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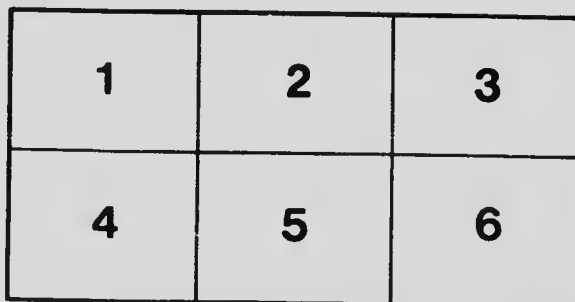
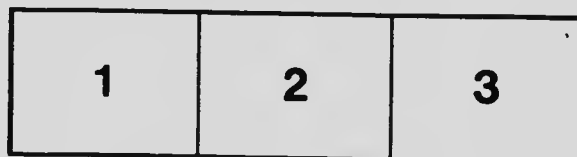
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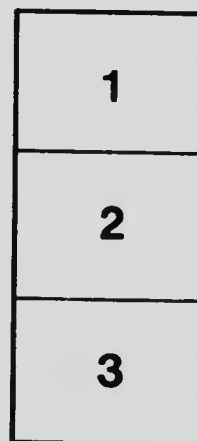
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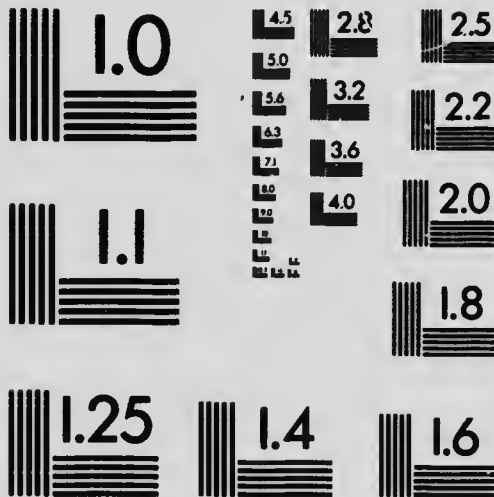
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BENJAMIN

L'ETAT
SERIES

MRS. SADDLER'S TRANSLATIONS

John M. Elder,
1st Prize in
Literature.

L. Stanislaus Schen
Guelph, June 27/04

BENJAMIN;

OR THE

Pupil of the Christⁿ Brothers.

TRANSLATED FROM LANCH;

BY

MRS. J. SADLIER

NEW EDITION

REVISED AND CORRECTED.

P. J. KENEDY,
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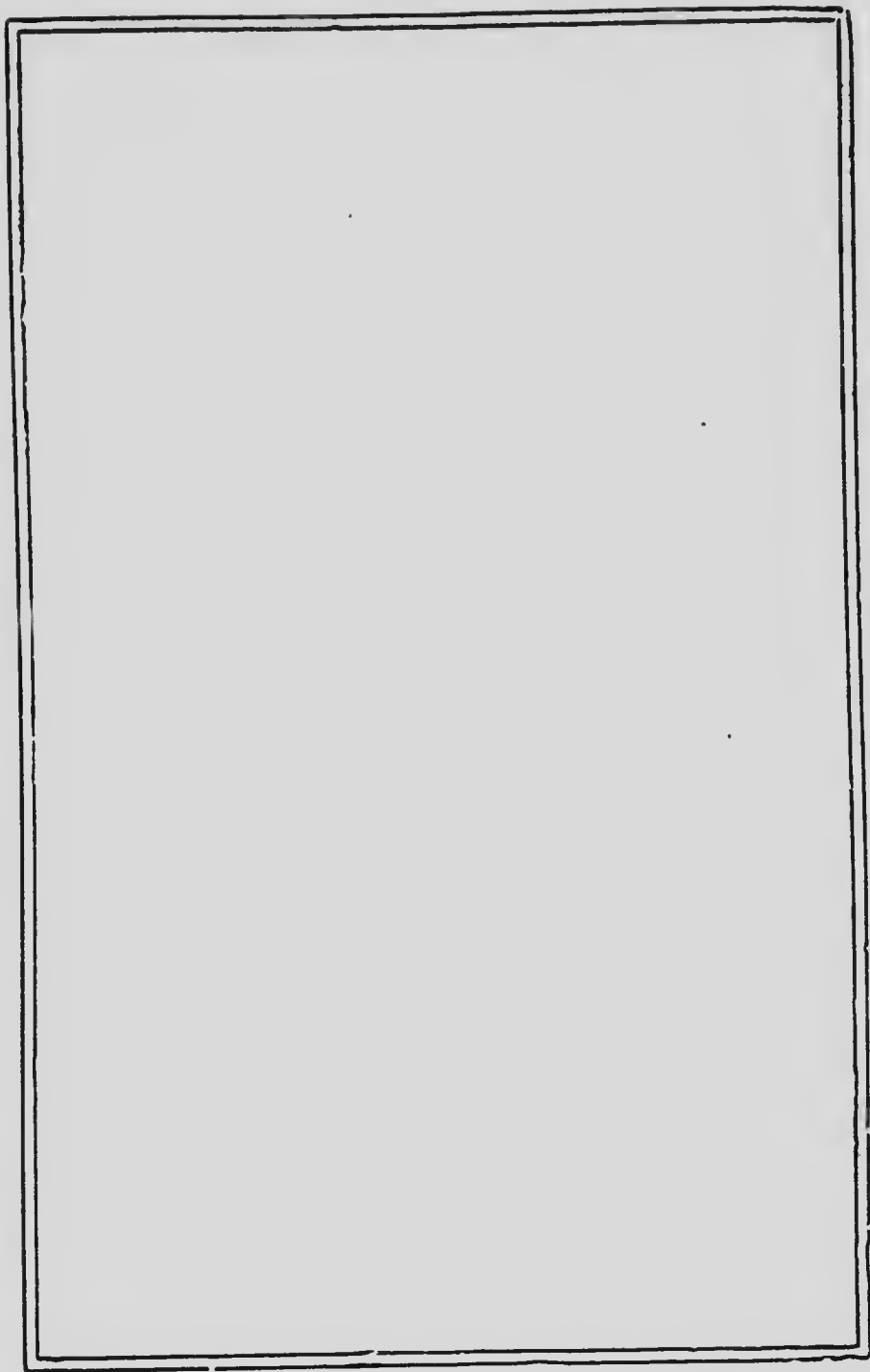
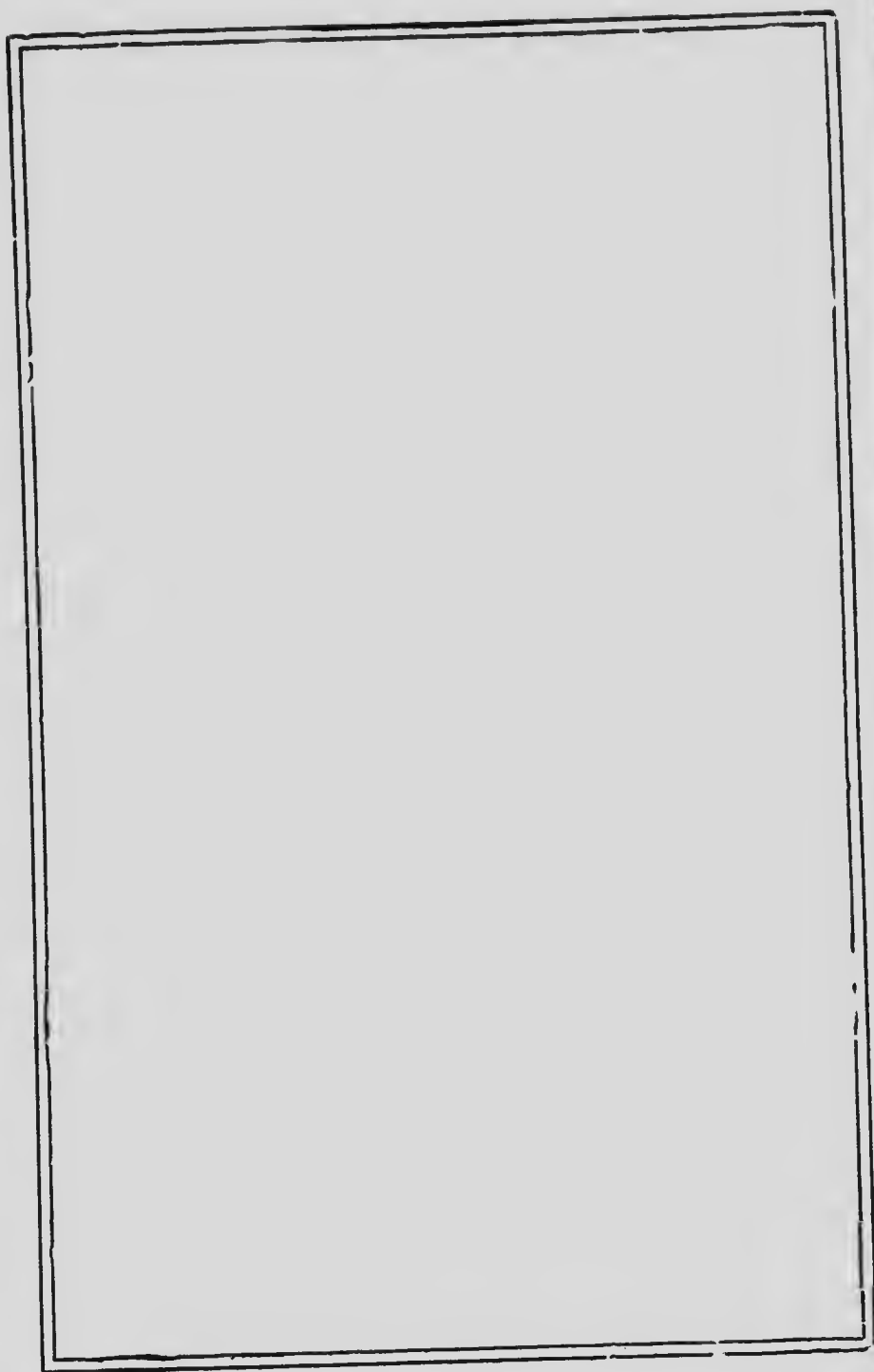


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A FEW WORDS FROM THE TRANSLATOR

At the present moment when the whole Catholic world is awaking to the vital importance of securing a religious education for the rising generation, it seemed to me that this little work might do a great deal of good, and I have hastily thrown it into an English form for the benefit of our own people, both parents and children. Let both read, the children for amusement and the parents for instruction, and let the latter reflect on the contents of this simple volume,—they will find it a most useful lesson.

It is with inexpressible joy that I see the schools of the Christian Brothers spreading from town to town and from city to city throughout the length and

breadth of Christendom. Nation after nation is opening her arms to invite their approach, and wherever they go, they bring with them true faith, humble, fervent piety, and the purest of all morality. These are the lessons they every where inculcate, and our *Benjamin* is but one instance of the benign effects of their teachings. The day has at length come, when Catholic parents have no longer an excuse for sending their children to 'Godless' schools—they all have the means of having sound religious instruction blended with their children's secular learning, and woe be to them if they avail themselves not of the advantages placed by Providence at their disposal.

MONTREAL,

M. A. SADLIER.

TO THE

Boys of the Christian Schools.

It is to you, my children, that this little book should be dedicated, since for you it was composed, with the sole intention of being useful to you, of contributing to your edification, and to your sanctification, to make you love the duties of your state, and the excellent masters from whom you learn them.

You see, my young friends, that if God seconds my efforts, and deigns

to bless my work, the little present which I now make you, may become very precious indeed. This hope is my encouragement; and if I attain my end, I shall be well rewarded.

Permit me now to explain the object which I have in view, so that you may the better understand its importance, and how nearly it concerns yourselves. I have tried to set before you in *Benjamin*, an example easy to imitate, since he is of your own age and of your own condition. You will see, my children, that to become good is not so difficult as you would suppose, provided you set about it in earnest. God demands of us no impossibilities; he desires that we should form ourselves after his own heart and according to his law, and weak

as we are, we can with ease attain the summit of human perfection. By reading this book, you will be convinced, that there is nothing so easy as to overcome bad habits; nothing so easy as to advance in virtue, if you are only so inclined.

May you take that resolution, as Benjamin did ! He was as you are, perhaps even worse, when placed under the care of the Brothers. He heard their pious and instructive lessons ; he followed their wise and virtuous counsels ; he began to correspond with grace, and grace soon sanctified him.

And you, my dear young friends, who have teachers as holy, as zealous, as learned as *his* were ; you, who constantly receive that advice which was given to him ; you, in a word, who are daily called and solici-

ited by the grace of God ; say, have you as yet made any attempt to subdue your evil propensities, to obtain the virtues in which you are deficient, and to avail yourselves of the numerous blessings which Heaven bestows upon you ? Alas ! it must be confessed that few amongst you have ever yet thought of such a thing. Oh ! surely it will not be so, for the time to come, and you will make a firm resolution to become, with the assistance of God, good Christians, and good scholars.

How rejoiced should I be, if my feeble efforts were one day crowned with such success, and how ardently would I thank Heaven for having made me the instrument of so much good. Ah ! I should then love children more than even now I do. Yes ; nothing would be more agree-

able to me than to see virtue and piety adorn the young ; and it is always with an aching heart that I turn away my eyes from the sight of so many unhappy children, whose evil passions and unruly conduct denote precocious corruption.



BENJAMIN.

CHAPTER I.

The Birth of Benjamin.—First Misfortunes.

IT is a great blessing to be born in the bosom of the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church; a favor so inestimable that it is of itself sufficient to excite our warmest gratitude and love. It is also an incalculable advantage to belong to christian parents, and to imbibe at home, as well as at school, those principles of sound morality which attach man to his duties here below, enable him to bear the troubles of this life with the

heroic courage of virtue, and secure to him the respect and esteem of his equals.

So thought Louis Milon, an humble artisan, having, it is true, little or no information, yet endowed by nature with an upright and intelligent mind. He was known all over his native town, Saint Brieuc in Bretagne, for a good and conscientious workman. In fact his honesty became proverbial throughout the country. By the rich he was confidentially employed in his trade of carpenter, and the poor never appealed to him in vain for any assistance in his power to bestow.

Louis Milon had been long married, before Heaven crowned his wishes with a son. This event was one of great joy both to Louis and his wife, the good and virtuous

Nicola, and the child was baptized by the name of Benjamin. Both father and mother well understood how sacred and how important are the duties which devolve on parents. They did not imagine, as many do now-a-days, that it is quite enough to get their child admitted into the church by Baptism, and that they need never trouble themselves any more about his religious instruction, but just let him live and grow up in a spirit entirely opposed to that of the Church, and that it is quite time enough, at twelve or thirteen, to begin to speak to him of God, his commandments and his religion. The parents of Benjamin, on the contrary, justly believed that the time which elapses between baptism and the first communion should be employed to plant in the young heart

sentiments of faith, love of God, and respect for his holy religion. In short, it is especially during that interval that the most sacred duties of parents are to be accomplished, and those obligations discharged which were incurred at the baptism of the child.

The first words that Benjamin learned to speak were the holy names of Jesus and of Mary. The first sentence that he articulated, was a prayer to the Blessed Trinity. That prayer he had learned from the lips of his father ; and Nicola, on her part, taught him a little prayer to his guardian angel, the protector of his infancy.

Benjamin had attained the age of four years, when his father was prevailed upon by a wealthy ship-owner of his own town, to embark as mas-

ter-carpenter on board a merchant vessel. He was led to believe that, after a few long voyages, he would be in a condition to settle down comfortably at home, and to secure a competency for his family. This temptation could not be resisted by a good father and husband, whose chief anxiety was to place his wife and son beyond the reach of want. The dangers which he might have to encounter gave him but little concern ; he had already braved them all, for in early life he had been first a cabin-boy, and then a sailor, like most of the poor boys born in maritime towns. But what grieved him most was the parting with Nicola, and his little Benjamin, his pretty boy, perhaps never to see them again. This thought kept him long in hesitation ; but, at length, putting his

trust in Providence, and placing himself and his family under its protection, he tenderly embraced his wife and son, and tearing himself from their encircling arms, hastened on board the ship, and was soon out of sight of those he loved so well.

Days, weeks, and months rolled away without bringing any tidings of Louis. Nicola began to be very uneasy, and little Benjamin often asked when his father would come back. This question always made his mother shed tears, and then Benjamin was sure to cry too. In the evening, Nicola used to take her son by the hand, and walk down to the sea-shore, where, kneeling on the beach with clasped hands, they prayed that God would bring the wanderer safe home. If a light breeze carried their prayers over the tran-

quail waters, their hearts were filled with joy and hope; but if their words were drowned in the angry turmoil of surging waves, and the horse roaring of the winds, they were sad and fearful, hope deserted them, and fatal presentiments chilled their very souls.

But these harassing fears, and this heart-wearing anxiety were as nothing when compared with their anguish and despair, when the fatal reality stared them in the face. Louis Milon never returned! Eighteen months had passed since he left his home, yet nothing was known of his fate. The vessel on which he had embarked was to have been no more than a year absent; so that it could no longer be doubted that she had perished, with every soul on board, before she reached her destination.

Vainly would I try to depict the grief of the bereaved Nicola. Very soon after this, she was reduced to the last extremity of misery, and was driven to a terrible necessity. Her piety gave her courage, for religion alone has power to sustain the bruised and sinking spirit. It taught her not only to suffer with patience and resignation, but it gave her energy to work her way out of trouble. Her principle of action was ever this: "*Help yourself, and Heaven will help you.*"

Very far from allowing herself to be cast down by adversity, or appealing to the charity of others for her support, the stout-hearted Nicola, having placed Benjamin under the care of the ship-owner, who begged to have him, sought and found a situation in the family of an aged lady,

who lived in the country near Chateaudren, and came only to spend the winter months in Saint Briec. So it happened that the mother and son were separated during the greater part of the year. What a grievous sacrifice this was, and how great a trial for poor Nicola! How hard was the lot of our luckless Benjamin! What a precarious situation was his, poor little fellow, who was scarcely six years old, deprived of the tender care, and wise counsels of his father and mother; admitted through compassion into the house of a stranger, an opulent merchant entirely occupied with business, and who forgot that such a person was in existence, before he was five minutes under his roof! What was to become of Benjamin amid the crowd of clerks and waiting people that

filled the house of the merchant ! Some were shouting, others swearing ; some singing, and others again cracking rude jokes, but all were busily employed. Benjamin alone was doing nothing, and he stood looking at them all, with a sad and heavy heart, and the big tears rolling down his cheeks. When any one, passing by, addressed him in a loud, coarse voice, he blushed and knew not what to say. Alas ! the voices around him were very, very different from the mild, fond accents of his gentle mother.

With his little head full of such thoughts as these, Benjamin watched his opportunity, and stole away when the men were not minding him, to the porter's lodge, where there had been a little bed prepared for him in a dark corner.

CHAPTER II.

The Spoiled Child.

THE porter with whom our little Benjamin was now lodged, had been forty years a soldier, and during that long course of time he had become hardened in iniquity. The people of the house called him Father Bomb, and by that name he was known far and near. He was of a gay and lively disposition, and his life was pretty nearly divided between drinking and singing.

This old man took a great fancy to Benjamin, whom he called his "little comrade." But alas! the friendship of such a man could only be fatal to a child of that age, and the consequence was that little by little he taught him to like what he liked, and very soon uprooted whatever principles of virtue the poor child had acquired from his virtuous parents. He even left off saying either morning or evening prayers, which he had till then been so punctual in doing. When once he abandoned God, it was all over with him, for God gave him up to his own wayward heart. Hearing every one about him swearing and cursing, he too began to swear, and seeing bickering and quarrelling all around he soon became rude and refractory; in a word, the company

and the pernicious example of Father Bomb totally destroyed his innocence, and planted in his heart the germ of every vice.

What a fearful change was that ; Benjamin, so young and inexperienced, without strength to resist seduction, moved rapidly on in the way of destruction, and became totally depraved at an age when it is so much the more dangerous to imbibe evil propensities, because the first impressions made on the mind are ever the deepest, and the most difficult to efface. All the mer. around the house had at first thought Benjamin a very awkward boy, and laughed immoderately at his bashful air ; but when once he began to imitate themselves, they declared him "a charming boy," and their praises incited him to go still greater

lengths. Unhappy child! everything around conspired to effect his ruin.

It so happened that the monstrous vices which Benjamin contracted, were not those which belonged to his own age. To the vices of a man he only wanted to add those imperfections and bad qualities peculiar to childhood, and this he failed not to do, having a model for that too.

Mr. Delor, the rich merchant, who was the owner of the house, had a son about seven and a half years old, named Meriadec, who had been with his mother for the last two months at a fashionable watering-place. They were now expected home every day. At last they came, and Benjamin was standing at the door of the porter's lodge,

when the carriage drove into the court-yard. As soon as Meriader could get the carriage-door open, he jumped out, to the imminent danger of his life or limbs, and knocking down, in his hurry, one of his mother's waiting-women who had come out to receive her mistress. He had caught a glimpse of Benjamin, whose face pleased him, and so he was all impatience to speak to him.

"Who are *you*?" said he, abruptly.

"Benjamin Milon."

"Where do you live?"

"Here in the gate-house."

"Ah! with old Bomb."

"Yes."

"And your father?"

"He is dead!" sobbed Benjamin.

"Oh! you must not cry so;" re-

sumed Meriadec, and he hugged him in his arms. But Benjamin cried more and more. "Don't cry, now!" continued Meriadec. "Do you hear me? I won't have you cry; come with me!"

So, taking Benjamin by the hand, he brought him straight into the parlor, Benjamin making no resistance, as one may well imagine. You see, little Meriadec was what is called a spoiled child, accustomed to do his own will in all things, and to govern every one about him by those authoritative words: "*I will have it so.*" In other respects, he had, as we have seen, a very good heart, an exceedingly sensitive disposition, with a great deal of candor and generosity. Yet all these good qualities were very uncertain, and were far overbalanced by his faults

His affections were ardent and suddenly formed, but they died away just as quickly, for Meriadec was fickle as the changeful wind. He was a sort of little tyrant who must be obeyed without a murmur, who must be constantly amused, without ever wearying or complaining, and no easy task it was to keep him in temper, so capricious were his likings and dislikings.

When he entered the parlor he had Benjamin by the hand, as already related, and his mamma inquired who the little boy was. He answered, without looking at her, "He is my friend." Whereupon Mrs. Delor smiled, as she cast a scrutinizing glance over the shabby apparel of the new friend. She then obtained from Benjamin an account of himself and his parents.

"My child!" said she to Meriadec, "your friend is very pretty, but wretchedly clad. Just fancy, now, if any one came in and saw him here. And then his great, heavy shoes—why he cannot walk on this floor without slipping."

"That's all very true, mamma, but then I'm going to dress him properly. You see we're just the same size."

"But, my dear child ——"

"I will have it so—that's all."

So saying, he dragged out into the middle of the floor a certain drawer, from which he equipped Benjamin in a complete suit. Mrs. Delor laughed heartily, for she was delighted to see her boy so clever and so kind. As to Benjamin, he allowed his officious and bustling friend to do with him as he pleased,

for Meriadec put on the clothes himself, in order to hurry the work.

He had barely finished Benjamin's equipment, when he called out for his play-things, and instantly two large boxes of them were thrown open. It was long since he had seen them, so that they were all as it were new to him, and he was delighted to see once more his coach and eight horses, his troop of cavalry, his cannon, his foot-soldiers, his moving menagerie, his Chinese mandarins, Turks and Arabs, his panorama, his ponchinello, his pack of hounds, and what not besides. In fact every description of play-thing found on the shelves of a toy-shop. In the twinkling of an eye they were scattered all around, and the floor, the chairs, in short every article of furniture in the room was lit

erally covered. The two boys were amusing themselves making a general review, when Mrs. Delor, who had a short time before quitted the room, came in with a bowl of raspberries well covered with sugar, and moistened with water and Bordeaux wine.

"My dear child," said she, "do leave your play for one moment. Here are some raspberries, which I know you like very much; I have sent for them on purpose for you. Come, my best darling--come to your own mamma."

"Raspberries! Oh, give them here!" cried Meriadec, springing up, and trampling under foot the ponchinello, the hounds, and the carriage.

"Here, my son, eat them now.

I know they will refresh you. See how fresh and ripe they are !”

“Mamma, where’s Benjamin’s share ?”

“My dear love, that is all we could obtain this evening. To-morrow I shall send for some for him too.”

“But, mamma, he could eat them very well to-day. Could you not, Benjamin ? Yes, them, don’t you ?”

“Why — yes — But then — if there is none for me.”

“Oh ! there must be some for you. Mamma, you must get some for Benjamin, or I won’t eat one of these.”

“My child, he shall have some to-morrow.”

“That won’t do—he must have them just now—this very minute.”

"It is quite impossible. There are none to be had."

"But they *must* be got."

"Come—come, my son!—eat your fruit! You are in need of something after your long journey, and I know you are fond of raspberries."

"And so is Benjamin. He must have some too."

"Well! then, give him some of yours, Meriadec!"

"Oh! not at all!—I couldn't do that."

"Then, let him wait till to-morrow. They are very scarce just now."

"I assure you, mamma, there are plenty to be had. Please to send Julietta. Do now, my dear, sweet mamma—do send—I'll be much

obliged to you, and so will Benjamin, I do assure you."

Mrs. Delor knew not how to refuse her son, whose obstinate entreaties she set down as a proof of his goodness of heart. Alas! how many mothers are there who thus turn the faults of their children into virtues? So she yielded to his entreaties, and Julietta was sent out with orders to search the whole town, if necessary, and not come back without the raspberries for Benjamin. On this condition, and on this alone, Meriadec consented to eat his fruit. Julietta returned, after a good deal of walking, with a little basket of raspberries, which had cost fifteen pence. Meriadec was well pleased to see them, and with his own hands, he sweetened and prepared them for his companion.

When night came, Benjamin slept in the same room with Meriadec, because the latter sturdily declared that he would not let him go away.



CHAPTER III.

Sidleness and Gluttony.

THE attachments which usually spring up between children, unless they be based on religion, are almost sure to become the source of mischief, each bringing into the connexion only faults and failings, and bad example. Hence we shall not set down as real friendship the close intimacy which was so quickly formed between Meriadec and Benjamin, an intimacy which entirely

depended on the incessant caprice of the former, and the servile obedience of the latter. Yet were the consequences fatal to both, for each acquired some vices from the other. Meriadec, constantly flattered and humored by his new friend, became still more violent and overbearing; while Benjamin, being incessantly provoked and irritated by Meriadec's insatiable caprices, and depending on his support, which he was always sure to receive, imitated the young gentleman's conduct in every particular, and to every one except him, he was insolent, cross-grained and ill-natured—he who had lately been so mild, so humble, and so pious. He had now become disagreeable, turbulent, vain, idle, and to crown all, a glutton! What a sad change in a few months!

Oh, my children !—you who read his history, I implore you to profit by his example ! You see how rapid is the descent to evil, and how easily we are drawn away by the torrent of passion, when youth and inexperience prevent us from seeing either the dangers to which we are exposed, or the fatal consequences of contracting evil habits !

In the constant dissipation of Benjamin's new way of living, he scarcely ever found a moment's time to think of his kind mother, whom he had so tenderly loved. Yet this was not surprising, for he who wilfully neglected the best of fathers—his Father in heaven—could not be expected to remember his mother. It is one and the same law which commands us to *serve God, to love our neighbor, and to honor our father*

and mother ; and he who violates one commandment is ready and willing to break the others also. So Benjamin thought no more of his mother, or if he did remember her for a moment, it was with little or no affection, and only till something else took his attention.

But with Nicola the case was far different. Every day the poor mother became more anxious about the health, and still more about the conduct of her son. In her restless solicitude about him, she imagined him exposed to a thousand dangers, and tormented herself with apprehensions for the little ingrate who troubled himself so little about her. But so it ever is with the affectionate heart of a mother, wearing away her very life with care and anxiety for her child or children. It is

not easy to describe the impatience with which Nicola looked forward to the period of her mistress's return to the town. But at last it came; the first appearance of winter was the signal for departure. No sooner had they arrived in town, than Nicola hastened to the house of Mr. Delor to see her beloved child. He was just then in the yard, dragging a little sleigh over the crust of ice which had gathered on a small pond. Just as his mother entered, the ice gave way, and not being able to get his sleigh along as smoothly as he wished, he fell into a passion, and swore a fearful oath. Nicola, thunderstruck, could not believe her own ears. Could it really be her son, her own Benjamin, who had uttered that blasphemy? Could it be him who was tugging away so

violently at the sleigh, his whole face inflamed with passion? Alas! what a discovery! Her son was changed into a little fury—a blasphemer!

Meantime, she went up to him. The joy of seeing him again made her forget for a moment those dangerous faults which chance had revealed to her; she thought of nothing—felt nothing—but the delight of embracing her child. Benjamin, taken by surprise, was really overjoyed to see his mother, and testified the greatest affection for her, ardently returning her caresses, and weeping with joy as she herself did; in short, he seemed suddenly restored to his own natural disposition, and Nicola forgot that she had seen him so different. Those moments were all too short to ca-

ress and fondle her child, and to enjoy the delight of seeing him still so loving, and she willingly postponed her censures and reproaches till some other opportunity.

Having talked with Benjamin for some time, his mother went to thank Mr. Delor, and to ask his permission to take her little boy home with her to spend the remainder of the day. The merchant, of course, willingly agreed, but it would not have been so easy to get Meriadec to consent, had he been at home; fortunately he had gone out with his mother.

Benjamin was very glad to go home with his mother, and he was received by Madam Dubac with great kindness. That good lady was very old, yet she still loved children. and was always pleased

to see them. Before dinner-time came, she gave Benjamin a cake and some sweetmeats, which he devoured so greedily that both his mother and her mistress observed it. Alas! every moment discovered some new fault in Benjamin, and his mother was overwhelmed with grief. At one time, she caught him smirking and smiling before a glass, admiring his fine dress, for he had put on his best clothes to go with his mother. Again she found him lolling lazily on a couch, looking as indolent and as listless as though he had been all his life accustomed to luxury. And there he lay, half an hour at a time, yawning and stretching as though he had been tired working. When his mother called him, and told him to do this or that, he either stoutly

refused, or if not, he obeyed her with a sullen look, and the worst possible grace.

Nicola was both angry and afflicted. "Alas!" said she to herself, in the bitterness of her heart, "Is this the same Benjamin from whom I parted scarcely twelve months ago? Oh! no—no—he was far, far different—he had many good qualities, while in this boy I can see nothing but vice. Ah! unhappy woman that I am, to be the mother of a blasphemer, of a child addicted to anger, to gluttony, vanity, idleness and disobedience! I who hoped to see my son adorned with the virtues of his poor father, to find him now tainted with so many vices! Ah! why do I live to behold so sad a sight,—and so

mournful a prospect for both him and me in the time to come!"

These complaints and lamentations, so far from softening Benjamin's heart, only annoyed and wearied him, just as one might expect. The young rascal coolly made up his mind to go off without saying a word, and return to Mr. Delor's house. Accordingly, he stole out, while his mother was engaged with her mistress, and he had got as far as the court which separated the house from the street, when the fresh sweet smell of fruit attracted his attention, and he knew that the desert was being prepared. A door at one side was open, and, looking in, he saw no one, whereupon he was tempted to enter. What a sight was there for a glutton. There were several

plates filled with the most exquisite fruits of the season, and in the centre stood a large cake, very nicely gilt and decorated, and looking altogether so tempting, that it made his mouth water. Alas! must it be confessed that Benjamin could not resist the temptation. Without pausing to think of the enormous crime he was committing, nor of the possible consequences to his mother, he filled his pockets with the choicest fruits, and then, taking up a knife, he cut out all the middle part of the cake, leaving the crust behind; by this plan he hoped that his theft might not be discovered, at least for some time.

Having secured his booty, he slyly left the place, but, instead of going back home, as he had at first intended, he went towards the bridge,

so as to feast at leisure on the stolen dainties. For this purpose he selected a retired spot where no one would be likely to disturb him at his repast. Indeed, he made such quick work of it, that there was not much time for interruption; it was little more than the work of a minute to swallow pears, apples, and all the rest. Till then, he had only one thought,—the greedy desire of hiding his prey; but, when all was eaten up, and that there was nothing more to do but digest it at leisure, he began to reflect that his crime must soon be discovered at Madam Dubac's, and that, in all probability, they would send to Mr. Delor's to inquire about him.

His fears were well founded. His departure was soon known, and almost as soon, was his theft found

out. His mother was overwhelmed with grief at this last proof of her son's wickedness, and, the worst of all was, that she knew of no means likely to reclaim him. As soon as her mistress had dined, she hurried away to Mr. Delor's to look after her unhappy child. Let us now see how Benjamin had passed the intervening time.

Having wandered for some time on and about the bridge, he was seized with violent pains in his stomach, which, being overloaded, could not digest such an unusual quantity of food. He turned pale as death, and his face was bathed in a cold sweat. His sickness drove away all his fears, and he resolved to return home, even though his mother were there before him. But she had not yet arrived.

When he appeared before Father Bomb, his old friend, his face pale, his eyes dull and heavy, and his strength totally gone, the old man made him go into the lodge, and drink a couple of glasses of wine. But that only made matters worse, for the weight of the liquor and its fermentation in the stomach, increased the unhappy child's disorder, and he was laid on the bed almost senseless.

It was at that moment that his mother arrived, but her indignation soon gave place to the keenest anxiety, when she saw him in such a condition. She easily guessed how matters were, and saw at once that this was a just punishment of Benjamin's gluttony. And truly the punishment was a very severe one, for, notwithstanding all that could

be done, his stomach was not relieved till the middle of the night. Even then, the unhappy little culprit continued in violent pain, the necessary consequence of his intemperance. At length he fell asleep, and his poor mother returned to her mistress, just at two o'clock in the morning.



CHAPTER IV.

The spirit of a school.

NIGOLA never closed an eye all that night, for the grief of her heart, and the bitterness of her reflections would not permit a moment's rest. A thousand anxious thoughts pressed heavily on her mind. She could no longer hide from herself the numerous faults which her son had contracted in the house of Mr. Delor ; faults which, if left to them-

hideous and destructive passions. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary to pluck out the evil by the root, and for that purpose it would have been the best and safest course to remove Benjamin from his present abode. But then, where was she to place him? Madam Dubac was far from being wealthy, and, besides, it was not likely that she would admit the boy into her house after what he had done. Nicola, thus circumstanced, could only make the best of the means within her reach, but, what she could do, she, at least, did promptly.

Next day she went to see Mr. Delor. Having given him an exact account of all that had passed on the previous day, she added: "You see, sir, that it is high time to put a stop to these evil propensities. I

know you wish Benjamin too well not to second the intentions of his mother whose hope is to see him grow up an honest man. I do believe that his present vices all spring from idleness ; for idleness, you know, sir, is said to be the mother of all vice. Will you then please to employ him, were it only for a few hours in the day, in going errands or any work of that kind? I hope you will also allow him to go to some free-school, where he may acquire good principles, by means of good advice and good example. When once he begins to get a taste for learning, he will do better. The only thing that can save him now is a good, Christian education, and from it, I have every hope Do not refuse to give me your advice, as I hope to have your assist.

ance in this, to me, most important matter. This, sir, I expect from your generosity, and I implore it from your compassion; it will be the completion of your great kindness to me and mine."

Mr. Delor listened very attentively. "You really anticipate my own wishes," he replied, "for I had been thinking somewhat of sending Benjamin to school, though I must own that I had latterly forgotten all about it. I am so overpowered with business!—Be assured, however, that I will attend to this matter, now that I am reminded of it."

"Oh! sir, you are too good!—How can I ever thank you as I ought? Surely my child and myself will owe you an endless debt of gratitude!"

“To-morrow—not a day later—if our little patient is well enough I will take him myself to school, and introduce him to the director.”

“How very kind you are, sir!”

“And I have reason to expect that my recommendation will have a good deal of weight—at least I hope so!”

“I do not at all doubt it, sir.”

“You see, my good woman, I am a member of the *Society for Intellectual Emancipation*, a correspondent of the *Association for the Propagation of Intelligence*, also one of the founders of the *Committee of Gratuitous Instruction*, a regular subscriber to the *General Agency of National Education*, and to the *Philanthropic Union of the friends of new methods of Elementary Teaching*. You see, Nicola,” add-

ed Mr. Delor, drawing himself up with an air of great dignity, "you see I am many ways entitled to the privilege of sending your son to our free school. Ever since its establishment, in which I was very instrumental, I have had the right to send six pupils, because I pay six hundred *francs* annually to help to support the institution. Of course a man like me is bound to do something for his fellow-citizens, and for his country. I assure you, it costs me upwards of a thousand crowns every year of my life subscribing to the various societies of which I am a member—it really does!"

Nicola made no answer for she was lost in thought. She did not understand the one-half of the big words which Mr. Delor had spoken, but she understood this much, that

in the long string of names she had just heard, there was not a word about the School of the Christian Brothers of St. Yon. Doubtless Mr. Delor had forgotten it. It never once occurred to her that a gentleman who contributed so much every year for the purpose of promoting education amongst the people, could overlook a brotherhood entirely devoted both by duty and by zeal to that arduous and laborious work; a brotherhood which has done such incalculable good in France and in every other country where their schools have been established; a body of men so respectable for learning and for virtue, and so conscientiously devoted to their onerous task; a body, which, far from falling in the public estimation since its re-establishment under the Emperor Na-

poleon, has never ceased to merit and to obtain the eulogiums of all good men.

Nicola was in the habit of regarding Mr. Delor as one of the most estimable men in St. Brienc, so she, of course, considered him a friend of the Brothers, although he had not included their school in his list. Unfortunately, such was not the case : very far from being a benefactor of the Brothers, Mr. Delor was their active, and inveterate enemy. He was precisely one of those men whose knowledge belongs exclusively to their own peculiar state, or profession, and of any thing beyond that, have not even the most common information. By means of certain fortunate speculations he had amassed a gigantic fortune, and thereby obtained a high position in

the world. He was known to be an honest man, and his stability was beyond a doubt. In a word, he had a very fair reputation, but although successful in his undertakings, and respected in his public capacity, he owed it neither to education, nor to any superiority of genius. When it became necessary to think on certain subjects, Mr. Delor required ready made thoughts, and in order to discuss certain questions he must always have some suitable phrases prepared beforehand. Now the ideas and expressions aforesaid the good gentleman usually selected from his favorite newspaper. But of course poor Nicola was entirely ignorant of the fact that there is a very numerous class, of men who, like Mr. Delor, draw from the columns of the daily papers the opinions and

sentiments of which they make such a pompous display. The simple-hearted woman knew nothing of the nefarious influence of the press on modern society; of the press,—that great auxiliary of the tumultuous passions which divide us; that inexhaustible source of errors, of systems, of the innovations which inundate and control the world; of the press, too often the organ of calumny and slander—the vehicle of impiety and anarchy.

It was the reading, then, of certain journals, and their continual declamations against every thing connected with religion, above all, their virulent and unjust attacks upon the Institute of the Christian Brothers, which had inspired Mr. Delor with a profound aversion for them. He hated them on the faith

of an editor, without troubling himself to inquire what were their real deserts, or whether the bitter invectives so often launched against them, were well-founded. Hence, when Nicola mentioned their school to him, he knit his brows, compressed his lips, and began to look very, very grave.

"Sir," said Nicola, "I don't know any thing about the schools you have named; I dare say, they are all very fine establishments, since a gentleman like you is pleased to encourage them, but I have strong reasons for deciding on placing Benjamin under the care of the Brothers."

"Under the care of the Brothers!—why surely, Nicola, you would not think of doing that?—Now,

would you really send Benjamin to the Brothers' School ?'

"Why yes, sir, of course I would, and I don't know why I should not."

How! what!—why, my worthy woman, we want to put down that school if we possibly can."

"And might I ask, sir, for what reason."

"In the first place, because they only form the children into bigots, while we want good citizens. That is the main point, you see!"

"But, sir, it seems to me that a true Christian is always a good citizen; that religion, which makes a sacrifice of every thing dear, has produced too many courageous, disinterested, and patriotic men, not to be the best and safest basis for education. And then we cannot call

religion *bigotry*; for ridicule can never fall on what is holy and divine."

"Pho! pho! you know nothing at all about it, my good Nicola, but just leave the matter to me, since I am willing to take it in hands, and do give up the notion of entrusting the poor boy to masters whose look is as crabbed as their costume is ridiculous!"

"I cannot think as you do, sir. If the appearance of the Brothers is a little grave or so, it is, at least, decent, and just what becomes teachers who are to command respect and obedience. With respect to their dress, it is that of their Order, and a very decent dress it is too. Permit me to tell you, sir, that these objections are very trifling, indeed, and cannot weigh much against the Brothers."

"The devil!" muttered Mr. De-
lor, with a forced smile, "I see they
have in you a very warm advocate.
But what will you say, Nicola,
when I tell you that children learn
nothing in their schools, and only
just spend their time there for noth-
ing. What do you say to that now,
and I solemnly assure you that what
I tell you is quite true."

"What do I say, sir?"

"Yes—that's the word!—let us
hear now!"

"I say, sir, that you are entirely
misinformed, and that of all other
schools, those of the Christian Broth-
ers are the best regulated—they are
those where children make the
greatest progress, where they receive
the best principles and where they
see the most excellent examples.
Such was the opinion I heard given

lately at our house, by the Inspector of Primary Schools, who is a relation of my mistress."

"Bah! your Inspector of Primary Schools is little better than a fool," said Mr. Delor, testily. "The Brothers are retrograde teachers, who would fain arrest the progress of intelligence, if they possibly could. Their Institute belongs to a by-gone age, and is far short of the standard required at the present day. Their course of training, you see, is very much restricted, and their rule, which never undergoes any change, shuts them up in the narrowest possible circle, from which they can never emerge. You may easily understand that when they cannot keep up with the progress of the age, they are forced to fight against it."

That is the real fact, and cannot be denied."

Before Nicola could think of an answer a visitor was announced and great was her joy when she saw the Inspector of Primary Schools enter and make his bow. Mr. Delor returned the salute rather coldly, and motioned to his visitor to take a seat. The Inspector was a man of staid demeanor and a singularly benevolent countenance, and when his eye fell on Nicola where she stood modestly in a corner, he smiled and nodded to her: "Why, Nicola, you here?—Is it possible?"

"Yes, sir," said Nicola, dropping a low curtsey, "I came to see about getting my little boy sent to school. You know Mr. Delor here has been so kind as to keep him ever since—since my trouble began."

“And only think,” said Mr. Delor, “she wants to send him to the Brothers’ School!—What an absurd idea!—I would as soon send my boy to be taught by a company of madmen!—Now what, may I ask, is your opinion of these Christian Schools, as they are called?”

Though Mr. Delor was not altogether unprepared for the answer he received, yet it evidently took him somewhat by surprise—

“Since you have asked my opinion of this Institute, Mr. Delor! I must candidly inform you that I look upon it as a real blessing to society. It was undoubtedly a very holy and a very benevolent idea to form a society of men, poor, virtuous, and learned, entirely devoted to the purpose of bestowing gratuitous instruction on the children of the

poor. That, I think, may really be called progress, though the people who now use that word so often never thought of instituting such a society. And, what is more, if they had, they would be almost sure to spoil it. It is only religion that can create such establishments, so lasting and so flourishing, because religion alone, setting aside self-interest and ambition, converts their toils and privations into works of merit. All the world knows that they have nothing earthly to gain, and much to suffer, so that no one enters upon the task but those who have placed their treasure in heaven, and there expect their reward. At the time when this heroic brotherhood was formed, and began its labors, the whole of France was overrun with ignorance and vice. Both of these

great evils they counteracted, by diffusing religious instruction amongst the masses, and they have done more than any other human institution to enlighten and civilize the people. It is very strange to hear them every day accused of being opposed to the progress of intelligence, seeing that for more than two hundred years, they have stood alone, unpaid, and unaided, overcoming many obstacles, and braving no small persecution, lighting the torch of primary knowledge amid the darkness which surrounded our unhappy people.— ‘But again,’ say those who call themselves exclusively the friends of progress, ‘the Brothers have a rule which they can neither change nor violate; what they taught two hundred years ago to rude, unpolished people, they pretend to teach

now, when the world is so far advanced in civilization; they know nothing of the peculiar wants of the period; there they are, standing stock still, never dreaming of keeping pace with the new systems of learning, but sticking fast by their old jog-trot method, teaching in the same old way, and the result is—nothing!’ But this contemptuous reproach is far from being deserved. The pious founder of the Christian Schools made choice of an approved method, the best in use at that time, and, after all that can be said against it, there has been none better invented since. The best proof of this is the unanimous approval of the world for two hundred years, the brilliant subjects it has formed, and does still form; in short, there is no system of teaching now known to

us, which has not borrowed something from that of the Brothers. So much for their method. Then, as to *what* they teach, it is very true that their rule only prescribes *reading, writing, and arithmetic, to be taught gratuitously to the children of the poor*. But every one knows that as soon as industry and the arts became more general amongst us, and that a more enlarged system of education was required, the Brothers solicited and obtained from the Pope a dispensation from that particular article of their Institute. For several years past, they have classes in all their schools for *Grammar, Mathematics, Geometry, Book-keeping, Ancient and Modern History, and Linear Drawing*. Now, sir, I know not how you can call them *retrograde teachers*."

Mr. Delor had not listened very patiently to this long defence. He coolly set the speaker down as a fool, and therefore unworthy of an answer, since he could not hope to convince him.

"So, Nicola," said he coldly, without seeming to notice what the Inspector had said, "I suppose you have made up your mind to send Benjamin to these excellent Brothers whom you and this gentleman praise so highly?"

"Indeed I have, sir. My poor husband, who was brought up by them, told me to do it, and I am bound to obey him. It is also my own wish, because I know it is the only chance for making Benjamin once more a good boy."

"Very well, Nicola, you can, of course, do as you like. You are the

absolute mistress of your son. and can dispose of him according to your prejudices and fantastic notions. I, therefore, give him up to you, and must beg that you will take him away this very day, for I will have no one in my house who has anything to do with those men."

Having thus spoken, he turned away, and passed into another apartment. Poor Nicola had never dreamed of such an ending to the conversation, and she burst into tears. A moment's reflection served to convince her that it was better to see Benjamin deprived of Mr. Delor's protection, than ruined by his kindness, so she made up her mind to leave the matter to the guidance of Providence.

CHAPTER V.

The Christian School.

THE parting of Benjamin and Meriadec would have been no easy matter, in fact all but impossible, had it taken place under other circumstances. But when Benjamin learned that Mr. Delor had ordered him out of his house, without any fault of his, he felt himself highly insulted. Meriadec called after him: "Come back, I tell you—you shan't go!" but he took no notice, and taking hold of his mother's hand,

walked away with her without once turning his head.

But it is one thing to command the firmness required in an emergency, and another to remain firm in the resolution then taken. Benjamin had just given a proof that when occasion required it, he could make a resolution, and exercise more than a little self-control, but he was no sooner in the street than his firmness gave way, and he began to cry bitterly for leaving a house where he had lived in idleness, and luxury, and free from all restraint. Such was the home he had lost, but what was his new one to be?

And very similar were the reflections of his mother. The unfortunate adventure of the cake was too recent to permit her to hope any thing from Madame Dubac. And

the event justified her apprehensions, for when the old lady heard of what had occurred, she solemnly declared that such a little vagabond should not enter her house, and that his mother must make some arrangement to keep him away altogether, if she wished to keep her situation.

This was not very flattering to Benjamin, but his conscience told him that it was just what he deserved. This was the first time that he felt himself disgraced by his own misconduct.

As for his poor mother, she knew not what to do. She must either give up her situation or find a place for her son, and it would take all her little earnings to pay his board. Nevertheless it must be done, for she had no alternative. There was a poor carpenter in the town, named

Rosel, whom her husband had formerly employed. Rosel was an honest, good man, with but one fault, that he was somewhat hasty in his temper. His wife, the niece of an old priest, was a very mild, pious woman, having three little children whom she was bringing up in a truly Christian manner. All things considered, this house seemed to be the very place of all others that suited Benjamin, so Nicola went at once and agreed with Rosel, stipulating that before and after school, the boy was to be employed in some work adapted to his age and strength. This important point settled, she took Benjamin off to present him to the Brothers.

Although Benjamin was old enough to be able to read, yet his education had been so totally ne-

glected that he knew not one letter of the alphabet, a circumstance which humbled him very considerably, for he had no small share of self-love. He immediately resolved that he would try and learn, so as to get rid of the disgrace of being ignorant. This was the only motive that could induce him to bear the tedious confinement of the school, he who was so capricious, so self-willed, and so fond of play. Besides he as yet knew little or nothing of what a school really was.

When Nicola rang the bell at the Brothers' school-house, Benjamin's little heart began to beat violently. They were at once introduced to the Brother Director, and to him the anxious mother related all that concerned her son, without either palliation or disguise. While his mother

was speaking, the little fellow kept his eye on the calm, still features of the Director, who with eyes cast down, and hands joined together, silently listened to the long recital.

"You see, brother," added Nicola in conclusion, "you see this child is lost, if your charity and good instructions do not change his heart, for it has become a very bad one. He has unfortunately become so wicked that there is great reason to fear for him both here and hereafter."

"Alas! Madam," replied the Brother, in a grave and penetrating voice, "we are well accustomed to see the children who are confided to us, infected with numerous vices, and having many passions to be resisted. God is the master of hearts, and He alone can change them.

Let us both pray to Him, that He may bless our exertions, and crown them with success. For us, we are but the feeble instruments of whom he sometimes makes use to work out his benevolent designs ; so that, though we of ourselves are nothing, we are yet all-powerful by the grace of God. How many miracles do we every day perform !—Of the two hundred children who attend our school, almost every one was more or less spoiled by over-indulgence at home, and there are scarcely two alike in character or disposition. These children, so impregnated with all the vices attendant on ignorance and low vulgarity ; so hardened in iniquity imbibed from the example of their parents, must necessarily be, when taken collectively, one mass of corruption. Is it not then a miracle of

grace to see, the greater number of them renouncing the past, reforming their lives and shunning the pestiferous atmosphere in which they had previously lived; to see them even becoming good and pious; and examples of virtue in their respective spheres.—Who can be so ungrateful, so unjust, so impious as to deny that this is the work of an Omnipotent God?

“Ah, Brother!” said Nicola, “how much trouble must it cost you, before you can bring about such a blessed reformation! What watchful care is required, and how wearisome it must be to struggle ever and ever against the evil passions of the children!”

“I tell you again, Madam! that if it were not for the grace of God, our cares, our incessant watchfulness,

and our zeal would all prove ineffectual in surmounting the obstacles thrown in our way by the pupils themselves, and still more by their parents. It very often happens that the latter, who, by their fatal example, have helped to corrupt their children, do still continue to counteract our exertions by their criminal indulgence. They condemn our severity, heap ridicule upon us, and then blame us when their children turn out badly. Unwilling to admit that either themselves or their children were to blame, they throw the whole fault on us. Now the truth is that this counteracting influence of the parents, and their imprudent censure of the teachers in presence of their children are the greatest obstacles in the way of their improvement. When will parents under-

stand that we assume their place, and that we love their children in Christ Jesus, as they love them according to the law of nature? When will they be persuaded that as their second fathers, we must have the love, and respect of our pupils, if they themselves would be loved and respected by them? Would to God that these truths were more generally known, and their importance better understood!"

"Brother!" said Nicola, "I, at least, am aware of their importance, and in confiding my son to your care, I not only promise you every assistance I can render, but I give up all my authority into your hands. My most ardent wish is to see Benjamin profit by your instructions, and become a good boy."

"Oh! he will," said the Brother

"I will answer for him. Will you not, my little friend," he added, taking Benjamin's hand between both his, "Won't you be very wise, and very attentive for the time to come?"

Benjamin made no answer, but sat with his head hanging on his chest, and twisting his mouth into all sorts of shapes. He looked for all the world like a criminal in the stocks.

The Director repeated his question in a mild, sweet voice, and then came out the half-pronounced words slowly and hesitatingly: "*Yes—Brother.*"

As far as being attentive went, he really intended to keep his promise, but to promise to be wise!—Oh! that was quite another thing, and he had never yet attempted to think.

Meanwhile, the Director contented

himself with the promise he had got. He conducted Nicola very politely to the door, still holding Benjamin by the hand, and when she was gone, he took the new pupil to present him to the Brother who was to be his teacher. Of course Benjamin was placed in the first class, because he had to learn his letters. There was fifty or sixty boys in the class, but they were all so much younger and smaller than our Benjamin that he looked like a little old grandfather amongst them all. Besides there were some of them that could spell very well, and others were beginning to read, so that he was the only one at A, B, C. Truly he had great reason to feel mortified and humbled to the lowest degree. But he was not without the means of consoling himself. "These fellows," said he,

to himself, "have all learned well, but I'll learn better than any of them, and unless its very hard to get it into my head, I'll soon get before them all."

This idea was very agreeable, for Benjamin had a great fancy for being the best man on every occasion, so he quietly took his place, at the foot of the class, looking very funny indeed with his head and shoulders up over the others, who were spelling and reading so well. One of the children having deserved some slight punishment, sturdily refused to submit. He was then punished more severely than he would have been, but still he remained obstinate. Our Benjamin, looking on, was so angry at this disobedience, that he could scarcely restrain himself. At

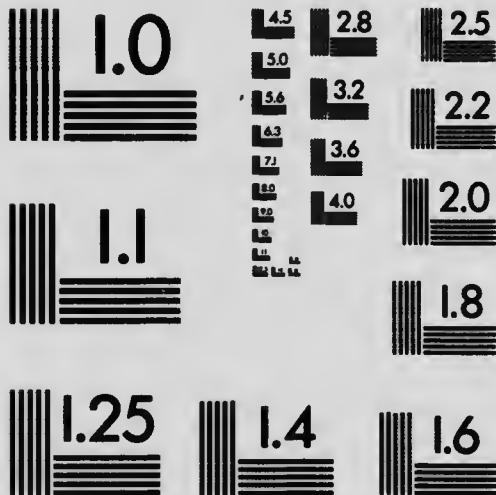
last, when he saw the little rebel standing out so obstinately against his teacher, he could bear it no longer, and giving way to his natural impetuosity, he jumped to his feet, and called out: "Will you obey now, you rascal—will you, I say?" Instantly, the boys all burst out laughing, and the master himself could scarcely preserve his gravity. The laugh was raised louder and louder when the fiery Benjamin, levelling a whole rank of the little fellows to get at the offender, laid hold of him by the ear, and hauled him up to the Brother.

This incident gave rise to a great deal of confusion. Benjamin, of course, knew nothing of the rules of the house, and that was his excuse, but the Brother soon made him ac-



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acquainted with them. He promised very faithfully to observe them, but he was so hasty and so impulsive that he very often forgot both himself and the rules. This first row was not the only one he kicked up in the school. Nevertheless he was so attentive and so anxious to learn that his whole mind was bent upon it, and he was thereby preserved from many foolish tricks, and escaped a good deal of censure and punishment.

We may here observe, for the benefit of our little readers, that they have it always in their own power both to please their masters and improve themselves. Application and love of study surmount all obstacles. It is even sufficient, if one be well convinced of this truth, and make some attempts at putting it in prac-

tice. We earnestly entreat the children for whom we write, just to make a resolution that they will try to apply themselves like Benjamin, who we hope will soon serve as an example for them in other matters as well as in this one



CHAPTER VI.

Brother Angelus.

BENJAMIN went on as well as could be expected, and indeed far better. It is true that he was still turbulent, quarrelsome, and sometimes even rude to his class-mates; nor did he agree better with Rosel's children. He was still sly and mischievous, playing numberless tricks on the neighbors all around. In short, his faults called loudly for correction and reformation; but, on the

other hand, there was not in all the school a boy more attentive to his lessons, or more anxious to learn. So rapid was his progress that at the end of some seven or eight months he was able to read pretty well. In this respect he was always held up as an example for the other boys, and this public praise so flattering to his self-love, encouraged him to redouble his exertions. The consequence was, that at the end of the school-year he was at the head of his class, just as he had promised himself that he would be. But alas! he had no prize to get, for as he had been quite recently removed into a new class, he was of course far behind the others. When the distribution came on he was quite enraged. "Oh! if I had only got into this class three months sooner than I

did!" said he to himself as he saw each prize given out, "you would not have had *that*, my good fellow!" But he had nothing for it only to be as resigned as possible.

During the short vacation given by the Brothers—it appeared a very long one to our friend Benjamin!—he made good use of his time, spending two or three hours every day in going over what he had learned, so as to keep it in his mind.

The remainder of the day, he was employed by Rosel to help the children with whatever work they had in hands. It was then that Benjamin's evil passions were most active, and there was not a day ever passed that he had not a quarrel either with Rosel or some of his children. If the father was absent, Benjamin always came off victo

rious, and beat the three little brothers; but when the father was at home, the tables were turned on him, and he was sure to get the worst of it, for Rosel was not the most patient man in the world; and by way of capital punishment Benjamin had to dine and sup on dry bread. Nor was it only within doors that the little pugilist carried on his warfare, for he very often returned home with the marks of conflict plainly visible, in the shape of a black eye, a scratched or bruised face, or clothes torn and dirty.

These pranks were not unknown to his mother, who went to see him as often as she could, and each time she saw him, she gave him a long lecture, but all in vain. This was the natural effect of the early training he had received, as first impres-

sions are ever the most durable. Yet still his conduct was a little better, just so much as to afford a shadow of hope. He did not swear at all so often as he used to do, and he soon got over the fatal habit of lying; he had no opportunity for indulging in gluttony at Rosel's frugal table, nor could he at all practise the same affected airs in the carpenter's workshop that he used to exhibit in the splendid saloons at Mr. Delor's. In short, Benjamin gradually grew out of those bad habits which he had contracted in his late luxurious home, and there only remained those which were natural to him. Yet even these were numerous—very numerous, and as constitutional and characteristic vices are more tenacious, it requires a greater degree of energy and a stronger resolution to keep

them in order, or obtain a mastery over them—Benjamin had not as yet attained that degree of perfection.

The classes were to commence again on the 1st of October, and on that day, Benjamin rose with the lark, and was the first at the school-room. Brother Angelus, his master, met him in the yard, and was not at all surprised to see him so punctual, for he was already aware that there was none of the boys more assiduous in fulfilling his duty, nor more anxious to profit by time. The Brother had been long ago struck by his prodigious memory, his very unusual strength of intellect, and his extraordinary love of study. He had also remarked the extreme violence of his passions, and his great impetuosity. Brother Angelus from his long experience, knew chil-

dren well; and he was persuaded that Benjamin, with all his strange mixture of vices and virtues, would one day do credit to his teachers, both as a scholar and a Christian, provided he were now properly trained. All depended on taking him in hands, and losing no opportunity of forming his mind, and this task the good Brother cheerfully took upon himself. He began by gaining the confidence and affection of his pupil, and that was not hard to accomplish, as Benjamin being really an obedient and respectful pupil, desirous of learning all that he could, was naturally disposed to love his teacher. And how well did that teacher deserve his affection !

Brother Angelus was about thirty years of age. He was tall and slender, and his mild, pale face was full

of sweetness, being the reflex of his spotless soul. His face was shaded on either side by light, silken hair, and his eyes had that deep, thoughtful look which belongs to such characters as he. His manners were polished and gentle, just fitted to gain for him the good will of children. His mind was richly stored with learning, which he well knew how to impart to others. To himself he was rigorous in the extreme, but to others he was kind and indulgent. Great and arduous and incessant was the labor he had to undergo, but his patience and his cheerfulness were proof against all attacks and all sufferings, and nothing could disturb the serenity of his mind. In a word, it would have been difficult to find a man more truly estimable under every point of view, or better adapted to

fulfil the sacred and onerous functions of his office.

Benjamin then had taken a great liking to Brother Angelus, who on his part took a sincere interest in the wayward boy. Yet their affection was of a very different nature, and had very different objects in view.

The pupil regarded his master simply as a learned and an engaging man, who was to initiate him into the secrets of knowledge, and thus gratify his predominant passion. The master, on the contrary, justly distrusting a desire so inordinate, which was founded solely on pride, was sensible of the importance of giving his mind a proper tendency, and basing his education on sound principles. He saw that unless his mind was early trained and accustomed to salutary restraint there was

little hope for him in the future. He knew that with such evil propensities as the boy then had, any knowledge which he might acquire, without the sanctifying and refining influence of religion, would be in all probability more hurtful than beneficial to society from the great superiority of his talents. This conviction placed him on his guard, and, being well aware that Benjamin would always be sure to make a rapid progress in his studies, he attended chiefly to his moral training, giving his most sedulous care to the development of his affections, and the directions of his sentiments.

Yet the good Brother did not always meet with that success which he had a right to expect. Another school-year glided away without producing any decided improvement in

Benjamin's character. It is true he was greatly changed, so far as outward appearance went. He was then entering on his tenth year, and from his size he might well have passed for a boy of thirteen or fourteen. And then his intelligence was far in advance of his age, for his natural talents being seconded by the closest application, he had long since outstripped all his school-mates. He had indeed many advantages peculiar to himself; such for instance, as an excellent understanding, a certain inspiring turn of mind which prompted him to examine every subject that presented itself to his mind, and finally, a happy knack of only burthening his memory with what was really worth retaining. Hence it was that with him learning any thing was the direct exercise of his judg-

ment, based on the desire of acquiring knowledge that was really valuable. While his comrades committed to memory a string of mere words, he fathomed and laid hold of the ideas they suggested. It was for instance very little for him to learn a few rules of grammar; he must also compare them with all those which had any relation to them, and assign to each one its place in the fundamental precepts of the language. In a word, he made it a point to study every thing in all its various bearings.

It may well be imagined that a pupil thus distinguished attracted considerable attention at the public examinations, and that he obtained more prizes than any other boy in his class. It excited no small surprise to hear a boy who twenty months

before, when he entered the school, knew not a single letter, now answering every question so clearly and correctly. In fact people would scarcely believe it, as I am just going to prove by an incident which occurred about the time we are speaking of.

If Benjamin had his faults, he had also many virtues, and amongst these was gratitude. He had never forgotten Mr. Delor's kindness to him, and he resolved to testify his lively gratitude in a way that should confound that gentleman's prejudice against the Brothers. Mr. Delor's birth-day was the feast of St. Maurice, the 22nd of September, and Benjamin thought he would give him a surprise. Without saying a word to any one, he wrote a complimentary note in his very best style. Besides that, as he knew a little of linear

drawing, he undertook to ornament the note with a view of the front of the merchant's house, and he succeeded to admiration. At length St. Maurice's day came, and Benjamin, as well dressed as his scanty wardrobe would permit, presented himself at Mr. Delor's door, and timidly asked to see the master. Being instantly admitted, he presented his note and his drawing with a trembling hand. The merchant examined both with great attention, and then asked whose work they were, but when Benjamin modestly replied that they were his, he could not believe him. He then began to question him, and after half an hour's close examination, declared himself perfectly astonished at the progress he had made. All those prejudices against the Brothers and their method

of teaching which he had adopted from the newspapers, suddenly gave way before this incontestible fact, yet Mr. Delor, like all those who wilfully shut their eyes against proof, would by no means give up his opinion. Still, he was deeply touched by this mark of respect and attention, and willingly took Benjamin back into favor. "Here, my little fellow!" said he, "here is twelve francs for you. I am well pleased with your attention to your studies, as proved by the progress you have made. You can come and dine here during the vacation. Go on as you are doing, and depend upon my friendship!"

Benjamin was overjoyed at having so large a sum in his purse, and still more that he had been restored to the good graces of his benefactor.

He chiefly valued the invitation he had received as affording him an opportunity of becoming reconciled to Mrs. Delor and Meriadec. But they were then at Vichy, where they always spent the month of September, for the purpose of drinking the water. The worst of it was that by the time they got back, the vacation would be over, and poor Benjamin obliged to return to school.

But after all the prospect of going to school again was to him a pleasant one, for his numerous prizes were all so many new motives of encouragement. The life of constant application which he had latterly led, had considerably repressed, if it had not entirely extinguished his passions. Brother Angelus had been an active agent in this great struggle, helping him to combat all those internal

enemies, and avail himself of every opportunity for reforming his morals. As for Benjamin, he wanted only the strength and the grace to make a firm resolution, and that the good Brother tried to bring about. But unfortunately he could not give his whole time to any one pupil, since all had the same right to his care and attention. Never had the labor of teaching been greater than it was that year, for the number of pupils increased to nearly three hundred, exclusive of the adult evening classes, and they were nearly as numerous. And there were no more than three Brothers for nearly six hundred pupils; so it can easily be imagined what a laborious life was theirs. They became fairly exhausted with fatigue, and Brother Angelus, who was naturally of a delicate constitu-

tion, was speedily attacked with a pulmonary disease which set in with very alarming symptoms. He was at length forced to give up his wearisome labors, and content himself, until the arrival of a provisional substitute, with keeping an eye to the class and hearing the catechism. This last duty brought him closely in contact with Benjamin. Being obliged to give long explanations so as to make the children understand the meaning and catch the spirit of the fundamental precepts of religion, he sometimes entered into little dialogues with his pupils on those subjects, in pursuance of his own purpose.

Though my young readers might derive much profit from these interesting conversations, yet I shall not attempt to repeat them I shall

merely show in the following chapter the subject matter of one of the most important. By Benjamin at least it was never forgotten, for it was that very dialogue that opened his eyes and chiefly contributed to effect a change in his sentiments—a change which though not very perceptible at first, was doomed to be permanent and sincere.



CHAPTER VI.

The Reformation.

BROTHER Angelus was explaining the thirteenth lesson of the Catechism which teaches that *the surest mark of a firm purpose of sinning no more, is to take means to correct evil habits and to effect an entire change of life.*

This important subject led to a discourse on Conversion, or the Sinner's Return to God. The pious teacher profited by the opportunity to explain to his youthful hearers

that Conversion. in order to be lasting, should be prompt, sincere, and entire; *prompt*, because the sinner, while separated from his God, abuses his daily measure of grace and may thus draw down upon himself the wrath of Heaven; because it is the part of a fool to remain indifferent to the danger which surrounds him; because it is the most fearful rashness to continue in a state of sin, without making an effort to overcome it. The conversion must also be *sincere*, that is to say without any lurking regret for the life one has quitted, and without any disgust for that just entered upon; without dividing the heart between God and man; between duties and pleasures; between religious practices and bad habits. Finally, the conversion should be *entire*, that is to say, a return of the

whole heart to God, with all its feelings and affections, an absolute sacrifice of all earthly attachments, a complete detachment from the joys of the world, and rending asunder all the bonds of sin.

Going on to speak of the difficulties of conversion, it was very easy to prove that by far the greater number, such as the violence of the passions, the force of bad habits, and the predominance of vicious inclinations, were not insurmountable, with the grace of God, and the firm resolution of giving up the heart to Him. With respect to the other obstacles, such as the shame of changing the course of life, hesitating about undertaking it, putting it off from one time to another, the dejection arising from the first fruitless efforts, all these Brother Angelus

considered as very trifling obstacles, and very easy to surmount. "Besides," he added, "these difficulties, my children, come not from God, as you see very plainly. They are our own work,—the natural consequence of our neglect of God, of our ingratitude towards Him, and of our departure from his service; they are the effect of our corrupt inclinations, and the vicious habits in which we live. It is we ourselves, then, who have erected a barrier between the Lord and us. It is we who have fortified that barrier, surrounding it with all that could make it strong and insurmountable. God has had nothing to do with this senseless and criminal deed, so that the blame is altogether our own. On the contrary that good Father has never ceased to call us back with out-

stretched arms ; and when he at last averts his face from us, it is because we have audaciously persisted in offending Him. Such being the case, how can we dare impute to Him the obstacles which oppose our conversion."

Having thus explained the difficulties of conversion, Brother Angelus proceeded to show his pupils the best means of getting rid of them.

The first and surest is to keep a deaf ear both to the promptings of our own weak nature, and the perfidious suggestions of the arch-enemy, which by exaggerating the shame and the trouble of a return to God, exposes us to lose the grace and the desire of conversion. The second, perhaps just as important, is to make choice of a wise and prudent director ; to lay open to him the secrets of the

heart ; to follow his advice in every particular, and to obey his orders without pausing to examine their meaning, for to him it belongs to fathom the depths of the soul, and apply the remedies proper to its various diseases. Thirdly, we must always accustom ourselves to walk in the presence of God, frequently to pronounce his holy name, and those of the Virgin and the child Jesus ; to make the sign of the cross very often, especially when attacked by temptation, and finally to raise the heart to God by some ejaculatory prayer. These practices of devotion, simple as they are, cannot fail to produce the happiest results. "Try them, my young friends!" concluded Brother Angels, "Return to that God who is so good, and so merciful. Detest that portion of

your life which has not been consecrated to Him, and put off your conversion no longer. And, after all, what is this conversion? It is living as a Christian should, becoming a worthy child of the Church and a faithful servant of God, in thought, in word, and in deed. Yes, my children, *a Christian is one who believes and professes the law of Christ.* And is not this just what one does when sincerely converted? He recalls to his mind the belief so long neglected. From being a transgressor of the law he becomes its faithful observer, and once more his soul is filled with the precious virtues of faith, hope, and love. Ah! children! do, I implore you, have the courage to be Christians! Return to the paternal embrace of your good Father in heaven. Make a

firm resolution to reform your lives, to struggle against your failings; to acquire the virtues in which you are deficient. Do this, and you will find how sweet it is to love and serve the Lord. How I should like to see a holy emulation established amongst you! for, be assured, that he who first resigns his heart to God will be the happiest of all!"

Such conversations as this could not fail to produce a lively effect on the minds of the listeners. Even the most careless and dissipated boys were deeply touched, and their conduct underwent a wonderful change. In fact the whole school was suddenly metamorphosed, and it was a sight worthy of heaven, to see a hundred little children displaying the most angelic piety, and the most assiduous application, watching care-

fully over their every action, and consecrating to God both their toils and pleasures.

But there was none amongst them all so remarkable as Benjamin. No longer was he obstinate, quarrelsome, or refractory ; but mild, modest, patient, civil and polite to every one. Following implicitly the advice of Brother Angelus, he placed himself at once under the direction of a discreet confessor, who taught him, by degrees, to subdue his passions and to root out all his evil propensities. He continued to apply himself more closely than ever, and his success was, of course, proportionate to his application, but his intentions were no longer the same. He was no longer actuated by self-love or by the vain desire of excelling others ; a sense of duty was

now his motive of action, for he had found out that the first of virtues is the exact fulfilment of the duties of our state, and that, while fulfilling them, we should ever have the intention of becoming better and happier.

Yet the entire conversion of our young hero was not effected without many severe struggles. He found it no easy matter to enter upon a new course of life, entirely opposed to all his previous habits. Many a time was he driven back by the force of habit, and so often did he find his good resolutions ineffectual, that he began to despair of ever being able to effect the desired reformation. But Brother Angelus was near; Brother Angelus who saw his position, read his inmost soul, and inspired him with renewed energy, the

effect of new and more sanguine hope. And at last Benjamin triumphed over all, and, taking for his model the divine child Jesus, he endeavored to imitate Him, and to grow like Him, as the Scripture says, in wisdom as in age, before God and man.

How rejoiced was Nicola when she thus saw her most cherished hope realised;—how her heart bounded with love and with gratitude when she at length beheld her son all that she could desire, all that even his father could have wished! How fervently did she thank God for having bestowed upon her such a signal favor, and how she applauded herself for having persisted in sending Benjamin to the Brothers! She had now the consolation of seeing her son every day, as her mis-

tress had become so infirm that she could no longer go to the country in the summer. Moreover, she had soon the gratification of seeing Madam Dubac take quite a fancy to Benjamin, who had indeed become very attentive and respectful to the old lady. As soon as the school was dismissed, instead of running off to play as he used to do, he now went straight to his mother, to help her with her work. Sometimes he read for the old lady (who had become nearly blind) either a chapter of the Imitation of Christ, or the life of the Saint to whom the day was consecrated. By this means he soon became a favorite with Madam Dubac, whose affection for him grew every day stronger, till at last she could not spare him even for one day, and requested his mother to

bring him home to live with them. This was a joyful hearing for his mother, who had been obliged to spend the greater part of her earning paying his board. Benjamin, too, was well pleased with this new arrangement, and he thanked God for having inspired Madam Dubac with so benevolent an idea. He could not help reflecting on the difference between a bad and a good child; how the one is despised and detested, while the other is caressed and loaded with kindness. And this thought should excite all children to endeavor to gain the affection of every one about them.



CHAPTER VIII

The Grammar Lesson.

BENJAMIN was not slow in availing himself of Mr. Delor's invitation, and he regularly spent the Sundays and Thursdays, indeed all the holidays at his house. He found Meriadec just the same proud, capricious boy he had ever been, but still warmly attached to him. He was, therefore, kindly welcomed by his former comrade, who told him in confidence that he was very un-

happy. His father had engaged a master to instruct him in elementary science, until such time as he was old enough to go to college. Meriadec wanted to have no master, but for the first time, his will was disputed, and it was his father's turn to say "*You must!*" Meriadec had at first tried to tire the master out by obstinate disobedience, but his master was a very severe man, and gave him many a good drubbing to enforce his commands, so that here again Meriadec was told *you must do it*, and had nothing for it but obedience. For a month past, as Meriadec sadly complained, he had been obliged to do what he was bid, and he was fairly sick of it. Still he dared not disobey, for his father had told him sternly that he would be obeyed, and the master,

on his side, never overlooked a single fault.

The luckless Meriadec hated most cordially the lessons which he could not understand, and the professor—who, having been accustomed only to teach advanced pupils, took no trouble to smooth the way for a child's first steps in learning. It generally happened that the child did not understand one word of the instructions he received, for the master just talked to him as he would to a grown up man of finished education. The consequence was that the more he taught, the more confused did the boy's ideas become, for he understood neither the words, nor the subjects, nor their connexion with each other. At last poor Meriadec despaired of learning anything, for several months had passed and instead

of making any progress, he found himself completely bewildered, and his mind one gloomy chaos without a ray of light. His father, thinking that the fault was still his own, treated him very harshly, and threatened still greater severity for the time to come.

Every time that Benjamin went there he found Meriadec in tears, and had to listen to a long string of grievances, in the shape of severe punishments which he had to undergo since his last visit. It was in vain that Benjamin tried to advise him, and to explain some of the most difficult parts of his lessons; these explanations might help him in those particular lessons, but then the morrow was sure to bring still greater difficulties. In order to get over all these obstacles, it was agreed

between the friends that Benjamin should begin unknown to any but themselves a regular course of instructions, for Benjamin was well acquainted with the first principles of mathematics, grammar, and linear drawing, and these were all that Meriadec had attempted. The secret lessons were at once commenced. Meriadec listened with docility and attention, and, for the time, understood what he heard, for his young teacher was methodical, and precise, and very simple in his language, making use of no scientific terms. In three or four lessons, Meriadec learned the principles of the four first rules; mysteries which four months of hard labor with the aid of a first-rate master, had not enabled him to understand.

This first step gained, his next

learned the elements of linear drawing. Thanks to the geometrical terms used by his master, he had not the slightest conception of what was meant by *surfaces*, *lines*, and *points*; now, he not only learned all that in a few hours, but it came so easy to him that he was quite surprised and delighted. The *rectilinear figures*, the *quadrilaterals*, the *polygons*, and all the other abominably hard words which used to frighten him so, became very pretty, and very easy words when once he was made to understand their exact meaning.

It was just the same with the grammar; of which Meriadec knew nothing whatever, except a string of names, and a few definitions which he had learned by rote, without one idea as to their meaning. I will just

give this interesting scene as Benjamin gave it, because I know it will be very useful to my young readers, and also to show Benjamin's method of teaching. The two friends were sitting in a pretty summer-house at the farther end of the garden, and who should be lying on a sofa in the other little room but Mr. Delor, who had been sleeping until the sound of the voices woke him up. After listening for a few minutes, Mr. Delor became very much interested, and listened attentively to the whole conversation. The lesson commences.*

Meriadec.—Heigho! This is the day for that abominable Mr. Lho-

* Children may be made to commit this little scene to memory, so that they may repeat it at the examination, with some trifling alterations.

mond, who has so often tormented me with his nonsensical grammar, and I'm sure he might as well be talking about *magic*, for all I understand of it.

Benjamin.—Perhaps the fault is not altogether his. We are now going to consider the general structure of the language, and then afterwards we'll come down to the particular details. It is important to consider grammar in its general outlines, for when they are well understood, all the rest is easily learned. First of all let us define *grammar*.

Meriadec.—Grammar is the art of speaking and writing correctly.

Benjamin.—Well! *speaking* and *writing* are very common things; but, you see, they become an *art* when we speak and write *correctly*, that is to say, according to the rules

of grammar. Before we go on to these rules, let us consider the characters or signs used in this art—these, you know, are called *letters*.

Meriadec.—And there are two sorts of letters, *vowels* and *consonants*.

Benjamin.—You must remember that the five vowels, or letters which have a perfect sound of their own, are *a, e, i, o, u* and then there are two others, *w* and *y*, which are vowels when they begin a word or syllable. The other letters are all consonants, or letters which cannot be sounded without the aid of a vowel.

Meriadec.—Oh ! I know that very well. And I also know that these letters go to make words, and words to make phrases. The worst of it is, that I am not able to explain how all this happens.

Benjamin.— And yet there is noth-

ing more easy. For example, in the phrase : *I love God*, the letters *I, l, o, v, e, G, o, d*, when put together, make up the words *I love God*, and the three words form a perfect phrase or sentence.

Meriadec.—Ah ! I understand now. With the letters *t, h, e, c, a, t, m, e, w, s*, I form three words *the cat mews*, and those three words make a sentence.

Benjamin.—Just so. All sentences are composed of words, and all words of letters. We are now going to distinguish three things : 1st. the *letters*, or the vowels and consonants, of which we have spoken ; 2nd. *words* ; and 3rd. *phrases*, of which we have yet to speak.

Meriadec.—Ah ! I must pay attention, so as to understand it all.

Benjamin.—The words of every

language are very numerous, and proportionate to the requirements of those who speak it. They are conventional signs—that is to say, signs to which certain meanings are attached, and which are used to convey particular ideas.

Meriadec.—I should like to hear you explain that.

Benjamin.—I can easily do that. Now let us suppose a nation at its very beginning. The people will of course seek words to express their ideas, according to their necessities, and their natural instincts. Well! the first of them who built a shelter for himself would call it a *cabin*, a *cottage*, or a *house*, and others would give the same name to the building which they would put up after his example. When one of them steals anything, his crime will be called a

robbery, or a *theft*. The various wants of life will also receive names, such as, *eating*, *drinking*, *sleeping*, &c. The feelings will also get conventional names, they will be called *love*, *compassion*, &c. The different actions, springing from the feelings will be named, *weeping*, *playing*, *rejoicing*, &c. In short, every thing receives a name, and that name, once given, will pass every where like ready money, taken at the given value, because every one gives it the same meaning, and employs it in the same way.

Meriadec.—And that is true. The weather in winter is said to be *cold*, and it is called so every where. So in summer it is said to be *warm*—just the same here as in *Perris*.

Benjamin.—Exactly so, and it is just the same with every word in

the language. But there is another remark to be made, and a very important one it is too, for it contains the whole secret of the art of grammar. Words, whatsoever they may be, were not invented generally, but to express an action or a state of being. Thus, the words of which we have been speaking, express the action of *building, stealing, eating, drinking, loving, weeping, pitying, rejoicing*, &c. Those words which imply no action, are used to point out, or to qualify the person who performs the action, or to determine the manner in which he has done it. So, in your phrase "*the cat mews*," there is the action of mewing, the name of the creature which performs that action, and the article *the* pointing out the particular cat of which you speak.

Meriadec.—I understand all that. But is this rule general?

Benjamin.—Of course it is. Even if you compose sentences for a whole hour, you will always find in each an action and a subject performing that action.

Meriadec.—Let us see now!—*My coat is torn.* Now, there is no action there, is there?

Benjamin.—Do you think so?—Now, I'll prove to you that you are mistaken, for there is a state, which is a past action. An action may have been done in time past, or it may be done at the present time, or is to be done in the time to come. In that phrase of yours: the action is already done, *my coat is worn.* Only you do not say who or what has done it. Add that much to it,

and you will see the whole train of the action.

Meriadec.—*Time has worn my dress—I have torn my dress.* I declare it is true—I see the action and all now.

Benjamin.—You see there is a past action. And that besides the subject *time* which has done the action, there is also the thing on which it was done, *the coat*. That which performs the action is called the *nominative* or *subject* of the phrase; and that on which it is performed is named the *objective* or object of the verb. Now give me an example.

Meriadec.—*Paul tears the book.* Paul does the action of *tearing*, so he is the *nominative* or *subject* of the sentence; the action of tearing is done on the book, so it is the *objective*, or object of the verb.

Benjamin.—Very well indeed. You now understand how it is that words are composed of letters, and sentences composed of words. You must remember that a sentence must contain at least two words, in order to make sense; these words are, the subject which performs the action, and the verb which expresses the action itself, whether it be past, present, or future, as: *the cat mews, Paul tears, time wears.* You see plainly that each of these phrases makes a perfect sense. When you want to add another idea, you have only to put in another word, which is usually the object of the verb. For instance; *the cat mews loudly Paul tears the book, Time wears the coat.* You perceive that according as you extend the sentence, your own idea will be the more fully de-

veloped. So if you go on adding words, the sense will become the more enlarged : *The cat mews loudly in the gutter, Paul tears the book with fury, Time gradually wears the coat.*

Meriadec.—So then the most complete sentence is the one that has the greatest number of words—is it not?

Benjamin.—Not exactly. The words are not necessarily placed one after the other. The best constructed sentence is that which expresses the idea in its full extent, with the fewest possible words; that is to say an action with its subject, its object, and the manner in which it is done; in short all the circumstances which present themselves to the mind as accompanying an action. The subject, the verb, the object and each

of the circumstances to be expressed will require the use of one or more expressions so as to render the idea complete.

Meriadec.—That is all very natural, but somehow I never understood it before. Will you just make it plainer for me, by an example?

Benjamin.—With great pleasure. *Paul is in class ; he has been punished, and he tore his book for spite.* There, you see, is an action—a book torn. Who did it? Paul. Where was it done? In class. How was it done? For spite. Why was it done? Because he had been punished. Thus you perceive that the fact and all its circumstances are related in a dozen words.

Meriadec.—Very true. But then there are many actions mentioned there—first there is being in class,

and then being punished, then being angry, and last of all there is the tearing of the book.

Benjamin.—Your remark is just. But speech is like painting: it would be ridiculous to paint the arms, the legs, the body, and the head all separately, in order to represent a man; so, it would be just as absurd to relate a fact by taking all its circumstances separately. The human mind, which is so rapid in its ideas, could never bear the tedious repetition of many small sentences, when one suffices to express the whole.

Meriadec.—Oh! that settles the point. But I thought that a sentence could not contain several words of the same kind, and here we have no less than three verbs: *to be*, *to punish*, and *to tear*.

Benjamin.—You were mistaken,

then. The same word cannot, of course, be brought twice into the same sentence, for that is strictly forbidden; but there is nothing to prevent us from employing words of the same kind as often as we find it necessary. So we can have two nouns, two verbs, two pronouns, &c. in the composition of a phrase.

Meriadec.—And might one put all the ten parts of speech into a sentence?

Benjamin.—Why not? Such a sentence is rarely, if ever, seen, but still it might be found.

Meriadec.—Dear me! I should like of all things to hear such a curious phrase as that would be!

Benjamin.—I will, then, try to gratify your wish; but, first of all, let us define the ten parts of speech. Do you remember their definitions?

Meriadec.—Why, to be sure I do, and it would be a wonder if I did not, after all the dry bread I eat, and all the lashes I got by those same parts of speech.

Benjamin.—Will you repeat them, then?

Meriadec.—The *article* is a word which serves to determine the kind or number of the thing spoken of;—the *noun* is the name of any person or thing?—the *adjective* is used to qualify such person or thing;—the *pronoun* is a word used instead of a *noun*, to avoid its too frequent repetition;—the *verb* expresses the action or state of the person or thing;—the *participle* partakes of the nature of the verb and of the adjective, being merely another form of the verb, and like the adjective it is used to qualify;—the *adverb*

points out the manner in which the thing is done ;—the *preposition* serves to connect words, and generally governs the object of the verb ;—the *conjunction* connects the various members of a sentence, and links sentences together ;—the *interjection* is an exclamation which expresses the sudden emotions of the mind.

Benjamin.—I am glad to see that you understand so much of the grammar. It is very important to know the different parts of speech very well, so as never to confound them one with the other, and also to be able to parse well. You will observe that in the ten classes of words which comprise our whole language, there are some which are but particles of words, indeclinable, having but a secondary value in the sen-

tence, and being without any government. Finally, there are others which have been classed separately, yet might still belong to that class from which they were first taken: such are participles, which are sometimes used as adjectives, and sometimes as tenses of the verbs; and of this kind are also the possessive pronouns, which are in reality nothing but adjectives. This will be enough for our first grammar lesson.

Meriadec.—Oh! but you promised me a phrase composed of the ten different parts of speech.

Benjamin.—True, and I am going to keep my word. Look at the gardener there working in the garden. He shall be our subject.

Meriadec.—Very good. Go on now!

Benjamin.—Let us suppose that I am speaking of the garden, and I will say : *The old gardener carefully extracts the weeds, and throws them on the ground, crying "Alas !"* Now parse that sentence.

Meriadee.—*The* a definite article, pointing out the noun *gardener* ; *old*, an adjective qualifying the noun ; *gardener*, a noun masculine, the subject, or nominative of the verb ; *carefully* an adverb showing how the fact was done ; *extracts* a verb active, expressing the action of the sentence ; *the* a definite article belonging to *weeds* ; *weeds*, a common noun of the plural number, governed in the objective by the verb *extracts* ; *and*, a copulative conjunction connecting the two parts of the sentence ; *throws*, a verb active governing *them* ; *them*, a per-

sonal pronoun (being the substitute for the noun *weeds*) and the object of the verb; *on*, a preposition, governing *ground*; *the*, a definite article; *ground*, a common noun; *crying*, a present participle; *alas!* an interjection.

Benjamin.—Now if you will only remember this little review of the art of grammar, it will be easy for you to remember in what manner the parts of speech you have mentioned separately may be connected, one with the other. This preparatory study ought to be very important for you, seeing that it comprises all the fundamental principles, and also because it will smooth your road when you get farther on into the difficulties of grammar.

CHAPTER IX.

Prejudice Overcome.

THE lesson was at length finished, and Mr. Delor, who had heard it from the beginning with as much interest as surprise, could scarcely believe his own ears. All his lingering prejudice against the Brothers now vanished like smoke before these palpable facts. Benjamin had entered their school without knowing even one of his letters, and in a shorter time than the very best mas-

ters could have pushed him on so far, he was able to teach others. Now, the upshot of all this was, that Mr. Delor found himself most shamefully deceived. The mist was now taken from before his eyes, and he was too honest not to acknowledge at once the change which had come over his mind, and to disavow those opinions, so very erroneous, and so very unjust, which had been infused into his mind by interested persons who abused his credulity. In his inmost heart he did ample justice to the Brothers, and became on the instant their steadfast friend, as he had before been their avowed enemy. As soon as Benjamin ceased to speak, he entered the summer-house, and warmly shook hands with the youthful preceptor of his son.

“And, pray, how long have you

been giving him lessons, Benjamin?"

"For nearly a month, sir," replied Benjamin, timidly.

"Well, then," said Mr. Delor, "I owe you thirty-six francs, for that is just what I pay to my son's master. Here is the money, and as I am very well satisfied with your lessons, I hope you will continue them. Will you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"I am going to send the master about his business, and Meriadec shall go with you to-morrow to the Brothers' School."

"Oh, papa," cried Meriadec, "how glad I am to hear you say so!"

"My child," said his father, as he returned the boy's caress, "I shall be well pleased to have you take

Benjamin for a model, and profit, as he has done, by the lessons of your worthy teachers."

Without a moment's delay Mr. Delor sent in his resignation to the various societies and associations for the propagation of popular instruction, by new and approved methods. He wrote a very polite note to the Brother Director, requesting the favor of an early visit from him.

"Sir," said Mr. Delo., after the usual salutations had been exchanged, "Sir, I have been strangely mistaken as to the real character of your Institute. I am now completely *undecided*, and will beg you to take my son under your care, and also to accept the annual sum of one thousand crowns, which I have long set apart for the promotion of solid education."

“Sir,” replied the Brother, modestly, “your frankness is very commendable, and your generosity deserves our best thanks. We shall have great pleasure in admitting the young gentleman into our school, but as for the proposed annuity, we, none of us, can receive it *personally*, as our rule expressly forbids us to accept any sort of present, or any donation from the parents of our pupils.”

“How! you are serving so many others, and are not permitted to serve yourselves?”

“And are we not serving ourselves, sir, when we diffuse blessings throughout the whole of society, by devoting our time, our attention, nay, our whole life, to train up the young in the way they should go? Your wish is to promote the cause

of education, and you are willing to give a thousand crowns yearly for that very laudable purpose; suffer me to suggest a plan for your consideration. We have been long seeking the means of founding a second school in this town, seeing that at present there are only three of us to teach, between children and adults, fully six hundred. The task is beyond our strength, and one of us has already sunk beneath it. In your generous proposal, sir, I gratefully recognize the direct interposition of heaven. With your munificent donation, we can realize our intention of erecting a new house, and at the same time your own wishes will be carried into effect."

To this proposal Mr. Delor readily agreed. The Brother-Superior was at once written to, and the adminis

trators of the school in St. Brieu were duly notified. Measures were also speedily taken to put the project in operation. The report flew quickly all through the town; some found fault with the merchant for what they termed his new whim; but by the greater number his conduct was warmly applauded, and several others followed his example by contributing towards the erection of the school-house.

Meanwhile, Benjamin, the principal cause of this happy change, and all its fortunate consequences, continued to edify his school-mates by his piety and close application to study. Meriadec was now more than ever attached to him, since he had become his class-mate, and he in his turn began to grow in knowledge and in virtue. Every thing

went on well; Benjamin continued to give lessons to his friend after school hours, and Mr. Delor, more and more pleased with his son's progress, regularly paid the thirty-six francs every month to the young teacher. This liberal remuneration soon mounted up to a nice little fortune for Benjamin, who, having his board and washing at Mr. Delor's, found it very easy to save the 432 francs which he yearly received. Of his monthly pay he disposed in the following manner: twenty-four *francs*, or one *louis*, he placed in the savings' bank, and the remainder he kept for charitable purposes. Such had been the advice of his mother, who knew, that of all the Christian virtues, there is none more efficacious than charity in sanctifying and strengthening the soul. Charity,

the most beautiful of all virtues, the duty of the virtuous, and the delight of the good; charity, the divine precept, and the heart's deep feeling! Nicola wished her son to devote a portion of his wealth to the poor, since it was given him in pure charity by another. So every month Benjamin had the happiness of relieving some poor sufferers, and receiving many a fervent blessing in exchange for a few small pieces of money. This was a pleasure unknown before, and it was a source of the greatest happiness to Benjamin. With what joy would he bring his little offering to a feeble old man, who lodged in a wretched garret; how gladly did he buy some little medicine or wholesome nourishment for a poor old sick woman, who, but for him, should have died for want

of assistance! how exquisite was the pleasure with which he weekly carried a large loaf to a poor woman who had a family of six young, helpless children, without any means of support! How happy Benjamin was while thus conferring happiness on others; and beholding the thin, worn features of these poor creatures all brightening at his approach. He consoled them all, as though they had been his dear friends, and prayed *with* them and *for* them, to that God who is the dispenser of hope and peace—the treasures of the poor. It is such scenes as these, so touching and so full of human sorrow, that, when coupled with the performance of the most sacred duty, are the surest means of forming the young heart to piety and virtue, and human ten-

derness; in short, these are the practices in which Christian parents should bring up their children. Benjamin had his twelve francs to give away every month: other boys may not have so much; some may have only a few pence to give, but the act will be of the same value before God, and the moral result will be the same.

But Benjamin was rapidly approaching an important epoch in his life. He was about to make his first communion, and to receive the sacrament of Confirmation; and these two great events had long been the sum total of his hopes and wishes. The remembrance of his past sins, and the very small degree of merit which he gave to himself, caused him to shrink from the idea of receiving his God, for he dared not

hope to have those holy dispositions which are absolutely necessary for the proper reception of those sacraments; and Benjamin well knew, that on that depended his eternal salvation. Applying his mind, therefore, to reflect on the inestimable value of the favor he was about to receive in the divine Eucharist, and the responsibility he thereby incurred, he mentally exclaimed:—
“Oh! my God, grant that I may prepare a pure heart to receive thee! make known to me, oh Lord, all my offences, to the end that I may detest them; and I beg of thy mercy never to let me fall again into sin! Should I not be the most ungrateful of human beings, if I were to drive thee away by sinning again, after thou hadst chosen my heart for thy dwelling-place, and

deigned to give thyself entirely to me. My God! my God! my only fear is that I may lose thee, after having once possessed thee. Grant that the sanctuary which I am preparing for thee may long be thy abode, and that thou wilt ever remain with me, oh divine Jesus, while I live here on earth!"

And these pious aspirations became daily stronger in Benjamin's mind and heart. He took all possible care to prepare himself for receiving the holy Communion, desiring that it should produce the most excellent fruit in his soul. Every day, and all the day, he made an offering of himself to God.

And God accepted the gift of a heart purified by repentance. From the happy day on which our young hero was first admitted to the

celestial banquet, he lived ever after a life of sanctity and grace. It was, indeed, a rare thing to see a child so young practising all virtues with so much ease. But this was the natural effect of that divine sacrament for which he had been so long and so carefully preparing. Whether in the class, in the church, in the house, or in the street, his modesty and piety were every where visible, enhanced by his great success in learning, and embellished by his natural gaiety, his never-failing good humor, and his unvarying kindness of heart. Masters, school-mates, and visitors, all alike loved Benjamin, and he was already treated with a respect which is seldom, if ever, paid to children. And thus was the foresight of Brother Angelus fully justi-

fied. Benjamin, with the advantage of judicious training, had become a model for the imitation of youth.

And his example was not lost on his companions, who were inspired with the desire of imitating him in every thing ; so true it is, that if *one scabby sheep infects the whole flock*, so one good boy can improve a whole school. Never had the Brothers' school in St. Brieuc boasted so many promising pupils ; a fact which was amply proved by the yearly examination, when it came round. The boys, indeed, gave general satisfaction by the promptness and correctness of their answers to all questions, and also by their writing and drawing, of which many beautiful specimens were presented. All the visitors were unanimous in express-

ing the warmest approbation. Mr. Delor, in particular, being one of the chief judges appointed to examine the boys, could scarcely find words to express his admiration. At the close of the examination, the prizes were formally distributed by his lordship, the Bishop of St. Bricuc. Benjamin obtained eight prizes, and Meriadec a premium for grammar, and the second prize for arithmetic. Mr. Delor was very much pleased, and took occasion to relate the scene which he had overheard in the summer-house, his tearful eyes all the time attesting his emotion, and he added: "If Meriadec has obtained two premiums, he may thank his young teacher, and both of them are indebted for all to these excellent men, who are bestowing countless

blessings on society, by diffusing amongst the lower classes the purest principles of morality, and the knowledge which contributes to man's earthly happiness."



CHAPTER X.

Generous Devotion.

WHEN the classes were again opened, the new school, founded by Mr. Delor, was provided with excellent masters. and there was certainly no lack of pupils. And now the Brothers belonging to the more ancient school were enabled to bestow still greater attention on their pupils, because they were no longer overtasked, all the surplus of their school being transferred to the new

establishment. The pupils themselves were very sensible of the change, and the affairs of both schools flourished beyond all previous hopes. The classes being now better organized, and fewer in number, it was much more easy to direct the studies of the boys, and give them a wider range. The Brothers had henceforward no other obstacles to encounter than those which are every where interwoven with their mission ; these they resisted with the arms of patience and watchful care, and victory came, at last, to crown their efforts. Then did they bless God for having poured down such abundant favors on their mission, — favors which exceeded their most sanguine hopes. The fatigue inseparable from their labors, the obstinate vices of some of their pupils, the

unjust complaints of certain parents, and the malicious sarcasms of their enemies, all these were more than compensated by the success of the schools, the progress made by many of the pupils, the favor and approbation of the public, with the donations and support of the avowed patrons of their schools, whose number increased in proportion to their success.

But it was chiefly in a moral point of view that the Brothers saw the greatest improvement in their pupils. Soon after Benjamin's first communion, he and several other boys had formed a little society in honor of the blessed Virgin, placing themselves and their schoolmates under her special protection. And it really seemed as though the immaculate mother of the Saviour had

adopted them as her children and obtained for them many extraordinary blessings. Purity is the source of innumerable virtues, for when the heart is chaste, the soul is easily preserved from the contamination of vice. Nothing contributed so much to the spiritual advancement of these good boys as the happy idea of devoting themselves to the Queen of Angels. Modesty accompanied all their actions; and their very amusements assumed that character of chaste decorum which invariably follows a Christian education. When they spoke, it was with the utmost mildness; they were always civil and agreeable towards each other, and they were all closely united by that holy friendship which is based on mutual charity and mutual virtue. Respectful and obedient to their pa

rents and their masters, honoring the aged whoever they might be, and full of compassion for the woes and sufferings of others, these pious children were the glory of the school and an example for the whole town.

And there was not one of these good boys more exemplary than Benjamin, whose good conduct and solid piety made him the joy and comfort of his mother. He had now but one year to remain at school, as it was thought high time to give him some business. Mr. Delor, who loved him as a son, had proposed to take him into his counting-house, with a salary of four hundred francs for the first year, to be doubled the year following. This proposal must have been a very flattering one, to a young lad who had scarcely completed his thirteenth year; yet, ad-

vantageous as it certainly was, and most agreeable to Benjamin, he yet hesitated at first to accept it, without consulting his mother, and asking of God the grace to know his vocation, and whether he was likely to suit the offered situation. He then returned his most sincere thanks to Mr. Delor, but told him at the same time that he must take a little time to talk the matter over with his mother and to ask the illuminating grace of God. This wise and modest reply raised him still higher in Mr. Delor's esteem, and made him still more anxious to engage him. "You are perfectly right," said he, "not to be too precipitate in taking a situation without proper reflection, or without your mother's consent. But it is six months till the vacation, and I shall keep the situation for you,

although it is really vacant now. By that time I hope you will have decided on coming to me, as I really do not think you can find a situation more advantageous to you." Benjamin assented, and again thanked Mr. Delor for his great kindness to him, assuring him that he would rather far be in his employment, than that of any other, even were the salary not so high, as he ardently desired to have an opportunity of proving his gratitude for the many favors already received. Mr. Delor was more and more pleased, and by the time Benjamin took his leave, it seemed tacitly understood that Benjamin was to accept the situation.

On leaving Mr. Delor's house, he was walking slowly along, turning over in his mind the proposal he had just received, when all at once

he was startled by a loud crash, and hastily went to where he saw a crowd gathering around a workshop. A pitiable spectacle there met his eyes, and chilled his very heart : an unfortunate carpenter, had fallen from a scaffold, and a huge beam falling with him, had shattered both his legs. Great was the sorrow and dismay of Benjamin when in the poor mangled creature before him he recognized his former host, Rosel. Sincerely grieved to see that worthy man in such a condition, Benjamin helped to carry him home, and staid some time with the afflicted family, trying all he could to console them. Thanks to his provident care of his little funds, he was enabled to assist them in their great distress, and truly rejoiced he was, to have it in his power, for he knew very well that

Rosel was wretchedly poor. The doctors were called in, and they found the injury sustained by Rosel to be fully as great as had been supposed; the bones being literally smashed in pieces, and the flesh dreadfully bruised and mangled. It was more than probable that the unfortunate man would be a cripple for the rest of his life. On hearing this announcement the groans and lamentations of his unhappy wife and children broke forth anew, and mingled sadly with the piteous moans of the agonized sufferer. It was indeed a scene of heart-rending misery. Benjamin remained all the day with his poor, afflicted friends, deeply sympathizing with them and doing every thing he could think of, that might be useful to them. All that long night he could never close an

eye, so great was his sorrow and anxiety about these poor people. The mutilated image of Rosel, and the sad, horror-stricken faces of his wife and children were before him in fancy, and engrossed his every thought. What could he do to secure to them some permanent assistance? for poor Benjamin's resources were very, very limited; his little hoard would not last them very long, and yet their necessity must be long—long and tedious—perhaps life-long. All of a sudden, he thought of Mr. Delor's generous proposal of the previous day; "That is the very thing," said he to himself, with a sudden rush of joyous emotion. "It will be the salvation of this poor distressed family. Mr. Delor is very charitable, and I know he will take Rosel's eldest son in my place, for

he too has been educated by the Brothers, and is eighteen months older than I am. He will have four hundred *francs* for the first year, and as much more for the next. He is a very good, steady boy, and Heaven will give him grace to win Mr. Delor's favor; so, the more I think of this plan, the more I am pleased with it."

Full of these generous thoughts, Benjamin passed the remainder of the night maturing his project, and anxiously looking for the dawn of day. At last he saw the first faint glimmer of the gray morning light, and dressing himself quickly, he repaired to Mr. Delor's as soon as he thought it likely that the merchant was to be seen. Mr. Delor, seeing him come so very early, naturally concluded that he had already made

up his mind, and was now come to announce his intention of accepting the situation. His reception was, therefore, even unusually gracious, but he was doomed to be speedily disappointed. Encouraged by his kindly smile, Benjamin hastened to tell him what had happened on the preceding day, dwelling particularly on the extreme poverty of Rosel's family, and his own obligations to that worthy man whose care, and advice, and good example, had been so useful to him. "Oh, sir!" he continued, in a choking voice, "I have reckoned on your goodness and compassion, to relieve the misery of these poor people. You can befriend them—you have the power!"

"Well, and what would you have me do for them?" demanded the merchant, who believed that it was

present and pecuniary assistance that Benjamin sought.

“Just this, sir,” replied the youthful advocate. “You have a place vacant in your office ; be so good as to give it to Rosel’s eldest son, who is a very good, religious boy. Oh ! do not refuse, sir !—pray do not ! You will find him well worthy of esteem and confidence, and then you will be conferring such a blessing on the whole family ; for if he only had that situation, his salary would keep them all from want.”

Mr. Delor was silent.

“It will keep them from starving,” said Benjamin, who could not prevent his tears from gushing forth. “And heaven and the good Christians will do the rest.”

“My boy,” said Mr. Delor, though he was at heart, deeply affected by

this noble disinterestedness, yet wanting to try him out for it: "my good boy, I had intended the place for you, and what right have you to interfere with my choice? Am I to be governed, do you think, by your childish fancies; or, am I expected to take an interest in all your acquaintances, because, forsooth, I have befriended yourself?"

"Oh! sir, sir!" interrupted Benjamin, "how little do you understand me! I to interfere with your choice, when I only meant to offer my humble petition! And see, sir, if I don't ask it with tears, for I can't keep them in! Ah! surely you cannot be ignorant of my real feelings, when I thus appeal to your compassion on behalf of this worthy family in their great distress? Oh no! I know you cannot blame me.

Ouly say so, sir, and I will be content!"

"I am well disposed to give you credit for the very best intentions, Benjamin," replied Mr. Delor. "But just let us talk the matter over quietly." He then did his utmost to convince Benjamin that what he proposed doing was very rash and imprudent; "for," said he, "charity should always begin at home." He represented to him that he himself was just as much in need of a situation as Rosel's son could be, and that if he now rejected the opportunity offered him, there was great reason to fear that such another might not soon present itself, and that he would repent his rashness when too late. Finally, he said that though generosity was a very excellent thing, yet its dictates were not

always to be followed to the exclusion of prudence.

Benjamin, as we may imagine, promptly answered these objections. In his opinion, charity was a fundamental precept, the first gift of faith; for *faith without works is dead*, according to the Apostle St. James. To serve others, then, and to make a sacrifice in their favor, when occasion requires it, is an act of faith, and of hope; for faith, hope, and charity, are sisters. Whatsoever charity gives is offered by faith to God, and hope prepares the reward. To give, before God, is to receive; for whatsoever is given He will give back an hundred fold. When we succor and assist our neighbor, we imitate God himself, who daily dispenses the treasures of his bounty amongst the whole human family.

And yet, who would be more excusable if He withheld his blessings—who meets with so much ingratitude? Who is so often tempted to regret his benefactions, if I might venture to say so? Yet his mercy is never impeded by these considerations; nor does the bad use made of his blessings ever arrest their course. This is the example which we, according to our power, ought to imitate, never suffering doubt or fear for the future to prevent us from doing good to others. To abstain from assisting a neighbor in distress, through fear that we might afterwards regret it, would be offering an insult to Divine Providence. How could we suppose, sir, that God would ever punish any one for relieving a fellow-creature in distress. Ah no! God would always raise up

a friend for us, or at least He himself would become our friend and consoler.

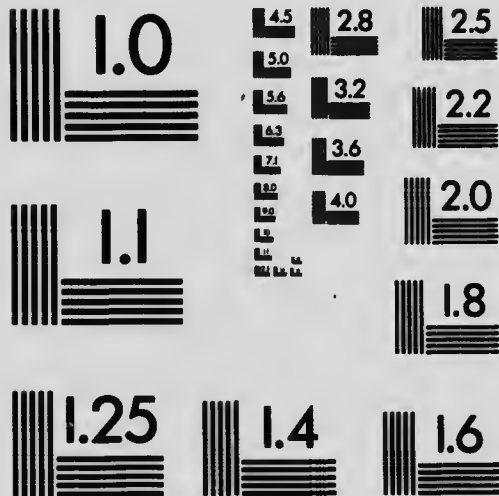
There was in this reasoning something so just, and so elevated, above all so truly Christian, that Mr. Delo could not help acknowledging himself fully convinced. Warmly shaking Benjamin's hand, he exclaimed: "Blessed boy that you are, you merit the favor of Heaven, and the admiration of men." On hearing this, Benjamin blushed deeply: "My dear, good sir!" said he, "just think of poor Rosel!—he is suffering, and every way wretched."

"Yes! yes! Benjamin you are quite right—let us think of that poor man. You will take him this gold piece from me, and run as fast as you can. At your request, I will give the vacant place to his son.



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When you are free to make an engagement, I shall find another for you. I will now give you the pleasure of bringing this good news to the family ;—so you may go as fast as you like.”

Benjamin, having made his best bow, darted away like lightning, and in a few minutes he made his poor friends rejoice by announcing the glad tidings that Mr. Delor was going to take the eldest son into his office, nor did he forget to mention the liberal salary attached to the situation. It is true he made not the slightest allusion to the part he had in obtaining this appointment, yet it happened that Rosel's family soon heard it all from another source.

CHAPTER XI.

The Sick Stranger.

THERE is certainly no feeling of the human heart more delicious, or more refined than that which follows the performance of an act of charity : so nothing had ever given Benjamin such exquisite happiness as the event related in the preceding chapter. The deplorable condition of Rosel, the extraordinary merit of his son, who had been Benjamin's playmate in childhood, and since

then his class-mate ; and finally the unvarying kindness which he had received from the whole family during his stay amongst them ; all these motives tended to increase the pleasure he enjoyed. And then the ardent, the unspeakable gratitude of the family, expressed in every way they could think of, made him feel still more happy.

Whilst Benjamin was thus taken up with the affairs of his friends, the time was rapidly approaching when he was to begin to think of his own. The school-year was now drawing to a close, and with it Benjamin's attendance at the Brothers' School. His education being finished, it became necessary that he should seek some means of earning a living. His mother was very anxious that he should lose no time in idleness,

lest the fruits of his excellent training might be endangered. She had too often seen children who had been carefully brought up by the Brothers, when once they left the school, give themselves up to idleness, and finally to evil courses, all for want of useful occupation to keep mind and body employed. It was doubly necessary that Benjamin should be put to some business, since his passions had been found so violent and so hard to subdue.

But, then, what business was the best for him?—It was certain that he was no ordinary boy. His solidity of judgment, and his great natural talents, cultivated as they had been; these, with the vast amount of solid learning which he had acquired, rendered the decision a somewhat difficult one. And Nicola knew

this. Though herself a plain, simple woman she could well understand that Benjamin's talents and requirements unfitted him for a purely manual employment. On the other hand, she had no means to prepare him for any of those professions which would have suited his taste and his abilities. She could not send him to college, where Meriadec was to go after leaving the Brothers' School, so the poor woman knew not how to act.

Just at this time it was that that fearful scourge, the cholera, broke out in France and began its dreadful work of decimating the entire population, and Brétagne was one of the first provinces it attacked. Every one that could move away, hastened to fly from the approach of the plague, but it followed from one

locality to another, and at each migration the number of fugitives grew fearfully less. Scarcely had this terrible pestilence appeared in St. Brieuc, when Madam Dubac resolved to leave it, notwithstanding her age and infirmity. It was not that the old lady sought to shun death, for she well knew that death was every where around, and not to be avoided by any precautions of hers, but she wished, before leaving the world, to see her only son and give him her last blessing. Preparations were quickly made for the journey, and they all set out on the day after the examination, when Benjamin, as usual, had obtained the highest honors, and most valuable prizes. He had barely time to go, in company with his mother, to take leave of his beloved masters, and to thank them

all, but especially Brother Angelus, for the excellent education they had given him. How his heart swelled with sorrowful emotion when he came to bid them farewell, and how carefully did he treasure up their parting admonitions! His school-days were now for ever at an end, and he was about to enter upon the dangerous paths of busy life, without any worldly means on which to depend. It was now that he must cling more closely than ever to the sacred principles of morality in which he had been brought up, and put in practice those divine precepts which had been so early impressed upon his mind. "My child!" said Brother Angelus in conclusion, "my child! you have been a good and docile pupil—go now and become a good citizen. Endeavor always to

convince others by your good conduct that a truly religious education is advantageous both to the individual who receives it, and to society at large. My blessings and prayers shall be ever yours !”

The tears were rolling fast from Benjamin's eyes as he kissed the Brother's hand and over again, and promised never to forget his advice. All hearts were touched by this scene, and Benjamin himself had to hurry away, unwilling to let his emotion be seen. Very soon after, he set out with his mother for the residence of Mr. Dubac.

The journey was a mournful one, for every where as our travelers passed along in the city and in the country—they saw nothing but death and desolation. Even the face of

nature, had there little to cheer the dejection of the travellers, for in that old maritime region the features of the scenery were dull and monotonous; the hills were clothed with gigantic oaks, all gnarled and knotted with age, and the plains strewn with coarse, dry rushes, or wild, half-withered brambles.

While journeying through this melancholy region, the abode of silence and desolation, they frequently met funeral processions, consisting solely of a few weeping relatives of the dead. In the cities through which their route lay, horror and despair were painted on every face, at sight of the dead-carts which were passing and repassing in all directions with their loads of wretched victims. And such were the scenes which greeted our travellers all

along the way till they reached their destination.

Mr. Dubac was rejoiced to see his aged mother, whom he had not seen for several years, and he was truly grateful that they had been spared to meet again. He was a man of distinguished merit, and in his professional character, as a physician, presented an edifying example of heroic devotion and real benevolence, at a time when such qualities were doubly required. His zeal seemed to increase as the danger became more alarming, for there is in a pure, unselfish soul a certain superhuman energy which, in seasons of public calamity raises it far above the fears and apprehensions of common humanity. And Benjamin, whose soul was well fitted to sympathize with such a man,

watched him day after day in his heroic exertions, till he at length became, as it were, spell-bound. Nicola went with her mistress to the doctor's country-house where his wife and children were, but Benjamin asked and obtained leave to remain in Nantes. In the course of a few days he became very useful to the doctor, whom he accompanied in all his rounds, especially amongst the poorer cholera patients, preparing and administering their medicines, or rubbing and warming them according as he was ordered. Dr. Dubac was not long without discovering Benjamin's worth, and he began to regard him with admiration, on account of his piety, his meekness, and his compassion for the sick; the consolation which he tried to give them, and the pious

exhortations with which he addressed them. Then how fervently did he pray for the departing soul, and how watchful was his care for the salvation of souls, and for the cure or relief of bodily suffering! All this caused the doctor to take a peculiar interest in the generous youth who thus voluntarily, and from a purely religious motive, exposed himself to constantly-increasing danger. It was something new for him to see such a self-sacrificing spirit actuating one so young; to see a mere boy manifesting day after day a charity which knew no bounds; a moral courage which nothing could subdue. No! neither the sight of the most fearful human suffering, nor the horrible spectacle of hideous corpses every where seen. Yes! it was a boy—little more than

a child who exhibited this devotedness, this firmness of principle, at a time, too, when the stoutest heart might well have quailed, and shrunk from doing what he did!—Yes! he was but a boy, but in what school had he learned that sublime devotion? Whence had he derived so many and such rare virtues?—Truly these were but the natural results of the Christian education he had received. In virtuous souls, religion calls forth all noble sentiments and inspires the loftiest and most heroic devotion. The mass of mankind cannot, and will not understand this, but the virtuous man both understands and imitates it. Dr. Dubac fully appreciated Benjamin's good qualities, and ever after he treated him as his own son. He called him

his young assistant, and in fact Benjamin was becoming a doctor, urged on by circumstances, and by his great compassion for the sufferings of his fellow-creatures. Nor was his want of medical knowledge any drawback on his usefulness, for the scourge which was then sweeping away the human race in myriads was entirely unknown to the faculty, who understood neither its origin nor the proper treatment which it required. Science confessed its utter inability to check, or even to understand the disease, which continued to sweep away millions of the human race in every land without any of its symptoms being marked or identified—strange and mysterious pestilence!

One day Benjamin had gone out,

according to custom, with Dr. Dubac. Having visited a great number of patients, the pair were returning home to get some refreshment, when their course was obstructed by a crowd who had gathered in the open street around a man who had just been attacked by the fatal disease. The physician made himself known, and the crowd instantly opened to make way for his approach. In a very few moments the unfortunate man reached the last extremity, and there was scarcely time, it would appear to convey him to the doctor's house; for, as he was a stranger in the place, no one else would consent to admit him. It was, indeed, a pitiable sight to see that poor man struck down by such a frightful malady, far away from all who knew him. His face

was perfectly livid, his skin wrinkled and sticking to his bones, his eyes fixed and sunken in their sockets, his voice husky and inarticulate, and his limbs powerless and icy cold.

The only symptom of life visible in the wretched man was the violent heaving of his chest, accompanied by a long-drawn rattling sound, which seemed the harbinger of approaching dissolution. Without pulsation, color, or motion, the man was fearful to look upon, and his sufferings must have been something like those of the damned, who, though not dead, cannot yet be said to live.

Such being the unhappy man's condition, he excited far more horror than compassion, so that Dr. Dubac's old cook—the only one of his servants who remained in town—would

not go near him on any account. So Benjamin, who was always ready for any work of charity, was obliged to take the sick man in charge. He resolved to sit up all night with him, provided he lived so long, which, however, did not seem at all probable. But though Benjamin had very little hope, he made up his mind to save the man's life if it were possible. He first moistened his mouth and lips with a reviving draught, prepared by the doctor; then he applied warm cloths to his stomach and chest, in order to restore circulation; he kept constantly rubbing his legs and arms; and, in short, tried every imaginable means to bring back life. And then how fervently he prayed for the poor sufferer! And his prayer was heard. Amongst the many strange

freaks of this most mysterious disease, are the sudden changes which it sometimes undergoes—assuming all at once a favorable aspect when every hope had vanished ; so, just as the day was dawning, the tide of life was seen to return, faintly, it is true, yet very perceptibly. After an agony of several hours, nature regained the mastery, and the patient began visibly to improve. It was soon manifest that all danger was over, but there remained that fearful relaxation of the whole organic system, which usually succeeds a violent attack of cholera. So utterly prostrated was the poor man's mind, that he could not collect his thoughts so as to speak half a dozen words connectedly. Yet, still his recovery was pretty certain, for it is very

rarely, indeed, that any one has a relapse after that disease. Benjamin was truly delighted at this unexpected recovery, for he began to feel much interested about the stranger. He often thought how afflicted his family would have been, had he died at that time, far away from home, and surrounded only by strangers.

The doctor had prescribed, amongst other things, silence and repose ; and his directions in this respect were punctually observed, so that the patient rapidly recovered. When he began to look more natural, and had nearly lost his ghastly appearance, the doctor's old woman volunteered to take care of him while Benjamin went with her master as usual. But no sooner did the young assistant reach home in the evening,

than he ran to resume his station by the sick-bed, and nothing could exceed his kind attention to the invalid. He even had his bed removed to the sick-room, so as to be at hand during the night. In short, no child could have done more for a beloved parent, than Benjamin did for that poor stranger.



CHAPTER XII.

An Unlooked-for Discovery.

NEARLY a fortnight had passed in this way, when the invalid was found so much improved that he was allowed to have a change of diet, and as much as he would eat. He was also permitted to sit up a few hours every day, and to converse a little, so as he did not go too far with it. It was then that he attempted to express his gratitude to Benjamin, whose generous devotion he could never sufficiently admire, and he

could think or speak of nothing else. To his ardent thanks and blessings, the youth always replied with a benign smile: "After all, what great thing have I done? Why, I have simply fulfilled the precept: *Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you.* Would you not have done as much for me?" and then he would quickly change the conversation, in order to escape thanks and praises, though in this he could not always succeed. In the course of his tedious convalescence, the stranger and his young benefactor became very intimate friends, and Benjamin was not long till he knew all about the family of his new acquaintance.

The stranger, now perfectly recovered, was very soon to resume the journey so fearfully interrupted

He was speaking to Benjamin of the happiness which he expected to enjoy when he reached his family, whom he ardently longed to see. "And I will speak to them of you, my young friend," he added, "I shall tell them that, under God, they are indebted to you for my life. My wife will bless you, for she is good and affectionate, and my son shall love you as a brother. Ah! if he resembled you with what delight would I embrace him, after so long an absence!"

"So then you have been long separated from your family!"

"Alas! it is almost ten years since I saw either my wife or son," returned the stranger, "and my boy was then very young, for he was scarcely four years old. I am afraid he will not be able to recognize me,

now, especially as I was believed to be dead."

These words made Benjamin's heart thrill : his own position was so much like that of the stranger's son, and he was just the age mentioned when deprived of *his* father, as he believed for ever. The pitiless sea had engulfed his beloved father, and he had never dared to hope that he might still be living. Yet still he was startled and agitated by what he had just heard. "They believed you dead!" he repeated in a trembling voice, "Oh! how great will be their joy when they find you still alive? What would I give to have *my* poor father thus restored to me ——!"

"Have you, then, lost your father?" inquired the stranger tenderly.

"Alas! yes," replied Benjamin

sorrowfully, "I lost him when I was but four years old. He sacrificed himself for my mother and me—and oh! what a good, kind father he was!"

"Why, this is a singular coincidence!" exclaimed the stranger—quickly. "And how long is that ago?"

"Nearly ten years."

"Ten years!—And you are then fourteen years of age!—It is truly marvellous!—If it were in St. Brieuc now ——"

"Why, that is my native town!" cried Benjamin.

"How say you?—St. Brieuc your native town!—Great God! can you be ——"

"I am called Benjamin."

"What!—Benjamin Milon?"

"Yes!"

“My son!—my dear son! It is then you who have saved my life!—come to my arms, my Benjamin!—child so tenderly loved—but now the glory and pride of your long lost father!”

Benjamin was completely stunned by this most unexpected discovery, but he, nevertheless, had the presence of mind to throw himself into his father's outstretched arms, where he wept and sobbed like an infant. It would be difficult to describe what Benjamin thought, and how he felt, while clasped to the bosom of that father whom he had so long mourned as dead. But our young readers can easily imagine his feelings, if they will just suppose themselves for a moment in his situation. Certain it is that no earthly happiness could exceed Benjamin's, as he alternately laughed and wept, and kissed his

father, and tried to give utterance to his joy and gratitude.

After a few moments of silent, because unutterable happiness, Louis Milon asked for his wife, and was told that she was about half a league from Nantes, at the doctor's country-seat. Benjamin added that he would go immediately to her with the happy tidings of his father's return. But Louis would not stay behind, for he was now all impatience to behold his long-lost wife. Just as this was agreed upon, Dr. Dubac came in, and was delighted to hear of the discovery just made. It was then arranged that all three of them were to drive out after dinner to the country-house. The violence of the distemper was already beginning to abate, so that the doctor might spare himself a few hours to visit his fam-

ily. They all set out, then, in the doctor's carriage, and a few minutes brought Louis Milon face to face with his faithful wife. But Nicola, had not the remotest idea of who he was, so much was he changed by time, trouble, and his recent illness. The news was broken to her very gradually and with the utmost precaution, lest the sudden shock might do her some serious injury. But at last the great secret was revealed, and Nicola, her eyes raining tears of joy, was again pressed to her husband's heart. What an affecting sight it was to see them meeting thus, after so many long years of separation. In fact there was not one of the spectators who could refrain from shedding tears of sympathetic joy. The doctor declared that there should be quite a grand

celebration of the event, for it gave him almost as much pleasure as it did any of the parties concerned. It is always useful to point out to a young family the ultimate triumph of virtue, after its series of trials and tribulations. And so thought the worthy doctor, who instantly gave orders for a little festival, and the evening passed away pleasantly and swiftly.

When night came on, the whole family gathered around Louis Milon, to hear the recital of his adventures during the ten years of his absence. This narrative had purposely been postponed till the doctor's return from the town, whither he had been obliged to go, early in the evening. The little circle being all seated in silent expectation, Louis Milon began his story.

CHAPTER XIII.

Adventures of Louis Milton.

SEDUCED by the brilliant hopes held out to tempt me, I consented, though very reluctantly, to leave my wife and child for a time, firmly believing that I could thereby secure to them an easy competence. This ambition was, I trust, excusable; but, unfortunately, I had not taken time to reflect on the chances of so hazardous an undertaking. I never thought of the dangers I had to

encounter when venturing on the stormy sea; alas! I was too soon reminded of them.

We had not sailed one hundred leagues on mid-sea, and our ship was violently driven over the billows in a southern direction by the force of a strong wind, when we were discovered by a brigantine, who darted after us with the rapidity of a bird pursuing its prey. From that moment my heart sank, and I began to have many sad forebodings. Our vessel had previously sustained considerable damage, and our means of defence were very trifling, so that, if once we came to an engagement, we had little or no chance of escape. We therefore did our utmost to avoid the enemy, but she was a much faster sailer than our craft, and very soon came up with us. We were

attacked, and captured, just as we had expected.

What a night was that which followed the taking of our vessel! Sorrow was in our souls, and despair on our faces. Fortune, hopes, and speculations, all, all were swept away, leaving us utterly destitute and forlorn. All our bright dreams were now replaced by sad reality; the most cruel slavery, without one single hope of escape. And then how fearfully was our silent despondency contrasted by the brutal rejoicings and vengeful shouts of the conquerors. We were very soon loaded with chains and flung all together into the where we remained until our arrival at Takumbrit, in the kingdom of Morocco.

There we were restored to the light of day, but not to liberty, and

we were compelled to stand by in silence while our own goods were divided amongst our brutal conquerors. And oh ! how bitter were our reflections as we looked on ! Freedom, country, home, family, and wealth, all were lost to us. Our misfortune would not have been altogether so grievous had we been permitted to remain together, but even that sad privilege of mourning and suffering together, was cruelly denied us, for we were publicly sold by auction in the market-place.

I fell into the hands of a rich proprietor, of European origin, who had abandoned Christianity to become a Mussulman, and he was the most implacable enemy of all Christians. He was called *Roum-al-Alaboulen*, that is to say, the *Scourge of Roman Catholics* ; and well did he deserve

the name, for, though he treated all his slaves with the utmost severity, yet he was doubly cruel to those who professed to retain the faith of their fathers, and would not give up the religion of Christ at his bidding. Many of these unfortunate creatures were at length forced into compliance, for human strength could scarcely resist the untiring persecution of the renegade. Hence, as it was through fear that the unhappy slaves gave up their religion, they made very bad Mahometans, but their master cared nothing about that. His only object was to lessen the torments of his own conscience, by inducing others to follow his own example, just in the same way that the devils go on tempting poor souls, in order to get as many as they can to share their eternal misery.

No fate can be more wretched, here on earth, than that of a slave who belongs to such a master ; and, for my part, I was almost reduced to despair. I was ever haunted by the cruel thought that I should never again see my wife or child, and it is impossible for me to describe what I suffered in my mind. Never was I again to behold my dear Nicola, or my little son, whom I now loved a thousand times more than ever. These sad reflections tore my very heart asunder, and I felt as though I could not live, with such a prospect before me."

Here Milon was interrupted by Benjamin, who, urged by an irresistible impulse, threw himself into his arms, and clung around his neck. For a moment, the father and son, clasped each other in a fond em-

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brace, as though fearful of being again separated, but neither could utter a word. Every one present regarded the scene with the deepest emotion.

"Ah, my dear father!" said Benjamin at last, "heaven could not do otherwise than restore you to us after so many trials and sufferings! Justice and mercy both required it!"

"Yet, with all my confidence in God," replied Louis, "I never dared to hope for that. The gifts of God are all gratuitous, and if we are all called to suffer for him, we are not all worthy of being rewarded. A short time after I had been sold, my master went on a distant voyage, and I was one of the slaves who attended him. He was going to bring home his daughter Anelie, who, since the death of her mother, had

remained at Izli with her maternal relations. Izli is situated at some distance from Takumbrit, in the interior of the kingdom, between Ouchda and Tefera. I had thus an opportunity of seeing a considerable portion of that country, and a short account of what I saw may, perhaps, have some interest for you.

“Traveling through those regions is very unsafe, especially at night, unless the party be numerous and well armed, so as to keep off the Kabylas, or Bedouins, by whom the country is infested. These bands of marauders are lightly armed, and mounted on small Arab horses, which fly over the ground with the rapidity of lightning, neither the vast sandy plain, nor the wooded hill being any obstacle to them.

“The inhabitants of the country

have nothing to dread from these robbers, being protected by their poverty ; nay, they very often join them in their attacks on travelers, and are almost sure to help them in any imminent danger, thus purchasing security for themselves by a crime which custom has deprived of all its enormity in their eyes.

“The soil is excellent, and the work of vegetation goes on with astonishing rapidity, owing to the abundant dews which fall during the night. Nevertheless, agriculture is so little attended to, that the only produce raised in that fine country is some grain and a few vegetables. Corn, rice, and fruit, may be said to be the whole harvest gathered in. Rich and vast meadows are every where to be seen, and I do not know that I have ever seen grass

so high, or in such abundance as I did there.

“I must own that my recollections of that journey are far from being unpleasant, and I have no doubt that, if my mind had been more at ease, I should have enjoyed it very much. When at noon, the heat of the sun became insupportable, Roum al-Alaboulen directed the caravan to halt under the shade of a grove, consisting of olive, almond, pomegranate, fig, orange, and jujube trees, whose delicious fruit furnished us with plenty of moisture for our sun parched lips. These trees are not the only shade which greets the traveler in Morocco; for there, as in Europe, we occasionally see the elm, the ash, the cork-tree, the oak, the poplar, the walnut-tree, the beech, the chesnut-tree, the palm-tree. and

the mulberry-tree. In the great organization of the world, the Creator has kept up, by his admirable foresight, a most salutary arrangement, even in the smallest particulars. He alone, whose voice called the universe into existence, could foresee and establish all that was necessary for the preservation of his creatures. So it is, that where the sun shines down with fiery heat on a parched and waterless region, we find numberless trees to shade the traveler under their thick foilage, and to quench his thirst with their ripe, juicy fruit. Wheresoever we go, there do we find God, in his power and in his beneficence. It is his goodness that brings forth from the cultivated field the wheat where-with we are nourished, the milk, the wine, and the water, which

quench our thirst, and the wool which forms our garments; and in the desert it is the same beneficent power which provides cool shades and delicious fruits. Ah! how worthy He is of all our love, praise, and homage, for ever and ever!

“At last we arrived at Izli, and Roum-al-Alaboulen once more embraced his daughter, whom he loved to excess. A great banquet was given by Anelic’s friends, in honor of her father’s visit, and it was kept up all the time that we remained at Izli. This gave considerable relief to us slaves, for we were treated somewhat more humanely while the festival continued. In order to save his daughter as much as possible of the fatigue of the journey, our master decided on having her carried by two of us in a sort of palarquín, and

he promised their freedom to the two slaves who should bring his daughter safe home. The choice was left to the young lady herself, and you may all imagine how ardently each of us wished to be one of the chosen two.

“Such was our frame of mind when we were all paraded before Anelie, and how great was my joy when she pitched on me, for one. So overpowering, indeed, were my feelings, that I actually fell to the ground insensible.

“Alas! when I again opened my eyes to the light, that gleam of hope had vanished, and my lot was dismal as before.

“Roum-al-Alaboulen had never dreamed that Anelie would have chosen me, and he was furious that she had done so. He had expected that his daughter would select a slave

more submissive to his commands than I was, for he had never forgiven my steadfast attachment to my own faith. He, therefore, tried every means to induce his daughter to make choice of another whom he pointed out as being more worthy of favor ; but whether it was through childish caprice, pity, sympathy, or any other motive, the young lady positively declared that I should be one of the two bearers.

“ Seeing that she was immovable in her resolution, the apostate became perfectly outrageous, and declared that though he could not refuse his daughter’s request, yet her preference should not benefit my condition. He kept his word, and another slave was set free as a substitute for me.

“ Ever after, the renegade could

not bear the sight of me, and we had no sooner reached Takumbrit than my sufferings began again, and far worse than ever. He had determined that I should give up the Christian faith, and throw a flimsy veil over his fierce hatred of me, he tried his best arguments and most seducing promises, in order to win me over. But how much was he mistaken, when he hoped to wean me from my religion!—I regarded the man with horror, and became daily more attached to that faith which could even sweeten the bitter cup of my captivity.

At length when Roun-al-Alaboulen saw that he could not prevail upon me to give up my faith, and finding that neither threats nor promises could affect me, he gave himself up to that ferocious cruelty which

was a part of his nature. I was condemned to the most painful and humiliating tasks, having for food only a little black bread, and my drink was the muddiest and most corrupt water that could be had. Add to all this that on the very slightest pretence, I was submitted to the most excruciating punishment that could be devised. The malice of Roum-al-Alaboulen was most fruitful in inventing tortures for me.

Being reduced to such a pitiable state, without any consolation but my God, without other advocate than my own conscience, I must certainly have sunk under my misfortunes had it not been for the tyrant's little daughter, the good and fair Anelie. According to the custom of that country, where the women are kept as slaves, she rarely

left the house ; but, as often as she could obtain that favor from her doting father, she hastened to find me out and do every thing she could to alleviate my sufferings. No one suspected her of having any partiality towards me, for the dear child was only five years old when she came to Takumbrit. Who, then, could have expected so much tender sympathy from such a child as that ? But so it was, and her interest in me increased with her years, and according as my sorrows grew heavier, so did her sympathy become more deep. What sweet consolation did I receive from her—how much assistance she secretly managed to procure for me, and how many torments did she contrive to avert from me !—Truly she was my guardian angel, nearly always invisible to my eyes

yet ever present in her influence and tutelary care.

Years passed on, and every year seemed an age in passing. It would seem that my firmness had at last overcome the obdurate animosity of Roum-al-Alaboulen, who appeared to forget what he called my obstinacy, or rather he grew tired of persecution which he had so long tried in vain. The true motive of his conduct was, I think, the fear of advancing age, and the load of remorse which pressed heavy on his soul. His mind was tortured with fearful forebodings, and superstitious fears, and he could think of nothing but his own apostacy, and that of so many others for which he was accountable. And then the sight of his young daughter, pure and fair as an angel, became another source

of torment to his wretched mind. Were these secret tortures he endured, these phantoms of guilt and horror, were these to be the lot of that beloved child? Was she one day to curse that father who had trained her up without those religious principles which secure the mind from the unutterable misery he had so long borne? was she to hate that father who had from her earliest infancy instilled into her mind those poisonous doctrines which destroy the soul, by first corrupting it and then casting over it a fatal blindness which is to continue 'till the awful moment when the lightning presence of the Judge shall reveal the foul abysses of that soul, and it shall be delivered over to revengeful spirits for all eternity?— This thought was insupportable.

He could resign himself, he fancied, to whatever awaited him,—but his daughter—his beloved Anelie?—the object of his tenderest affection, to expose her to be eternally lost, and to curse him for ever and ever!—oh horrible!—most horrible! Seizing his daughter in his arms, he looked at her with an almost frenzied eagerness, and, for the first time, the tears rolled from his eyes. One day he summoned me to his presence. He was pale and haggard. “Slave!” said he, “you have long braved my anger and revenge. Your courage and constancy display an elevated mind, and such is deserving of respect. For the future I leave you unmolested. But now that I have promised this, you need have no more fear, so I command you to tell me your real and sincere opinion

was it not a strange infatuation which prompted you to disobey my orders?"

"My lord!" said I, "you are greatly mistaken. I have only refused to obey you because I was not at liberty to do what you commanded. Heaven is my witness that I was not influenced by obstinacy or ill-will, but solely by a sense of duty."

"Stop there!" cried Roum-al-Alaboulen. "Can what you say be true? Do you mean to tell me that it was for the sake of your religion that you endured so much suffering without a murmur?"

"Certainly, my lord," I replied. "My sufferings were borne for God's sake, and I trust he will reward me: that was my hope and my consolation."

"You must hate me, I am sure," observed the renegade.

"Hate you!" said I, "oh no!—You must know that my religion commands the forgiveness of injuries, and that hatred can never find an entrance into a heart devoted to God, and submissive to His holy will. As for you, my lord! you have only been the instrument made use of for my sanctification."

"True—most true. Now hear me!—I know and esteem you. I am surrounded by slaves who have sacrificed even their hopes of salvation to please me, and you alone have asserted your own principles—you alone have stood forward, an honest man, really worthy of my confidence. This I am now going to give you. You understand?—Will you—can you be my friend?"

Not knowing the drift of these questions, and fearing that they might possibly be meant to ensnare me in some way, I knew not what to think, but I quickly answered: "My lord! any thing that I can do to serve you, without infringing on my duty as a Christian, I will willingly do. You may trust me for life or death."

"I will then—even for death," said the renegade with much solemnity. "Sit down there, and listen to me!—I have abandoned the faith in which I was brought up, and I have denied the God of my youth, but my crime has not gone unpunished. I have had wealth in abundance, I have enjoyed all earthly pleasure, and have had a long run of prosperity,—in short, I have had all that man covets here below,

but all could not recompense me for what I had voluntarily lost. My mouth blasphemed the Lord, but he was still in my heart, and I could not get him expelled, at least the continual remembrance of Him pursued me wheresoever I went; it embittered all my pleasures, disturbed me in my sleep, and enveloped me in a gloomy and impenetrable veil which shut out from me all the happiness of this world. Then, then did I curse God, that tyrant God who thus mercilessly persecuted me. I swore an eternal enmity against all who honored his name, and you know how well I have kept my word. I wanted to give Him hatred for hatred. Senseless project! vain and silly presumption! Impotent fury! How dearly did I pay for having dared to conceive such a

purpose! hell itself took possession of my heart. I have lived the enemy of your God, and such I must die, but my daughter—my tender, gentle Anelie, whose happiness is so dear to me that I would purchase it for her with my heart's blood—my daughter—so young—so lovely—so innocent—must she, too, be a prey to the wrath of this terrible God?—Is he to revenge on her the crimes of her father? Would he have the cruelty to condemn a creature so pure to a life of endless misery?—Ah! rather let him take Anelie—let her be a Christian, if he wills it, so that she may be tranquil and happy! Yes, since he has overcome my pride, let him have the glory of gaining my child, for I freely give her to him!—My fortune is all made available. so when I am no more,

you will take it and my daughter under your care. I confide in your honor and honesty, and you shall answer to me at the last day for the trust I now repose in you!—Swear it to me on this book which contains your creed, and in the presence of your God!”

“When I had taken the oath, the old renegade sent for Anelie, and gave her solemnly into my care, requesting me to make her acquainted with the truths of religion. But in vain did I try to move himself to repentance, and to infuse some hope into his mind,—he died, and would not listen to a word, rejecting with contempt the possibility of averting the wrath of God. What a fearful death!—What a dread example for those who try to live independent.”

of God and in defiance of his holy law !

“ As soon as the unhappy man was dead, I took care to execute his last wishes. I embarked with Anelie, and her fortune in bank bills. Our voyage was prosperous, and we landed in this city without any adverse occurrence. I placed Anelie as a boarder in a convent, until such time as she could learn to speak French and be instructed in the mysteries of religion. Having disposed of her so much to my satisfaction, I was preparing to set out for home, when I was seized with the cholera. You know the rest.”



CHAPTER XIV.

Conclusion.

LOUIS MILON's recital was not only interesting to his own family but to that of Dr. Dubac. Each admired the ways in which divine Providence rewards and consoles persecuted innocence, and all were impatient for the morrow, so that they might see Anelie, whom they already loved for her goodness, and for the tender compassion she had shown towards her father's slave,

while her own situation tended to increase their interest. And when they saw her, they all loved her more and more, for it was impossible not to love her, she was so pretty, so mild, and so affectionate! She was kindly received into the doctor's family, and very soon became as one of its members.

Meanwhile some months had passed away, and the cholera had totally disappeared, so that the family returned to the city. Time gradually effaced the remembrance of those sorrowful days, and people were again occupied with the present and the future. Louis Milon's return had necessarily brought about some changes. Nicola could no longer remain with Madam Dubac, for her husband wanted to commence housekeeping once more. Then

Benjamin was to be provided for and the doctor was most anxious that he should study medicine. Benjamin's own inclinations pointed in the same direction, and he wished above all things to follow that profession which is so useful to mankind. The means, however, were the great difficulty, for his father had returned just as poor as he left home, and Benjamin could not prosecute his studies without considerable expense. But Heaven provided the means, as might be expected, from Benjamin's firm confidence in God. Dr. Dubac, who was well acquainted with the talents and virtues of the boy, volunteered to bear half the expense of his education, and Mr. Delor, when made acquainted with the matter, cheerfully undertook to pay the rest.

He was, therefore, sent to college, where, in the course of four or five years he completed his studies, so great was his application. In the intervals between the classes he still accompanied the doctor in his visits to the hospitals, where he gained much practical information. Finally, he set out for Paris, where he attended the best lectures for two years, so that, at twenty, he found himself fully capable of entering on the practice of his profession. Never once during those seven years had he acted in a manner unworthy his character as a Christian; never had he given way to the influence of bad example, to the secret promptings of passion, or the tempting allurements of pleasure. Amid all the vices of his fellow-students, and the numerous snares laid for inno-

cence in great cities, Benjamin remained faithful to the first lessons he had received from the Brothers, and knew how to keep aloof from the corruption of the world. His faith remained unshaken, lively and perfect; his zeal inspired him with a love for all practices of piety, and of Christian charity. Though his lot was cast amongst vicious young men of his own age, yet he always preferred and sought after the company of older, and wiser, and more virtuous men. The former he tried to improve by his own good example, and the latter he imitated in their virtues, always taking care to keep clear of the two extremes *atheism* and *fanaticism*. In short Benjamin's conduct was, in every particular, the most convincing proof

of the benign influence exercised over the whole life by a religious education.

The state which he had embraced was also one which afforded him many opportunities of practising virtue, and even attaining perfection. It afforded him frequent occasions of being serviceable to his fellow-creatures, of alleviating their sorrows, and relieving their sufferings, and his was precisely the heart to enjoy all this. He grew up to manhood respected by the rich and beloved by the poor, while the extraordinary cures which he performed from time to time established his professional reputation on a solid basis.

It was then that he became the husband of the fair and sweet Ane-

he, who having long loved him as a brother, was easily persuaded to become his wife. Their marriage was blest by God, and they lived a pattern of virtue, enjoying as much happiness as earth can afford.

Benjamin never failed to retain the friendship of Brother Angelus, with whom he kept up an uninterrupted correspondence, which we may one day or another publish, for the edification and instruction of our young readers. They will there remark, amongst other things worthy of notice, one great truth which these pages must already have made apparent, viz. that education is a fatal weapon directed against the well-being of society, and an accursed boon to him who receives it, if it be not based on religion, which

is the source—the main-spring of all virtue, and the enemy of all vice; condemning all human frailty, teaching us to subdue our passions, making the path of duty a smooth and pleasant one, and the only road to true happiness, even here below.

This simple reflection serves to remind us how well the pious instructors of our hero, thanks to their excellent method of teaching, succeeded not only in storing his mind with that useful knowledge which embellishes life and affords the means of working a way through the world, but also in giving his character a proper bent and changing the whole tendency of his mind and heart. This last result, much more difficult to effect than the other, is also more important. I would, therefore, in

conclusion, call the attention of my young readers to this most interesting point.

Oh ! that they would, like Benjamin, fix heart and soul upon religion, the most sacred object of their love and veneration ! The practice of virtue, simplicity of heart, the correction of one's own faults, and the acquiring of all those precious virtues which endears man to God, in short all those delights and consolations which God, in His goodness, has left to mankind even in the lowest grades of society ; all these are surely as deserving of the student's attention as the mere book-learning for which he goes to school. Let them no longer draw a line of distinction between the desire of acquiring knowledge and the improve-

ment of their mind and heart; between the love of human learning and that of Christian virtue. Then I can truly promise them that they shall do honor to their friends and relations; that they shall be the pride and glory of their teachers, and the objects of general esteem and respect like my little *Pupil of the Christian Brothers*.

THE END.

