, a cross is wanting.”

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“That of Our Lord Jesus Christ; receive it from my hands, and keep it always in remembrance of me.”

V.

IN the course of the intimate chats which the priest and the ex-officer of hussars had had before the so long wished-for day of the conversion, Ricard had again manifested more than once a wish to see again the travelling clerk whom he had once met sword in hand.

“Your wish shall be gratified,” the Abbé often told him, “for it is only mountains that never meet. Your former opponent is in Paris: I know him, and I promise you that you shall meet him at table before your departure, to resume, glass in hand, the contest once interrupted at the *île de la Bartelasse*.”

Yet days and days passed away and the projected meeting had not taken place. Ricard had appointed the Thursday after Easter for his departure, when one evening he received the following note:

“MY DEAR FRIEND:—If you are still desirous of seeing, before leaving Paris, the travelling clerk whose life you generously spared on the *île de la Bartelasse*, come and dine with me, at six o'clock to-morrow. Ever and heartily yours, ———.”

Next evening, six o'clock was ringing from the church of St. Sulpice, when Ricard accepted the welcome invitation of the worthy Abbé. The table was set and only a guest was wanting.

"Shall we grant him the quarter of an hour's indulgence?" asked the Abbé.

"We will give him two," answered Ricard, "for distances are long in Paris, and people have much business to transact."

Half-past six came, but not the expected guest.

"Let us sit down to table," said the Abbé smiling, "and do not be disappointed, my dear captain, I promise you he will come."

"Are you sure of it?"

"You shall see him at the dessert."

Dinner was soon served. A magnificent carp, laid on a china dish garnished with flowers, figured in the first course. The guest looked his thanks for an attention which recalled a pleasing association.

"Ever since I learned the story of your duel," said the Abbé, "the carp is my favorite fish."

"Why so?" asked Ricard.

"Because I cannot help seeing therein the mysterious agent employed by Providence to effect the salvation of two souls."

"Whose are they?"

"Yours, in the first place; for, believe me, captain, no one plays with grace in vain. The day that you, a Catholic, played the part of a good Catholic in giving an example of submission to the commandments of the Church, that day, the good God blessed you: He opened to you the treasures of His mercy, and prepared for you the place you now occupy in the bosom of His Church."

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"You spoke of another soul likewise saved—to whom do you refer?"

"To the travelling clerk, undoubtedly, who, doubting and scoffing at everything, thought himself at liberty to insult others, because he knew by heart Beranger's collection; that day, captain, I repeat, the carp you ordered in place of a fowl, merely to fulfil the laws of a Church that was not your own, that carp has played in the history of your conversion a greater part than you suppose. Under the hand of God, the greatest effects often proceed from the most trifling causes."

"You shall see that my former adversary will not come," exclaimed Ricard, "for, if I am not mistaken, we are at the dessert."

"Captain Ricard, look at me closely,—do you recognize me?"

"Yes, as an excellent and worthy priest, whom I esteem and love with all my heart."

"Now for your revenge, captain!—the adversary whom I promised to have here to meet you is now before you, glass in hand, to call you to account for the sword-thrust you might have given at the *île de la Bartelasse*."

"How! could you be——"

"The impudent and irreligious travelling clerk to whom the Huguenot Captain Ricard gave a lesson in toleration and politeness." So saying, the good Abbé threw himself into the arms of the captain,

who thought himself under the influence of some strange hallucination.

"Oh! yes, it is I—look at me well," resumed the Abbé, and he briefly related in its most minute details the scene we described in the first part of this story.

At the request of the astonished captain, he completed his recital by an account of the sincere conversion which from public carriages and high roads had brought him into a seminary, and from the seminary to the sacred pulpit.

"From that day forth," said he, "I gossip no more *at three francs a head* at hotel ordinaries, but I teach men of peace and good will the consoling truths of our holy religion. In a word, I find myself a hundred times happier since the hymns of the Church have made me forget the songs of Beranger."

The two converts, forgetful of the passing hours, continued their friendly chat till near midnight; the captain rose first, and took leave of the priest whom he was never again to see in this world. The zealous preacher set out, six months after, for the Missions of the Levant.

* * * * *

Captain Ricard is still in this world; retired from business, he lives in the country in the love of the Lord, and enjoys an easy competence. He is married and the father of several beautiful children. On days of abstinence he never fails to have a carp on his table.

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VALERIA; OR, THE FIRST CHRISTIANS.

Her name was her crime.—TERTULLIAN.

I.

THE EMPRESS.

THE Roman Empire, like a stately monument ruined by time, was tottering to its fall, and under a still imposing exterior, hid the principle of death that was in its bosom. Its majestic unity, established, built up at the price of so much genius and so much blood, existed no more, those immense territories, those several kingdoms fused into one single empire, which the Republic did not find too large for a camping ground for its armies, which Augustus and his first successors governed with a gesture, and kept in subjection with a look, had henceforward three different masters. Constantine, son of Constantius Chloris and Helena, governed the Gauls and bore the title of Cæsar; the rest of the empire belonged to Lucinius and to Maximinius-Daia, adopted son of the Emperor Galerius. Weakened by its intestine divisions, the empire tottered under the menacing feet of the barbarians who, going forth from the deserts

of Asia and the frozen steppes of the North, every day straightened more closely the frontiers defended by the mercenary legions ; expiring polytheism had just kindled an implacable persecution against the Christians ; vice and impiety reigned in the palace ; virtue reigned there, too, but in the depth of its dungeons ; in fine, as an illustrious writer has since said : " It was requisite that every vice and every passion should pass over the throne, in order that men might consent to place thereon the religion that condemns all vices and all passions.*

About that time it was that, in one of the most remote chambers of the palace which Maximinius inhabited in the capital of the world, a woman, alone on her knees, seemed overwhelmed with cruel anguish, and her eyes, raised to heaven, betrayed a deep-seated, heart-piercing, and almost hopeless sorrow. Although the first charms of youth had already abandoned her, and her mourning robes, of the most severe simplicity, could add nothing to her beauty, her features preserved a sweet and majestic character that inspired affection and respect ; but she appeared as insensible to these gifts of nature as to the Asiatic magnificence by which she was surrounded. All around her breathed the refined luxury of that age when the spoils of the world were made to minister to its material enjoyments. Marble, purple and gold decorated the walls of the apartment ; plates of transparent alabaster closed the windows looking towards

* CHATEAUBRIAND, *Etudes historiques.*

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the atrium, admitting a softened light, like that of early twilight; the ceiling, enriched with precious sculptures, was framed in gold; all the furniture was remarkable either for fineness of workmanship or richness of material, and the dazzling mosaic that covered the floor represented an immense basket of smiling many-colored flowers. In the midst of this royal pomp, this delicate and refined luxury, there existed more than one strange dissonance, more than one severe contrast. Had any one raised with curious hand the curtains of the deep recess, they would have seen that the bed so sumptuously, so tastefully adorned, contained only a bundle of straw and a wooden pillow. . . . The niche reserved for the household gods was empty; but in a corner, on a porphyry table, there was a vase of rough clay, which contained some bleached bones and sediments of dried blood. One side of the vase bore the effigy of a lamb, and the other the words: Vincent, martyr.* A book was placed on this table; it lay open at the words: "Blessed shall you be, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake." (Luke VI.) To the wall was fastened a

* St. Vincent, born at Saragossa; Valerius, bishop of that city, ordained him deacon. Dascian, governor of the province, wanted to make him sacrifice to idols; but the most cruel tortures could not weaken the martyr's courage. He sank under his wounds at the moment when Dascian was trying to overcome him by caresses.

wooden cross, an instrument of torture abhorred by the Romans, and which seemed, nevertheless, to prevail, a glorious and modest standard, over the proud luxury of that imperial chamber. It was before that cross that Valeria, the daughter of Dioclesian, the widow of Galerius, remained prostrate, offering to God her prayers and her tears; at length, she raised to the blood-stained feet of Christ her clasped and trembling hands, and said :

“ Oh God ! my God ! thou knowest that how hard soever have been the trials of my life, I have lovingly accepted them for Thy sake ; an unhappy daughter, a more unhappy wife, in the midst of my anguish I adored and blessed Thee, and in the days of my pilgrimage, I loved, I sought only Thee. But now, Lord, I cry out for mercy ; my soul, from the depth of the abyss, asks aid and pity ! I am Thine ; dispose of my life ; but spare these faithful souls, these sisters in the faith, these companions of my sorrows who are about to be immolated for me. O just God, snatch them from the hands of the impious ! Protect the innocent from the fury of the wicked ! If thou wilt have an holocaust, take my blood, the same blood, alas ! as that of the persecutors of Thy saints ! but spare Marcia and Junia, that thus the tears of my heart be dried up ! ”

At the same moment, a door opened and gave admission to a young and beautiful slave, whose golden hair, alabaster skin and blue eyes betrayed her northern origin. Valeria turned anxiously towards her :

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"Well?" said she.

"Madam," said the young girl, "I succeeded in getting out of the palace, and I have got some information; but, alas!——"

"Speak, my daughter, I can hear all. The worthy Marcia, who has been to me as a mother, where is she?"

"She has appeared before the tribunal of the judge Eustratius, accused of an infamous crime, as was also the wife of the noble senator, Albinus! both have been condemned to death."

"O my God!" cried Valeria, pale with anguish; "and who has dared so to outrage virtue?"

"A miserable Jew, bribed by the confidant of Maximinius, deposed against her; in vain would the noble Albinus have testified on behalf of his wife; his testimony was refused——"

"Marcia! the benefactress of the poor! Junia, so noble a wife, so tender a mother!"

"Both are condemned—. Oh! my mistress, the wild forests of Teutschland are preferable to the palaces of Rome."

"There is no time to lose," said Valeria, drawing her veil over her face; "I will go to Maximinius."

"Oh! madam, do you not fear——"

"What have I to fear, damsel? What misfortune could now terrify me?"

Saying these words, Valeria went forth from her chamber followed by the young barbarian. They traversed sumptuous galleries, where statues, purloin-

ed from the valleys of Elida, recalled the image of gods, and heroes, and reached at length a cedar door, guarded by a young legionary. With his axe on his shoulder he paced slowly to and fro. Recognizing the widow of Galerius he bowed. She opened the door; but the slave whispered in the sentinel's ear:

"Ebroin, if you hear my voice calling for help, enter this chamber, strike with your battle axe, strike Cæsar himself, I conjure you in the name of Herman!"

The soldier had not time to answer; the slave followed her mistress into the chamber where Maximinius was at the moment alone. That emperor, formerly a shepherd, raised to the supreme power by a whim of Galerius, bore on his features all the meanness of his origin. Proud without dignity, harsh without valor, the man could inspire terror, but never respect. He was seated before a silver table, covered over with letters and dispatches which he scanned with an anxious eye. When Valeria entered he went forward to meet her, regarded her with a smile at once cruel and exulting, and said:

"What am I to augur from your visit, madam? You have not accustomed us to such favors."

"Ah! you know the motive that brings me here; striking me in my dearest affections, you knew well how to force me to sue to you! If you would enjoy your triumph, Maximinius, be satisfied; behold at your feet the widow of your benefactor, of him who named you his son! Mercy, Maximinius, mercy, not for me, but for those whom you have brought under

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the axe of the executioner, and who have committed no other crime than that of loving me too faithfully."

"Madam, you know my conditions," replied the emperor, casting a gloomy look on the prostrate Valeria; "abjure the worship of the Nazarene, and become my wife. Your friends shall be restored to you; I will load them with wealth and honors; if not, before the sand of the glass is run out, they shall be dead. Their fate is in your hands."

Valeria wrung her hands in anguish.

"See," resumed Maximinius, "the sand glides on—the hour flies. There is yet time, I can send a messenger who will stop the lictor's axe. One word, madam, and my clemency saves their life; if you are silent, well! their blood be on your head!"

Valeria had risen, and in a transport of grief she exclaimed: "I can sacrifice all to you, my fortune my liberty, my life, all, except my honor in this world and my salvation in the other. Never has the widow of a Cæsar given her faith to a second spouse; still less can I, the widow of your adoptive father. She who was your mother can belong to you by no other title, and no more can she who belongs to the living God offer incense to crumbling idols. Rather a thousand deaths than such perjury! If you must have victims, strike the daughter and the widow of your masters; I will bless the deadly stroke, if my life can redeem that of my sisters."

"Your obstinacy sacrifices *them*, madam!—Behold!

the sand will soon be gone; the Hours, daughters of the Sun, touch the earth with a light foot——”

Valeria cast her eyes on the hour-glass now almost empty.

“Oh!” she wildly exclaimed, “but tortures and death would be sweet to me compared with what endure!”

“The gods preserve us from injuring your sacred person!” said Maximinius, in a scoffing tone; “you shall live, madam, to remember having rejected my hand with contempt.”

A long silence succeeded to these words; Valeria, almost insensible from suffering, remained motionless, her hands clasped, and unable even to utter a prayer. The young barbarian, trembling with indignation, cast many a bold and wrathful look on the emperor, who, affecting indifference, had seated himself at the table and resumed his examination of the letters piled before him. More than once the young girl conceived the desire of calling to her aid the Frank soldier in order to put a bloody end to the scene; but the fear of precipitating the fate of her mistress arrested the word on her lips. The hour-glass was empty; Maximinius turned, and looked at Valeria; she groaned piteously, and, at the same moment, a young man, clad in a military costume, entered abruptly! it was Faustus, master of the emperor's horse, and his prime favorite.

“Friend,” asked Maximinius, “have my orders been executed?”

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“Eternity, the law has had its course, and those women, whose life outraged the gods, have ceased to live. Marcia answered nothing to her accusers; she wore on her neck the image of the Crucified, which she kissed, saying: ‘Just God, Thou knowest the truth!’ She gave herself up to the executioners in silence, and with a joyful air. A troop of wretches followed her weeping; they say she fed those people with her substance, and tended them in their sickness. To put an end to their clamors they were shut up in the Mammertine prisons.”

“It is well; and Junia?”

“She wept and protested her innocence, calling on her husband and children. Both of them, before they died, prayed to their God for Valeria.”

The widow of Galerius seemed as though she were dying; leaning on her slave, she sighed heavily, and murmured the names of Marcia and Junia. Maximinius approached her and said

“Madam, you see how I can punish! Those who sustained you in your opposition to my will, those who encouraged you in the vile belief you have embraced, have perished; for you, your head is safe, but from this moment your possessions belong to Faustus. To-morrow, you shall leave Rome to retire into Syria, to the village of Bethlehem, so dear to your Christians. You shall take with you but one slave and you shall not quit the place of your exile but with my permission. Such are my orders:—go!”

Valeria, recalled to herself, raised her head proudly

and looking steadily at Maximinius, she answered :

“Poverty! exile! those are blessings worthy of you and the only ones that I would receive from your hands! Farewell, Maximinius, persecutor of the just; the web of your life is woven, and we shall soon meet at the judgment-seat of God!”

She withdrew, followed by her slave. Faustus left alone with the emperor, said to him in a low voice :

“Eternity, here is what I did not choose to tell you in presence of the empress; the Jew-Eliphaz, who had followed my instructions in deposing against Marcia and Junia, retracted at the sight of their torment, and it is said that, overwhelmed by remorse, he stabbed himself.”

Maximinus, sunk in a fit of gloomy abstraction, answered not; his eyes were fixed on the door by which Valeria had passed out, and he said in an undertone : “Yet how I loved her.”*

* All these details are strictly historical, and may be found in Lactantius (*On the death of persecutors*). Two noble women were dragged before the tribunal, under an odious pretence, sent to execution, and the false witness whose deposition had satisfied the venal conscience of the judges, died by his own hand. Those women were only guilty of an inviolable fidelity to their religion and to the unfortunate daughter of the mighty Dioclesian.



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II.

BETHLEHEM.

THE night had closed in, an eastern night, beautiful, serene, starry, full of sweet harmonies, even, and balmy freshness, although it was midwinter.

In the village of the shepherds called by the Arabs of our day Dta-el-Natour, in a little hut built of trunks of trees and covered with straw, two women watched by the pale glimmer of an earthen lamp, which cast its rays on a small, poor chamber. One of them, sitting on a rustic seat covered with sheepskins, was reading aloud, and a young girl, kneeling beside her, seemed listening to her words with earnest attention. It was the Empress Valeria and her faithful slave, the German Rikhilda. The mild, pale features of Valeria had an expression of subdued sadness and tranquil resignation; it was easy to see that the long misfortunes which that soul had undergone had purified it more and more, as fire cleanses metal from all gross alloy. The young barbarian, of a strong and lively nature, wore also on her face a tinge of unwonted mildness; it seemed that new impressions had tempered that rugged character, wild even in its devotion; it seemed, also, that a celestial influence had blended in her calmness with strength and energy with patience.

She listened, in silence, to what Valeria was reading: "And this shall be a sign unto you: You shall

find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger."

Reading these words, the empress's voice faltered; tears dimmed the eyes of the young girl, who at length said in her simple way:

"And that child, madam, is the God you worship?"

"Yes," replied Valeria, with sweet gravity, "I adore the supreme greatness annihilated, the Divinity reducing Himself, for our sake, to the miseries of the human state.—That child, the Son of the living God, and God himself, that Christ, the Saviour of nations, born of a Virgin, who for palace had but a stable, for cradle a crib, and for worshippers shepherds; that is the God of Christians, that is my God, and, Rikhilda, he will soon be yours."

"Be it so! My mother taught me to fear the gods of my country; yours, O my mistress, wants only to be loved; let Him, then, take the heart of His poor servant."

"And blessed be He, the good and mighty God, who has vouchsafed that, wretched and deserted as I am, I can still bring a new sheep into the fold of Christ! When the water of baptism shall flow on thy head, Rikhilda, pray then, pray for her who hath brought thee forth to the true faith."

The young barbarian, much affected, pressed Valeria's hand to her lips, and exclaimed:

"I loved the freedom of our forests, I was the daughter of a mighty chief, and the homage of men surrounded me; but you make me bless my slavery, with em

and, near you, I forget my mother and my country!"

"You are no longer my slave," said the empress, laying her hand on the fair head bent down before her; "amongst Christians, that name is unknown. Thou art my daughter in God and the companion of my sufferings. But the hour advances; the sacrifice is going to commence; let us go, like the shepherds, to adore the child that is born for us."

The night was that of the Nativity, and some faithful Christians were preparing to celebrate the sweet anniversary in the very cave of Bethlehem. Valeria and Rikhilda, accompanied by an Arab shepherd, a Christian like themselves, took their way towards the ancient city of Juda. The road they had to traverse was very short, but historical recollections, monuments of the faith crowded beneath their steps. They passed by the wood which Adrian had consecrated to Adonis; those balmy shades displayed no more nor statues nor altars; no more were heard from their smiling depths the choirs of young men mingling with the tones of flute and lyre to celebrate the sorrows of Venus. The mysteries of idolatry had fled affrighted before the mysteries of the Cross. By the light of the white stars that spangled the dome of heaven, they perceived the city of David, so often celebrated by the prophets and the sacred writers, that true house of peace, wherein it pleased the Son of God to be born. They arrived, trembling with emotion, in the cave, the only asylum that pre-

sented itself to the wandering footsteps of Mary and her spouse, and descending the steps cut in the rock, the empress and Rikhilda penetrated into the subterranean church, where a crowd of people was assembled. The young barbarian fixed her eyes with timid curiosity on that spectacle so new to her; silver lamps fed with perfumed oil gave light to the holy place; the altar, draped in white, adorned with flowers, radiant with lights, rose at the farther end of the cave, like a throne of mercy; the bareness of the rocky walls was hidden by green branches. Nearly in the centre of the sanctuary, a star of white marble was set in the pavement, and around were read the words:

Here Jesus Christ was born
Of the Virgin Mary.

This sacred place, surrounded by a railing, attracted the respectful looks of the Christians; Rikhilda fixed hers there with mingled fear and love, casting them at times on the prostrate assembly, adoring in silence the Desired of Nations. In that assembly were seen Bethlehemite Arabs, descended, perhaps from the shepherds to whom the news was announced; their majestic features, their garments of antique form, the long beard that flowed down to their swarthy chest, all recalled to mind the sons of Jacob, the pastors of Hebron, the glorious fathers of the twelve tribes. Their wives, clad in the costume which tradition assigns to Mary, were worthy daughters of Rachel by their grave beauty, and still th

more by their modesty. Pilgrims from the Isles of Greece, where St. Paul preached the Gospel, sons of Athens the learned, of proud Lacedemonia, of royal Argos, of hospitable Corinth, of Thebes, the country of Pindarus, there adored the God who had no glory but opprobrium, no science but humility, and who had taught His disciples, from the height of a cross, a wisdom more profound than that of the Porch, and a stoicism unmixed with pride or harshness. Mysterious Egypt, and the nations of Asia had, notwithstanding the persecutions, representatives at the foot of the crib where lay the world's salvation, and Rikhilda herself seemed deputed by those barbarous tribes who were soon to open so vast a field to the zeal of apostles and the intrepidity of martyrs. Silence reigned in the assembly, when the priest, clothed in a linen alb, went forth from a retired place; he adored at the foot of the altar, and the deacon lector, ascending the holy tribune, opened the book in which the Word of Life is written, and read aloud the three first lessons, taken from Isaiah :

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light, and the day hath arisen on those who sat in the shadow of death. The voice of one crying in the desert : Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the wilderness the paths of our God.”

When the reading was finished, the people chanted the psalm, “Great is the Lord and exceedingly to

be praised ;” then the celebrant clothed himself in the sacerdotal vestments, and the deacon said aloud “Let the catechumens, penitents, and all those who are not entitled to assist at the mysteries, retire.” Rikhilda arose, with some other young girls who had not yet received baptism ; she went out of the church the doors of which were closed, and knelt on the stone steps that led to the subterraneous grotto. Meanwhile the sacrifice was finished, and the bread of life distributed to the faithful, in the very place where the Word was born into this world ! After the *Agapes*, in which all hearts, like the Apostles of the Lord, had recognized the Saviour in the breaking of bread, they distributed amongst the widows and the indigent the alms of that little church, indigent itself, and Valeria, already stripped of almost every thing by charity, added to the collection a golden bracelet, last relic of her former splendor. Every voice was raised to thank the Lord, who, before proscriptio, before martyrdom, perhaps, had permitted this fraternal meeting ; then all withdrew in silence. The stars of night were paling in the first faint light of day, when the empress and her young companion regained their humble dwelling.

A man, in a travelling costume, was seated on a stone bench near the door ; he arose and followed the empress into her dwelling ; he then bent the knee before her, and presenting a scroll from which hung a seal of green wax, he said :

“Candidian salutes his adoptive mother; he charged me to give her this writing.”

The empress unrolled the papyrus; she read its contents, and a cloud overshadowed her face; but, recovering herself immediately, she sent the messenger to a place intended for repose, and, when the duties of hospitality were discharged, she returned to the now fireless hearth, and read over again Candidian's writing. Rikhilda, troubled, knelt beside her, and said timidly :

“If my mistress has any new trouble, will she not confide it to her faithful slave?”

“My daughter, life cannot be without pain; but when troubles come from the hand of God shall we murmur against them? . . . I must quit this asylum, where, in spite of Maximin and the harrowing recollections that his cruelty left me, I had found peace of mind. We must go hence, Rikhilda!”

“Is it by the emperor's orders, madam?”

“No, my daughter, no!—whilst he that is to guide our steps out of this desert still reposes, I can explain to you the motives of my flight. Thou knowest that, married to Galerius, by my father's orders, I had not, in the cares of a troubled union, the only pure consolation that God hath given to women, maternity. How often have I with tears begged a son from the Lord! how often have I not said, like Rachel: ‘Give me children, or I die!’ How many proud hopes I founded on that son whom I incessantly asked of the divine goodness! I flattered myself that, cradled in

my arms, suckled with my milk, he would have known from his earliest years the faith I had embraced, and that one day, inheriting the purple of Galerius, he would have raised Christianity to the throne of the Cæsars. I hailed in him the pacificator of the Church, the Saviour of my brethren, the chosen of God, he whose mighty hand was to raise the cross of Christ above the standard of Romulus! Alas! such an honor was not reserved for me! It is said that a woman of obscure birth, Helena, the mother of Constantine, has brought up her son in the true faith. May he one day make it prevail throughout the universe! I waited and prayed in vain, and my life passed solitary in that sumptuous palace where I was born, and where I never tasted one hour of happiness. Several years had flown away since my marriage, when, renouncing even my hopes, I resolved to adopt and regard as my own, the son of Galerius, the young Candidian. God inspired me with a great compassion for that motherless child; I asked my husband's permission to bring him up, and Candidian thus became the son of my love, if not of my blood. On the death of Galerius, his son joined the army; he had, from his childhood, nourished ambitious projects that were wholly unfounded, and, although he honored me as a mother, my counsels could not dissuade him from these proud chimeras. Now, he writes me to say that fortunate circumstances present themselves in his favor; that the army, weary of the tyrant's yoke, is ready to raise him to the empire,

and he invites me to join him at Thessalonica. I will go, not to resume an ephemeral splendor, but to snatch the son of my adoption from the perils that surround him; for Lucinius and Maximinius, established in their power, will not forgive him. The voice dear to his childhood may guide him still; and if a fatal presentiment be realized, should he fall alive into the implacable hands of his enemies, well! the daughter of Dioclesian has still prayers to implore them, and tears to soften their hearts."

"Let us go, madam," said Iulikhilda with eager devotion; "let us go!"

. III.

THESSALONICA.

NIGHT was falling slowly on the city of Thessalonica, rich and pompous then, favored by several emperors, but fallen now into poverty and degradation. Two women, mounted on mules, which a man with sun-browned face held by the bridle, presented themselves at the gates of the city, and wending their way through the waves of a tumultuous crowd, traversed streets where monuments arose worthy of Rome herself.

They at length reached the vicinity of a place, the avenues leading to which were blocked up with crowds of people. Cries and much loud talking was heard on all sides; some of the words they said at

length reached the ears of the travellers who appeared terror-stricken by what they heard. The elder of the two women, bending down, whispered some words to their guide. He glided through the crowd and disappeared. His companions remained in the same place, motionless and hidden under their veils; no one questioned them, for public attention seemed to be absorbed by some sinister event. At length the guide reappeared, his face pale and haggard. He drew the two women under an arcade then deserted.

"Candidian!" cried Valeria, for she it was, disguised under the garments of poverty.

"Oh day of woe!" answered the faithful servant; "Candidian!—my master!"

"Well!—speak!"

"He has just received his death-blow! Full of blind security, he presented himself to the troops which the pro-consul was reviewing. Loud acclamations greeted the son of Galerius; his beauty, his youth, his noble and martial aspect, touched many hearts; but, on a signal from the governor, just as he was advancing to the foot of the eagles, claiming his share of the empire that had been his father's, an arrow from the bow of a Numidian cavalry soldier struck him in the throat. He fell, and his dying body was pierced with many wounds. His corpse was conveyed to the city prison. Ah! madam, what hast thou come hither to seek?"

"The accomplishment of the designs of God," said Valeria with gloomy resignation; "Christ re-

avenges his martyrs even on the children of persecutors; let us bow to his decrees! But come, Lucius, come to the prison to see what remains of Candidian here below. It is the only house open to me in Thessalonica, the house of death and mourning. There an inward voice tells me I shall find a peace that nothing can evermore disturb. Come, let us go!"

The two servants endeavored to dissuade their mistress from this purpose, but she remained insensible alike to the representations of Lucius and the tears and entreaties of Rikhilda. They set forward, and, under the guidance of Lucius, who knew the city, arrived before an arched door, gloomy and dark as the entrance to Pluto's dominions, guarded only at that moment by the terror it inspired.

Valeria entered without fear, and, guided by the sound of voices, she at length reached a low arched dungeon, an anticipated sepulchre, where the living made the apprenticeship of death. It was the funeral chamber of him who had hoped to wear the purple of the Cæsars. Candidian lay there on a little straw, the last couch of the captive who had preceded him in that dungeon. The reddish light of the setting sun, falling through a grating on the pallid features of the young prince, gave them an artificial glow of life and health; he was beautiful still, for the blows of the murderers had respected his face, and his eyes languidly closed, his lips half open, his head gently bending forward, indicated sleep rather than

death. This was doubtless the impression felt by one of the witnesses of this scene, for a voice was heard repeating those lines from Virgil :

“ Even as the tender violet, or the languishing hyacinth culled by the fingers of a young maiden ; those flowers have lost neither their beauty nor their form, but it is seen that the earth, their mother, sustains them no more and no longer yields them nourishment ”*

Valeria who, prostrate, and holding in silent agony the cold hand of her adopted son, turned at these words. The governor of Thessalonica, for he it was who had spoken, drew near her.

“ Daughter of Dioclesian,” said he, “ I have recognized you, not so much by your features as by your grief,—you are betrayed, and I am forced to obey the instructions I have received. You know you were not to leave the place of your exile without the orders of Maximinius, and yet you are in Thessalonica. I must, therefore, retain you a prisoner, till the emperor shall have decided on your fate. The gods are witness that it is against my will I lay hands upon you, but I obey my masters and the fate that rules us all——”

“ Yes,” replied Valeria, “ you obey an invisible arm, you are the instrument of an inevitable destiny. I submit, Faustus. And Thon,” she added, raising her eyes to heaven, “ Thou who triest me, O my God ! I adore and bless Thee!—The clay may not rebel

* *Aeneid*, l. xi. These lines relate to the death of the youthful Pallas, son of Evander, killed by Turnus in a combat.

against the potter, nor the creature against the Creator!"

Rikhilda advanced at this moment, and said to Faustus: "Do not separate me from my mistress; she has none now but me to love and serve her!"

On a motion from the governor, the empress and her slave were conducted to another chamber of the prison, and a heavy iron door, closing after them, separated them from the world.

Valeria sat down on a rude seat, and, with her hands clasped on her bosom, she remained absorbed in thought. Rikhilda, kneeling beside her, contemplated her in silence, the tears falling from her eyes. She at length took one of her mistress's hands, kissed it tenderly, and said in a low, gentle voice:

"Cannot the God of the Christians save Valeria? Is He not the Sovereign Master of Maximin and Faustus? Will you give up all hope, my mistress?"

Valeria turned a melancholy look on the young girl; the latter resumed:

"All is not lost! we are prisoners, but the Lord can send us a liberating angel, as He did to his Apostles. I hope in Him, for Ebroïn is here!"

"Ebroïn! and who is Ebroïn?" said Valeria, recalled to life in spite of her, and yielding to the influence of that young consoling voice.

"Ebroïn is a soldier of the German legion——"

"Poor child! and do you think that an obscure soldier could deliver us?"

"An obscure soldier!" said the German girl raising

her head proudly ; “ Ebroin serves Rome, it is true but is he less the chief of the tribe of the Cherusques, the last descendant of Hermann ? ”

She read hesitation in Valeria's look, and went on :

“ Hermann, the ancestor of Ebroin, is he whom you call Arminius ; he is the hero of our fathers, the conqueror of the legions which Varus commanded ; it is he whom our bards yet sing, when they excite the young men to the fight. Ebroin is the last of his race, and, although he is but a private soldier, the whole Germanic legion would rise at his first signal. It is God that sends him to us, madam ! he is here ; I saw him as we passed along the streets of this Thessalonica, and knew him under the Roman helmet and armor ; he was handsome and stately as Hermann himself, when he espoused the daughter of Segestes, or as that Judas Maccabeus, whose history you once related to me. Ebroin will save us ! ”

“ Is Ebroin your brother or your kinsman ? ”

“ No, madam, ” said the young girl with graceful modesty, “ but I was promised to him for a wife on the day he received his father's shield ; we were betrothed, and drank from the same cup in token of union and love. Evil days came since then ; Rome levied her tribute, and Ebroin had to serve under the eagles, whilst I was taken for the service of the empress. Of that I no longer complain, madam, ” she quickly added, again kissing Valeria's hand, — “ though absent from each other we have still kept our faith unbroken, and if Lucius can bring a message to Ebroin

he will arm his comrades and take us from the hands of our jailers. Then we shall be free! then we shall be happy! we shall fly these cities where murder and treachery abide—in the green mountains bordering on the Rhine there are fair solitudes, peaceful retreats where we shall live far from men and for ourselves alone. You shall come with us; you will teach us to serve the true God, and you shall live long days, honored as a queen, loved as a mother. Oh! that Lucius would come! that he would let Ebroïn know! Pray to God, madam, pray that He may effect our deliverance.”

“Yes, let Ebroïn come, my Rikhilda, that I may be enabled to place thee in the arms of thy husband! Thou shalt see again the banks of the Rhine and the forests of thy country; but for me, my days are numbered; time is for me no more; I already enter on eternity. Listen: the hand of God is on me; I feel it is His will that I should die, and I am willing to offer myself in sacrifice; He is accomplishing His designs on the race of the persecutors. Dioclesian, my father, lived wretched and despised;* Galerius, my husband, died in the most frightful agony;* Candidian was stricken down in the flower of his years;

* Dioclesian, after his abdication, witness of the misfortunes of the empire and the miseries of his daughter, lived unhappy, and died of hunger and despair.

* Galerius was eaten alive by worms; the Christians attributed that terrible malady to the divine vengeance.

who knows what will be the fate of Licinius and Maximinius? I, the last of my race, am reserved to fulfil the promise from above, for God heard the voice of those who suffered death for Him, and cried :

How long, O Lord, dost Thou not judge and revenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? * But, falling under the sword, I will bless my God, and I will still hope in Him."

"If you die, I die!" said Rikhilda.

Some days passed after this conversation; the two captives seemed forgotten by the entire world; Lucius had not been able to reach them; they spent their hours, Rikhilda dreaming of freedom and deliverance, Valeria in grave meditations and continual prayers.

Often, too, did the empress profit by those moments of truce with death, to engrave more deeply in the girl's heart the teachings of Christ, and finish, before leaving the earth, the work she had commenced in Bethlehem. She told her the story of our first parents, their happiness and their fall, that fall the sad effects of which are still felt by every child of Adam; she told her of the consoling promise the Lord made them; the young Abel stricken down by his brother's hand and death appearing for the first time in the world; the deluge covering the abominations of the earth; the patriarchs, those shepherdkings, visited by angels and looking forward, during the long days of their pilgrimage, for the Redeemer

* Apocalypse, chap. vi.

promised to their race; she described the nations dispersed, the worship of the true God preserved by one single people, the bright light shining amid the darkness of idolatry, and saluting by the mouth of its holy prophets the expected Messiah, the Son of God, who, becoming incarnate, was to open the gates of heaven which Adam's transgression had closed on his descendants. She unfolded, according to the sacred books, that long series of striking predictions; she showed the revolving years, the times foretold by Daniel arrived, and the Saviour of Israel, taking flesh in the womb of a virgin of the tribe of Judah; she described Him in His cradle, surrounded by prodigies; in the thirty years of His hidden life and the days of His public life, evangelizing the poor, healing by the very touch of his garments the diseases of the body and the infirmities of the soul; she painted Him at last such as Isaiah saw Him through the shades of the future: "Despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity; He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins. He was offered because it was His own will, and He opened not His mouth; He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before His shearers, and He shall not open His mouth;"* condemned by the judges, climbing, under His cross, the infamous Golgotha, dying alone, abandoned by all, save only His faithful mother and the disciple whom He loved.

* Isaiah, chap. liii.

“And yet His law already governs the universe,” continued Valeria; “He broke the gates of the tomb; He triumphed over death and hell; He communicated His Holy Spirit to His Apostles, so cowardly before; and they confessed the Saviour Jesus Christ on the cross and under the sword! His evangelical doctrine is preached to every tribe, in every tongue; seven persecutions have strengthened the Church they were meant to destroy, and, oh! depth of the judgments of God! the heirs of the fisherman of Galilee shall rule as masters in the city of the Cæsars!—The time is at hand, but I shall not see it; thou shalt see it, Rikhilda!—thou shalt see Christ triumphant and thou shalt see Him in the new temples which the kings of the earth shall build in His honor. O my daughter, thank Him for having called thee to the knowledge of His name; for having instructed thee in His law of love. Bear in thy hands, as a precious liquor in a frail vase, thy soul, that soul for which the Lord Jesus gave His Gospel, for which He sacrificed His life! Remember always, poor sheep the ransom thou didst cost the charitable pastor. Love thy God, love thy neighbor, keep thy heart pure, be steadfast in the faith, and await in humble hope the crown that God has promised to those whom He loves. Ah! if I could but see the waters of baptism poured upon thy head! May God grant me that favor, so that my soul may depart in peace.”

Rikhilda listened with religious respect to that beloved voice and, renouncing in her heart the hideous

idols of her country, she took pleasure in invoking the name of the true God, and in placing herself under the protection of Mary, whose power and goodness Valeria had made known to her. These lessons and these prayers had softened for the two prisoners the horrors of captivity, when on the sixth day Faustus entered the dungeon. His aspect was gloomy and betrayed the agitation of his soul; he bowed down before Valeria with the same respect as he had shown her in the days of her power, and with downcast eyes:

"I have received a message from Licinius, madam."

"I understand you, Faustus!—how much time still remains for me?"

"To-morrow, at this hour, you shall have ceased to live."

Valeria betrayed no emotion on hearing this. Her sacrifice was complete; the issue of accursed blood, she shed it joyfully to satisfy the justice of God. Faustus, the weak and unhappy servant of an iniquitous power, regarded her in mournful silence; he at length said:

"What would you desire, madam? Command, and I obey!"

"Yes, at the free banquet, the wishes of the dying are even anticipated, are they not?" said Valeria with a melancholy smile. "Well! I would wish to see, if it were possible, a Christian priest, and to have an interview with a young soldier of the Germanic Legion named Ebroin."

"You shall be obeyed; were I even to run some risk, your last wishes shall be fulfilled, for I cannot forget, madam, that your father and your husband loaded me with favors."

He saluted the empress and slowly retired.

When the night had fallen the prison door opened and gave admission to a young man wrapped in a cloak, the folds of which concealed from view his short sword and his glittering breastplate. One of Faustus' attendants ushered him into Valeria's dungeon. He stopped a moment on the threshold struck with the sight that met his eyes. The empress was kneeling at the feet of an old man clad in a linen alb and a purple stole; she was speaking, and he seemed to listen with profound attention; near them, against the granite wall of the prison, rose a white stone cut in the form of an altar, on which stood a bronze crucifix, two lighted tapers, and a chalice covered with a silken veil. The young soldier contemplated in silence these preparations for the sacrifice, and, suddenly, with a collected mien, his hands clasped on his mailed breast, he advanced into the prison, knelt before the altar, and made the Christian sign. Valeria and the priest arose simultaneously.

"Are you, then, one of our brethren?" cried the old man.

"Are you, Ebroïn?"

"I am a Christian," answered the young man; "in our forests they called me Ebroïn, but in baptism I said

some received the name of John, the beloved disciple of
 our Lord. I was sent for to this prison, and thought
 it was to render some service to one of my brethren
 in Christ; I came in haste."

The priest and Valeria heard the words of the sol-
 dier with silent joy.

"Behold the barbarous nations coming to range
 themselves under the cross," the old man said.
 "Happy young man, you are the first fruits of those
 nations who shall one day confess the name of
 the true God."

Valeria had gone out; she returned, accompa-
 nied by Rikhilda, who had retired to a den adjoin-
 ing the dungeon, whilst the empress was at confes-
 sion. Ebroïn turned at the sound of their steps; he
 remained a moment motionless, his arms outstretched
 towards the young girl, who, in that dark abode,
 seemed a celestial vision ready to vanish away.

"Behold your spouse," said the empress; "I have
 loved her as a daughter, and now, when about to die,
 give her, I confide her to thee. Receive her from
 the hands of a second mother; take her to your coun-
 try, far from the corruption of this old empire, on
 which the cup of divine vengeance is being poured
 out. Be happy in each other, and faithful to your
 God!"

"Rikhilda! you restored to me, and a Christian!
 O joyful day!"

"She has not yet received the sign of salvation,"
 said Valeria; "but before dying, I would fain see her

born to the true life. Rikhilda, this priest of God is going to pour the baptismal water upon your head; afterwards, he will unite you in marriage to your betrothed husband; do you consent to this, my last will?"

Rikhilda fell sobbing at the feet of her mistress.

"I would that I might die with you," she cried; "my life belongs to you, and amongst the Germans, the slave kills himself on his master's grave."

"The Christian waits till God demands his life to sacrifice it; live to keep my memory and serve our common master, with the spouse His goodness gives thee. My daughter, wilt thou be a Christian, wilt thou be the wife of Ébroïn?"

The modest look of the young slave, first raised to heaven, then cast on the soldier, was an eloquent reply. The priest had prepared the holy water; he questioned the catechumen, she answered without hesitation but in a tremulous voice. He at length poured on her forehead the saving water that regenerates and purifies; the son of Hermann and the widow of Galerius were the sole witnesses of this solemn act; they gave to the new Christian the name of Agnes, celebrated in the Church, and shedding the double perfume of martyrdom and virginity.

"My Agnes! now you are a Christian! now you are my sister in Christ! Oh! when the true light began to shine on me, when in the midst of camps I gathered from the mouth of some of my companions the doctrine of Christ, how many times have I thought

of you with tears! But I find you a Christian! Come, my sister in the faith, come, the priest awaits us. Let us go to ratify our promise,—become my wife at the foot of that cross which is to prevail over the world!”

The Frankish soldier would have drawn Agnes forward, but glancing towards Valeria kneeling in prayer, she said :

“She dies to-morrow! can I taste the joys of life? can I even enjoy the bliss of being thine, when my second mother is about to be dragged to execution?”

“She dies for her God! She is become odious to the tyrants, because she confesses the true faith.

Oh! how beautiful is her death! come, Agnes, come to obey her; the priest shall give thee from the arms of a mother to the arms of thy husband——”

They advanced to the foot of the altar; the old priest commenced the sacrifice, and the spotless victim descended under the gloomy arches of the prison.

The three assistants participated in the holy oblation, then the minister of the Lord invoked the blessing of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob on the young couple bent before him. They exchanged their vows, and Valeria drew from her finger a ring, which, placed on that of Agnes, sealed the eternal compact. Just as they rose, and with hands and hearts joined forever, looked into each other's eyes with melancholy joy, the dawn shed its first faint ray

on the dark walls of the dungeon. It was the signal for separation!

“Behold the dawn of the eternal day,” said Valeria, “my children, farewell! remember me before the Lord!—We shall one day be reunited in His bosom!”



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THE IVY AND THE ELM.

It was towards evening; a young workwoman was going in, after her day's work, to the large house in the rue de Bagneaux, in the highest story of which she occupied a small room. She was slowly ascending the interminable staircase, when, on the third story, her attention was attracted by the sight of another tenant, who seemed to climb with difficulty the steps which the light foot of the young girl scarcely touched. Of an advanced age, feeble, and infirm, her embarrassment was further increased by the heavy pitcher she carried in her hand, the weight of which seemed to exceed her strength. Touched with pity, the young workwoman, whose name was Emerance, ran to her old neighbor, and in a respectful tone offered her services. The poor woman would fain have answered, and, perhaps, declined the offer, but she could not; Emerance, with one hand took the pitcher, with the other supported her neighbor, and both arrived at the sixth story, where they lodged. On reaching the door of her garret, the old woman resumed her pitcher, thanked Emerance with extreme politeness, and entered before the girl could even get a peep at the room, as

her curiosity desired, or, to speak more justly, the interest she had long taken in her neighbor.

The life of the latter was sufficiently mysterious to excite this double feeling. Alone, without family, without friends, the old lady, whom they called Madam Simon, seemed, without ever complaining to any one, to be reduced to the most absolute distress. Although it was in the year 1801, her costume was precisely the same as that worn before the Revolution; her dress and her mantilla were of black taffety; on her head she wore a *Theresienne*, a sort of high antique head-dress long out of date, covering a muslin coif, and, as it were, framing a face pale and emaciated, yet still sweet and noble; altogether, Madam Simon appeared to belong to another world than that in which she lived.

Her stately politeness kept her poor neighbors at a distance, although they would have wished to offer their services and become familiar with her. Sweet and gracious to all she confided in none, and no one knew, although they might guess, the secrets of her poor dwelling. Emerance, her little neighbor, had long been desirous of speaking to her; so, entering her own little room, after the trifling service she had rendered to the old lady, the girl felt unusually happy, not only as one does after a good action, but also as if a great honor had fallen to her lot.

Emerance was an orphan. Her father and mother, honest working-people, had got safely through the horrors of the revolution, sheltered by their poverty.

They had brought up their only child in the fear of God and the love of work, and having given her these two safeguards they died in peace, a short interval one from the other. Left alone, Emerance had not quitted the neighborhood where she was known; she had removed to a decent, quiet house, and lived by the produce of her needle.

Her little room was neatly fitted up with the furniture that came to her from her parents: a bed, an old chest of drawers of dark oak, a well-polished table; over the mantel-piece was an old pier glass, two large vases of blue and white crockery, always filled with the flowers of the season; and above the chest of drawers, despite the decrees of the Convention, a crucifix, a holy-water font and a wax figure of the Virgin, clothed in a blue robe and mantle, spangled with golden stars. Some books were ranged on a shelf: they were the *Imitation*, the catechism of the diocese of Paris, an odd volume of the *Lives of the Saints*, and another of the *Lettres Edifiantes*. A canary, in his cage, hung from the ceiling, began singing at sight of his mistress, and on the window-sill were some pots of daisies and mignonette. All within the little room reflected the peace, the serenity, the purity that were in the heart of innocence.

Since the day that Emerance had made herself useful to her aged neighbor, there was no stratagem that she had not employed to succeed in making her acquaintance; she unceasingly practised all manner of pious intrigues in order to render her person and

her services agreeable to Madam Simon. And why so many efforts? Why this obstinacy in obliging, which seemed even to embarrass the old lady? It was that Emerance was entirely alone: young she was and unprotected; loving and gentle she had no object of attachment; her companions, assimilated to herself by age and condition, were separated from her by principles, and she vainly sought around her a guide that might direct her, a heart that could understand her. A mysterious instinct drew her to Madam Simon; there, there was enough of misfortune to exercise her devotion, enough of virtue and experience to shelter her weakness. But this connection, so much desired, progressed but slowly. The old lady shut herself up within the limits of the strictest reserve, politely refusing the girl's offer of service, avoiding all that could lead to any intimacy, and evincing in her whole conduct the prudence of a person to whom life has not been sparing of its hardest lessons.

Nevertheless, her health appeared to grow worse and worse, sorrow and privation bowed down her noble form and made her limbs totter; a hacking cough rent her chest, and it was in the midst of winter, a cold severe winter! One night Emerance, sleeping the sound sleep of her age, was suddenly awoken by a noise for which she could no way account; she looked around her: all was quiet; the little lamp shed its feeble ray, struggling with the expiring light from the hearth; the furniture was all in

order, the door and the window well closed; the noise could not be there. Emerance, leaning on her elbow in her bed, listened attentively, and heard a faint moaning. Starting up at once, the kind-hearted girl threw on a dress, lit a candle, and went straight to her neighbor's door;—the lock yielded easily to her hand, and Emerance found herself in Madam Simon's room. Her instinct had not deceived her. It was there the suffering was. The old lady, lying on a poor bed; was struggling with a convulsive cough aggravated by the icy cold of the garret. Emerance took the old lady's hand and said:

"It was God that woke me up—I am so glad—I can, perhaps, be of some service to you, madam! allow me to make a little fire to warm your drink."

Madam Simon made no answer, but her features expressed agitation. Emerance arranged the thin covering around the sick woman's shoulders, and ran to the fireplace. But having searched everywhere she could find neither wood nor coal. The cold ashes showed that the fire had been out some time—who knows? perhaps, for several days. Emerance went as fast as she could to fetch some wood from her own little stove, and in a few minutes, a bright fire lit up the room, exhibiting its dreary bareness. Emerance looked in the cups, the milk-pot—they were empty. A little water, half frozen, placed near the bed, in a broken glass, alone served to quench the sick woman's burning thirst. With swelling heart, the girl tried to remedy this great and secret misery. She warmed

water, mixed it with some gum syrup, which she had in her room, and made Madam Simon drink some spoonfuls. She also brought in a quilt and pillows, so as to make the old lady somewhat more comfortable, and all night long, Emerance kept watch, going from the now blazing hearth to the bed where her patient lay in feverish, broken sleep. That night appeared very sweet to her, it was so long since she had tended any one, and she felt in her heart such great arrears of devotion which she now hastened to expend!

The gloomy morning of a January day found her sitting beside the bed, watching over Madam Simon's rest. The old lady awoke; her first vague look fell on Emerance, and after some moments of hesitation, recognizing her, she said in a tremulous voice:

"What! is it you? You have sat up all night with me! I did not know you—but your presence—your care does me good."

"You make me very happy, madam!" replied Emerance, "and, since I can be useful to you, permit me to remain near you. You are not in a state to get up."

Madam Simon would have made some objections, but Emerance silenced her with a gentle authority. She installed herself immediately, and brought her work and her little provisions. In arranging the chamber she saw better, how utterly bare and wretched it was; only two objects revealed the recollections of another existence, of a past embellished

by wealth, animated by the joys of the heart. One was a locket in crystal and gold, containing a silken curl of fair hair; on the setting was engraved in small characters the following words, a fatal remembrance: *Prison des Carmes, 1st September, 1792.* The other was the miniature portrait of a young man, in the uniform of a naval officer, a noble and expressive face, which added still more to the melancholy of the funereal date, below the portrait: *Quiberon, 1795.* These two objects doubtless contained the whole of the old lady's past, and her transient happiness, buried in the mourning of our civil wars. Although Emerance knew little of the history of the time in which she lived, she understood that there were there recollections both sad and tender, and wounds of which her old friend was never to be healed.

These reflections excited the girl's devotion still more, and even that first day she succeeded in making her presence at once so sweet and so necessary, that when she asked permission to come again on the morrow, Madam Simon could only reach out her wasted hand, saying: "Yes, come, since you will have it so!"

And she *would* have it so not only that day, but every day, and those tender and respectful cares, those sweet attentions, became in a little time indispensable to the poor invalid. That calm and smiling face, those light steps, that soothing voice, enlivened the desolate dwelling wherein a poor mother, a sor-

rowful widow, had so long suffered and wept in silence. Soon, the two existences of the orphan and the widow made but one. Emerance obtained permission to arrange the chamber as she pleased; she brought thither her books, her bird, and her flowers. Unwilling to leave her aged friend any more alone, the young girl asked her employers to give her work which she could do at home. When she timidly announced this new project to Madam Simon, that lady listened in silence, regarded her with moistened eyes, and at length said:

"My daughter, will you leave me no more?"

"No, madam, never, if you wish it—God gives me to you—I feel it."

"Will you attach your young age, so full of life and joy, to my sad old age?"

"Ah! madam, will it not be a joy and an honor for me?"

"I am infirm."

"I will tend you."

"I am poor—destitute of means."

"If you will accept the fruit of my labor I shall be so happy!"

"You scarcely know me."

"You are about the age my mother would be."

"Dear child! since you will be a daughter to me, I will be your mother."

"And will you accept my little services? A mother refuses her daughter nothing. Say, will you, my kind mother?"

The girl was on her knees beside Madam Simon's arm-chair. The latter laid her hand on the fair head bent before her, and said :

"Must it be so?—Well! I consent, let us live one for the other. You, Emerance, have all the rights of a daughter, as I have all the feelings of a mother."

Happy, and much affected, Emerance threw her arms round the neck of her adoptive mother; the frail ivy, as it were, gracefully twining round the dry and withered elm which stays and supports it!

"But, my daughter," resumed Madam Simon at length, "you do not know me; you are ignorant of who I am."

"You are my mother, that suffices."

"You only know me as Madame Simon, but that name hides one much more celebrated. I am the widow of the Marquis Simon d'Esne, seneschal of Flanders, hereditary peer of the Cambresis, vice-admiral, and much distinguished in the Indian wars. But what avails the recollection of that glory, wealth and honor, that happiness forever gone? Honored, rich, happy as I was, I have undergone misfortunes which, notwithstanding their excess, have unhappily become but too common. I lost my worthy husband; the Revolution found me a widow; it robbed me of my titles and possessions, a trifling loss compared with other irreparable evils. Look at those medallions, Emerance! they will tell you all the bitterness of my fate. I had a daughter, good and pious, married according to the wish of her heart. She was

thrown into the Prison des Carmes, and perished there under the pike and the knife of the Septembrists. The evening before her death, she confided this lock of hair to a fellow-prisoner, who escaped the massacre, and it is all that now remains to me of Marguerite!—My son, my Charles, fighting under the banners of Charette and Larochejacquelin, was taken at Quiberon, and perished in the fields of Auroy, shot by the side of the heroic Sombreuil. . . . There is his portrait,—those two medallions, those fatal dates alone tell me that I was a mother—and the mother of such children!—God, who so tried me, permitted that I should survive so many miseries. I was put in prison, my property was sold, but I escaped the death which had cut off so many happy wives and mothers. . . . Lonely and destitute, with neither friend nor relative remaining in Paris, I took refuge in this chamber; I lived by the sale of some jewels that remained to me; indifferent to everything, and only consenting to live because I was doing the will of God, adorable even in its rigor,—I lived—but counting ever the days that separated me from the eternal shores, where I shall find again all that was dear and lovely to my eyes. But no, I am mistaken, Emerance! henceforward I shall regret the life in which I leave you,—you, my child, who have alone brought joy to a broken heart. Blessed be the Lord who sent you to me, and blessed be you for your piety and your devotedness!”

Emerance could not answer; never had she felt

happier than she did at that moment, and this conversation sealed the bonds which bound together the poor girl and the noble lady, the motherless child and the childless mother. From that day forward, Emerance had, in fact, all the rights of a devoted daughter; she could offer to Madam Simon the fruit of her labor, and taste the indescribable happiness of being useful to her whom she loved. A modest ease reigned in that peaceful home; Emerance was skilful with her needle, and the taste for luxury, reviving again with peace, seconded her efforts. Whilst she embroidered the cambric dresses, much in vogue at that time, the scarfs, the veils that were to figure at Malmaison or at Madam Tallien's, her old friend read to her, or described some scenes of the old world, that world in which she had lived and shone, long engulfed in a sea of blood. She spoke of the good queen, Mary Leckzinska; of her son the Dauphin, the worthy father of Louis XVI.; of Marie Louise of France, whom she had seen gay and smiling under the Carmelite habit; of Marie Antoinette, so good in prosperity, so sublime in adversity; of all that society broken up, proscribed, whose misfortunes exceeded its faults.

“God alone is great!” she would say at the end of her recital; “we pass away—He remains; and, ever the same, beholds the fluctuating wave of men and their passions dying at His feet. My daughter, attach yourself to Him alone, for in Him, as Moses said, is all good.”

Emerance was delighted with these conversations : that twofold life, devotion on one side, support on the other, which was necessary to her heart. One thing only troubled her, it was the failing health of her adoptive mother : she saw her growing weaker from day to day, exhausted less by age than sorrow. Faithful to the habits of a pious life, she prayed much and fortified herself with the sacraments, which a zealous priest, who had not quitted Paris, even in the days of Terror, frequently brought her. One day he came to visit her without being sent for, and after some moments' conversation, he said to her :

“ Did you not do me the honor of telling me, marchioness, that you had no more relations bearing your name ?”

“ I believe it is so, father, for I was, you know, the last of my race, and the few relatives the marquis had perished in the Revolution. His nephew, the Viscount, was massacred on the 10th of August ; his cousin and godson died in exile ; and the brother of the latter, the prior of Sept-Fonds, perished at sea, within sight of the island of Guernsey, where he was going to seek an asylum.”

“ But had you not a relation in St. Domingo ?”

“ It is true—my nephew by marriage, Victor d'Esne. I know not whether he is still of this world.”

“ More than that, madam, he is in Paris.”

“ What say you ?”

“ He left the island on fire, in the hands of the revolted blacks ; he abandoned the greater part of his

wealth, happy in being able to escape tortures and death."

"Others," sighed the marchioness, looking at her lockets, "others, alas! did not escape!"

"I met M. d'Esne in one of my friendly visits; his name struck me; I asked and obtained information, and made known to your nephew that he had still one surviving relative."

"What was his reply, father?"

"That he was most desirous of paying his respects to you, madam! Will you allow him to do so?"

"Yes," replied Madam d'Esne, after a moment's reflection, "let him come; no longer to the stately apartments of Esne House, but here, where I have undergone so much suffering, and received also so many consolations, thanks to my daughter Emerance."

The interview took place next day; it was very touching. Madam d'Esne was much affected on beholding the last scion of her husband's family, and he could not contemplate, without painful surprise, the poor garret in which a woman once so prosperous, so favored, was ending her days. He offered to remove her at once from that miserable dwelling, but Madam d'Esne refused:

"Leave me," said she, "in the place where God has placed me; in it I hope to purify myself for heaven—and can I be unhappy with an angel at my side?"

This interview, this agitation shortened days already numbered. The marchioness was dying, but she was

still calm, gentle, united to God by prayer, and full of affection for those about her. On the third day she received the Holy Viaticum, receiving with ineffable joy that sweet pledge of everlasting life. When her thanksgiving was ended, the Viscount, who never left her, and treated her with the most filial tenderness, requested the favor of a few moments' private conversation. When they were alone, he knelt beside the bed, and said :

"Aunt, I wish to ask your advice; can you hear me?"

"Certainly, my dear Victor!"

"Miss Emerance has loved and served you as a daughter; our house has contracted an immense obligation to her. Would you approve of my uniting my fate with hers?"

"You could not find a better wife, or one more noble in heart."

"That suffices, aunt!—our debt shall be paid; Emerance shall be my wife. Do you wish that I should make my proposal to her in your presence?"

The marchioness bowed assent. Emerance came back soon to the bedside, and the Viscount made his proposal in a tone of deep feeling. Emerance, surprised, blushed to her very temples, sought the eyes of her adoptive mother, reflected a moment, then answered modestly yet firmly :

"I feel, my lord, the full value of your proposal, yet allow me to say that I cannot accept it,—I may not, must not suffer you to unite your noble name,

your bright prospects, with the name of one so poor and so obscure as I am. Such a lot is not for me. What I have done, moreover, was done for my mother, not for any reward. You will take another wife, high-born and gently nurtured like yourself; you will be happy together, and I will pray for you both all the days of my life."

"And you, my generous girl," said the marchioness, drawing Emerance towards her, "whose will you be? who will make you happy?"

"God, my mother!—the God whom you have taught me to love beyond all else."

The marchioness smiled sweetly; she could no longer speak; she pressed Emerance's hand and regarded her with tender affection. The priest, alarmed, commenced the recommendation of the departing soul; the sobs of Emerance and the viscount answered him. The young girl was kneeling beside the bed, when all at once she felt the hand of the dying woman resting on her head, and the marchioness, with her last breath, articulated these words:

"My daughter, my consolation, I bless you! may the just God grant you the reward promised to respectful children. I bless you as Noëmi blessed Ruth."

They were her last words: the marchioness pressed the crucifix fervently to her lips, and her heart and her soul winged its way in peace.

When the first weeks of mourning and grief were over, the viscount renewed his offer, through the in-

intervention of the priest. Emerance, confirmed in her resolution by serious reflection, repeated her refusal and the expression of her gratitude.

"But what will you do, my daughter?" at length said the priest.

"You may, perhaps, consider me too ambitious, reverend father, but, nevertheless, I must tell you what I have been thinking of. I would like to consecrate myself to God and the poor; my parents are dead, my kind protectress is dead; no one has any need of me now. But there are many poor and wretched, and, perhaps, with the help of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin I may be able to attend them in their sickness. What is your opinion, father?"

"I will think of it, my daughter!"

The priest went away, admiring the designs of God on that soul thirsting with devotion, and seeming to find contentment only in being useful to others.

So Emerance became a religious; she was one of the first to embrace the monastic state after the revolutionary storm. Some years after she was serving one day in one of the wards of the Hotel Dieu, when she heard some one mention the name of a young lady who had come to visit a poor patient. They called her the Viscountess d'Érne. Sister St. John followed with her eyes her whose name and place she might have occupied, and, with a heart full of joy and peace, she said to herself: "She ap-

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pears to be happy, but I am still more so, for I belong only to Thee, my God!"

Sister St. John had the happiness of making the sacrifice of her life to God, attending the sick during the cholera: worthy crown and just reward of a life so noble!



ADRIENNE.

I.

ADRIENNE DELATOUR TO CLEMENCE GAUTHIER.

PARIS, 6th November, 1842.

KIND AND DEAR FRIEND:—The confidence which has always existed between us, the sisterly friendship I bear to you, will not allow me to conceal from you the true motives of that marriage at which you are so surprised. You say you cannot conceive how it is that I accept for a husband, with the consent of my family, an honorable man, doubtless, but one whom no one would be likely to choose; for that Colonel Larcher is not young, is not rich, and has, by his former marriage, a poor child stricken with a sad and incurable infirmity. That is all true; but, dear Clemence, sound the depths of your own heart, and in those very objections which you enumerate, will you not find the true motive of the union I am contracting? Colonel Larcher is afflicted, and his daughter, too; is not that a reason why they both should be loved? Interrogate all women and they will tell you the same. But to this potent and irre-

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sistible attraction of misfortune, there are, in my case, personal motives superadded. You know the colonel's first wife was a cousin of mine, and one to whom I was much attached, notwithstanding the difference of our age and position. Her simple, retired, tranquil life made her happy, and the birth of her little girl, this poor Juliette, came to crown that happiness; but when, at the end of two years, she perceived that the child could neither hear nor speak; when the most scrupulous examination of science confirmed her fears; when she was convinced that her poor Juliette was a deaf-mute, cut off from human intercourse, shut up in her infirmity as in a prison, her heart broke; she would fain have lived to bring up her child and give her all the happiness compatible with her position; she would fain have lived, but it was not so ordained. Her feeble health could not withstand grief; she fell ill, and when she reached the last stage of her disease, it was not her cruel sufferings that troubled her most; her daughter was the sole object of her thoughts;—she often spoke to me of her—I promised her that I would be a sister to Juliette; I will more than keep my promise: I will be her mother.

My poor cousin died, regretting a life that she would fain have consecrated to her husband and child; she died praying for them. Four years have passed since that time; I have never ceased to give Juliette such care as the ties of kindred authorized; her father perceived it; he, perhaps, thought that I

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would make a good mother for his daughter; he asked me of my parents who, good and generous as they were, thought not of waiting for a better offer, a younger, wealthier, or more prosperous husband for me. There, then, dear Clemence, is the history of my marriage; it is all in that line of Ducis' which we used to read together:

Elle aime mes malheurs, j'aimai sa pitié *

Adieu: pray for me, my friend, my sister; pray that I may not fall in the grave yet sweet duties which I now accept with so much joy. Adieu.
Yours ever, ADRIENNE.

ADRIENNE LARCHER TO CLEMENCE GAUTHIER.

PARIS, 29th December, 1842.

Here I am, my dear Clemence, installed in my new home, and almost accustomed to my new position. In it I find what I had expected: calm, interior peace, mutual confidence, that consciousness of making others happy which adds so much to one's own happiness; in a word, I am satisfied, and so are those I love. I devote much time and attention to Juliette: but if you knew, Clemence, how little effect these multiplied cares, this unceasing attention have on a poor being without communication with the outer world, to whom the most common ideas, those which the child learns in the cradle, are a foreign language! The poor deaf-mute, given up to natural instinct, possesses none of

* "She loved my misfortunes, I loved her pity."

the spiritual abstract notions, which, without our knowing it, have become familiar to us by conversation and exchange of speech; first ideas abide in the depth of the understanding, but in a state of lethargy; speech alone could develop them, but that speech comes not, and before you can give instruction, you must first give the instrument by the aid of which the object of your care can communicate his or her own thoughts and understand those of others. You see, the education of a deaf-mute is an entire creation, since speech and intelligence have both to be given him. I ask your pardon, dear Clemence, for enlarging so on this subject, but it is at the bottom of all my thoughts, and as you are the half of myself, you must take part in all that concerns me. Yes, I confess my constant care is the training of Juliette! I watch her going and coming around me, playing with the abruptness, the impetuosity that often characterizes deaf-mutes, making known to me by rapid, incoherent gestures what she wants, what she desires. I see her still in the vegetative, incomplete state, and I say to myself that there dwells a soul which is unconscious of itself, a soul made for God, yet ignorant of the very existence of its Creator; I do not dissemble from myself that through the barriers by which that soul is surrounded, it will be necessary to introduce a world of ideas, purely intellectual and of which no previous notion could possibly be given to it. I would shrink affrighted from such a task if I had not recourse to Him *who doeth all things well, who maketh*

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the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak. He can give to us, to me, when the time is come, the lights to instruct my daughter, and to that unfortunate child the requisite intelligence to learn to know and to love her God, to love those who, in her regard, hold His place on earth. Adieu, dear Clemence!

PARIS, 14th May, 1843.

You ask me whether the difficult task I have undertaken leaves me any hope of success? No,—if I believe my impatience, often excited by the little progress made by my pupil; yes—if I believe the experience of those who, before me, have attempted such an enterprise. Juliette, like almost all those who are afflicted with the same infirmity, has a wild, impetuous disposition, capable of affection, it is true, but of a violent temper, manifesting itself at times in a very disagreeable manner. She has attached herself to me, and loves me with all the ardor of her passionate and exclusive nature; she never leaves me; she lavishes on me those caresses of which she is often sparing towards her father; but, I confess, the progress she makes does not correspond with her docility. Let us work on, however: God will do the rest. Adieu, dear friend.

PARIS, February, 1844.

I add a word to the joyous letter written by my

husband to tell you, dear Clemence, how happy I am in the birth of my dear little boy; my soul is full of the deepest joy, as I contemplate my child asleep and smiling. He is beautiful, and will, I hope, be good. I need not tell you how pleased my excellent husband is, seeing that he tells you himself the extent of his happiness. Adieu, my beloved Clemence—my son is named Clement Arthur. Pray for him and for us.

PARIS, July, 1844.

Who would have thought, my dear Clemence, that the liveliest joy of my life should become for me the occasion of the greatest anxiety, the most poignant sorrow? You know how happy I was in the birth of my little Arthur, and how each day added to whilst developing that joy; but I never failed to perceive that the dear child inspired Juliette with a profound antipathy. Jealous of our caresses, jealous of our cares, she seems to hate and to envy the innocent creature who shares them with her. Yet God knows that nothing could deprive her of my tenderness. But she turns away from my child, regards him with a gloomy and jealous air, and seems to concentrate in the depth of her soul the bitter feelings by which she is possessed. And how to penetrate to the bottom of that soul? Not knowing the depth of the wound, how is one to apply the remedy? A thousand feelings, good and bad, often

stir in the depth of Juliette's heart; she cannot express them, and it may be that the bad make inward and incalculable ravages. Who can know what is passing within her? Her father suffers much, and shall I tell you, dear Clemence, that I sometimes fear his affection for her may be cooled, because of the grief she causes him to feel. These are the secret, interior troubles which a wife, a mother of a family, alone knows, the weight of which she alone feels; thorns which young girls never suspect under the wifely crown, but which, borne with patience and resignation, will add to the crown of glory that awaits us in Heaven. Husbands and children know little of the cares that sit with us at the hearth; but it is for them we bear them, and that thought renders them less bitter. Adieu, dear friend.

PARIS, October, 1844.

My kind dear friend, I come, chatting with you, to refresh and console myself for the cares and anxieties which harass my mind. I told you how much affliction my poor little Juliette was giving me; in vain I tried by all possible means to inspire her with some kindly feeling towards Arthur; I did all I could to persuade her that she is as dear to me as my own dear child! Her antipathy still went on increasing, and often did she repeat to me with her wild yet expressive gestures: "You ought to love me more than the new-comer for I have loved you a

great while!" Darting, at the same time, threatening looks ~~on~~ Arthur, asleep on my knee. Would you believe that I was afraid of her. Yesterday I was sitting quietly beside my husband, holding my son in my arms. He was smiling at his father who was making his sword-knot dance for him in the sun. We were both, I confess, taken up with the dear infant, and his laugh, his gestures, his look so full of life and gladness, filled our hearts with a holy joy, when all at once Juliette, whose footfall was deadened by the carpet, appeared at my side; she cast a furious look on me, and rolling in her hand the skipping-rope with which she had been amusing herself, she gave her brother a violent blow on the head. Arthur gave a piercing cry, and whilst I, trembling, occupied myself with him, my husband took Juliette by the arm, led her to her chamber and locked her in. . . I heard, as in a troubled dream, the inarticulate cries she uttered, expressive of impotent and ungovernable anger. When my poor child was quieted and I was satisfied that the blow he had received had not seriously injured him, I would have gone to Juliette to try and appease her anger, which pained me as much as Arthur's suffering, but my husband re-entering the room, said to me in a firm though kind tone: "My dear Adrienne, such scenes must not be renewed; they are too painful to us, and they endanger the life of our child. . . . I have just taken a determination which nothing can change; Juliette shall be placed, to-morrow, in a house of education establish-

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ed for young girls stricken with the same infirmity. . . Believe me, my love, this step, however trying to us is indispensable to our safety and the peace of that poor child, whose heart is envenomed by the daily sight of the love we bear her brother.—It must be so, Adrienne !”

I wept whilst he continued to exhort me, but his resolution was not to be shaken. My poor Juliette is gone; she left me without shedding a tear. It seems to me that affection has no longer access to that childish soul, ulcerated by such unjust jealousy.

PARIS, January, 1845.

My husband's regiment is ordered to Algiers; Henri is going away, and I remain behind! The age of my child, the indifferent health of my old parents, forbid me to accompany him; he leaves to-morrow. O my dear Clemence! what so heart-rending as a parting that may be eternal! Pray well for him, that he may escape, that he may return!

PARIS, May, 1845.

For the first time since my husband's departure, I have had to-day a moment of sensible and real joy: God alone be praised for it! I went out this morning with Juliette, and took the way to St. Cloud, that fine park, so calm and so majestic. The sun

shone brightly, yet not too strongly, his rays reflected in the quiet waters; the breeze fanned the tops of the trees, and brought the snow-flowers of the chestnut-trees in showers to our feet. It was a delightful morning, and Juliette seemed to enjoy it to the utmost. "Is not this all very beautiful?" said I in the language of signs. "Oh! yes," she answered with an expressive gesture; "it is so nice; the sky is beautiful, the flowers are so pretty, and down below there, there are ever so many large trees!" "But do you know who made all these things?"

She hung her head. "Was it you?" She laughed and shook her brown ringlets. "Was it I?"—"I do not think so," said she. "Who, then?" Juliette, in her turn, looked into my eyes with keen scrutiny. I took her hand, and again pointing out the landscape to her, I said slowly: "All that you see, all that surrounds you, the whole world, men, women, children, yourself, all has been made by a Being whom we cannot see, but who, nevertheless, exists, and who is called God."

She remained motionless, appearing to be impressed with the new idea which presented itself to her mind; she at length made a rapid gesture, and said:

"Where is God?"—"In a place of delights whither we shall go ourselves after our death, if we have been good."—"And you say it was God who made all that I see?"—"Yes, my dear Juliette!" "Then, God is very good, for all that is very beautiful."—"God is very good, and if you will become good, Juliette,

you shall one day see Him and speak to Him." "I? I?"—She mused again, looked at the radiant landscape that seemed to reflect the power and the goodness of the Lord; she looked at me, and said in a timid, hesitating way, her eyes dim with tears: "I will love God!"

There, my dear Clemence, is the word that I expected, yet did not dare to hope for; but with that word hope re-entered my soul; once more, praises be to God!

ADRIENNE.

[We here suppress a number of letters that would have no special interest for our readers.]

PARIS, June, 1847.

At last, dear Clemence, after four years of absence and of anxiety, my husband is returned; I see him again, escaped from all the perils of the climate and of war; he comes home to enjoy a little rest. Our first moments have been all taken up with the joy of meeting, and this morning we heard the Mass of Thanksgiving. But instead of going to our parish church we went to the religious house where Juliette had been placed. The chapel had a festive air; bunches of roses and other flowers bedecked the altar, and, in the nave, under the eyes of the religious, were a score or so of young girls, veiled and dressed in white. It was a First Communion. I took my place with a swelling heart, and my husband sat beside me. The priest ascended the altar,

and the Mass commenced, amid general devotion and recollection, for the ceremony of First Communion touches even the most unfeeling hearts. It awakes so many recollections! it gives rise to so many hopes and so many fears! The fair morning of life comes back again to us, when we see those children, white, timid, dressed, like a brood of birdlings about to take their first flight, or a vessel which, for the first time, leaves the port of Havre to tempt the great sea. We smile and tremble, and, above all, we pray the Great and Divine Master, who adapts the wind to the little bird's wing, the wave to the planks of the frail bark, and who gives to innocent hearts His grace and His strength to combat the storms of life.

The holy sacrifice was nearly over; the priest had received the holy victim, and the girls in their turn approached the table of the divine banquet. After having partaken of that living bread, the object of their desires, they returned slowly to their places and had to pass close by us. One of them was distinguished from all the others by the expression of recollection and angelic happiness which shone on her charming face. My heart beat—my husband saw the child, and instantly turned a questioning look on me. With tearful eyes, I made a sign of assent. He had recognized the child; it was his own, his Juliette! He hid his face in his hands, praying, or, perhaps, weeping.

After Mass, we went to a parlor of the Convent;

Juliette ran, and, with a rapid spring threw herself on her father's neck, loading him with caresses, and testifying, in the most expansive manner, her joy on seeing him again. My heart was full to overflowing. Henri took Juliette on his knee, and looked at her with delight, unable to believe his eyes on finding in that mild, intelligent looking girl the little wild, rude creature he had left scarcely four years before. She spoke to him with vivacity, spelling his name on her fingers, with a thousand words of affection and respect. "Who, then, has trained her so? Who has taught her all that?" said my husband to me. Immediately Arthur translated by signs, to his sister, the question asked of me. She took a slate and wrote rapidly: "It was my mother that taught me all I know, and I owe all to her: she taught me to know God, to love you, my beloved father, and you, my dear little brother Arthur!"

My husband read with astonishment. "You alone!" said he to me. "You have, then, brought her up?" "My dear Henri," said I, "it is true; I disobeyed you. After your departure, Juliette never left me; God assisted me; she is good, she is pious, she loves you, she loves our Arthur." "But how were you able to bring up this poor child?" "The good Sisters communicated their secret to me; they had me for a pupil, and not Juliette." "And it is you, you alone, who have formed my child's soul! Adrienne, you are more than her mother!"

He was silent; the tears trickled down his

cheeks,—every feature of his noble face expressed emotion; I regarded him with delight. . . . Resting the fair, girlish head of my daughter, and the pretty infant face of my Arthur on his bosom—a group that united all the feelings, all the duties of my life,—my husband held out his hand to me, and said: "*Adrienne I am happy!*"

You know, Clemence, that word alone from the mouth of a revered and beloved husband is enough to repay the toils of a whole life; I have attained the object of mine, and, if God leaves me long here below, the memory of that delicious moment will strengthen me in the unavoidable troubles of every day;—union, repose, felicity; it was a glimpse of heaven!

Adieu! dear Clemence! Henri is come home for a long, long time; Juliette will never leave us, and we are all going to work at Arthur's education. Adieu

ADRIENNE.

