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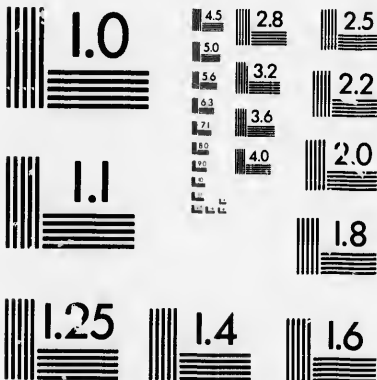
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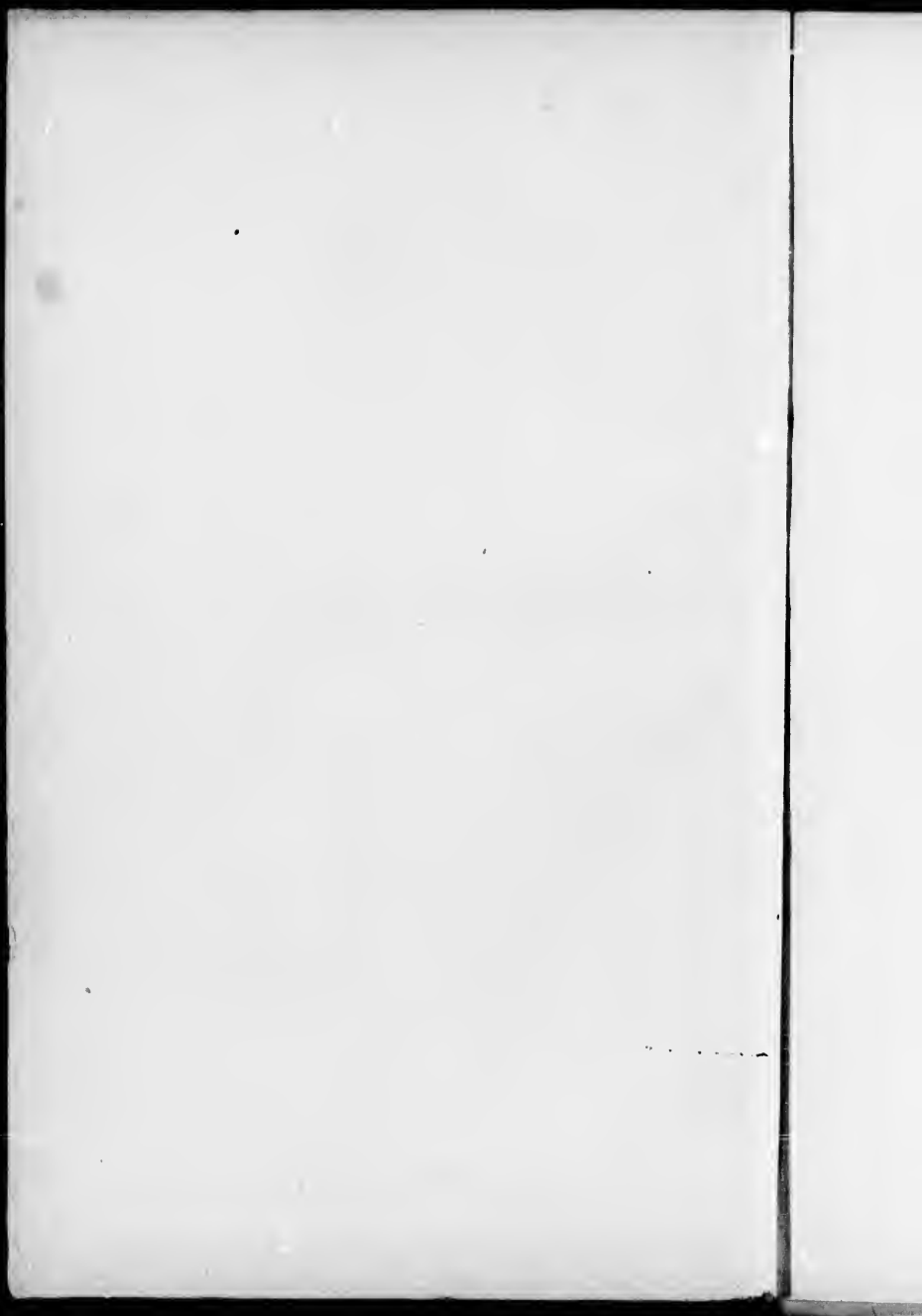
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THE LADY OF PROVENCE.

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THE LADY OF PROVENCE;

OR,

HUMBLED AND HEALED.

A TALE OF THE FIRST FRENCH REVOLUTION.

BY

A. L. C. E.

AUTHOR OF "RESCUED FROM EGYPT," "PRIDE AND HIS PRISONERS,"
"HEBREW HEROES," ETC.

CLARK & CO. 101 N. 100



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PREFACE.

IN writing the following pages, A. L. O. E. has kept in view the story of Naaman the leper, as being a striking type illustrative of an important Scriptural doctrine. The story of the Syrian also gave an opportunity of exemplifying the honorable place which may and ought to be that of a servant who is faithful both to an earthly and a heavenly Master. The connection between employer and employed is too often regarded by both as a mere matter of bargain,—so much work on the one hand, to be given in return for so much wages on the other. The Author would be thankful should her little book lead some masters and servants to feel that this connection, like every other social tie, may be ennobled and strengthened by that faith which unites into one body all the ransomed people of God.

A. L. O. E.

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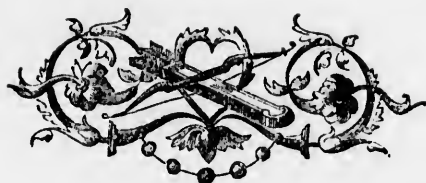
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THE LADY OF PROVENCE.

CHAPTER I.

DAWN IN NOVEMBER.



T is in the year 1792 that my story opens, a time during which occurred some of the worst horrors of the French Revolution. For more than three years had Christendom been breathlessly watching the progress of the fearful social convulsion, as those who gaze on the eruption of a volcano, beholding the fiery lava stream sweep over palace and church; the flames rising higher and higher, destruction spreading wider and wider, till the sky over all Europe seemed to be reddened by the blood-red glare!

In England, which was divided by but a narrow channel from the scene of such a convulsion, intense was the interest which it

excited. She appeared to be scarcely beyond reach of the fiery shower, which but for God's blessing on a pious king and a loyal people, might have crushed her throne and buried in ashes the wreck of her constitution. The storming of the Bastile, the massacre of the Swiss Guards, the insults heaped upon Louis XVI. and his hapless Queen, at this time prisoners in the Temple, with the more recent butcheries at Bicêtre and La Force, were the common topic of conversation. The names of Robespierre, Couthon, St. Just, fierce Danton, blood-thirsty Marat, were familiar as household words on the lips of the smith at his forge, the farmer at the fair, the publican behind his bar. The press did not spread news during the last century with the rapidity with which it does so in the present—there was no telegraph to flash tidings from shore to shore—but the arrival of the stage-coach with the post-bag was eagerly awaited at county town or wayside-inn; and the scanty intelligence which its guard might bring down from London was soon widely spread through the neighborhood; the account of

the state of Paris losing nothing of its horrors in its circulation from mouth to mouth.

In the village of W——, in Surrey, the interest felt in French politics was increased by the circumstance of a country-house in its vicinity being for some time the abode of the young daughter of one of the principal actors in the terrible drama of the French Revolution. Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans, cousin, and yet enemy, of the imprisoned Louis the Sixteenth, had in 1791 sent his daughter Adelaide to England, under the care of the celebrated Madame de Genlis, as the delicate health of the royal girl was said to require the bracing air and chalybeate springs of our island. Orleans (or Egalité, as he now called himself, in order to win favor from the Jacobin mob) was bitterly to rue the step which he had thus incautiously taken. It is matter of history that his having suffered his young daughter to reside in England was one of the heads of accusation brought against him by the enemies who succeeded in accomplishing his destruction. But, unconscious

that by her sojourn in Britain she was adding to the perils of her father, the gentle Adelaide found our country a haven of safety from the horrors raging in her own distracted land;* and she may often in her after-life have looked back with regret to peaceful days passed in old England. In happy ignorance of what the future might bring either of weal or of woe, Adelaide, in her Surrey retreat, little dreamed that she was to live to see a father on the scaffold, or a brother on the throne.

Strong as may be our interest in stirring foreign events, yet, after all, how small a place they occupy in the mind, compared with the petty cares and trials, the hopes and fears, which make up the round of each individual's every-day life! It was certainly not of France and its social changes, nor even of the sorrow of its much-pitied queen, that Faith Stanby was thinking as she sat straining her eyes in the dim twilight of a November morning, that she might weave a delicate basket of the osiers that lay across her knee.

* "Life and Times of Louis Philippa."

There was indeed too little light to have enabled her to go on with her work, had not the rapidly moving fingers known their way so well, that the aid of sight was in a comparatively small degree required. Faith had been up for some hours, and had burnt her rushlight down to the socket, and then, having no second one with which to replace it, had had to wait for some minutes in almost total darkness till the first gray gleam should enable her to proceed with her basket-making employment. She sat very close to the window—much too close for comfort, for the little casement at that early hour let in more of cold air than of light.

The cottage room in which Faith worked was a very small one; it held little beyond her pallet-bed, and the three-legged stool upon which she was seated. The unplastered ceiling sloped down on either side, and was so low that it was only near the middle of the chamber that a person of moderate height could have stood upright. But though the size and appearance of the room showed poverty, there was nothing of discomfort or squalor to be seen. As light in-

creased, it gave to view boards carpetless but spotlessly clean, and walls whose whiteness was broken only by a shelf with its row of neat books, and a framed picture of Naaman at the Jordan, which was hung over the bed. The pretty patchwork cover on that bed, the three flower-pots on the sill filled with delicate plants which Faith intended to nurse through the winter, gave to the tiny room that home-like appearance, the charm of which may rest on the dwelling of the peasant as well as on that of the peer. Faith thought that no view in the world could be prettier than that to be seen from her little window. There was not much of sky, indeed—for that was almost quite shut out by the thickly thatched eave under which swallows had twittered during many a summer—but fair was the prospect over green meadows and softly wooded slopes, with a higher range of hills looking blue in the distance.

The white mist of the November morning was now resting on the landscape, and lay like a shroud upon meadow and hill. And there was something on the mind of the

basket-maker which prevented her from caring at that moment for any of the beauties of Nature. Busily was that mind working while darkness compelled for a brief space the fingers to be idle, and when they again resumed their work. Faith, in her life's journey, had come at the age of eighteen to a point which all in a Christian land may expect at some time or other to reach, the point where a decision must be made which shall influence the whole future as regards this world—and probably also as regards the world to come. Edward Marston, the young farmer whose dwelling rose on the wooded hill, had on the previous evening spoken a few words to Faith which had sent a thrill of delight through her heart. There had been no time for her to reply to them then, for her step-mother, who had been with Faith when Marston met her, had but turned aside for a minute to greet a neighbor when those few low words were whispered; but Faith knew now that it only rested with herself whether she should or should not be mistress of Woodland Farm, and the wife of its owner, the

finest, bravest yeoman in all the county. To the peasant girl it appeared that the happiest lot on earth was summed up in this description. She had rather that Woodland Farm should be hers, than Windsor Castle itself, and all the broad lands around it: Woodland Farm was to her fancy an earthly Eden; and even had it been a spot less favored by Nature, Faith would have preferred sharing a hovel with Edward Marston to dwelling in a palace with any other husband than him.

"How could he think of me?" was the young maiden's first thought after quitting Marston, so unworthy did she feel herself to be his chosen bride; but that thought was almost instantly followed by another,— "Dare I think of him?" If the first question flushed her cheeks, the second sent the blood back again to Faith's heart, and left her face pale with conflicting emotions. Faith had been unable to sleep that night, and had risen long before the first gleam of dawn. Thoughts of Marston and his words had come between her and her rest, had come between her and her prayers. Faith

was in an agony of indecision, and now sat at her basket-making trembling and shivering, less from the outer cold than from the chill at her heart.

And why was there any indecision; why was the maiden's heart not full of joy at the assurance that all she could desire of earthly happiness now lay within her reach?

In Bunyan's Allegory we read of a By-path Meadow, which seems to run alongside the strait narrow path of duty; a verdant flowery meadow, very tempting to the soul, and diverging from the right way, as it appears, so little, that pilgrims easily persuade themselves that there is little risk or sin in venturing upon it. Faith now stood close to such By-path Meadow, gazing on its verdure with a wistful, longing eye. There was, as it were, but a stile to divide her from it. What was that barrier which so easily might be crossed; that barrier, over which thousands of girls constantly cross, without hesitation, without fear, without a thought of the miseries and perils to which the flowery meadow may lead? That barrier was one brief sentence from Scripture—the

four words, ONLY IN THE LORD—which divides holy marriage, such as the Saviour hallows with His presence, from the marriage to which the heavenly Master cannot be invited.

Faith knew—and bitter to her was the knowledge—that generous, noble, and brave as Marston might be, he was deeply tainted with the infidel views so widely spread, not only through France, but also through England at the time of which I am writing. She knew that he spoke lightly on themes which she felt to be sacred; that he was careless even as regards the outer forms of religion; and that whatever attractive qualities the young farmer might possess, he lived without God in the world. Faith could not close her eyes to this fact, willingly as she would have done so, gladly as she would have persuaded herself that Edward was really more religious than he appeared, and that one whose moral conduct was so blameless, whose spirit was so generous, could not but be led in time to reverence the God of the Bible.

There is an argument which readily occurs

to any woman in the position of Faith, which came with power to her mind. "If I marry the man whom I love," thought she, "will not the tie between us enable me to draw him upwards? Will not his love for me incline him also to love what he sees that his wife holds most precious?" This chain of reasoning convinces most women that the course through By-path Meadow is not only pleasant, but the right one; they rely on their influence for good, their power over the heart of a husband. Faith was fain to indulge these hopes, and would have indulged them, but for that barrier in the way, the inspired command which she dared not forget. *Only in the Lord. Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers.* Should she begin wedded life by an act of wilful disobedience, could she expect a blessing on her efforts to win a soul? Might she not rather be herself drawn away by the influence of a husband? would not her duty to him sometimes clash with her duty to God? and dare she trust her own power to press on with unswerving steps in an upward path which her own act would have beset with difficulties

and obstructions? Faith found herself instinctively making excuses for Marston's errors, trying to believe that after all "he can't be wrong whose life is in the right," as if any life could be right that is spent in forgetfulness of Him who bestowed it. The poor girl caught herself in wishing to discover that Edward had some fair reason for his doubts, and started to find how earthly affection could make her regard as a pardonable error of judgment in one man, that which would have appeared to her as a grievous sin in another.

"I should make an idol of Edward—I am now making an idol of him!" thought Faith, as the brimming tears so filled her eyes that she could not see the osiers which she was weaving. "I could scarcely think a saying wrong if Edward said it; or if I could not help feeling that his words were wrong, the bright smile on his lips would make me forget all the sin. But must I therefore give him up?" Faith thought of the young ruler who was called to resign his great possessions to follow the Lord. "*That* would have been easy," said poor Faith to

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herself, with a choking sensation in her throat; "I could give up a good deal for religion—at least I hope that I could; had I a house full of silver and gold, I believe that I would give it up for conscience' sake without so much as a sigh; but Edward—my Edward—oh! how could I part with him!" and here grief would have free course, the eyes overflowed, and Faith sobbed in the bitterness of her spirit, though very softly, lest her step-mother in the little front room should waken and hear her.

And had Faith no human being with whom to take counsel in this important crisis of her life; had she no father to whom to turn for advice, no friend to whom she could pour out her heart? Whilst the maiden is weeping alone in her tiny chamber, a brief account of her family will place in a clearer light the difficulties of her position.





CHAPTER II.

THE COTTAGE INMATES.

RAITH was the only child of Joshua Stanby, or, as he was usually called by his fellow-laborers, Gentleman Jos. Though this title was given in mockery, and by no means as a mark of respect, it rather pleased than offended the man who bore it. Jos never forgot, nor let those connected with him forget, that his father had been a lawyer, and that he had lived in Golden Square. In the mind of poor Jos all was golden about that square, as he saw it through memory's haze. How the son of the lawyer had come to be but a laborer, and an ill-paid laborer too, was an unsolved problem to Jos. He had been to school in

his boyhood—nay, to the very school in which the famous Samuel Johnson had been trained for future usefulness and fame. Why the one boy had become a wonder of learning, while the other never willingly opened a book, was another riddle to make out. The defective education of Jos was not from want of flogging, for it was a standing joke with his master that he should make extra charge for extra birches expended upon young Stanby; but no amount of teaching or whipping could ever make much of poor Jos. It was not so much that the boy wanted brains, as that he wanted application and resolute will to master the work before him. His teacher compared him to blotting-paper, which takes every impression easily, but retains nothing distinctly; with Jos everything turned into a blot. He was not fit to make his way in the world by brain work; Jos tried it, and failed completely. His father having died and left him penniless, the poor young man had no choice but to earn his bread by hand-labor, and in this his success had not been great. Jos had never kept any place

for three weeks at a time—he was ever changing masters or changing work ; life was always a scramble to Jos, a from-hand-to-mouth kind of existence. He did odd jobs if they came in his way—now mowed a lawn, now cut a hedge, now drove a farmer's pigs to market—but nothing that Jos did was done well. The edge of the lawn would be unclipped, the hedge would be marred in the clipping, one of the pigs would be lost in a ditch. Few cared to employ Gentleman Jos, and indifferent work brought indifferent wages. Jos was in never-ending difficulties, and but for the skill and industry of his first wife, and afterwards those of their daughter, could scarcely have managed to pay rent for the little cottage in which he resided.

It must not be supposed that Jos looked upon his poverty as arising in any way from faults of his own. Such an idea never entered the brain of Gentleman Jos. That brain had an inveterate habit of tracing effects to any cause but the right one. Jos had a hazy notion that his misfortunes were in some inexplicable way connected with

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the revolutionary ideas so prevalent in his time. It was to them that he attributed his own descent in the social scale, his moving down the ladder instead of mounting up it. Jos could certainly not make clear to others, nor even to himself, what Voltaire's writings or Robespierre's deeds had to do with his being a laborer instead of a lawyer ; but he fancied that if he was poor, it was because, revolution being the order of the day, no real gentleman could have a chance of holding his own. And though his hands were hardened, his nails blackened and broken with out-of-door work, poor Jos imagined himself a gentleman still, at least on Sundays : then, instead of fustian jacket or linen smock, Jos would put on his long-skirted coat with ruffles at the sleeves and ruffles in front, such as was worn in the earlier part of the reign of George III. The coat was old, and the ruffles older, having in them more of Faith's neat darning than of the original lace, but Jos always felt himself a gentleman when he wore them, and walked forth from his low-thatched cottage, his powdered head surmounted by

a three-cornered hat, with a pig-tail hanging down behind it. Yes, if there was scarcely bread enough in the cottage to satisfy the hunger of its inmates, there must always be, in a broken cup kept for the purpose, a little flour on Sunday morning for the hair of Gentleman Jos, and a bit of rushlight end to serve as pomatum. On Sundays, if on no other day of the week, Stanby thought much and spoke much of old days in Golden Square, and talked familiarly of the great Doctor as "Sam Johnson," as if the two men, whose lives were such contrasts, had been fellow-scholars and equals still.

Jos went to church about two Sundays out of three, less because he deemed it right to attend public worship, than to show that his principles led him to uphold church and king, as it behoved a gentleman to do. On such occasions Jos, in his long-skirted coat and ruffles, three-cornered hat on his head, and cane in his hand, felt half ashamed of his homely wife, and of the daughter who never pretended or wished to be a lady, who was only "a good, quiet girl," as her mother

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had been before her. True, but for this good, quiet girl, the life of Gentleman Jos would have been far more wretched than it was. It was Faith who kept his cottage a picture of neatness; it was Faith who mended and washed his linen, and who listened with patient attention to all his stories of past grandeur in Golden Square. It was Faith's talent for making the most beautiful of osier baskets that enabled her parent to have necessaries even when he was out of work, a state of affairs which was of very common occurrence. Still Gentleman Jos did not think very highly of Faith. He was a careless father, though not an unkind one. His girl was useful enough to her father; so were his tools—his hammer—his spade—his barrow; but what were these common tools to Gentleman Jos, compared to the old lace ruffles which he had first worn in Golden Square!

Of his wife, the second Mrs. Stanby, little description is required: she was neither better nor worse than the average of the class to which she belonged. Deborah Stanby's thoughts were more set upon what

she should eat, drink, and wear, how coals could be purchased or rent be paid, than on anything beyond the narrow world which she lived in. Mrs. Stanby was not a good manager, but then Faith could make one shilling go as far as two; Deborah had little notion of either making or mending, but Faith's needle was always ready. Jos's wife was often sickly and complaining; Faith never had a headache, or if she had, she said nothing about it. Neighbors would sum up Mrs. Stanby's character in the words, "There's not much harm in Deborah," a phrase which usually implies "there is also not much good."

Faith, as may be gathered from what has already been said, did not at all resemble her father. She had none of his vulgar ambition to mimic the follies and fashions of a class to which he no longer belonged. Faith looked—what she was—a modest peasant girl, with that quiet manner which has a dignity of its own, a dignity consistent with meekness. No one would speak an impertinent word to Faith Stanby, no one could speak light words of her. The

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appearance of the maiden was not striking. Her hair, smoothly braided across a broad brow, was the only ornament which she wore; the hair never looked ruffled, the brow was never knitted into a frown. A low sweet voice, mild eyes, and a gentle manner, these were all the outward attractions of the village girl. Her education had been of the simplest description; in those olden times a parochial school was not to be found in every village, nor did the present golden network of Sunday classes overspread the land. Till Faith had reached the age of twelve, she had had the blessing of the care and example of a wise, intelligent mother, who had taught her not only to read the Bible, and read it well, but to love its truths and practise its precepts. From that mother the child had also learned needle-work, and many of those useful though homely arts which make a cottage comfortable. A few books, relics of Golden Square, or gift volumes that had belonged to her mother, formed a little library for Faith; to read them was her great recreation after the day's duties were over.

Writing Faith had chiefly taught herself, for to copy out verses was from childhood a favorite amusement.

From the foregoing glimpse of the life led by Faith in her father's cottage, it will be clear that a marriage with a prosperous farmer would have been to her a rise in worldly position, and an escape from daily toil. Many of her neighbors, indeed, would ask the same question which Faith had put to herself, "How could Edward Marston think of her as his future partner for life?" But the farmer had but shown in his choice the same strong common sense which marked his conduct in worldly affairs. Marston is not the only man who has found modesty and gentleness attractive, or who has shown a belief that in the conduct of a daughter we may see what the wife and the mother's will be.



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CHAPTER III.

THE STEP-MOTHER'S VISIT.

FAITH STANBY did not cry long. The loud rapid striking of the clock in the kitchen below made her start, dry her eyes, and set diligently again to her work; she had no time to indulge in weeping. The clock had struck nine, but Faith knew that it wanted nearly two hours to nine; for it was a peculiarity of that clock that it was always in advance of the proper time, and hurried on as if running a race, while its hands never by any chance pointed to the same hour as was announced by its striking. Nevertheless, with all its defects, Gentleman Jos was very proud of his clock, and would let no

one regulate or even wind it up but himself. It had once adorned a mantelpiece in Golden Square; and in its tawdry appearance, loud voice, and general uselessness, the clock formed no unmeet emblem of its owner, Gentleman Jos.

The striking of the clock had probably awakened Deborah, for Faith could hear her step-mother moving about in the next room; the cottage was so small, and its partitions so thin, that every sound was heard through. It was not long before Faith's door was opened, and her step-mother, slipshod, dressed in an old faded print cotton gown, with her hair hanging loose on her shoulders, entered the little apartment.

"Well, I say, child, how perishing cold you are here—you be all of a shiver!" was the step-mother's greeting, as she laid her hand on Faith's shoulder. "But how you get on with your work, to be sure! That there basket—and ain't it a pretty one!—has grown wondrous fast under your fingers."

"I have been at work a long time this morning," said Faith. "The young lady

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who lives with the French princess was in a great hurry to have the basket: when she ordered it on Saturday, she wished to have it home the next evening, and was surprised that any one should mind working on Sunday."

"Ah, them French ben't much better than heathen, and have their fiddling and dancing and play-acting on Sundays just as much as on week-days," said Deborah. "But I think," she added, drawing a dirty plaid shawl closer around her—"I think that you might for once have humored the French miss's fancy, instead of getting up at four o'clock in the winter, and wasting candle, when you might have had daylight to work by."

Faith Stanby made no reply to this observation. She was diligently passing an osier-strip in and out to form the lace-like lid of the basket, though her chilled and trembling fingers with difficulty managed the delicate work.

"What a mist there be," observed Deborah, looking forth from the little casement; "Edward Marston's chimneys are

clean blotted out, and all the trees about them. Them be his cows a-lowing, though, and his cocks a-crowing," she went on, as the rural sounds from the neighboring farm-yard came through the still misty air. "Dear heart, what a lot he keeps! He's a thriving man, is Marston; and his wife, when he has one, will live like a lady. The gossips say as he be likely to make up with Matty Doyle; she has plenty of money anyways, but I take it she has a bit of a temper."

Faith worked faster than before, and kept her eyes steadily fixed on her work. Could she have commanded her voice, she would have tried to turn the conversation; as it was, the poor girl dared not speak, and Deborah went on with her gossip.

"By-the-by, did you know that Marston had left here a basket of eggs just afore we met him when we were coming from afternoon church? You ran up to your room at once, so maybe you never noticed what he had put on the table. New-laid eggs, every one of them; and at this time o' the year eggs be so scarce, Queen Charlotte don't

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have 'em for breakfast. And they was all packed in green moss, so pretty. I wonder what could make Farmer Marston bring 'em to me!"

Deborah turned round from the window as she spoke, and looked at her step-daughter with a curious scrutinizing gaze, of which the poor girl was unpleasantly conscious, though she never raised her eyes from her work.

"He's a fine handsome fellow, is Marston, and well-to-do in the world; his turkeys are a sight to look at. Dear heart, how I should like to have one of 'em at Christmas!" cried Deborah Stanby.

"Do you think that father will be home to-day?" asked her step-daughter abruptly.

"There's no knowing when Jos will come or go—I didn't think as he'd have stayed over the Sunday at Guildford, but maybe summun 'as given him a job," said Deborah in a peevish tone; "I'm sure Jos needs to earn summat, or I don't see how we're to pull through the winter—coals be so dear, and my flannel is worn to a cobweb!" Deborah shivered, gave her shawl another

pull, and then chafed her rough red hands. "Such a hard life is not what Jos had to look to, born as he was a gentleman's son, and in Golden Square! But, dear heart, how uneven things in this world be divided! Here we be a-struggling to get bread enough to keep soul and body together, and there's them French ladies living so grand at t'other side of the hill. Mary Cobbs—she has their washing—you never set eyes on such handkerchiefs as she had to get up last week for 'em, lace all round, deep as my finger, and fine work right over the best part of the lawn; the plain bit in the middle might have been covered over with a China saucer. Why, one of those handkerchiefs must have cost as much as you would earn in a month, getting up in the middle o' the winter's nights, and working hungry and cold."

"I don't think that we should wish to change places with any French lady now, when there is such misery in her land," observed Faith.

"These young ladies be well out of it," remarked Mrs. Stanby.

"But their thoughts must often be there,"

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said Faith—"and they themselves are going back to Paris, and start to-morrow; for Mam'selle Ninon, as I heard her called, told me so herself when she was in such haste to get the basket. Oh, it would be terrible to be in France now! I'd rather earn a crust in dear old England, than be the grandest lady on the other side of the water. Think of the poor, poor queen rushing from her room to escape for her life, with those terrible sounds in her ears—the yelling and howling of the furious mob, while her brave and faithful guards were fighting and dying at the door! When such bitter tears are wept as Frenchwomen must weep now, I don't see that it matters much whether the handkerchief that dries them be made of cotton or of lace."

"There be something besides tears folk be a-shedding in Paris now," said Deborah. "Jos says that the guillotine, as he calls it, chops off heads by the score, and the Jacobins ain't nice as to whether they be women's heads or men's. If I was that Madame de Genlis, I'd bide where I was, where I could keep my head safe on my

shoulders, and not take the poor French girls back among them murdering folk. Jos says as Jacobins han't no religion among 'em, and would as lief play at skittles in a church as a barn. But, for the matter of that, we've some here in England as think as little of churches as they do, and yet be honest folk for all that, as good as any in the land."

Faith bit her lip, and said nothing. Deborah had again turned to the window, and was looking at the chimneys of Woodland Farm, now dimly visible, for the mist was beginning to clear off under the beams of the rising sun. It was the sight of these chimneys that had suggested the step-mother's last observation. Mrs. Stanby had a suspicion that the wealthy farmer might possibly be thinking of some one besides Matty Doyle, that the fresh-laid eggs "might mean something," and she was ready to throw all the weight that she could into the scale in favor of a wooer at whose house she and her husband might expect to live at free quarters. Those eggs left by Marston on her table had, in the fancy of

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Deborah, expanded into turkeys and geese and savoury chimes; and every cock whose crowing now came from the farm sounded in her ears the praises of the wealthy owner of Woodlands.

"People say hard things of Edward Marston," Deborah went on in her rambling way; "but I says, says I, better have no talk about religion, and have open hand and open heart, than be one of your Methody saints, and drive a hard bargain, and look at both sides of a groat afore you make up your mind to spend it. Matty Doyle will be a lucky girl, and lead a fine easy life of it, if she marries with Edward Marston."

Faith gathered up her osiers, and rose from her seat with the unfinished basket in her hand.

"Where be you a-going to, child?" asked Deborah, turning round again at the sound of the movement.

"I am going to light the fire down-stairs, and get breakfast ready," said Faith, who could endure the conversation no longer.

"No, no; you bide here and go on with your work," said Deborah, "or it's no coals,

we'll have to burn afore the week is over. We'll have new-laid eggs for breakfast for once in a way; I haven't tasted such a thing these six months. I think I'll ask Marston to drop in and take a dish of tea with us in a neighborly way some evening; maybe he'll give us a thought when he kills his turkey at Christmas!"

Deborah went out of the room, and shuffled down the steep little staircase, leaving Faith to her work and her anxious reflections. The girl could not ask counsel from one whose coarser mind could not even understand the motives which influenced her own. Faith knew that her scruples of conscience would to her step-mother seem childish weakness. There was but One of whom the young maid could take counsel in the hour of her greatest perplexity—her most sore temptation. The little upper chamber, under the low thatched cottage roof, became a holy place, as in it knelt a troubled, tempted woman, in lowly communion with an invisible Friend. Faith asked for guidance that she might know what was right, and the answer came, as she prayed, in the

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voice of Conscience, warning her from the By-path Meadow which her heart yearned to try. Faith asked for strength that she might resist her own will, strength to overcome in the hardest struggle which she ever had known, strength to give up earthly happiness if that happiness could only be secured by breaking the least of her Lord's commandments.

As Faith knelt in prayer, the rising sun burst through the veil of mist; his clear bright rays streamed through the casement, and filled the small apartment with glory. There was indeed little of warmth. As Faith rose from her knees she trembled still with a chill in her frame and a chill at her heart; but the darkness of doubt was gone—the path of duty lay clear before her—rugged, flowerless, it seemed indeed, but heaven's sunlight lay upon it.





CHAPTER IV.

A WINTRY WAY.

IT was well for the village maiden that there was a necessity for her to work, and to work hard, for her living. Had Faith been a lady, she might have sat still in her boudoir, fretted and pined, given up every occupation as irksome, and every amusement as hateful, and so have sunk under the pressure of sorrow into crushed spirits and broken health. Many a painful thought, indeed, did Stanby's daughter seem to weave in with every slender strip of osier that passed through her fingers; but her occupation was one which compelled from her some attention to work, and Faith was obliged to

use diligence in order to complete it in time. For the greater portion of that day the basket-maker did not rise from her seat except to snatch a hasty meal. She did not accept Mrs. Stanby's invitation for her to come and work by the kitchen fire; Faith preferred her own cold little room, for there she could at any rate be alone, and be spared the pain of listening to her step-mother's worse than wearisome talk about Marston's turkeys and eggs, varied by conjectures as to whether Jos had got a good job, and fears lest he should have lingered at some public-house, and fallen into trouble by the way.

Faith had promised Mademoiselle Ninon La Fère, the companion of Adelaide of Orleans, to let her have the basket which she had ordered before Monday evening, and the cottager worked hard in order to keep that promise. Faith had not cared to tell Deborah Stanby how the young French lady had urged her to work on Sunday, offering double payment for the basket if it were brought on Monday morning, and jesting at the obstinacy of *la petite Anglaise* [little English-

woman] when Faith had modestly but firmly persisted in her refusal. It was needful for Faith to use more than common diligence to complete her task and keep her promise; but before sunset, the most graceful and delicate of baskets had received its finishing touch from her fingers.

Faith hurriedly put on her straw bonnet and shawl—one of the thinnest of shawls, well darned like her father's ruffles, and almost as ill suited to keep out the cold. "I will warm myself by walking fast," said the shivering girl to herself, as she crossed the threshold of her cottage, and faced the piercing east wind. Faith walked rapidly along the high-road, then turned down the lane that led to the mansion occupied by Madame de Genlis and her pupils—the lane which skirted the farm of Marston. The hedges were almost leafless, but the boughs of the birch were still spangled with gold. Thick lay the coral berries on the hollies. Faith glanced at the trees, and thought how beautiful they looked with the glow of sunset upon them. In the fields which she passed a number of cows were grazing on the yet

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green grass. "How happy and peaceful they look!" murmured the maiden with a sigh; "everything belonging to *him* looks happy and peaceful. And I—I have it yet in my power to be the happiest girl upon earth."

There was the distant sound of hoofs on the road behind her. Faith's heart beat fast; for, distant as it was, she felt certain that the horse which, at a brisk trot, must in a few minutes overtake her, was no other than Marston's gray hunter. She did not turn to look round, but rather quickened her steps. Had the maiden felt any doubt as to who was approaching, it would have been removed by Hero, Marston's shaggy dog, which dashed up and overtook her. Hero was deemed a savage dog, one with which it was dangerous to meddle; but Faith had never been afraid of the hound, she had always a smile and a kind word for Hero, and the animal, fierce to others, was ever gentle to her. He now gave her a short, glad bark of recognition, and bounded around her, leaping up to claim notice and caress from a friend.

"Ah! Faith Stanby, well met!" cried a cheerful, manly voice, as Marston reined in his powerful horse. The young man sprang from the saddle, and keeping the rein in one hand, held out the other to Faith with a smile so beaming and joyous, that it was hard not to smile in return. Few finer looking men than young Marston trod upon English soil, and he appeared to great advantage on horseback, being a bold and graceful rider. When Marston appeared in the hunting-field, as he not unfrequently did, none kept up better with the hounds, more fearlessly took a fence or swam a river, than the master of Woodlands Farm.

Faith felt that the most trying moment of her life had come. She was accustomed to daily sacrifice of self under her father's roof, where her toil and self-denial made up for the laziness and carelessness of others. Faith had given up her inclinations so often that she was seldom conscious of effort in doing so; it seemed to be a matter of course that the daughter of Gentleman Jos should rise earlier, work harder, and fare worse

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than the other inmates of his cottage. But Faith now felt that the act of self-sacrifice before her was great indeed—so great that it was almost beyond her strength to make it.





CHAPTER V.

ONE WORD.

“**B**EALLY, nephew, you cannot be so mad as to throw yourself away on a penniless girl, the daughter of a spendthrift ne’er-do-weel, who has no more brains in his noddle than groats in his purse. Jos may have been born, as he says, in Golden Square; but he’ll end in a workhouse at last.”

Such had been the almost angry expostulation of Mrs. Agatha Marston, Edward’s maiden aunt, as her nephew, booted and spurred for a ride, told her before he mounted that he intended to bring home a wife at Christmas, and that such wife should be little Faith Stanby.

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The young farmer listened to the old lady's outburst with a good-humoured smile. Tapping his high boot with the whip which he held in his hand, "I marry the girl, and not her father," said he.

Mrs. Agatha Marston, who had for years ruled as mistress at Woodlands Farm, was little likely to regard a successor with favor. "Such a man as you might look a good deal higher than Faith," observed the old lady with a sneer. "I know no harm of the child; but is there no girl with beauty or money in the country, that you should make up with the daughter of Gentleman Jos?"

Marston gave a short, merry laugh. "As for beauty," said he, "that is a matter of taste. One sheaf of good wheat pleases my eye more than whole acres of poppies; and as for money," he added, drawing himself up a little proudly, "a fellow who owns as many broad acres as I do, and has as much cattle grazing upon them, need not choose a girl for the weight of her money-bags. If he can keep a hunter, he can surely keep a wife also."

And so Edward Marston had mounted and

ridden away in high good-humor with himself. He had a comfortable persuasion that in gratifying his own fancy he was doing a generous, disinterested thing, and to tease his maiden aunt gave rather an added zest to his wooing. It seemed to Edward that his course of true love was likely to run almost too smoothly. He had, indeed, never had a word of encouragement from Faith; but she was a shy little creature, and he had never, till that Sunday afternoon, let her know how much he cared for her. Nothing was further from the expectations of Marston, than that any difficulty in regard to a marriage, to her so very advantageous, should arise on the part of Faith Stanby.

Edward was humming a merry tune to himself in the gayety of his heart, when he caught sight of Stanby's daughter hastening along the lane down which he was riding. In her plain print dress and straw bonnet, Faith scarcely looked a suitable match for the wealthy farmer mounted on his gray hunter, for which, but the week before, he had refused an offer of seventy guineas. Perhaps such a thought occurred to Mars-

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ton's own mind as he reined in his horse on overtaking Faith Stanby. He certainly did not guess the cause of her paleness, nor of the nervous agitation of her manner, when, after dismounting, he went up to her and took her by the hand, as related in the preceding chapter.

"You have thought over what I said to you yesterday evening?" he asked gayly.

"I have—I have," murmured Faith, not daring to look up from the ground, or meet the glance of the merry dark eyes that glanced down so kindly upon her.

"And when shall the knot be tied?" asked Marston, who still held the hand which Faith had not courage to draw away.

"It cannot be," faltered the maiden, with an effort which made every fibre in her frame to quiver.

"Cannot be!—what do you mean?" exclaimed Marston, in his surprise dropping the hand of the trembling girl.

Faith felt that she must speak out frankly, fully: she must do so in justice to Marston, she must do so lest her own reso-

lution should give way under a lengthened strain.

"Oh! Mr. Marston, you are so kind, so generous! The only return which I can make is to be open and sincere with you now. I must not, dare not, consent to be the wife of one who disbelieves truths which are more to me than my life!" Faith clasped her hands as she spoke, far too full of her subject to notice that the movement which she made caused her little basket to drop at the feet of her suitor.

"So that is how the ground lies!" said Marston, half amused, half provoked by her words. "I don't think, Faith, that it will be very hard to reason you out of this fancy. If a man were a drunkard or a tyrant, one would understand a girl's refusing to have him as her husband; but as long as he offers her a happy home, what matters it to her whether he choose to read Hobbes and Paine, or a volume of sermons?"

"How can a home be happy where husband and wife cannot talk together, cannot feel together, on one subject—the most important of all?" said Faith.

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"I can't for my life see why it shouldn't," replied the young farmer, "when husband and wife have every other subject under the sun to choose from. I don't hinder your believing as much as you like, so that you don't mind my believing as little as I like; there's a fair bargain, isn't it?" As Faith returned no answer, the young man went on, while his hunter pawed the ground with impatience, and Hero went bounding round in circles. "You look at what you call serious matters from a woman's point of view, I from a man's; this is all natural enough. You are fenced in by a hedge of old notions and scruples; you can neither see through it nor over it, and are contented to trudge along quietly where your grandmothers trudged before." There was pride in the farmer's tone as he added, "I like a bolder, freer course, and mounted on my good horse Reason, I clear the hedge at a leap!"

"And if there should at the other side be danger—if there should be sin?"—faltered Faith. "Remember France, miserable France! Did not all the horrors there be-

gin by her people neglecting religion and forgetting their God?"

"Leave politics to statesmen, and preaching to parsons!" cried Marston, with growing impatience. "I come to ask you a plain question, with which religion has nothing, or ought to have nothing, to do. Are you ready, Faith Stanby, to take me for better for worse?"

How much may hang on a single word—a word which it takes not one moment to utter, but on the utterance of which the happiness of a soul through time and all eternity may, humanly speaking, depend! To say that little word "No," may require an effort of courage as great as to put the match to a train of gunpowder, the explosion of which must shatter all that has been prized upon earth. Faith often wondered afterwards how she had been enabled to say that short word which decided her fate. She did say it, however; and it must have been in a way to leave no doubt that she meant it, for Marston turned suddenly and angrily away, muttering something about "fanatics and fools," and unconsciously

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crushing Faith's basket under the one booted foot, he raised the other to the stirrup, swung himself into the saddle, and in another minute the clatter of his hunter's hoofs was heard, as at a wild pace he dashed down the lane.

"All is over; I have done it!" murmured Faith; "Edward is gone for ever, and with him all the joy of my life." She mechanically stooped and picked up the little basket all crushed and shattered, with the mire-marks on it left by the heel of the heavy boot. Faith looked at it sadly, and thought, "There is something else crushed besides the basket. He left me in anger; but perhaps that is well: I could better bear his anger than his sorrow. I am glad that the sorrow is only with me."

Faith had made the sacrifice which was to her as the plucking out the right eye, and she thought that the suffering which it caused her was the greatest which she could ever have known. But in this the maiden was mistaken. Better, far better, the sharp pang than the life-long pain. It would have been worse to have shared an earthly home

with one with whom a fond wife dared hardly have hoped to have shared a home in heaven. Faith was saved the constant grief of hearing profane words from the lips of a husband—words for which she knew that a dread account must be given. She was spared the sorrow of going, Sunday after Sunday, a solitary woman, to a place of worship, where she must listen to the doom pronounced on impenitent proud unbelievers, with a sickening dread that her husband might be incurring that doom. Faith was never to know the keen anguish of seeing children of her own learning from a father's example to neglect or despise what their mother revered. She had escaped the misery of those whose who have turned sorrowfully away as the young ruler turned, when required to take up the cross and follow his Master. No; Faith had made a wise decision even as regarded earthly peace, when on her knees she had resolved at all cost to obey the Bible command, and marry *only in the Lord*.




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CHAPTER VI.

THE BUTTERFLY.

IN a pretty little apartment in a country mansion, furnished with elegance and taste, sat two young French ladies, each about the age of fifteen—Adelaide of Orleans, and her companion Ninon La`Fère. A stranger possessed of little power of discrimination would have had no difficulty in at once singling out the royal girl, from the natural dignity of Adelaide's mien, which was increased by the pensive sadness already stamped on her youthful face. But Ninon was the more richly and fashionably dressed of the two. Of the color of her hair nothing need be said, for both the girls wore theirs

powdered, the locks brushed back from the face, and a large white curl resting on either side of the neck. On their heads, each of the young ladies wore a round white cap, according to the custom of the period, but only that of Ninon was trimmed with a bright cherry-colored ribbon. The girl's face, which might otherwise have been pretty, was marred by the rouge on her cheeks; Adelaide, with far better taste, had left hers to their natural paleness. Adelaide sat close to the fire, with her little embroidered slippers resting upon the fender, for she suffered from the cold of an English November; Ninon often quitted her seat, to flit restlessly about the room, her silk dress rustling as she moved hither and thither on her high-heeled shoes, till at length, like a butterfly settling, she crouched down on the hearth-rug in front of the fire, and stretched out to the blaze her small hands, which sparkled with a number of rings.

"I thought that she would fail me, that *petite Anglaise!*" cried Ninon, in a tone of vexation. From having resided more than a year in England, both the girls spoke its

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language with fluency and correctness ; but Ninon's accent as well as appearance must always have marked her as having come from the southern side of the Channel.

"Thou* must have a little patience," said Adelaide of Orleans.

"Patience! have I not shown it to-day?" cried the Butterfly. "Have I not for hours watched Eliza packing my boxes and putting up my *bijoux* till I'm well-nigh tired to death, and endured this horrible English climate till I'm nearly frozen, like my poor little monkey! Here, *petit Coquin*" [little rogue], cried Ninon, beckoning with a spangled fan, which she carried certainly more for ornament than for use, to a monkey that was perched on the back of a tapestry-covered chair; "he shall come and warm himself by the fire—he shall!"

At the call of his mistress the animal swung himself down from his perch, and leapt nimbly into her lap. Ninon patted

* It is unnecessary to mention to those conversant with French, that "theo" and "thou" are used in addressing both inferiors and those with whom the speakers are familiar.

and stroked her long-tailed pet, which was dressed in the extravagance of the fashion which had prevailed in the French court, and whose grinning muzzle and small beady eyes looked all the more ugly from being seen above a lace ruff.

"Ah! I forgot, *Coquin* ; thou must try on thy new head-dress," said Ninon ; and opening a small embroidered reticule which hung by her side, she drew out a red cap made to fit the head of the monkey. "There ; just look at him, Adèle ; is not he charming! The *bonnet rouge* * is all the rage now ; he must wear the cap of liberty to secure him a good reception in Paris."

Adelaide scarcely glanced at the monkey, nor did she join in Ninon's laugh at seeing it wear the republican symbol.

"And dost thou know," continued Ninon, "that I'm going to change *Coquin's* name? —it's the fashion to change names now ;—I'm going to call him *Jacobin*.† That will be sure to win him favor with his majesty of France, Monsieur the Mob!" Ninon again

* The red cap worn as an emblem of revolution.

† The Jacobins were furious revolutionists.

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laughed gayly, but the Orleans princess sighed.

"I wish that thou wouldst not jest on these matters, Ninon," said she.

"I must jest, I must laugh, or I should die of ennui!" exclaimed Ninon, teasing the monkey with her fan, as she ran on with her light conversation. "If I were to be guillotined to-morrow, I must be amused to-day! I think that it is this horrible climate that makes thee so *triste* [sad]. For me, I take everything with *gaieté de cœur* [gayety of heart], or I should be in dreadfully low spirits now!" Ninon shrugged her little shoulders and raised her eyebrows to express her sense of the trials of her position. "Has not that *petite Anglaise* forgotten her promise, and never brought the charming basket on which I had set my heart? Has not that faithless *femme-de-chambre* [lady's-maid] Eliza deserted me at the last moment, refusing to go with me to *la belle France*, because of the troubles there, forsooth!—as if a *femme-de-chambre* had anything to do with the National Convention or Jacobin

Clubs, or any one think it worth while to cut off her head? Then there is the dreadful voyage before me, with that horrible *mal-du-mer* [sea-sickness], of which I nearly died when I crossed the Channel last year! And what is before me at the end of the journey? Ah!"—Ninon repeated her affected movement of eyebrows and shoulders—"I'm not even to stop in Paris—dear, charming Paris! I'm to live a prisoner's life in Provence, at Château Labelle, with *Madame la Comtesse, ma belle-sœur* [the countess, my sister-in-law]; and if that does not break my poor little heart, it will be because hearts are not like china plates, and can't be easily broken."

"I thought that Château Labelle was a delightful residence, and the comtesse a most charming lady," observed Adelaide of Orleans.

"Ah! the château was delightful enough in old times when my poor brother was alive, and there was plenty of company in the house," replied Ninon La Fère. "It was a pretty sight to see the horsemen with the dogs set out for the chase of the *sanglier*

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[wild boar], twenty or thirty gentlemen at a time, with plumes in their hats and gilt spurs at their heels, clattering out of the court-yard, while the merry horn rang through the woods! And it was pleasant enough to be at the grand feasts at the château; such feasts! The comtesse did not forget the tenants,—there was always an ox roasted whole for them at New Year, and the fountain played wine instead of water. But the most charming of all," continued Ninon, kindling into enthusiasm at the recollection,—“the most charming of all was the dance in the evening, and the little theatre—ah!” she exclaimed, interrupting herself with a gesture of despair, “I am *desolée* to think of the horrible changes that I shall find in Château Labelle!”

“I suppose that the comtesse has lived in great retirement since her poor husband was killed in Paris by those dreadful *sans-culottes*,” observed her companion; “it is natural that she should do so.”

“Quite natural that Gabrielle should fret for a while; I did so myself,” replied Ninon; “for three whole days—while the

mourning was being made up—I was *désolée*—could not eat, could not sleep, could not dance!” the young lady looked down pathetically at her fan, as though confiding her sorrows to the shepherd and shepherdess in pink silk and spangles that were pictured upon it. “But one cannot be always pining!” she added, raising her face with a smile. “Life is so short, especially in these terrible times; so if short, let it be gay!”

“Did the comtesse love her husband very much?” inquired Adelaide of Orleans.

“More than *grandes dames* [great ladies] generally love their husbands,” replied Ninon lightly. “Ah! Coquin—Jacobin, I mean—leave my gold chain alone; thou art always in mischief!” the girl smartly tapped her troublesome pet with her fan, and went on with the conversation, which the monkey had interrupted. “Of course, the marriage was *une affaire arrangée* [an arranged thing],—Henri and Gabrielle had scarcely ever seen and never spoken to each other before it. (How differently these matters are settled in England!) Gabrielle had the money and the lands, my brother had influ-

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ence at court, so nothing could suit better than a match between them. And really poor Henri was charmed with his wife," continued Ninon, as if a French nobleman's being so was rather a cause for surprise; "they were as happy together as if they had been peasants in a *chaumière* [cottage], who had never seen or heard of the *grande monde* [great world]. Gabrielle, as thou dost know, was quite a star at court; she created a sensation at the Tuileries.* But even then she, strangely enough, spent a good deal of time in Provence, and could leave Paris without a sigh to bury herself, with her husband, for months at a time, amidst the gardens and forests."

"But her life was, by thy account, no dull one at Château Labelle."

"Not then -- but now -- ah!" exclaimed Ninon with an affected shudder. "To judge by the letters which I receive now and then from my *belle-sœur*, Château Labelle must be worse than ever was the Bastile.† No com-

* The palace of the king and queen.

† The great state prison, which was destroyed in 1789 by the Jacobin mob.

pany, no dancing, no amusement—nothing to pass away the wearisome hours! I believe that I shall find the very rose-beds turned into rows of cypresses, and that the peacocks have lost every eye on, their feathers! Ah, my poor little Jacobin!”—Ninon was fondling her hairy favorite—“what wilt thou and I do from morning till night in that grand, dreary old place! If I dance, I must take the chairs for partners; if I sing, there will be no one to listen; I shall forget at last how to talk; I shall forget this English tongue, after all the pains I’ve taken to master its dreadful *ths* and *chs*! Ah, that *méchante* [naughty] Eliza, if she had not thrown up her place, just at the last, I could at least have conversed with her.” Ninon appeared to take the loss of her English maid almost as much to heart as the murder of her brother.

“I wish that I were going to Provence instead of to Paris,” said Adelaide sadly; “I shrink from entering a city which has been the scene of so many horrors. I dread what the future may bring.”

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the *Palais-Royal**—I beg pardon, the *Palais Egalité* [Equality]," cried Ninon,—“something to excite—to amuse! Thou wilt have to play the agreeable to Messieurs Danton and Marat, and perhaps dance the *Car-magnole*† with Robespierre himself.” Ninon laughed, but Adelaide shuddered. Young as she was, she felt bitterly the position of her father, who had given up the title which was his birthright, to take a name which implied that he made himself one with those who would level royalty and rank with the dust. *Egalité* was as one stroking a tiger whose fangs are already stained with blood, and whose next act may be to tear him to pieces; the shouts and applause of the mob for which the Duke of Orleans had renounced the fealty due to his cousin and king, were soon to be changed to yells of hate. The ladder on which *Egalité* sought to rise to power was slippery with blood, and his fall from it would be terrible. The shadow of approaching trials lay on the spirit of his young daughter.

* The palace of the Orleans family.

† A dance peculiar to the Republicans.

"I shall never endure meeting those chiefs of the Revolution," said Adelaide; "I could not—no, I could not let my hand touch that of Robespierre!"—she made an involuntary movement, as if pushing something from her in disgust. "My heart is wrung for the king, the honest, good-hearted king, and the unhappy, deeply-wronged queen! I know that Marie Antoinette never liked papa, but she was always gracious to me."

"Ah! what a beautiful creature she was; I saw her once at the opera, only once," cried Ninon; "but I shall never, never forget the queen. So fair she looked, so queenly, with diamonds glittering on her swan-like neck and sparkling in her hair. Every movement of hers was grace; and her smile, it was simply bewitching! Every one seemed ready to kiss the very ground upon which she trod! I could not sleep the night afterwards for thinking of that most charming of queens. I remember saying that I would gladly give up ten years of my life to be Marie Antoinette—but for one hour!"

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"And now the poorest peasant in France would not change places with its unhappy queen, a prisoner in the Temple," said Egalité's daughter. "All her beauty, her rank, her grace, have not been able to save her from insult, danger, misery!" Tears of pity rose in the young princess's eyes as she spoke.

"Thou must not dwell on things so *triste*!" cried Ninon, who disliked anything approaching to sadness. "Were we to cry ourselves blind, it would not help the poor queen; so why should we make our eyes red, and spoil our beauty for nothing! Come, shall I sing thee a little *chanson* to my lute? Ah, I forget, the lute is packed up, labelled and corded: I saw Eliza putting the wrapper round the case. That *méchante* Eliza, to desert me thus! If she had only left time for Madame de Genlis to find another *femme-de-chambre Anglaise* to fill her place, I should not have minded her going."

"It would be impossible to find one now, as we start for the sea-port to-morrow," said Adelaide of Orleans.

"Ah, I have it!" exclaimed Ninon, with a

little cry of childish delight and clapping of hands, as if she had made an important discovery. "*La petite Anglaise!* the girl who makes those little *bijoux* of baskets! I have taken such a fancy to them—and to her, with the manners so quiet and *gentille*, and the eyes so gentle and thoughtful! Ah, *ça va bien*—that will do—that will do!" continued Ninon, again clapping her hands. "Faith Stanby, she shall go with me to Provence, to the horrible dreary château; she shall talk English to me and read to me English *romans*, and feed and take care of my *charmant* Jacobin, and show me how to make those beautiful baskets. Adèle, I will rival *Messieurs* thy brothers. They know so well how to use their hands. Have I not seen the charming press and table with drawers made by *le Duc de Chatres* and his brother!* If the royal children of France learn trades, (the king himself is a clever locksmith,) why not a *demoiselle* [young lady] of Provence? In these times of change, when the world is turned upside down, and butchers and fish-women lord it

* "Life and Times of Louis Philippe."

over *les aristocrats* [nobility], it is just as well that we should all have a trade to fall back on in case of necessity. I may have to wander about with my lute and my monkey, and dance and sing for the diversion of others instead of my own, and sell my pretty little baskets, while *Monsieur le Duc de Chatres** is earning his bread by teaching *l'histoire et la géographie* [history and geography] in some foreign land." Ninon sprang up from her crouching position on the hearth-rug, as if impatient to begin directly her course of education in basket-making. "I will go at once," she cried, "and tell Madame de Genlis that I have found another *femme-de-chambre*, and that I have decided on taking *ma petite Anglaise* with me to Château Labelle!"

"Hadst thou not better wait to know what *la petite Anglaise* herself says to the question?" observed Adelaide of Orleans. "It is possible that Faith Stanby may decline leaving her home and her country."

"Decline leaving some wretched *chaumière* [cottage], to dwell in the most charming

* Afterwards King Louis Philippe.

château [castle] in *la belle France*! impossible!" exclaimed Ninon, forgetful apparently of the very different description of the place which she had given two minutes before. "Besides, if *la petite Anglaise* did object to going with me (she might so perhaps just at first), I should soon win her over with a few smiles, and the promise of plenty of *louis d'or*. Money and sugared words are baits which she will never resist."

"Faith did resist both on Saturday, when thou didst press her so hard to make the basket on Sunday," observed the Orleans princess.

"*La folle*! [silly thing!]—as if there could be any possible harm in pleasing a *demoiselle*, and earning a whole crown instead of a half one!" exclaimed Ninon La Fère. "And yet the *méchante*, though she will not work upon Sundays, thinks nothing, doubtless, of eating flesh upon Fridays, and probably never said an *Ave* to the Madonna in her life. Ah, these Anglais, they have no religion at all!"

"I do not agree with thee, Ninon," said Adelaide, her fingers unconsciously toy

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with a little golden crucifix, which she wore suspended by a ribbon round her neck; "the English do not go to high mass, nor pray to the blessed Virgin, nor have as much outward show as we have—or as we used to have, in France, before these terrible days; but I have often thought that there is more depth, more life in their devotion. See the influence that religion has over the actions of some of these people: that girl Faith, for example. There was poverty shown in her dress (I counted three neat patches upon it,) poverty in her face (I suspect she had fasted on Saturday, whatever she had done upon Friday), and yet, with all your coaxing and bribery, you could no more persuade her to do what she thought contrary to her religion, than you could have moved the towers of *Nôtre Dame*."

"Ah, the whole nation are obstinate, from their farmer of a king down to a peasant girl!" exclaimed Ninon, shrugging her shoulders, and speaking in a tone of contempt. Her own course of action was as different from that of the girl whom she despised, as the feeble zigzag flutter of a butterfly is from

the straight, rapid flight of a strong-winged bird. Ninon had no principle of any kind to guide her: in life, her sole object was pleasure; and she was unable even to understand how any one could live in the world and yet be not of the world, or how it could be possible to find any happiness in doing the will of an unseen Creator.

"Perhaps," observed Adelaide, "thou mayest find Faith as firm in declining to follow thee to France as she was in refusing to work upon Sunday."

"*Ma chère*, why shouldest thou always imagine difficulties!" cried Ninon gayly. "I think that thou hast breathed the fog of this England till thou hast imbibed some of its gloom. Thou dost sit, and think, and sigh—I laugh and dance! where is the use of thinking and sighing? our crying our eyes out will not bring back the gay court-life in Paris, nor the grand processions on saints' days, nor—Ah, *Coquin!*—Jacobin! what hast thou done!" exclaimed Ninon, suddenly interrupted by the sound of a crash, as the monkey, in one of his gambols, threw down a china figure from a gilded

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stand which he had chosen to make his perch. "The charming St. Agnes flung down on the carpet—her gilt crown broken off. Ah, *quelle dommage ! quelle dommage !*" [what a pity !] cried Ninon, raising the fallen image with an air of exaggerated distress, and kissing and pressing it to her bosom, as if it had been an injured child. "*Méchant Jacobin, petit monstre !* I will punish thee, I will have thee beaten ! thou hast no reverence for the holy images !" Ninon, as she spoke, angrily threatened with her fan the monkey that, as if exulting in the mischief which he had done, grinned and jabbered from the pedestal on which the figure had stood ; then, suddenly changing her manner and tone, the volatile girl burst out into a loud ringing laugh : "But thou art a clever fellow, thou art ! it is but in thy new character that thou art acting ! thou knowest that to wear the *bonet rouge* gives a right to knock down images and knock off crowns ! thou wilt have Jacobin manners as well as Jacobin name ! Ah, won't they adore thee in Paris !"

Ninon might have prattled a good deal

more nonsense in her flippant, affected way, had not her attention been diverted from the broken ornament and the mischievous pet by the entrance of a footman in gorgeous livery, to announce that a girl was waiting outside, who said that she had been ordered to bring something for Mademoiselle Ninon.

"Ah, *ma petite Anglaise* at last!" exclaimed Ninon La Fère; "show her up here directly; I have been dying to see her."



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CHAPTER VII.

THE OFFER.

THERE could scarcely have been a greater contrast between two girls than that presented by Ninon and Faith, as the latter, pale and sad, in her plain and modest attire, dropped her courtesy before the gayly-dressed, powdered, perfumed, and rouged young lady of France. The November sun had just sunk, and in that chill misty evening more light came from the fireplace than from between the crimson satin curtains which draperied the windows; but there was sufficient to show deep traces either of sorrow or of suffering on the countenance of Faith Stanby.

"*Pauvre fille !*" [poor girl!] thought the

gentle Adelaide ; " I fear that she has tasted little food since we saw her on Saturday. How pallid her face, how hollow her eyes ; they look as though they had been weeping ! Her shawl is so thin, the wind must blow through her ! That *fille* will scarcely refuse to go to any place where there is abundance of fuel and food."

" I am sorry, mademoiselle, very sorry," began Faith, looking down on the soiled and crushed basket which she held in her hand. " I tried to keep my promise ; I was at work before four o'clock this morning ; but"—

" Never mind the basket ; thou shalt make plenty more, and teach me how to make them, they are *si gentilles* !" cried Ninon La Fère ; and without giving Faith time to reply, the young lady rattled on : " thou shalt go with me back to France to-morrow—over the sea to *la belle France* : thou shalt be my *femme-de-chambre*, in the place of that *méchante* Eliza. I like thy face ; and thou shalt have other dress ; and thou shalt comb and take care of my *cher Jacobin* "—

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As if the animal had heard the sound of his own name, he darted from the stand of which he had taken possession, and from which he had been maliciously grinning at Faith from the moment of her entering the apartment. Perhaps the difference in her dress and appearance from that of the usual occupants of that room had roused his natural fierceness, for Jacobin sprang like a wild cat at the English girl, clung to her arm, and bit her through her thin shawl. Faith was startled and frightened; she had never seen a monkey before, and the contrast between the brute's fantastical dress and savage wildness made him appear to her more hideous.

"Take him off her, she is alarmed—I fear hurt," cried the Orleans princess to Ninon, who was almost in convulsions with laughing at her favorite's vigorous attack on the stranger.

Ninon La Fère, still laughing, struck the monkey sharply with her fan, and with little difficulty made him let go his hold, and retreat whining behind a sofa. "Never mind," she said to Faith; "he is the most

charming little creature when he knows thee—so wise—so clever! thou wilt be so fond of Jacobin when thou art with me in France."

"But, lady, I have no wish to go to France," replied Faith, who felt that nothing on earth should induce her to do so. The account of horrors in Paris and Versailles had roused a feeling of strong indignation throughout Britain—a feeling shared alike by the gentle and the bold: that feeling was like the stirring of wind before the coming of the tempest. The black clouds were overspreading the sky, and were soon to burst in the thunders of war. On every side preparations were being made for the impending conflict; recruiting parties were abroad, and the chances of success in the coming struggle with France was the theme of talk in cottage as well as in hall. To cross the Channel at this period would be almost like going into an enemy's country, with the probability of never being able to leave it again. Faith would almost as soon have ascended Mount Vesuvius during an eruption; the roaring fires and hot lava of

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the volcano were less horrible to her mind than the flames of the French Revolution.

"No wish to go! but thou must and shalt go!" exclaimed Ninon, who was too much of a spoiled child to endure opposition to her will, at least from one belonging to a class whom she despised, and termed *canaille*. "I am not going to stay in Paris. I reside in a château the most *charmant* in France, a *veritable Elysée*, full of *delices*" [delights]. Ninon's little upward movement of hands and eyes was intended to impress on the imagination of Faith the happiness to be enjoyed by residing in a place which the young lady herself had lately described as being worse than the Bastile.

Very modestly, but very decidedly, Faith again declined the offer made her. She had no intention, she said, of going into service at present, for she was wanted at home. She had never been taught a lady's-maid's duties, and would perform them badly.

"Not taught; but Diane shall teach thee!" cried Ninon, not easily daunted by

a refusal. "She is *bien accomplie*—she shall show thee how to *frisonner*—Ah, I forget, thou knowest not the language!—to friz and to powder." Ninon with animated movements of her hands acted what she described. "Thou shalt work—I am sure thou dost work beautifully—thou wilt soon learn to copy *les modes* to perfection!"

"Indeed, lady, I thank you for the offer; but I must decline it," said Faith, taking a backward step towards the door, with a strong wish to escape from the room; but the lively French girl was by no means disposed to let her retreat.

"Thou shalt have money—not paper money, not *les assignats*,"* continued Ninon, with an arch glance at Egalité's daughter. "Two hundred *francs*†—three hundred—four hundred," she continued, raising her terms as she read steady refusal in the countenance of Faith. "Thou shalt have money with thy own king's head upon it—

* Paper money, largely circulated in France, of which there will be found fuller mention in a note further on in this volume.

† A *franc* is tenpence.

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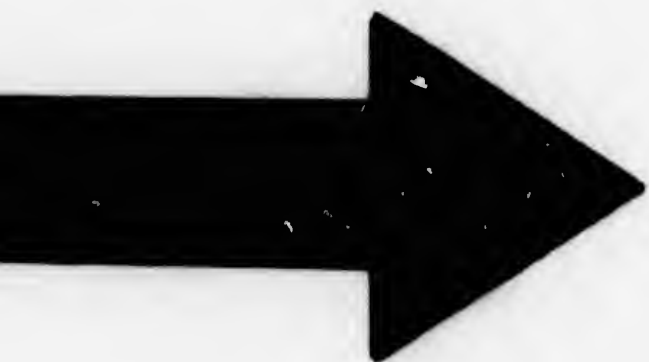
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ten yellow golden guineas in thy hand this very day—if thou wilt but cross the sea with me on Wednesday.”

“Pardon me, lady, but no money would make me leave England now,” replied Faith; and she added, but not aloud, “Not for ten guineas a thousand times would I change my country for one in which there is no order, no peace, and where the only religion known is the idolatrous worship of Rome.”

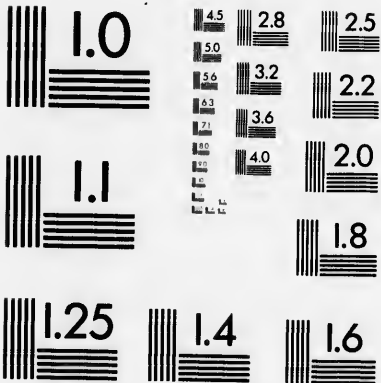
For Faith was not only infected by those national prejudices which at that time very strongly prevailed throughout Britain, but her Protestant principles made her shrink from throwing herself amongst strangers professing the Romish religion, if they professed any religion whatever. The quick eye of Faith had noticed a colored image of the Virgin Mary which occupied a niche in the room, the golden crucifix which was hung round the neck of Adelaide, the rosary which lay on the table, beside an open volume of the legends of saints. At the nature of the contents of the book Faith could only guess from the strange picture





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and illuminations which caught her eye ; but this, as well as the things before mentioned, were in her mind connected with a corrupt Church, whose votaries had, especially in France, slain thousands by fire and sword, and driven the brave and true into exile for no crime but that of desiring to worship their Maker in spirit and in truth. No temptation or pleasure could have induced the English maiden to give up the religious freedom which she enjoyed in a Protestant land.

The emphasis which Faith in her reply had laid on the words "*no money*," showed even Ninon that all attempt to persuade her would be vain, and the playful coaxing of the young lady was instantly changed to the expression of anger and disappointment. With the petulance of a spoilt child to whom a coveted toy is refused, Ninon stamped on the carpet, and, in a voice shrill with passion, launched at Faith a volley of epithets in French, the exact meaning of which might not be understood by the English maid, but which were easily enough recognized to be terms of abuse. Faith

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was *bête—folle—ingrate*; though it would have been difficult to have proved against the poor girl the charge of ingratitude towards one who never even offered to pay her for the many hours of toil bestowed on making the unfortunate basket. In vain Adelaide of Orleans expostulated against her companion's outburst of temper; Ninon would not listen to her friend. The monkey, seeing and sharing the excitement of his mistress, added the noise of his bark to that of her petulant abuse, and appeared to be preparing to dart again at the stranger. Faith did not consider it necessary to stand to be insulted by a passionate girl, or worried by her monkey; so, with modest dignity, she drew her thin shawl more closely around her, dropped a courtesy to Mademoiselle of Orleans, and then retired from the room. Faith could hear the shrill tones of Ninon's voice until the outer door of the outer hall was closed behind her, and she found herself again in the open air.

"To serve such a mistress would be to sell myself into slavery indeed!" thought Faith. "How thankful I am that it is not

my lot to be her maid; I pity the person who is so. I thought when I entered that house that I was as unhappy as I could be, but I see now that I was ungrateful for many rich blessings. Dare I murmur whilst I have a home in dear England, though that home be so humble! If I am poor, I am free!"

Notwithstanding the sharp pain in her arm from the bite of the monkey, the visit to Ninon had had rather a bracing effect on the spirits of Faith. She walked with a firmer step and head less depressed than she had done after her trying interview with Edward Marston. To say "No" to him had been bitter indeed; perhaps a little lurking pride in the heart of Faith made her feel rather pleased than otherwise that she had had to repeat that difficult word to the fine French lady. As in the dim misty twilight Faith rapidly retraced her steps along the lane which skirted the property of Marston, and intuitively strained her eyes to catch a glimpse of his dwelling through the thick white fog, she realized how much thoughts of him had to do with

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her extreme aversion to quitting her country. When Faith had parted from Edward an hour before, she had believed that she had entirely given up all hope of becoming his wife ; but hope is hard to kill, especially in young hearts. Why might not Marston's views change—why might he not become in time as pious as he was already generous and brave ? Faith's fervent prayers for the man whom she loved might be answered ; the only barrier between Marston and herself might be thrown down ; she might yet be the happiest of women. Weary and well-nigh exhausted as she was, such thoughts inspired Faith with new vigor, and beguiled the way until she came in sight of the glimmering light in the window of her home.





CHAPTER VIII.

A SACRIFICE.

“**O**H, my husband—my poor dear Jos! Alack, that I should live to see this day!”

Such were the words, sobbed forth by Deborah Stanby, which first met the ears of Faith as she lifted the latch, and crossed the threshold.

“My father!—what has happened to him?” cried Faith in alarm.

“And he—such a gentleman as he is, and always was—to be marched off with a herd of low fellows as know no more than the beasts they’ve been a-driving, or the kettles they been a-tinkering,” sobbed Deborah, rocking herself backwards and forwards in her chair and wringing her hands.

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"Oh, tell me what has happened!" cried Faith, turning anxiously towards Tim Mason, the carrier, who was standing by the fireplace with his hands in his pockets. He had been the bearer of a letter, which lay open on the table.

"Well, it's nothing to make the missus take on so, as if Jos were killed and buried already. It's not every soldier as is knocked over in the bloodiest fight, and we han't come to fighting yet," said the carrier.

"Soldier!—surely my father has not enlisted!" cried Faith.

"'Listed—that's just what Gentleman Jos has done. He'd had, maybe, a drop too much at Guildford; and the recruiting parties, they be going about the country—drum and fife, cockades and all. At the soberest times, Gentleman Jos be easily caught with a fly, if you make it of gay-colored feathers; so he thought as how he'd go and help to thrash them French, and make mincemeat o' them, for the way they've treated their king."

"Jos was always for church and king!"

cried Deborah, proudly; "he'd stand to the last for the one or the other."

"So he thought in the evening," said the carrier, with a broad grin; "but it seems he changed his mind in the morning, and would rather that Will Pitt should send any one else to thrash them Jacobine lot."

Deborah fired up at what sounded rather like an imputation on the courage of Gentleman Jos.

"It ain't that he wont fight like a British lion!" she cried, speaking with rapid utterance and in an excited manner; "but he don't forget that he's a father and a husband, and a gent'man; and he ain't a young man, nor a strong man; and it ain't a-fitting he be set to drill and goose-step, and a-lying out o' nights, and a-marching all day—and he'd the rheumatics 'all last winter, and a cough in the spring! Oh," she exclaimed, bursting into tears, "if my poor Jos once goes 'cross the waters, he'll never come back again—never!"

Faith looked anxiously at the letter which was lying on the table. Her step-mother pushed it towards her. It was in

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the well-known handwriting, straggling and uneven, of Gentleman Jos, with many words underlined, and some doubly so, to give them additional force. The letter ran as follows :

"DEAR WIFE AND FAITH,—I have had *many* troubles in life, but the *worst* of all has come to me now. I've taken the king's shilling; and the — regiment, in which I have enlisted, is likely to be the *first* sent on foreign service if the war breaks out, as it is *sure* to do before long. I am never likely to have to exchange shots with the enemy; for, though the blockhead of a surgeon says that I'm *sound in lung and limb*, I know—and you know—what I *suffered* last winter. A *gentleman's* son must not look to bear what the son of a *clodhopper* may. *I can't stand* life in barracks; and as for soldiering in the field, a week of that would *KILL* me, and leave you a *helpless widow* and *orphan* on the charity of a cold world that has always treated me so ill. The *only* hope for me is that I can get a substitute here to serve the king in my place. A joiner's son has offered to do so, *if I pay him ten guineas down on the nail*. Don't leave a *stone unturned* to make up the sum; Tim Mason, who takes this letter, can bring it to me *to-morrow*: he starts for Guildford at six A.M., so you've *not a moment* to lose. *Beg, borrow*, do what you will, so that you *make up the money and send it*. I'm a *LOST MAN* if you can't raise ten guineas before the morning.

"J. S."

Faith turned very white as she read and

re-read the letter. It was not only the grief for her father's trouble that made the contents strike on her heart like the keen cold edge of a knife. She laid down the paper with a trembling hand, and faintly murmured, "Ten guineas."

"Ay, ten guineas; and I should like to know where or how we're to get 'em!" exclaimed Deborah, passionately striking the table with her fist; "guineas don't grow upon hedges like blackberries, nor lie in ditches. There's rent due for this cottage, and not a shovelful of coals remaining in the shed! I've naught but rags on my back; and if I pawned this table, and the bed from under me, I could not make up one guinea. Yon clock would not fetch half-a-crown, for all that it came from Golden Square," added Deborah bitterly, reminded of the family heirloom by its just then striking—of course the wrong hour.

"Well, missus, I can't bide here longer, but I'll call in to-morrow morning—'taint out o' my way—and maybe you'll have a letter for poor Jos, and a pair or two of warm socks, if ye can't scrape up the money

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to send him," said Tim Mason the carrier, as he quitted the cottage.

"But I must get money—I must and will," exclaimed Deborah Stanby, starting up from her chair. "Faith, child, can't you help me to think? you was al'ays a good un for thinking; poor Jos says as ye take after your grandfather the lawyer. Now when I want advice, you're as mum as a fish! I tell you what, I'll put on my bonnet and run over to Woodlands Farm; Edward Marston, he's a generous fellow, and rich enough to do the kind thing. I'll warrant you he'll lend me ten guineas, and not look sharp after the payment either."

"Oh no!—go to any one rather than to him!" cried Faith, her pale face flushing crimson. She had far too much delicacy of feeling to endure the idea of a petition for money being made, and a debt (never likely to be paid) to be incurred to the man whose hand she had just rejected.

"There's no one else I can think of," said the perplexed Deborah; "unless," she added, brightening at the thought—"unless you ask the fine French lady who has taken

such a fancy to your baskets ; she is up to the ears in gold, she'll never miss ten guineas."

"I have displeased her, I have made her angry," said Faith.

"Angry? — how? by your nonsensical whim of not working upon Sunday?" asked the step-mother.

Faith shook her head, but was silent.

Deborah's curiosity was aroused. "How then have you offended her?" she inquired in a tone of impatience.

"By refusing to go to France as her maid."

"What! the grand lady asked you, did she?—and you refused, without ever consulting your father or me!" exclaimed Deborah.

"There was no time, the ladies start for the seaport to-morrow; besides"—Deborah gave Faith no time to finish her sentence.

"She offered you good wages, no doubt?"

Faith's "Yes" was scarcely audible.

"And if you chose to go after all, d'ye think she'd advance ye ten guineas?"

The room seemed to swim around Faith,

and she leant on the table to steady herself, as she gave the affirmative reply.

"Then why on earth should you not go with the young lady,—who is so generous and so monstrously rich!" cried Deborah, clutching eagerly at the hope before her. "You've often and often thought of entering service."

"In England—in England!" cried Faith.

"In England—fiddlededee!" exclaimed Deborah; "service is service, all over the world! I warrant you that the lady who has such lace on her handkerchiefs has lots of good things in her larder; and if you've a full dish to eat from, and a soft bed to lie on, and capital wages besides,—my patience! what does it matter whether you're on this or t'other side of the British Channel!"

"I'd rather die than go over to France!" cried Faith.

"Die! that's sheer nonsense," said Deborah; "it's no question of dying with a strong, healthy girl like you. Your father is like enough to die if he's left in the army. He won't bide there—Jos never could bide at

anything for three weeks together ; he'll be a-deserting—and get shot—and all along of you !" cried the step-mother passionately, looking at Faith with as much indignation as if the poor girl had been the guilty cause of her father's enlisting as well as of his expected desertion. Deborah spoke very fast, as she always did when in a state of excitement.

"Mother, give me breathing time, I can't decide in a moment ; I'm very, very wretched," faltered Faith.

"Of course you are ; selfish folk who care for none but themselves are al'ays wretched," said Mrs. Stanby to her whose whole life had been a course of patient industry and daily self-denial. "I wonder that a girl like you, who sets up for a saint, should forget that the Bible tells you to honor your parents and provide for your own !"

The reproof was scarcely a just one, yet it went home to the conscience of Faith. The apostle's declaration that he that provideth not for his own is worse than an infidel, recurred with force to the mind of

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the troubled maiden. Faith knew that she could not bear to live in luxury and leave a parent to want, she could not wear expensive finery while a parent was poorly clad; (would that many young servants from cottage homes could say as much as this!) but she did shrink back from making such a sacrifice as that which was required from her now. The trial had come so suddenly and at a time when Faith's power of endurance had already been tested so severely, that it was no marvel if her courage gave way. With an irresistible craving to be alone, if but for five minutes, Faith ran out of the kitchen up the stairs into her own little room, where she threw herself down on her pallet bed in a passionate agony of weeping.

It may be thought that the maiden's distress was disproportionate to its cause, and that, after all, there was nothing in a journey to a neighboring country to overpower one who had already shown herself capable of making a great sacrifice from a sense of duty. But the English girl felt that if she once crossed the Channel she was going

into almost hopeless exile. How was she, alone—unprotected—poor, and ignorant of the French language, to find her way back from Provence, which, at that period, when there were neither steamers nor railways, appeared to be more inaccessible than New Zealand would be to us now? By consenting to accompany Mademoiselle La Fère, Faith would be giving herself up, tied as it were hand and foot, to a foreigner, of whose command of temper and kindness of heart the late interview had given Stanby's daughter a very low impression indeed. The impending war between England and France would of course render more difficult all intercourse between the two nations; Faith might not be able even to hear of those whom she loved, and would be almost as completely cut off from all earthly ties to which her heart clung, as if she were already laid in the grave. Faith loved her father, if she could not honor him, and many a bond of affection linked her to friends of her childhood. Dear to her were the familiar sights and sounds of her home: the warble of the robin that she fed with her crumbs,

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the twitter of the swallows under the eaves, the whistle of the plough-boy, the chime of the church-bell which called her to prayer. But dearest of all to Faith was the secret hope that would be wrenched away by her quitting the country in which dwelt Edward Marston. *He* would be certain to take her departure for France as an assurance that she had never cared at all for him, and he would soon cease to care for her. Faith pictured to herself the look of indignant surprise — perhaps of contempt — on the handsome countenance of the English yeoman, when he should hear that the girl whom he had chosen for his bride had consented to go as *femme-de-chambre* to a land which he regarded with a more than common amount of national prejudice and dislike. Such was the prospect before Faith Stanby, and it wrung from her the bitter exclamation, "Anything but this — oh! anything but this!"

Then followed another silent struggle: the wrestling prayer which precedes and prepares for that martyrdom of the will of which the world knows nothing, which wins

no praise from man, but which is the highest achievement of Christian courage. We count the numbers who fight and fall upon some great field of battle—those who have been conscious that great events depended upon their prowess, and that the fame of their deeds would spread through all the civilized world; but who notes how many soldiers on duty in obscure outposts suffer and endure hardness even unto death! There is One who sees and knows; and perhaps at the great Day of reckoning some unnoticed or despised child of poverty, some servant girl who in life's desert through grace overcame the world, the flesh, and the devil, may receive a brighter crown than will be awarded to some whom nations have recognized as great saints.

Faith did not sacrifice herself from her love for her father, for her filial affection had to be balanced against an affection more weighty: besides, to leave England was to leave her parent also, probably for ever, without even an opportunity of bidding him farewell. Faith's sacrifice was made to One whom not seeing she had loved; it was

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for His sake that she was preparing to leave father and friends and country, and to give up all that she dearly prized upon earth.

The poor girl had not many minutes left to her, even for prayer; she heard the voice of her step-mother calling to her from the bottom of the stairs, and obeyed the call directly. There was no excitement in Faith's manner; it was very quiet and subdued as she said, on re-entering the little kitchen, to which Mrs. Stanby had returned, "Mother, it is dark; will you come with me to the mansion? I am going to ask the French lady if she is still willing to take me as her servant, and will give me, as she promised, ten guineas, which we will send to-morrow to my father."

"I knew that you would change your mind; I knew that you would think better of the matter!" cried Deborah in triumph. "There's nothing that a girl fancies like change; in France you'll be happy as a queen!"



CHAPTER IX.

DEPARTURE.

THERE was little wind to swell the canvas of the sailing-vessel which, on the second day after Faith's interview with Ninon, started from an English port to cross the Channel for Calais. The leaden-colored waves that slowly heaved under a leaden-colored sky, but here and there curdled and broke into thin crests of foam. There was no sunshine upon the waters, no patch of blue in the sky. There was a gloom over the face of Nature, on that November day, which was in harmony with the sensations of Faith, as, with a half-broken heart, she watched the white cliffs of England receding in the distance, and bitterly reflected that she was likely never to behold them again.

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"I'm glad that Madame de Genlis has gone down into the cabin; I only hope that she'll stay there till we land," said Ninon gayly to Adelaide of Orleans, as they stood together on the deck. "I am never quite at my ease with the *gouvernante* beside me; one is always afraid of these terribly clever women, lest they should put one into a book! Madame could not make *me* into a dear little bit of perfection—an *Adèle* or *Theodore*,* like you and your pretty-behaved brother, *Monsieur le Duc de Chatres*," added the laughing girl, with a saucy shrug of her shoulders.

"The air is too chilly for me; I shall follow madame," said Adelaide; "besides, it would scarcely be *comme-il-faut* [proper] to remain upon deck without her."

"It is always *comme-il-faut* to be comfortable; I should die in the cabin; I could not breathe; it is stifling, *detestable*!" cried Ninon. "Faith," she called to her maid in

* Ninon was doubtless referring to Madame de Genlis's well-known work, "*Adèle et Theodore*," where the chief characters are said to represent her pupils, Louis Philippe and Adelaide of Orleans.

an imperious tone of command, "fetch me the ermine cloak, and the Cashmere shawl for my feet, and the rug and the cushion, and the box of cakes and *bon-bons*; I will settle myself here at my ease."

"But madame"—expostulated Adelaide. Ninon cut short the sentence by a laugh.

"Never mind Madame de Genlis; I'm pupil of hers no longer. Now that I'm clear of England, I am my own mistress at last. Jacobin! where is Jacobin? Faith, bring me my monkey directly."

Ninon certainly understood how to make herself comfortable even on the deck of a vessel in the gloomy month of November. Wrapped up in her ermine mantle, like a squirrel in its fur, she could defy the sea-fog or chill of the air. She never noticed, nor would have cared had she noticed, that her young maid was trembling with cold. Perhaps it never entered the mind of the gay young mistress that her servant was made of flesh and blood like herself, and could suffer from weariness or pain. Faith was not allowed a moment's rest: now she was

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despatched on messages to the two ladies who were down in the cabin; now kept kneeling on deck for an hour to chafe her mistress's feet. The monkey, which, notwithstanding his finery, felt the cold, and would gladly have slunk down the gangway into the warmth of the cabin, had to be chased and captured, not without leaving fresh marks of his teeth on the hand of the maid.

The patience of Faith was much tried during the first hours of that voyage. Etiquette prevented Mademoiselle La Fère from entering into conversation with two French gentlemen who were on board, and who, wrapped in their cloaks, walked up and down the deck to keep themselves warm; but if Ninon did not talk to them, the frivolous girl talked for them, speaking loudly and rapidly in French to the English girl, who did not understand a word of the language, and then laughing affectedly at Faith's perplexed and inquiring looks. At last, even Ninon grew weary of this childish folly, and, addressing Faith in English, she said, "Go to the cabin, fetch me the first

volume of 'Evelina,' and my parasol (the Oriental one of the pattern which Count Lally brought from India). There's no sun, but thou shalt hold the parasol behind my head, to prevent the tiresome breeze from blowing the powder out of my hair."

"That poor maid leads the life of a dog," observed one of the French gentlemen to the other; "she looks ready to drop with fatigue. I wonder how long she is to be kept standing there, holding that toy between her young lady and the breeze?"

There sat Ninon La Fère in her costly wraps, laughing to herself over her novel; only glancing up now and then to see if she were attracting admiration, or to bestow a caress on her monkey. Close to her stood Faith Stanby, leaning against the bulwark to support her weary frame, with her tear-dimmed eyes turned in the direction of the fast-receding shore of her native land. It is not worth while inquiring what were the thoughts of Ninon when she paused in her reading; she had few thoughts unconnected with self; but had any one had the power of glancing into the mind of her silent at-

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tendant, something like the following would have been read :—

“How shall I be able to endure the life which is before me—I, a free-born English-woman, a slave to the caprices of an insolent foreigner, between whom and myself there is a wider gulf than that which divides France from my own dearly-loved country ! I have indeed bartered my freedom for gold. I must obey my young mistress—I have no choice ; but the loving service, the willing obedience, which no money can buy, I will never, never give to Mademoiselle La Féré. She treats me as if I had no more feeling than a stone. My service shall be as that of the mill-stone, which does its work because it cannot resist the power which moves it, but does it heavily, lifelessly, and stops the moment that the power is withdrawn. Mademoiselle shall have little cause to congratulate herself that she succeeded in luring me away from my home.

“But is it not pride that is speaking in my heart ?” thus Faith pursued her reflections. “Is there not within me a lurking spirit of malice—even of revenge ? Happy-

ness I have given up in this life—joy can never again be mine; but while I cherish evil feelings such as these, can I know that peace which may remain even when happiness is lost? Is it sufficient to make one great sacrifice of the will? Must not the Christian 'die daily'—every waking hour bringing the opportunity of doing something, or giving something, for the sake of the blessed Redeemer?

"I am a servant; there is nothing degrading in the calling: the Most High took upon Himself the form of a servant; He came to minister to others; He stooped to wash poor fishermen's feet! There are words in the Bible which apostles wrote expressly for servants, to encourage them, and to instruct them how to perform their special duties." Faith's memory was well stored with verses from Scripture, and she had no difficulty in recalling those which now seemed to be expressly addressed to herself: *Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters, . . . in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ. Not with eye-service, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the*

heart (Eph. vi. 5-7). *Not answering again, not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things* (Titus ii. 9, 10). "Adorning the doctrine!" repeated Faith to herself; "then I am called, even as a servant, to show what a Christian woman should be. As the servant of Christ must I work, doing His will from my heart. The Master's eye is upon me, and whatever I do, if done unto Him, will be the free service of love!" Faith looked on the white sea-birds, skimming lightly over the waves; and the yearning sigh was breathed, *Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.* But with the sigh came the answering word of consolation—*There remaineth a rest to the people of God.* "Yes, beyond the grave there is rest; yes, beyond those clouds there is rest! But now for the voyage on the restless sea—now for the girding up of the spirit to endure hardness as a faithful soldier and servant. Oh, for grace to enable me to suffer without shrinking, obey without murmuring, and return injustice and un-

kindness with that charity which endureth all things!"

Then Faith sought in her memory for an instance from Scripture history of one tried like herself; and that of the little maid carried captive into Syria to be the slave of Naaman's wife, readily occurred to her mind.

"That girl's trials may have been, probably were, far more bitter than mine," reflected the servant of Ninon, as the vessel slowly bowed and rose over the heaving waves. "She was carried off by a foreign, a heathen enemy—perhaps borne away from a blazing home, perhaps over a threshold stained with the blood of a father who had fallen in its defence! That little maid was a slave amongst idolators—a slave to those who despised Israel, and who knew not Israel's God. Oh yes! her cross must have been yet heavier than mine! And did it seem likely that in the midst of strangers, enemies, heathen, that little maid would be able to keep alive the spark of true religion which she had brought away in her heart? What grace was required to keep that spark

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unquenched, when there was nothing earthly to guard it! But it seems that such grace was given. We know that the slave remembered the prophet from whose lips, perhaps, she may have learned to fear and love the God of her fathers. And what a character for truthfulness must the maid have won amongst the Syrians, when her bare word—the word of a slave-girl—had power to make her master undertake a journey into the very land which his sword had ravaged! Naaman hoped for a miracle on the mere word of his servant! Ah! her feeble spark must not only have been kept alive, but have strengthened and brightened till it became a light to shine before men—a light which served to guide her heathen master to health of body and peace of mind. Surely it was the Lord's tender care for servants," thought Faith, "that made Him give that little maid a place—an honorable place—in His own holy Word. We might have heard of Naaman's journey, as we do of the Queen of Sheba's, without being told of the first cause of his being led to undertake it; but the Great Master would not let the poor

young slave be forgotten. She had but one talent; but she did not bury it: she was made a blessing even to the enemies who had deprived her of freedom. And yet that maiden lived before the world had had the example of Him who when He was reviled, reviled not again; the command was not then written that servants should do faithful service, not only to masters good and gentle, but *also to the froward*; nor had the assurance been given that the patience of an ill-treated servant is *acceptable with God* (1 Peter ii. 18-20). That is indeed an encouraging word, *acceptable with God!* Surely He who blessed the slave-girl in Syria will also bless me; He who cared for her in her bondage will care for me in my land of exile. The Lord can keep me from falling in my painful and slippery path, and make me, amongst strangers and Romanists, faithful to the pure religion in which I was brought up, by my own dear mother."



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CHAPTER X.

LANDING.



THOUGHTS such as the foregoing had a strengthening and cheering effect on the spirits of Faith. She dared not let her mind dwell upon what might have been had she chosen a different lot; she dared not reflect on the happiness which she might have enjoyed had she been less obedient to the dictates of conscience. Faith tried to fix her attention, not on past joys, but on present duties, knowing that the most trivial become honorable if fulfilled in a Christian spirit, from the motive of Christian love.

"I must even try to make friends with Jacobin," said Faith to herself; "why should any creature be hateful in my eyes?"

She had been reminded of the monkey by seeing its red cap peeping from under the ermine folds of Ninon's mantle, to which the animal had probably crept for the sake of its warmth. But Jacobin had another object in view besides that of obtaining shelter. The black bead-like eyes of the favorite were longingly surveying the pretty box of *bon-bons*, which lay open on the bench on which Ninon was half sitting, half reclining. Cautiously, a brown hairy paw was extended towards it; then with a sudden snatch the monkey possessed himself of the prize, and sprang up on the bulwarks to enjoy the contents of the box.

The movement made Ninon glance up from her book; without waiting to give her attendant time to attempt to recover the box, she angrily struck the monkey with the bound volume which she held in her hand. Ninon had frequently beaten her favorite, had been quite as fond of teasing him as of caressing, and it was no new thing to Jacobin to be knocked over by a passionate blow; but the monkey's falls had hitherto been on soft carpet or velvety

lawn, —now the poor creature was thrown backwards over the side of the vessel into the cold heaving waters below.

"My monkey! my Jacobin!" cried Ninon, starting up from her seat when she saw the effect of her thoughtless blow; "fly, Faith, fly to the captain; order him to stop the vessel this instant, and put out a boat to save my drowning darling."

Faith hastened to the captain, while Ninon stood wringing her hands, watching the struggles of the poor monkey, and uttering loud exclamations of despair, which, of course, drew towards her side of the vessel such of the passengers as chanced to be on deck at the time.

"Stop the vessel, indeed, to pick up a hairy brute," muttered the weather-beaten captain, with a profane exclamation, when Faith delivered her young lady's message; "I'd not take in a bit of canvas to humor the fancy of any French miss under the sun."

Ninon showed at first petulant anger, as she always did when her will was crossed; but the red-faced sea-captain, in his rough

pea-jacket, was a very different person to deal with from the courteous acquaintance or obsequious dependants with whom Ninon had usually been brought into contact, and she dared not provoke him to anger. As soon as the demoiselle saw that Jacobin's case was hopeless, she philosophically made up her mind to his loss.

"I can soon have another monkey from Marseilles," observed Ninon, as she leaned over the bulwarks, looking on the waves with which the wretched creature was battling in vain efforts to regain the vessel. The young lady even appeared to find some amusement in watching those efforts.

"Ah, he swims bravely, *pauvre Jacobin*; but he has not wings as the ship has, he will never overtake it. See—he goes down—no, there is his head; but he has lost his cap of liberty, his *bonnet rouge*; it is floating away on the waters! He has cast off his old principles, he will die a gentleman of the *ancien régime*!" Ninon laughed at her own heartless jest, while her favorite sank under the waves.

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had it been her maid who had fallen overboard instead of her monkey," observed one of the French gentlemen to his companion, as they walked to the further side of the deck.

"Perhaps a little less," was the reply.

The voyage ended without further incident; the vessel, soon after dusk, safely reached her destination, which was the port of Calais. It was by lamplight that Faith first saw a city of France; not the brilliant lamplight of gas, the invention of more modern days, but the yellow light thrown by oil-lamps suspended in the centre of the streets. In the time of the First Revolution, this mode of suspending lamps so often suggested to the Jacobins an easy way of murdering their victims by hanging, that *A' la lanterne!* [To the lamp!] became a proverbial cry.

Ninon's weary maid could give little thought to the associations which would otherwise have filled her mind on first setting foot on the shore of France at the place where her own countrymen had for long borne sway. Her attention was dis-

tracted from historical recollections by the bustle of landing, and the difficulty of conveying safely on shore, after dark, some twenty small articles which Ninon had entrusted to her care, with a threat that should one be missing, the servant should never be forgiven. Faith had to think of fan and reticule, scent-bottle and powder-puff, instead of Edward III. and Eustace St. Pierre, of whose deeds she had read in an odd volume of Froissart which had been brought from Golden Square. She could not, however, avoid noticing in the faces of the small crowd that had gathered at the port to see the passengers disembark, something that raised in her breast a vague sensation of fear. The courteous manner natural to Frenchmen even of the poorer classes, was changed to a republican roughness which was with some only assumed, but with others only too faithfully expressed hatred entertained towards everything connected with the *ancien régime* [old order of things]. The French ladies were somewhat jostled on their way up the quay, and murmurs of "*émigrées aristocrates!*" from men

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whose dark features looked stern and fierce in the lamplight, made Madame de Genlis hurry the movements of her pupils.

They had not gone many steps when they were met by a servant in mourning livery bearing a torch, and accompanied by a woman who had evidently come to meet the ladies on their first landing at Calais.

"Ah, Diane!" exclaimed Ninon La Fère to the woman as soon as she caught sight of her face, "*so ma belle-sœur* has sent thee to meet me! Just see that that stupid Anglaise does not drop any of my things."

It was not mere curiosity that made Faith glance at the person whom Ninon had thus addressed. Faith had already heard the name of Diane often enough to know that she was the waiting-maid of Madame la Comtesse La Fère, and would be her own instructress, and might be her tyrant also. On Diane rather than on Ninon herself the future comfort or misery of the young English stranger might depend. Her first glance at the French lady's-maid did not reassure Faith. Diane was a woman of about thirty years of age; she might be

called good-looking, her face expressed intelligence, and her manner quick decision. Her complexion was dark but clear; a very frequent smile had left wrinkle lines at the corners of her mouth, the only wrinkles to be seen, but that smile itself was not pleasing. It merely lengthened the thin, tightly-closed lips; it had nothing to do with the eyes which, black, bright, and cunning, strangely reminded Faith of those of Jacobin the monkey.

Diane returned Faith's glance with one of keen curiosity, a gaze which seemed to pierce through and through.

"*Anglaise, herelique!*" muttered the waiting-maid of la comtesse. Faith was as yet ignorant of the French language, but of those two words it was easy to guess the meaning; and had it not been so, the tone in which they were uttered would have rendered that meaning intelligible. Faith, as she followed Diane to the hotel in which apartments had been secured for the night, intuitively felt that in the comtesse's *femme-de-chambre* she would have an enemy rather than a friend.



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CHAPTER XI.

THE REIGN OF TERROR.

“**Y**ES, I find from Diane that *ma belle-sœur* Gabrielle is in Paris awaiting me,” said Ninon to Adelaide of Orleans, when the two young ladies were left alone together in the room which they were to occupy for the night. “*Madame la Comtesse* is wonderfully affectionate indeed; I certainly did not give her credit for such tender care of a *petite etourdie* like me! I should not have thought that anything would have induced Gabrielle to quit her retreat in her beloved Provence, and come up to naughty Paris!” Ninon gave her little affected laugh and shrug of the shoulders.

"Perhaps la comtesse had some other motive for her visit," suggested Adelaide.

"Perhaps she had," said Ninon with a sarcastic smile; "a pilgrimage to some holy shrine, if *Messieurs les Jacobins* have left such things as shrines standing in Paris. They've made short work of the luckless priests; just think of eighty of them being murdered at the prison *de l'Abbaye*, and two hundred at Carmel, praying in the church!" *

"Ah! what horrors!" exclaimed Adelaide of Orleans.

"Shocking, was it not?" said Ninon; "but here comes Faith with the chocolate and sandwiches at last," she continued in exactly the same tone of voice. "I'm quite glad to have something to warm me, for I'm half-frozen; and the sea-air gives one appetite. Here, Faith, set down the tray, and come and chafe my feet. These French *fagots* don't warm like the coal-fires in England."

"I wonder at the comtesse visiting Paris

* Thiers' "*Revolution Française*."

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at such a time," said Adelaide ; " I tremble myself to return there."

" Ah, I forget ! I have a letter from Gabrielle that will explain all," cried Ninon, drawing a sealed paper from the reticule which lay on her knee. " When Diane placed the note in my hand, there was not light sufficient to read by, and then the crowd, and then the bustle, and the fidget of Madame de Genlis to get us safe through the mob, put everything else out of my head."

Ninon broke the black seal and opened the letter. It was of course written in French ; and therefore when Ninon read it aloud was unintelligible to Faith, but the remarks with which Ninon interrupted her own reading were in English ; in which the two young ladies frequently conversed together, it being now almost as familiar to them as their own.

The comtesse's letter was as follows :

" Thou wilt be surprised, dear Ninon, to hear of my being in Paris ; but I could not rest until I had at least attempted something to alleviate the sufferings of my deeply wronged queen."



"I told thee so!" cried Ninon; "Gabrielle never came to Paris for my sake."

"*'The mother of Danton had once received much kindness from mine; this encouraged me in the hope that the Jacobin leader would at least permit me to share the imprisonment of the royal family in the Temple.'*"

Ninon dropped the letter on her knee. "Gabrielle is insane, perfectly insane!" she exclaimed. "I've heard of many persons trying to get out of prison, but never before of any one trying to get in!"

"Do go on with the letter," said Adelaide.

Ninon first dropped a lump of sugar into her cup of chocolate and then proceeded with her reading:

"*'I stooped to ask for an interview with Danton; I endured to cross the threshold and enter the presence of that man of blood, to ask a favor of him from whom my soul revolted.'*"

"Gabrielle stooped to put her head into a lion's mouth, the wonder is that she was ever allowed to draw it out again!" laughed Ninon, as she paused to sip the sweet chocolate, before finishing the comtesse's letter. "*In vain I entreated for permission to attend on*

the queen ; " *Capet's wife has learned to wait on herself,*" was the brutal reply. I prayed for leave to send to the Temple at least some few comforts for the royal captives. " *The citizens supply all that the Capets need,*" said Danton ; " *and they are not likely to want that long !*" The democrat closed the interview abruptly by the warning that I myself, as an aristocrat, stood on dangerous ground, and had better quit Paris at once ; unless I wished to share the fate of *Louise de Lambelle !*"

" Ah the unhappy *Princesse de Lambelle !*" interrupted Adelaide ; " I cannot think of her murder without a shudder !"

" Of course it shocked thee, thou wert her near relative, thou hadst seen her so often," observed Ninon, who had put down the unfinished letter in order to direct her attention to the plate of refreshments. " Was she really as pretty as is reported ?"

" I thought her so,—she was so elegant, had such an air of *ton*," replied Adelaide of Orleans ; " *la princesse* led the fashions more than did Marie Antoinette herself. I will show thee at the Palais-Royal the poor princess's likeness which was taken for my

mother. She looks in it so *aristocrate*, the immense mass of fair hair drawn up from the head, and surmounted by the gayest of *chapeaux* [hats], cocked on one side, and trimmed all round with a wreath of red roses;—ah! that poor head—that poor head!” Adelaide covered her eyes with her hand, as if to shut out some horrible sight.

“The queen fainted when it was carried past her window fixed on a pole, with the long fair hair floating around it,” said Ninon La Fére. “Diane has been telling me all about the poor princess’s death, for Diane’s cousin was present at the mock trial at the prison of La Ferce. But wilt not thou take thy *petit souper*, Adèle?”

Adelaide would not so much as look at the plate which her companion had pushed towards her. “Tell me all about the terrible scene,” she said, trembling as she spoke.

Ninon repeated the fearful tale as calmly as she might have described the plot of some play which she had seen acted on the stage.

“The princess was brought, as you know,

before that terrible tribunal at La Force. She looked pale and nervous, Diane says, but had not lost her self-possession. The Jacobin savages demanded her name. 'Louise of Savoy, Princesse de Lambelle,' she replied. 'What part did you play at court? Did you know of the plots going on there?'—'I knew of no plots,' said the princess.—'Swear to hate the king and queen and royalty.'—'I cannot swear that,' answered the poor lady; 'it is not in my heart.'—'Set madame free!' cried the judge. They set her free indeed," continued Ninon, "but it was by the murderers' daggers."*

Adelaide of Orleans burst into tears.

Faith Stanby had in England heard something of these frightful scenes enacted in Paris, for they were the talk of all Europe; but they now rose before her imagination in more fearful distinctness as she listened to the account of them on the first night which she passed on French soil, and heard that account from French lips. The fair girls who, wrapped in their luxurious *robes de*

* Thiers' "Revolution Française." Also "Rues de Paris."

chambre, now talked of the death of Louise de Lambelle, might have in the unseen future a fate as fearful as hers. The gay, flippant Ninon, whose dainty little feet the English maid was now chafing, was not more shielded by rank and wealth from murderer's blow than had been the fair princess, the leader of fashion, the envied favorite of a queen. What a fearful comment did the French Revolution present on the words of the prophet: *All flesh is grass, and the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field!* And yet Ninon La Fère could smile and sip her chocolate with as much relish as if the scythe of Death were not levelling around her the fair flowers which had shone so gayly in the sunshine of a luxurious court. As for the thought of the great Hereafter, of the solemn tribunal to which murderers and their victims would be summoned alike, such thought never rested, even for a moment, on the frivolous mind of Ninon La Fère.

"Thou hast so much sensibility, a heart so tender," she observed to her companion, with her characteristic little movement of eyebrows and shoulders; "but there is no

use in tears—it is better to laugh than to cry. Shall I finish the letter of *ma belle-sœur*?" and again Ninon took up Gabrielle's epistle.

"Where was I at? Ah! here—'*the fate of Louise de Lambelle.*' What a clear, fine hand Gabrielle writes! '*Finding that I cannot serve my unhappy queen by endangering my own life, I have resolved on returning to Château Labelle, and I only await thy arrival in Paris to travel back with thee to Provence.*'

"Now, that is provoking—intolerable!" exclaimed Ninon, flinging the letter down on the table. "Why should I be carried off to dull, dreary Provence the very moment that I arrive in Paris? I had set my heart on staying for a fortnight, or at least ten days, with thee, *chère amie*, at the Palais-Royal. I must have a little gayety, a little amusement and excitement, before I go to be buried alive in Provence."

"Hast thou finished the comtesse's letter?" asked Adelaide of Orleans.

"No; there are three lines more—only three," and Ninon resumed her reading aloud. "'*Though thy brother entrusted thee,*

Ninon, to the care of the gouvernante of the Duke of Orleans, his widow cannot suffer thee to be for one hour under the roof of Citizen Egalité."

Adelaide uttered a faint exclamation as of pain, suddenly rose from her seat, and turned towards the fire, with her back towards Ninon La Fère.

"Oh, thou needst not mind what Gabrielle writes," said Ninon, noticing her companion's emotion, but partly mistaking its cause; "she meant no harm by leaving out the titles of thy father; thou dost know that he prides himself on the name of Citizen, and chose that of Egalité to please his Jacobin friends."

Adelaide restlessly stirred the fire. She keenly felt the reproach against her father conveyed in the comtesse's note, which she had most assuredly never been intended to hear.

"I wanted so much to see and live in the Palais-Royal," continued Ninon, in a complaining, petulant tone. "Gabrielle never considers the feelings of others! There was something so charming in the idea of being

in the very palace where Cardinal Richelieu lived in such state a hundred or two years back, and where he spent three hundred thousand crowns on the representation of his own tragedy, in the presence of Queen Anne of Austria. How I wish that I could have seen it!" Ninon warmed into animation as she went on. "There was never such a place for grandeur and show as the Palais-Royal in the days of the wicked Regent Orleans—pardon me, Adèle, I forgot that I spoke of thy ancestor. Whether he was wicked or good matters not to me—he was at least a magnificent prince; the splendor and luxury of his court must have been as wonderful as those of the Grand Monarque* himself!"

"I have heard much of it, perhaps too much," said Adelaide sadly, as she resumed her seat at the table. Young as she was, she was in some degree already aware that the luxury, extravagance, and vice of such men as the Regent Orleans had prepared the way for the horrors of the French Revolution.

"Thy father also has done much for the

* Louis XIV.

Palais-Royal," chattered on Mademoiselle La Fére. "I long to see his charming theatre, and the marvellous gilded staircase, and all the splendid decorations which he added to his ancestors' abode. But I cannot help fancying that the place must have looked more palace-like before *Monsieur le Duc* built all these shops (beautiful shops, no doubt!) round his garden, and cut down the cardinal's fine old trees that jewellers might display their charming *bijoux* to tempt Parisian ladies."*

"My father had doubtless good reasons for so doing," said Mademoiselle d'Orleans; "though, for my own part, I should have preferred not having the world's Vanity Fair brought quite so close to my dwelling."

"Of course he had reasons, and excellent reasons," laughed Ninon La Fére. "Shops, brilliant fashionable shops, are trees that bear apples of gold to their owner. And why should the friend of the people, why should Citizen Egalité, shut himself up in aristocratic seclusion? Was not the garden of the Palais-Royal to be the very birth-

* "Rues de Paris."

place of the French Revolution? Was it not on a bench under one of its trees that Camille Desmoulins harangued the mob on the 12th of July, just before the destruction of the Bastile?"

"I witnessed that scene from one of our palace-windows," said Adelaide of Orleans.

"Didst thou!" cried Ninon La Fère; "I would give the world to have seen it. Wert thou near enough to hear the Jacobin ask the mob what color they would choose to be the sign-mark of Revolution?"

"No; I could hear nothing but the sound of Desmoulin's voice raised high when there was a lull from the noise made by the shouts of the people. Oh, what a tumult of voices there was; I can compare it to nothing but the roar of the sea. I had been practising on my spinnet, and therefore had not heard what was going on in the garden, till Madame de Genlis ran in, and called me to look out of the window. It was to me an amusing sight; I enjoyed the excitement then—I remember it now with horror; but who could have guessed to what that popular

outbreak would lead! I could see the figure of Desmoulins where he stood on the chair or bench, under the branches of a tree; he was gesticulating with both his arms, and stamping. I think that he drew out a pistol. Some one from the crowd handed him a ribbon, a green ribbon. I saw the Jacobin fasten it into his hat; and oh, what a deafening shout arose when he sprang down amongst the people! The mob pressed round the orator as if to stifle him with their caresses; they embraced him as if they would have torn him to pieces in their frenzy of mad admiration."

"And how didst thou feel?" asked Ninon, who in the amusement of listening to Adelaide's description forgot for the moment her own disappointment.

"Oh, we had been taught—Madame de Genlis had taught us—to think it a fine and noble thing to rise against tyranny and overthrow abuses," said the daughter of Orleans. "She spoke to us of liberty, equality, fraternity; we were pleased to wear the green ribbon, and when the

emblematical color was changed, we all had cockades of the tricolor."

"All red would have been more suitable," suggested Ninon.

"Madame de Genlis actually took us in one of my father's carriages* to see the destruction of the Bastille," continued Adelaide. "But then, I own, I was frightened. When I looked at the savage, excited mob, and heard their cries of fury, I could not help thinking that it was as if the wild beasts in some menagerie had suddenly been turned loose to tear and devour all before them. But alas! even then I could little guess that the Revolutionists would not rest till throne, church, all had been trampled under their feet!" There was a moment's pause, and then Adelaide added with a sigh, "It is well for thee, Ninon, that thou art not to remain in Paris."

"I don't see that—I don't see that at all!" cried Mademoiselle La Fère, recalled to the remembrance of her grievance. "Aristocrats are murdered in the provinces as well as in Paris,—I can count four—

* "Life and Times of Louis Philippe."

five gentlemen who used to be at Château Labelle who have come to a violent end; and double the number have emigrated to Switzerland or England to avoid it. Then Gabrielle is so absurd; if the Jacobins chose to have her up before one of their tribunals, she'd answer them just as did the Princesse Lamballe. I don't believe that she'd put on a tricolor cockade if her life depended upon it. See," continued the young lady, drawing a bow of red, blue, and white ribbon out of her reticule, "I'm prudent enough to have one at hand. I meant this for Jacobin—poor Jacobin—but I may be glad to wear it myself."

"Perhaps in driving through Paris," said Adelaide.

"Not in Paris only," cried Ninon. "I tell thee that I should be much safer at the Palais-Royal than in the château of an *aristocrate*; thy father, the duke, is so popular; thou knowest that he is the idol of the people."

"He was so once," said Adelaide sadly; "I fear that he is so no longer."



CHAPTER XII.

FIRST NIGHT IN FRANCE.



THE conversation which she had heard while chasing her young lady's feet, left a vague impression of terror upon the mind of Faith Stanby. Into what a fearful country she had come, where priests were slain in crowds by their altars, and fair ladies murdered in cold blood without remorse or pity! And this was called liberty! All these crimes were committed in the holy name of Freedom! With intense, regretful love Faith thought of the dear land which she had left—perhaps forever.

And yet the English girl would not, had she had the power to do so, have recalled her sacrifice of self. It was better, she

thought, that the struggle, the suffering, the danger which might await her should fall to the lot of the young, than to that of the parent who had been brought up in ease and luxury, with prospects so fair and hopes so bright, and who had met with already so much of misfortune and disappointment in life. Faith would not allow herself to think that her father had sunk so low in the social scale by any fault of his own. Especially now that she was parted from him, none but tender, loving recollections should cling round the image of a parent in the heart of his child. "After all," thought the young English maid, "it matters little what happens to me. Life lost all its brightness and value to Faith when she heard the clatter of the horse's hoofs which bore away Edward Marston."

The one point touched upon in the conversation between Adelaide and her companion to which Faith reverted with something like pleasure, was what related to her whose letter had been read by Ninon—Gabrielle, Comtesse La Fére.

"That lady must have a spirit loyal,

generous, and brave," thought Faith Stanby. "I should like to see her. Perhaps I may love to serve her. The comtesse must, at least, be very different indeed from her sister. Perhaps I have been wrong in supposing that most French ladies are like Mademoiselle Ninon, or Madame de Genlis, who looks so clever, but so bold. There may be many amongst them gentle, self-denying, and good. The comtesse, who was ready to bear imprisonment and risk her life for her queen, must, at least, have something noble in her character, something to be loved and admired."

When Faith was dismissed from attendance upon her young mistress, she found her way, with some difficulty from her ignorance of the French language, to the chamber at the top of the large, lofty hotel, which room she found that she was to share with Diane. Greatly would Faith have appreciated the luxury of being alone, if but for a quarter of an hour; but this comfort was not to be hers on her first arrival in France. She found Diane already in the room. The shy reserved English girl felt that wherever she

turned, whatever she did, the beady black eyes of the *femme-de-chambre* were watching her movements, and that the looks which they cast upon her were looks of mingled curiosity, scorn, and dislike.

"I must for once say my prayers in bed, and give up my evening reading of the Scriptures," thought Faith, as she opened the bundle—the small bundle which held all her travelling luggage. "I cannot read my Bible, I cannot kneel down to pray, with that Frenchwoman watching me all the while. And yet, to read and to worship openly, is that not the way in which I should confess my Lord before men? Shall I be ashamed of my religion? Shall a Protestant English girl leave a Romanist to conclude either that she has no religion at all, or one which she dare not avow? Cold and cowardly heart, to shrink from so plain a duty! Daniel prayed openly three times a day, at the risk of being thrown to the lions. Oh, for faith like his to overcome the fear of man that bringeth a snare!"

It was a very great effort to Faith to

open her Bible and read a few verses. She could hardly bend her agitated mind to take in their meaning. It was a greater effort, after she had closed the book, to kneel down by the side of her low French bed, and in the presence of a stranger, and a Romanist, offer her silent prayer. But with the effort came the reward. Never had Faith been able to plead with more fervor, never had she more sweetly realized that her pleadings were heard. Every one whom she loved was remembered in her supplications, and half the pain of separation was gone. Faith felt no longer alone, even in a strange land. She was one of the Lord's great family, knit together in bonds of love; and she herself was resting at the feet of a heavenly Father. *I will be with thee*, was the promise which came to her memory with almost the force of an audible answer to prayer; and Faith arose from her knees with the response in her heart, *I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.*

Diane was standing with arms akimbo, and her thin lips drawn into a mocking smile, as she watched the *heretique* at her devotions.

She said nothing, however, to Faith, knowing that she would not be understood if she did so. Diane took up a rosary of her own, and as she passed the beads through her fingers, she rapidly muttered her *Aves* and *Paternoster*, looking at Faith all the time as though to say, "I too have my forms of devotion." Faith could hardly imagine that her companion was praying, nor could she exactly tell what the string of gay beads could have to do with religion. Why should prayers be counted? Were there not here the "vain repetitions" against which the disciples were warned? Diane concluded her devotions, such as they were, by making the sign of the cross; and satisfied that she had shown a good example to a benighted heretic, went to her rest.

It was natural that the scenes through which Faith Stanby had passed, and those of which she had heard, should mingle themselves that night in her dreams. She fancied herself again on the deck of a vessel, and leaving the white cliffs of England behind her. But instead of the slowly

heaving waves over which she had passed in her voyage across the Channel, wild, furious billows were tossing around. The deck was crowded with fierce Republicans, who, with excited gestures, thronged around the English stranger. Faith dreamed that the foremost made a demand to her much like that which had been made to the unhappy Louise de Lamballe, save that it was loyalty, not to an earthly, but to a heavenly King which the English girl was called upon to renounce. "I cannot deny Him—it is not in my heart!" exclaimed Faith, in her dream; and she was instantly seized upon by merciless hands, and thrown over the bulwarks into the tempestuous waters below. But at this crisis all the terrors of the dream vanished away. There was no drowning, no struggling with death. Faith seemed, in her dream, to be changed into one of the white sea-birds which she had seen skimming lightly over the waves. She had wings, she was free, she was safe, she was flying back to old England; and the sense of joyful hope and

confidence which Faith felt in her dream remained with her when, refreshed by the night's rest, she awoke in the morning to find herself in the land of her exile.



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CHAPTER XIII.

TRAVELLING.



TRAVELLING was, in the last century, very different from what it is now. A single day will, at present, suffice for the journey from London to Paris; but in 1792 three might be required for that portion of it which extends from Calais to the capital of France.

The Duke of Orleans had sent, for the conveyance of his daughter and her companions to Paris, one of his own carriages. The stately vehicle was drawn by six black horses, with flowing manes and tails; animals something resembling those now used for hearses. But there was nothing hearse-like in the conveyance itself. A coach like

that in which the French ladies were to travel is never now seen, except, perhaps, in some civic show or grand procession. It was very capacious, and, to our ideas, unwieldy, swaying from side to side as the six horses dragged it along. The upper portion of the carriage was considerably wider than the lower, and the whole was adorned with a good deal of carving and gilding. There was ample and luxurious accommodation within the vehicle for the ladies; and on the back and front seats outside, half-a-dozen servants were able to find places, though somewhat straitened for room. Under more favorable circumstances Faith would greatly have enjoyed the novelty and amusement of her journey through a country where, to her, everything was new. Even as it was, it was not without a feeling of pleasure that the young girl mounted to her lofty outside place, courteously helped up by one of the Duke of Orleans' valets, who was to occupy the seat at her side.

Pondichon—such was the valet's name—was in himself a character; at least such he appeared to the English country maiden.

To talk fast and incessantly seemed to him to be a necessity; and he accompanied his speech with so much action of head, eyebrows, hands, such expressive and lively gesticulation, that if his conversation was not quite as intelligible to Faith as it would have been had she known his language, it was perhaps to her as amusing. Pondichon made Faith comprehend, partly by his excessive politeness, partly by most expressive frowns, shrugs, and pantomimic gestures, whenever they approached a tree of liberty, or a wayside cabaret bearing a Jacobin sign, that he was no Republican, but of the *ancien régime*, as became the valet of a prince of the blood. Pondichon, however, seemed to consider discretion as the better part of valor; for, notwithstanding his loyalist principles, he always pointed ostentatiously to the tricolor cockade which he wore in his hat, and sometimes even waved that hat, as if in triumph, whenever he passed through a village. On such occasions the valet, in the midst of his rattling conversation, would burst out into the Marseillaise Hymn, concluding by a "Bah!" of disgust when he

was out of hearing of those whom the servant in gorgeous livery contemptuously termed *sans-culottes*.

Faith was at first pleased by Pondichon's politeness, and diverted by his lively manners; but she soon felt that the manners were too free, and that the politeness was very different indeed from the respect with which every man should treat a young maiden, however lowly may be her position in life. The English girl had that true modesty which does not arise from pride, but from that purity of mind which belongs to the new nature imparted by Him who is purity itself. Faith would readily have knelt down to wash the feet of a beggar, but she would not have stooped to listen to light flattery from the lips of a prince. By womanly instinct she soon became aware that it was better that she did not understand the speeches made by Egalité's valet, and that it was not for a Christian maiden to encourage familiarity from one who had, like Pondichon, been brought up in the midst of moral corruption. Here was a new difficulty for the shy girl thrown

amongst strangers. She was fearful of giving offence, and was naturally unwilling to appear utterly different from every one near her; yet she must never forego the sobriety and modesty of demeanor which become a handmaid of the Lord. Faith Stanby grew at last so uncomfortable, that she would have preferred the unfriendly, sarcastic Diane as her travelling companion, to the fantastic, flattering Frenchman. She became more grave and reserved, and without the slightest breach of courtesy, let the valet perceive that familiarity from him was unwelcome. The vanity of Pondichon was wounded; he did not care long to obtrude his attentions upon one who did not relish the levity and worse than idle jesting in which he loved to indulge. The Frenchman turned from the shy, quiet stranger, to converse with those who would laugh as gayly as himself, and care as little what they laughed at. Pondichon made his companions merry with the remark, that it was a pity that these British islanders (the sneer, of course, was at Faith) chose to

carry their cold, chilling fog with them wherever they happened to go.

There was a noonday's halt on the way, to bait the horses and enable the travellers to partake of refreshment, at a hotel in a town through which their route lay. When the time approached for again starting on the journey towards Paris, Faith, who had this time to mount unaided to her seat on the carriage, found a little crowd assembled around the conveyance. A somewhat noisy crowd it was; those who composed it had been dancing around a tree of liberty erected in the courtyard, and their singing of the Marseillaise had sounded ominously in the ears of Faith while she had been in the hotel. The arrival of a royal carriage had naturally excited observation and curiosity in the place. The ducal coronet and arms had, indeed, been carefully painted out from the panels, and an emblazoned P. E., with a cap of liberty, appeared in their stead; but on the buttons of the servants' liveries, and on the gilt ornaments of the horses' harness, still the hated coronet appeared. Egalité himself had become,

as has already been mentioned, an object of suspicion in France ; and the information, which was speedily circulated, that in this carriage travelled his daughter, lately arrived from England, raised an ill feeling amongst the Jacobins in the crowd. Robespierre, the Democrat leader, as was well known, hated England above all other countries,* for her loyalty and her freedom, and he by no means stood alone in his hatred. Poor Faith, whose fair face, blue eyes, and English dress marked her at once as having come from the northern side of the Channel, found herself the object of most unwelcome observation from the Republican throng.

"Anglaise ! Anglaise ! à bas les Anglais !" [down with the English !] passed from mouth to mouth, as, with a little difficulty, Faith mounted to her lofty and exposed seat. The murmur was like the distant muttering of the thunder, when storm-clouds are gathering over the sky.

Faith grew more and more alarmed, and became very impatient for the ladies to

* Von Sybel's "French Revolution."

come out of the hotel, that the carriage might be driven from the place. She tried, however, to suppress all appearance of fear, and to look calmly down from her high seat on the threatening faces below. "I am an Englishwoman," thought Faith, "and must not disgrace the name by playing the part of a coward. But oh! why, why does madame delay?"

Soon—though it seemed a long time to Faith—Madame de Genlis appeared with her charges at the entrance to the hotel. They saw at a glance how matters stood, and became aware that on the eve of a war with England, it had been an act of imprudence to travel with an English maid sitting, exposed to the view of all, on the outside of Egalité's carriage.

"See, see the crowd! oh! hear them!" exclaimed Ninon, shrinking back in terror, and grasping the arm of Madame de Genlis. "They are staring up at Faith Stauby; they are crying '*A bas les Anglais!*' Had we not better tell the girl to get down at once, then drive off as fast as we can, and leave her behind?"

Adelaide uttered an indignant exclamation at the cowardly suggestion. "What! leave her, a stranger, unprotected amongst these rough people!" cried the generous daughter of Orleans.

Madame de Genlis, with a keen rapid glance, surveyed the threatening faces of the crowd. "It will not come to bloodshed here," she observed in English: "but danger may increase as we draw nearer to Paris. The girl must travel inside the carriage, and show her white face as little as may be." And in a tone purposely imperative and harsh, Madame de Genlis ordered Faith to descend from her seat, and help to place her young lady's parcels in the carriage.

Faith was glad enough to come down from her perch, which was becoming to her every moment more like a place in the pillory. Perhaps her modest but firm bearing had roused some generous feeling towards the poor young stranger in the minds of the people, who had not, like those in Paris, been brutalized by scenes of bloodshed. If so, such generous feeling was unconsciously

increased by Pondichon, who, in his dread of sharing the unpopularity of an *Angloise*, with marked rudeness gave Faith no assistance whatever in getting down with her bundle. Politeness is so natural to Frenchmen, that the valet's want of courtesy provoked animadversion on the part of the crowd.

"There's the kind of polish got in courts for ye!" growled a smith, who, with face begrimed, had come from his forge to have a look at Egalité's carriage. "Yon lackey in livery don't know how to treat a woman. Here, mademoiselle!"—and a strong hard hand was stretched out to help the maiden down from her seat.

Faith thanked the Frenchman for his rough courtesy—she had picked up enough of his language to be able to do so—and with a great sense of relief took her place inside the carriage, opposite to her young lady, well shrouded by a quantity of cushions, bandboxes, and shawls from the view of any one outside.

"How wonderfully a gracious Providence has cared for me!" thought Faith, as the

large lumbering vehicle rattled out of the stone-paved yard. "Kindness was put into the heart even of one whom I dreaded, and the very circumstance which just now caused me anxiety and fear, is the means of my enjoying comforts which would not otherwise have been mine. So thinly clad as I am, I must greatly have suffered from cold, had I travelled the whole way to Paris on the outside of the carriage. And I am so glad to be separated from Pondichon and his lively companions."

It was indeed a luxury to Faith to be able to remain as quiet and unnoticed in her corner of the carriage as if she had been a portion of the luggage, except when her services chanced to be required by the restless, fanciful Ninon.

Faith had, however, to pay for the advantage of travelling inside the carriage, in the increased dislike manifested towards her by Diane. The jealousy of the *femme-de-chambre* was aroused by what she chose to regard as a matter of favor, though she knew it to be but a matter of prudence. That a mere *soubrette, une Anglaise, une here-*

tique should be admitted to sit within the carriage with the ladies, while the confidential maid of Madame la Comtesse had to travel outside in November, was an insult not to be tolerated.* Diane dared not express her resentment to Madame de Genlis, of whom she stood in some awe, but she made its innocent object feel its effects at every place where the travellers halted. Faith had much need of patience and meekness under the petty persecution which she had to endure from a malicious woman. The young servant found it impossible to please Diane; whatever Faith did was found fault with; every kind of service that was difficult or disagreeable was allotted to her; she was scarcely allowed time to take sufficient food at meals, or sufficient sleep at night to keep her from physical exhaustion. The spirit of the English girl rose against tyranny more intolerable than that to which she was subjected by the selfish caprice of her mistress. Many a time had the poor maid to repeat to herself, *Let patience have its perfect work*, to strengthen herself for endurance, and to wrestle down

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the anger which rose in her heart against cruelty and injustice. If it be difficult for the Christian to keep his light shining when the fierce blasts of temptation blow around it, perhaps it is as difficult to let it burn brightly under the drip, drip of daily provocations, especially those which come from the temper and tongue of a woman. But the grace which feeds the holy flame in the one trial also avails in the other; and Faith was enabled to work with a diligence and endure with a sweetness of temper which won for her the secret, unavowed respect even of her bitter persecutor.





CHAPTER XIV.

IN PARIS.



It was on the Saturday evening of that, to Faith, eventful week, that the six jaded horses drew the cumbrous travelling-carriage up to one of the barrier gates of Paris. A slight drizzling rain was falling; the air felt damp and chill; even Paris, gay, beautiful Paris, seemed to have a pall of sadness over it.

Madame de Genlis had been unusually grave and silent during the day—not one lively *bon-mot* had escaped her; Adelaide had by no means unmixed pleasure in returning to the palace of her fathers. Ninnon was fretful, from weariness and the disappointment of her hopes of remaining

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for some time to enjoy the amusements of Paris. It was by no means a cheerful party that occupied the inside of the luxurious vehicle; even the maid had her own heart-sorrows and secret regrets.

At the barrier the travellers found awaiting their arrival a plain but handsome carriage, with a footman in mourning livery. He went up to the window of Egalité's carriage, and respectfully presented a letter to Madame de Genlis, and a small jewel-case to Adelaide of Orleans. The elder lady broke the black seal of the letter, and after perusing its contents, handed the paper to Ninon.

"Here, then, my child, we must part. Madame la Comtesse has sent her carriage to convey thee to her lodgings in the *Rue des A——*."

Ninon had previously known of this arrangement, which had been mentioned in a postscript to the letter which she had received at Calais; and yet she gave way to a burst of petulant vexation. She was *désolée au desespoir* on having to quit her *amie chère*; why could not the comtesse

have left them for at least a few days together?—such were the young lady's laments. Adelaide probably took her companion's embraces and passionate expressions of friendship for as much as they were worth. Madame de Genlis was anxious to reach the Palais-Royal before nightfall, and in rather an unceremonious manner hurried the movements of Ninon. In a few minutes the necessary arrangements were made, luggage and wraps were transferred by the servants from one carriage to the other; and Ninon, accompanied by Faith and Diane, were soon being rapidly driven through the streets of Paris towards a quiet and retired quarter of the great capital of France.

Ninon, during the drive, conversed a good deal with Diane; while Faith sat in silence, her thoughts very full of the past. Amongst the few books which Gentleman Jos had preserved from the library of his father was a broken-backed copy of a translation of the "*Siècle de Louis XIV.*" Faith had perused eagerly every volume on which she could lay hand, and amongst others this

account of the reign of the *Grand Monarque*. All the world's magnificence and glory seemed to Faith to be spread out before her when she read of the mighty Louis, surrounded by his brilliant court, his famous generals, his sparkling wits, the beautiful, the gay, the gifted. What mortal had ever been placed on so high a pinnacle as Louis XIV., he who had been almost worshipped by his court, as though he had been more than a man! Faith thought much of the magnificent monarch as she was driven through the capital of his extensive dominions, through beautiful Paris, which she had often in her childhood desired to see, picturing it to herself as a city of fairy palaces, gay with perpetual music and mirth, where sparkling fountains and glittering shops reflected perpetual sunshine.

"Ah! could the great king," thought Faith, "at one of his magnificent feasts have seen, like Belshazzar of old, a handwriting on the wall, would not the words traced have been *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity*? How little did Louis XIV. in his pride think how his descendant and successor"—

"Look, Faith!" cried Ninon La Fére, suddenly interrupting the current of the English maiden's reflections, "yonder is the Temple; thou seest where the light is gleaming in yon window. There's where the king and queen are shut up; how *tristes* they must be! Diane tells me that the queen has to unravel bits of carpet with her dainty little hands to get worsted to knit socks with, just to pass the wearisome hours. I dare say she often lets down her stitches." Then turning again to Diane, Ninon went on with her conversation in French. Faith was very rapidly acquiring the language, so that she partially understood what was said, assisted by the pantomimic gestures with which Ninon usually accompanied her speech.

"So Marie Antoinette has not even a *femme-de-chambre* in attendance, she who was waited upon by duchesses, with so much of grandeur and etiquette. *C'est terrible!* I wonder how she can manage her toilette, how she can powder her hair!"

"Ah, mademoiselle, the hair has no need of powder," observed Diane; "since the royal family were arrested in their flight at

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Varennes, Her Majesty's beautiful hair has all turned white!"

"*C'est terrible!*" again exclaimed Ninon, though her sympathy was not of the kind which reaches below the surface. "And then to be shut out from the *spectacle*, the opera, all her diversions, all her pleasures; it is enough to break her heart. But her life can scarcely be duller in Paris than mine will be in Provence," continued Ninon, with a petulant shrug. "I suppose, Diane, that there are now no guests at Château Labelle?"

"Guests, mademoiselle!" cried Diane; "all the *noblesse* who used to come to the château for the hunting (except the *émigrés*) have either been murdered on their estates, or have perished by the guillotine here in Paris."

"*C'est terrible—affreux!*" cried Ninon, with more vehemence than before. "Then I shall have nothing whatever to amuse me, no variety—except, of course, the *Fête-Dieu* at Aix."*

* A Romanist festival, which used to be observed, with many quaint ceremonies, in that old town.

"Does not mademoiselle know that the Jacobins have abolished the *Fête-Dieu*? They have no religion—none!" said Diane.

"Abolished the *Fête-Dieu*!" repeated Ninon La Fère, in dismay. "Are there, then, no processions with banners, no holy images carried aloft, no girls crowned with wreaths strewing flowers, and civic officers marching in their robes, with priests in their splendid garments, and boys swinging censers, and masquers and all—the prettiest, gayest sight to be seen out of Paris!"

"Ah, mademoiselle, all these charming things are never thought of now," said Diane. "Churches are closed and left to the rats; priests have to fly for their lives; persons can't even be married like good Catholics now. Has not mademoiselle heard how the mob has sacked monasteries, and whipped the holy nuns,* and how sisters of mercy have been plunged shrieking into the river Rhone, and then been dragged out half-dead?"

"I wish I were back in England!" ejaculated Ninon. "And what has become of my

* Von Sybel.

belle-sœur's confessor, Père la Porte? Is there no priest now at Château Labelle?"

"No, mademoiselle, not one," said Diane. "Since the poor père was almost murdered when passing down the grand avenue, madame will not suffer a priest to come. Madame says that she will have no innocent blood shed on her threshold. Madame la Comtesse sometimes goes to mass," continued Diane, lowering her voice, and glancing suspiciously towards Faith; "but not often—and suddenly—privately. Few know whither madame is going or for what object she goes. Madame la Comtesse feels much the loss of a resident father confessor."

"I'm sure that I don't!" exclaimed Ninon gayly; "we are well rid of Père la Porte; I liked his preachings little and his penances less. I would much rather have confessed to the merry little abbé at Aix, who was so fond of coming to the fêtes at the château. How his eyes would twinkle at the sight of a *pâté de foie gras*, or a glass of my poor brother's *vin de Bordeaux*! Well," continued Ninon La Fère, "I hope that since

church feasts are abolished, the fasts are done away with also ; that is but fair."

"I think that with madame every day is now a fast day," said Diane. "Her spirits are low—she punishes herself; madame lives the life of a saint, yet she thinks herself such a sinner!"

"I hope that Gabrielle will not expect me to live the life of a saint," began Ninon, when a sudden movement of Diane's hand and head made her pause in the midst of her sentence.

"Mademoiselle, look there—just passing that lamp"—

"Who is it? I see no one but a vulgar-looking man with thick, coarse features—a *roturier*,* no doubt," said Ninon.

"It is Danton himself," murmured Diane, in accents of awe.

Ninon bent forward and looked again from the window with eager curiosity to catch another glimpse of a man who played so terrible a part in the tragedy of the French Revolution. Faith never lost the image impressed on her memory of that

* Term of contempt for one of the lower class.

face, with its massive jaw, deeply creased brow, and mouth so expressive of stern decision. But Ninon merely drew back her head from the carriage window, with the frivolous observation, "The *parvenu*! [upstart] he has not even learned how to tie his neckcloth!"

"He has hempen neckcloths for his enemies, mademoiselle, and ties them tightly enough," said Diane.

The sister of the murdered Comte La Fère could laugh at the *femme-de-chambre's* jest!





CHAPTER XV.

THE COMTESSE.

“**A**H, Ninon, to what a land have you returned!” Such was the greeting of Gabrielle, when she met her young sister-in-law in the hall of the dwelling in which the comtesse occupied apartments during her sojourn in Paris.

Faith had concluded from all that she had heard of the Lady of Provence that she must be very unlike Ninon, of a character far more lofty and noble. Had the young servant formed no such impression, her first glance at Gabrielle La Féro must have conveyed it at once to her mind. Faith's silent reflection on seeing the comtesse was this: “I have never before looked upon one

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so beautiful, so graceful. There is a mistress whom I shall take pleasure in serving."

Gabrielle's form was rather above middle height; and had the peculiar dignity and grace which belonged, perhaps in their greatest perfection, to the high-born ladies of France. The comtesse was dressed in deep mourning, and wore no ornament of any description, save a jet rosary and cross, and a miniature of her husband, set in brilliants, clasping the kerchief which partly shrouded her beautiful neck. That kerchief and the small round cap which surmounted the lady's hair were of simple snow-white muslin. No powder disfigured the rich raven locks which lay on Gabrielle's shoulders; there were no bracelets on the finely-formed arms, which, as was usual at the period, were bare to the elbows. But Faith scarcely noticed what the lady had on; her whole attention was attracted by the countenance of Gabrielle La Fére; the large dark melancholy eyes under the beautiful brow, the pale cheeks, the delicate features, the lips so expressive of sweetness,

more especially when from them came the low musical tones of her voice.

Calm and still as was the manner of Gabrielle, her husband's sister seemed to have her a little in awe; at least it appeared to Faith that Ninon was not at her ease with the Comtesse La Fère. There could, indeed, be little of sympathy between natures so widely different. Gabrielle, after kissing Ninon on each cheek, looked earnestly into her face, trying, perhaps, to trace in it some likeness to a dead brother; then, with an almost imperceptible shake of the head, the lady turned and led Ninon to a large room on the ground-floor of the house, in which a repast was prepared. Diane motioned to Faith to follow, as both of the maids were laden with light packages, mantles, and trifles which might be required by Ninon.

Gabrielle glanced at the little English servant and addressed some question to Ninon in French. Her tone was too low for the sound to reach Faith's ears, but the maid both heard and understood Ninon's careless reply. "*Anglaise—Protestante,—ah, qui !*"

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"Thou hadst better go to thy warm supper," said the comtesse to Diane; "and see that the English maiden has from me a better protection against the cold than that slight shawl before we start for Provence on Monday."

"That lady, at least, takes thought for the comfort of others," was Faith Stanby's reflection, as she courtesied and followed Diane out of the comtesse's presence, for Gabrielle's gesture had helped the girl to interpret her words.

"I cannot help regretting, Ninon, that thou shouldst have brought a heretic with thee from England," said Gabrielle, as the two ladies seated themselves at the table; the one to eat and the other to help, for the comtesse herself did not care to taste the repast.

"Where is the harm?" asked Ninon. "Faith is intelligent and quick—has the *goût* [taste] of a *modiste*, and the temper of an angel. So long as she obeys readily, works hard, and never grumbles, what matters it to us what she believes?"

"What matters it?" repeated the com-

tesse bitterly. "Is it not this very indifference to what regards the welfare of those who serve us—this looking on them as if they were brutes that have no souls, or stones that have no feeling—that has drawn down on the *ancienne noblesse* of France the fearful judgments of heaven? The brutes have turned to rend us, the stones are hurled against us to destroy. Where we looked for protectors we find enemies! If it mattered not to us in our luxury and pride what the masses around us believed or suffered, we are now startled out of our dream of selfish ease, when infidelity profanes our altars, and democracy pours out our best blood like water."

Gabrielle spoke rather to herself than to Ninon, for at the moment the comtesse had almost forgotten the presence of her *belle-sœur*, who, on her part, was giving much more attention to the delicacies on her plate than to the words which fell on her ear.

"Thou hast no need to vex thyself about Faith," observed Ninon, without raising her eyes from her *pâté*; she will soon become *bonne Catholique* at the château. Diane has

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taught her already to dress hair to perfection—she shall teach her also her *Ave* and *Credo*; the one thing is as easy as the other."

"Had good Père la Porte still been with us, I should have had no fear but that his pious care would soon have brought about our young servant's conversion," observed the comtesse; "there would then have been a soul saved, and glory would have accrued to the Blessed Virgin;" Gabrielle crossed herself as she mentioned the name. "But the doctrines of the Church cannot be taught by a *femme-de-chambre*; and this poor English stranger may live on and then die in her native darkness."

"Faith is desperately religious in her own way," observed Ninon La Fère; "of course it is the wrong way, for she doesn't believe in the Pope, nor burn candles to the saints, and thinks that she can pray just as well in English as in Latin. Of course I know this is all very wicked, and that she will burn in purgatory for it; but it is a comfort," added Ninon, with selfish philosophy, "when a servant has some kind

of religion which makes her obedient, obliging, and honest. There's not a *bonne Catholique* in the château to whom I'd sooner give charge of my jewels or my purse than to the English heretic Faith."

The comtesse made no reply, and for a while the subject of Faith and her supposed errors was dropped between the two ladies.



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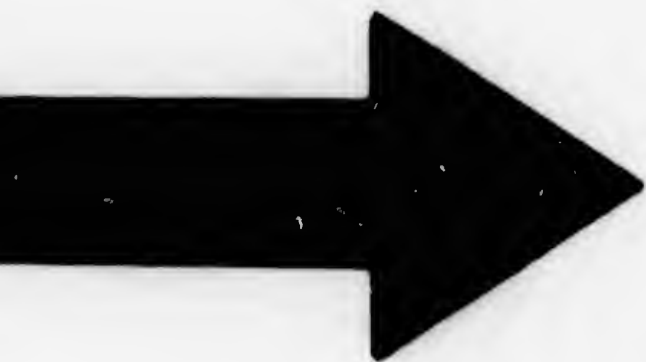
CHAPTER XVI.

LIFE OR DEATH.

EARLY in the morning of the following Monday, the carriage of the Comtesse La Fère passed through one of the southern gates of Paris, on that journey to Provence which it would take at least six days to accomplish. Not but that the high roads were good ; a few royal roads intersected France, made by the exertion of despotic power, and kept up by grinding exactions on the half-starved peasants ; for on the poor had entirely devolved the burden of maintaining the highways : where the cottagers had no money to give, they had been forced to give their labor.* Even in merely driving through

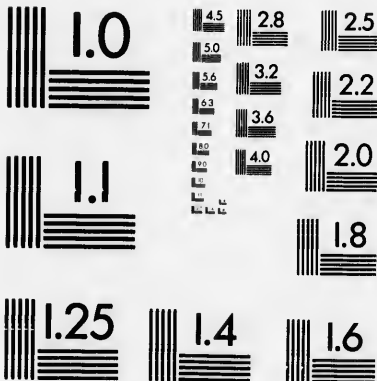
* Von Sybel.





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provinces of France at the time of which I am writing, an intelligent girl like Faith could not but be struck by the painful evidence on every side of the effects of tyrannical laws and cruel oppression.

The winter of 1792-3 was indeed a season of peculiar distress; but distress and want had for a long period been the portion of the peasantry of France. What cared the small farmer for his fields, when half their produce would have to go to a merciless landlord, to enable him to amuse himself in the theatres or gaming-houses of Paris, while his heavily-taxed tenants were in want of the common necessities of life? So little did such tenants care for their crops, that they would turn out their geese to fatten in their own fields of rich wheat; for why should they gather corn into sheaves, when they themselves and their families were not to eat of the bread!

Faith could not look into the village homes, or the isolated dwellings which dotted the hedgeless expanse of landscape, to see how scanty and wretched was the fare of their inmates; she did not see the

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bowl of gruel, seasoned with lard, or mixed with the ground bark of trees, on which workingmen were expected to keep up their strength for labor; wheaten bread being looked upon as a luxury, a little bacon but as an occasional treat. But Faith did notice the wretched state of the hovels in which human beings crouched over their scanty fires, some cottages even having no windows; she did notice that while some of the country people wore *sabots* [wooden shoes], many, even in winter, went barefoot. Penury and distress were evident even to the eye of the passing traveller; and when Faith remembered the well cultivated fields, the full barns, the haystacks and corn-ricks, and the pretty cottages of her own dear land, she silently but fervently thanked Providence that she had been born where there is liberty without anarchy, and where the burden of poverty is borne by the many without being made more crushing by the tyranny of the few.

“Ah, that is a novel sight for you, Faith,” laughed Ninon, addressing herself to the English maid, who sat opposite to her in

the carriage; for the comtesse would permit neither of the women-servants to travel outside, the weather being inclement. "I'll be bound you never saw in your country a woman yoked with an ass to drag a plough over the fields."

"Never, mademoiselle," replied Faith; and she could not help betraying by her tone a little of the indignation which she felt at the sight.

In passing through villages and towns there were again unmistakable symptoms of the fierce discontent, the spirit of hatred towards those who had been born in a station above them which pervaded the oppressed people France. Several times the comtesse was insulted by cries of *A bas les aristocrates!* [down with the nobles!] and the sight of a tree of liberty, or of a knot of workmen wearing the *bonnet rouge*, and yelling out the *Marseillaise*, or "*A la lanterne!*" always awakened some feeling of uneasiness in the travellers' minds. The comtesse, indeed, did not betray her alarm; whatever she might feel, she maintained her calm dignity of demeanor; but Ninon

became very timid and nervous; the horrors of the massacres of Paris now perpetually recurred to her mind; more than once she seemed inclined to dive down and hide herself under mantles and shawls at the bottom of the carriage.

"Oh, that I had never left England—there, at least, I was safe!" cried Ninon. "Everything in France is so horribly changed. Why can't the people rest quiet, and eat their gruel in peace! I wish that I had lived in the glorious days of Louis XIV., when there was nothing but *spectacles* and diversions, when no one cared what the *canaille** said, or thought of their doings!"

"The corruption and vice of those days," said the comtesse, "have prepared for the miseries of these."

And Gabrielle spoke the truth. The fearful wickedness which had made the courts of the two last monarchs of France like pest houses of corruption, was one of the principal causes of the French Revolution. Those kings and their courtiers, the luxurious, the impure, had—to borrow a

* Term of contempt for the masses.

forcible image from Holy Writ—sown the wind, and those who followed them reaped the whirlwind. The hire of the laborers who had reaped the field, that hire which had been kept back by fraud, had cried; and the cries of those which had reaped had entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.*

After some days' journeying, the travellers reached the city of Lyons, and drove up to the entrance of one of the principal hotels, where Gabrielle had arranged to take a repast while the horses were baited. The landlord, all politeness, bowed the ladies into an elegant apartment on the ground-floor, from which French windows opened on a slip of garden, which divided the hotel from the street. The low gilded palings which surrounded the garden, left open to the view of the occupants of the room all that passed in the thoroughfare beyond. There were a good many persons in the street, chiefly men, most of them in coarse blouses, unshaven, unwashed, and wearing red caps on their heads.

"I hope that madame will find everything

* James v. 4.

as she could wish," said the obsequious landlord, whose smooth fat face wore an expression of anxiety which was not natural to it. "I would presume to recommend the ladies not to attempt to go out to visit *restaurants*, or to make purchases, while they honor Lyons with their presence. The city is in a disturbed—a very disturbed state. There are thirty thousand workmen at present out of employ; there is a cry for bread; the *canaille* throng round the bakers' shops; they demand—they threaten. Houses were broken into last night—it is said that the owners were strung up *à la lanterne*." The landlord significantly pointed to his own thick neck, enveloped in the voluminous folds of his large cravat.

The comtesse thanked the landlord for his warning, and said that she had no intention of quitting the hotel until she resumed her journey. Lyons had already won for itself an unenviable notoriety in the annals of the Revolution; while the general distress, greatly increased by the country being flooded with *assignats*, which people were compelled to take instead of coin, was

especially felt in a large manufacturing town.* Bread had become very scarce, and any one suspected of hoarding grain was exposed to serious danger from the fury of the Jacobin mob. Of this the travellers were soon to have an alarming proof.

The comtesse, who wished to preserve as much privacy as possible, instead of joining the *table-d'hôte* [general dinner-table], desired to take her meal in the private sitting-room, and to be waited on by her own maids. Diane and Faith remained, therefore, in the

* M. Thiers states in his History that in the year 1794 the *assignats* in circulation represented the enormous sum of 5,536,000,000 francs, or more than two hundred and thirty millions of pounds of our money! Of course their real value in the market was very much less. Von Sybel, in his valuable History of the French Revolution (see vol. iv., p. 323), relates that the value of *assignats* went down, till in August 1795 they had sunk to 2½ per cent—that is to say, a pound in paper money was only actually worth sixpence in coin. As this depreciation of the *assignats* pressed with intolerable severity upon government officials and holders of government securities, there was actually offered to them as a kind of compensation the privilege of purchasing tallow-candles, oil, and herrings at a quarter of the market value! Truth is in this case stranger than fiction.

apartment, in attendance on the French ladies.

"So I am not even to have the little diversion of a *table-d'hôte* to enliven my journey," sighed Ninon, as, after taking off her cloak and travelling hat, she seated herself opposite to the comtesse at the table.

Scarcely had the ladies commenced their repast, when their attention was arrested by loud cries and yells in the neighboring street. The cause of the noise was not at first evident, but as it increased and came nearer, the comtesse and Ninon rose from their seats, and looked anxiously across the strip of garden into the street beyond it.

The next moment a man, pursued by a yelling, furious crowd, came in view. He rushed wildly down the road, like a hunted beast when the hounds are close upon its haunches. By his dress the fugitive might have been known to be, what he was, a master baker, but that the dress was so much disordered, blood-stained, and torn. The wretched man's cap had been knocked off his head, and from the head itself the blood was fast trickling down the ghastly,

terror-stricken face. The baker was a powerful man, and was making a desperate struggle for life, striking right and left at the savages, whose object was to pull him down, tear him in pieces, trample him under foot. It was, however, impossible that any one, strong as his frame might be, could long maintain a struggle against such desperate odds; and the baker's last moment seemed to have come, when the palings enclosing the grounds of the hotel gave him one more chance of life. Flinging from himself, by a tremendous effort, two of the mob whose grasp was already upon him, the baker made a dash at the palings, and succeeded in swinging himself over into the parterre below.

"Oh, mercy! he is bringing the wretches here after him!" shrieked Ninon in terror; "Diane, close the shutters—keep out the mob!" and wild with alarm, the young lady hid herself under the table.

Diane, who was a strong, active woman, rushed to one of the windows, and rapidly proceeded to close its shutters and fasten them inside by their iron bar, so as to form

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a barricade against the yelling ruffians who were clambering over the palings. The comtesse and Faith were at the same instant busy at the second window, but not in closing shutters. At a gesture from her mistress Faith threw open the French window, so that the gasping, hunted baker, seeing one place of refuge open, rushed through into the room, where he sank on the carpet, utterly exhausted, unable either to fight or to fly.

There was no time to close the shutters of the second window; the garden slip was already full of rioters; there seemed to be nothing to prevent them from following their prey into the room, and murdering him under the very eyes of the ladies. But the courage of Gabrielle La Fère rose with the danger before her. Brave and beautiful, she stood at the open window between the savages and their helpless victim, and with a gesture of command waved back the howling mob. They paused — even those fierce Jacobins paused at the sight of that fair, fearless woman, standing erect in her deep mourning garb, and facing them all with

unblenching courage. There was even a moment's silence amongst the throng, then the foremost of them called out with savage fury, "She is an *aristocrate*!" and the mob caught up and echoed the word *aristocrate*, *à bas les aristocrates!* and seemed about to press forward and wreak their fury upon the defenceless lady.

But the clear silvery tones of Gabrielle's voice again arrested the surging tide of furious men. She did not retreat one step—one inch; had she done so the murderers would have come on; but some even of those savage rioters shared the sentiment which has been put into the mouth of Cœur de Lion, "I cannot strike where there is neither resistance nor fear."*

"I *am* an *aristocrate*," cried Gabrielle La Fére, "the daughter and the widow of *aristocrates*!" The unexpected avowal surprised her hearers, and all became silent to listen to what was to follow. "Yes," continued the comtesse, "an ancestor of mine won his spurs at the field of Ivry, and his

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title and lands were given to him by *Henri de Navarre!*"

The name of their favorite monarch, the king who, more than any other, is regarded with admiring pride by the French, raised a softened murmur amongst the crowd, very different from the savage yells by which it had been preceded.

"Go, men of France," continued the Lady of Provence, "tell your wives that it is an *aristocrate* who has this day saved you from the crime of imbruing your hands in the blood of a fellow-citizen, untried and uncondemned by any tribunal!"

Most of the atrocities of the Jacobins were committed under the form of law, and Gabrielle's last sentence had been uttered with consummate tact. The baker was a citizen, and of course by every republican theory had, as such, a claim to a citizen's rights. The strangely versatile character of a French mob was instantly shown by the one addressed by the comtesse. Gabrielle's beauty and heroism made the effect of her words irresistible, and to the amazement of Faith, who as yet knew little of Gallic nature,

a cry of *Vive madame!* broke enthusiastically from the very same lips that but two minutes before had yelled *A bas les aristocrates!* The contesse was no longer regarded as one of a hated class, but as the beauteous preserver from unlawful violence of a citizen's life; and the mob were ready to raise aloft on their shoulders in triumph the woman who, but for her tact and presence of mind, they would probably have barbarously murdered!

Gabriello saw her advantage, and followed it up. "I am a Frenchwoman," she said, as soon as her voice could again be heard, "and feel like one for the sufferings of my fellow-countrymen. Take my purse"—she held one out to the foremost rioter, who looked half ashamed to receive it—"share its contents amongst you. Go and procure bread for your hungry children by means worthy of brave men, who should scorn to shed blood, save in the defence of their country."

Again, and more enthusiastically than before, arose the shout, *Vive madame!* It had, humanly speaking, but depended on

the turn of a straw whether Gabrielle's own life and that of her companions had not been the sacrifice of her attempt to save the wounded baker, and now it seemed as if every individual in the mob had heart and hand at her service. With graceful courtesy, as a queen might dismiss her attendants from her presence, Gabrielle dismissed the admiring crowd. Not till the last individual had regained the other side of the palings, which had been partly broken down by the rush of the mob, did the comtesse close the leaves of the window, and calmly turn round to resume her former place at the table. Faith was on her knees, offering a glass of wine to the wounded man, whose head she had bound with her handkerchief. The comtesse smiled upon her.

"Brave, good *Anglaise*," said Gabrielle La Fère, "thou didst second me well. I shall know whom to trust in the hour of peril. Diane," she continued, addressing her *femme-de-chambre*, "ring the bell for the waiter; tell him to go for a surgeon, and see that this poor man has all the help that he needs at my charge. When thou

hast done this, throw open those slutters again."*

* An incident, much resembling that described in the foregoing chapter, was many years ago related to A. L. O. E. as a fact. But it was not a French lady, but an Englishman of the name of Nesham, who preserved the endangered life of a citizen by a bold appeal to the Jacobin mob.



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CHAPTER XVII.

SORROW AND SIN.

IF Faith from her first sight of the comtesse had felt admiration for the Lady of Provence, that admiration was increased a hundred-fold by the scene which she had just witnessed. The warm heart of the young English maiden, separated as she now was from every one to whom her affections had clung from childhood, yearned to have some being near her whom she could venerate and love; and Faith felt that her mistress was such a being. Reproaching herself for the foolish prejudice which had made her almost doubt whether wisdom and goodness could be found at the southern side of the Channel, Faith was inclined to

rush into the opposite mistake, and believe that in her French mistress she had found an example of the highest degree of perfection that human nature could reach. The enthusiastic girl's imagination invested her noble and beauteous lady with the attributes of an angel.

"It is not the comtesse's fault," thought Faith, "that she has been brought up in the errors of Rome. The All-merciful will not condemn her for following the faith of her fathers. How few, oh, how very few of those who have been brought up in the clearest light of the gospel are to be compared to my noble lady! I will pray, most fervently will I pray, that the comtesse's mind may be as open to religious truth as her heart is to every pure, generous, and holy feeling!"

It was for the happiness of Faith that she had not the power to read more deeply into the human heart, for the study of that of Gabrielle would have been saddening and disappointing to one of a spirit so loving. While the travellers are pursuing their journey to Provence without meeting with

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any other remarkable incident by the way, we will pause to glance at the early life of Gabrielle, and examine more closely the character of the lady of Château Labelle, and the outward circumstances which had contributed to form it.

Gabrielle, the only child of Comte Louis Labelle, had been born the heiress of a large landed estate in Provence. From childhood she had given promise of singular beauty and talent, and in womanhood she had more than fulfilled that promise. Admired, flattered, courted by all, the youthful Gabrielle had found life full of enjoyment. Her spirits had been high, her relish for pleasure keen ; but even in the midst of her lively mirth there had been an undercurrent of serious thought in the heiress's mind, which had given to her character a depth which was to be found in that of but few of the youthful *noblesse* of France.

After the death of her father, Gabrielle became the *dame propriétaire* of the large estate of Labelle. Many were the suitors for her hand before she became the wife of Henry La Féré. Far happier in this re-

spect than most brides of her rank in France, Gabrielle had been able with her hand to give her heart also. The husband of a fashionable court beauty, or of a *grande dame propriétaire*, was too often a mere cipher, one whose very existence was almost forgotten by the world, and, alas! by his wife also. To love, honor, and obey a husband, according to God's holy law, and scriptural example, was thought a strange and singular thing amongst the *ancienne noblesse*; a weakness to be smiled at, rather than a virtue to be admired. Even Gabrielle, though she loved her Henri, and honored to a certain extent, never acted as if she felt herself bound to obey him. Hers was the quicker intelligence, the firmer spirit, the stronger will, as well as the far larger worldly possessions. Henry was amiable, self-indulgent, fond of ease. The influence which his young wife had over him was unbounded, and that influence was frequently used for good. Gabrielle was no selfish oppressor; she had some idea of duties as well as privileges belonging to the position of a landed proprietor. Her peasants were less

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cruelly ground down, less mercilessly taxed than those of most of the landlords around her. The comtesse wished to be popular with her tenants, and to a great extent had her wish. It was easy and natural in her to be gracious in manner, and to give pleasure and win attachment needed no sacrifice on her part. Happy would it have been for the lady of Provence had she been content to dwell amongst her own people, and direct her energies to promoting their welfare.

But Gabrielle had an ambitious spirit, and with her, as with most French ladies, the great object of ambition was a high place at court. Henri La Fère would willingly have spent most of his time in his beautiful home in Provence, have enjoyed his hunting and fishing, and kept clear of the intrigues and troubles of court-life in Paris. But Gabrielle could not tolerate the idea of her husband sinking into the position of a mere country gentleman, even though in that position he might be a blessing to hundreds around him. Henri Comte La Fère must hold a place at court, he must take a leading part in politics, he must hold

a post of distinction in Paris, which, to Gabrielle, as to so many of her countrywomen, appeared to be the very centre and core of the civilized world. Henri gave up his own tastes and inclinations to please his young wife, and when the wild storm of Revolution swept over the city, paid the forfeit with his life. The poor young nobleman had been killed by the mob in Paris about a year before the time when my story opens.

The death of her husband was a fearful shock to Gabrielle La Fère. It not only crushed her earthly happiness, but it overwhelmed her with bitter regrets and remorse. Sorely did the widow reproach herself as to the way in which she had exercised her talent of influence in regard to him who had been suddenly cut off by a violent death in the prime of his manhood, without warning, without preparation for the awful change. Henri, before his marriage, had led such a life as was unhappily usual amongst the French *noblesse* of that period. He had scarcely so much as given a thought to religion, and had rarely entered a church, save, perhaps,

to look at some famous picture, or to hear mass on some occasion when the music was especially fine. After his marriage, Henri's outward conduct had greatly improved; he had not unfrequently accompanied his bride to assist at a mass; but he had never partaken with her of the Holy Communion, which Romanists hold in such superstitious reverence as even to make the wafer an object of worship. Gabrielle had felt little uneasiness at her husband's neglect of the most solemn rite of her religion. "He is so young, he has many years before him," she had observed to Père la Porte, her confessor, but the day before the tidings reached her of Henri's violent death. Gabrielle had devised more—had striven more to procure for her husband the world's dignities and distinctions, than to draw his gay spirit to care for the things of the world unseen, into which he had now been suddenly summoned.

Terrible was the revulsion in the mind of the Lady of Provence; agonizing the question which she was incessantly asking herself, "Where is the soul of my husband?"

This was her absorbing thought by night and by day, a thought of remorse and anguish. The fires of purgatory, by which (according to the false teaching of Rome) souls are purified after death, haunted the imagination of Gabrielle La Fère. For weeks, after receiving the terrible tidings from Paris, she never closed her eyes in sleep without seeing in horrible dreams the flames prepared for the godless.

But Rome also teaches (and she has found the doctrine a very profitable one as regards her worldly advantage) that the living can help the dead out of purgatorial fires. Gabrielle's intelligent mind had been disposed to question the possibility of silver and gold, and purchased prayers, buying off, as it were, the wrath of an offended Deity against sin. But in the time of her weakness and anguish, the poor anxious widow caught eagerly at any straw of hope that superstition held out. Gabrielle fasted till she injured her health; she made long pilgrimages on foot; she prayed to every saint in the calendar; she gave large sums of money for masses to be said for the soul

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of Henri La Fère. Nor was all this sufficient to satisfy the yearning heart of the widow. Gabrielle resolved on making a magnificent offering to the Cathedral at Aix. She not only placed in it a fine stained glass window to the memory of the comte, but made an offering of a silver shrine to his patron saint. The workmanship of this shrine was exquisite, it being executed by a first-rate Italian artist, from a design made by the comtesse herself. The gift was massive; two strong men were unable to lift it; much of Gabrielle's fine old family plate had been sacrificed to complete it. To form the design for this splendid work of art and offering of devotion, and to superintend the carrying out of her plan, was the greatest solace which the young widow experienced during the first six months which followed her bereavement.

But Gabrielle was to find that her hopes of benefiting her husband's soul by pecuniary sacrifices made by herself were empty and vain. Scarcely a week had elapsed after her great gifts had been placed in the Cathedral of Aix, when the Jacobins smashed

her window, and melted down her silver shrine into money. The very priests whom the comtesse had paid to pray for the soul of Henri La Fére had to escape for their lives. Gabrielle had spent her time, her efforts, her wealth for naught, and in the bitterness of her spirit concluded that the Lord had rejected her offerings.

Had Gabrielle's loss occurred a few years previous, she would probably, in the first impulse of her grief, have entered a convent, to spend the remainder of her life in praying for her husband's soul and her own salvation. Happily for her, the very state of anarchy and irreligion into which France was plunged at the time prevented her from shutting herself up in a prison where she would have become more and more the victim of superstition. Gabrielle, as has been mentioned, was obliged to part even with her father confessor, as it was not safe for a priest openly to conduct the rites of the Romanist faith. This deprivation of what she considered religious privileges seemed to the Comtesse La Fére a grievous misfortune indeed. To superstitious Romanists the

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priest stands in the place of God; to the priest they confess their sins, from the priest they receive absolution; the priest is the guide of conscience; the priest is the keeper of the soul. It was perhaps well for Gabrielle that she was driven from the refuge to which, as a Romanist, she naturally fled, so that she was not suffered to find false peace from trusting in mortal man.

To the widowed lady there still remained the resource of prayers, penances, and works of charity, and these she did not neglect. Gabrielle spent hours in private worship, and gave liberally to the poor. All who knew the life led by the Comtesse La Fère, deemed her to be very religious. But what, in truth, was her religion? Merely a consciousness of sin, and a dread of the punishment which it might bring. Gabrielle regarded the All-merciful only with terror, not with love. She dared not even approach her heavenly Father in prayer without invoking the aid of Virgin or saints. Gabrielle knew—felt that the deposity of sin was upon her soul, but she

vainly sought for its cure. In the effort to win pardon and salvation by works of her own, the lady was like a fountain perpetually striving to spring upwards and reach the clouds, but ever falling back into its basin on earth. The mourner could not understand the mysterious dealings of the Almighty with her country, her husband, herself. Everything around her seemed to be in a wild chaos of confusion; and in her darkness and misery a rebellious and doubting spirit took possession of the soul of the comtesse. Gabrielle knew that spirit to be wicked, but she could not free herself from its power. The widowed lady had hard thoughts of the Father of mercies; her mind refused to accept the doctrine that *God is love*, and wherever this truth is rejected there can be no spiritual health. External sanctity of life and charity may be fair in the sight of the world; man admires and praises good works without examining too closely whether they come from a source which is pure or poisoned. Naaman, in his purple and fine linen, may, when seen from a distance, have appeared a grand and

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goodly object; but the deadly plague was upon him. Naaman was a great man, honorable and mighty; but Naaman was a leper still.





CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CHATEAU.

"**O**H, to what a goodly land, to what a beautiful home, has my gracious Master brought me!" was the silent exclamation of Faith to herself on the day of her arrival at Château Labelle.

That day was the first of December, but it was so soft, balmy, and bright that it almost wore the beauty of May. On entering sunny Provence, the English girl seemed to have left winter behind her. She was where the myrtle and pomegranate flourish, where the orange and lemon hang their golden fruit in profusion amongst their dark green leaves; she had come to the very home of the rose, which was blooming

in luxuriance at a season when in our northern clime, ice and snow cover the face of the earth.

The château of the comtesse was an ancient, stately building, crowning a wooded height, one of the hills that girdle the city of Aix, and distant about five miles from that place.

There was much that struck Faith as peculiar and picturesque in the appearance of the château; with its mullioned windows, high steep roof, fantastic chimneys, and quaint little turret-towers, it was so unlike any building that she had seen in England. The prospects commanded from the towers were exceedingly beautiful; more beautiful than Faith had ever beheld, even in dreams. To the south the view over fair sunny slopes extended as far as to the sea. The Mediterranean bounded the horizon, now softly blue as a turquoise, now glittering like a streak of burnished silver. But Faith preferred even to this the view from her own little room, which was in one of the pointed-roofed turrets which looked to the east. There the distant Alps lay in their glorious

beauty, seen through the clear transparent atmosphere, giving the last finish of loveliness to a landscape on which a poet or an artist would have gazed with delight. Faith was neither poet nor artist, but a simple English maiden, yet the pleasure which she derived from looking at the fair works of creation was as pure, and certainly higher than that which belongs merely to a cultivated taste. Faith looked "through nature up to nature's God," saw His handywork in everything beautiful around her, and the reflection, "My Father made them all," heightened to rapture the admiration with which the glorious landscape inspired her.

After severe trials have been endured, few things tend so much to revive the spirits as a change to new scenes, especially if those scenes be of exquisite beauty. Faith, in making the painful sacrifice of leaving her country, had unwittingly been taking the very course most likely to soothe the heart-grief which she felt on having to give up Edward Marston. Never are flowers so sweet as when they are unexpectedly found throwing fragrance over a rugged path of

duty. Faith did not trample them under foot because they were not the flowers which she would have prized the most. She did not refuse to be grateful for blessings granted because others had been denied. She thanked Providence for many comforts and sources of enjoyment upon which she had never reckoned, but which had been freely bestowed upon her. The young maiden had feared a dreary time of exile amongst strangers, who would probably hate her on account of her being a foreigner, and of a faith different from their own, and Faith's first experience with Diane made her conclude that such fear was but too well founded; but the pleasant, cordial manners of most of her fellow-servants soon put the English girl at her ease. French politeness was no mere name, but Faith found it in many instances to be the outward expression of true kindness of heart.

Then there was a repose, a tranquillity at Château Labelle, which was very refreshing after the fearful scene at Lyons, which had given Faith a glimpse of the horrors of the French Revolution. The travellers, at the

close of their long, anxious journey, seemed to have floated into a safe haven after a storm. The comtesse, as far as Faith could see, had nothing to fear from her tenants. There appeared to be no danger that the *Marseillaise* would ever be sung, or the *Car-magnole* danced, within the walls of Château Labelle. With its picture-hung corridors, its stately halls with gilded and painted ceilings, its galleries of family portraits, where Labelles of many generations were depicted in strange variety of costumes, the château looked the dwelling-place of peace and order. Every sight and sound within or around it seemed of a nature to calm and soothe an agitated mind.

But it must not be supposed that the charms of her new home made Faith ever forget the old one, or that her intense love for her country was at all weakened by absence. The thoughts of Faith constantly wandered back to her father's cottage, and to the dear ones whom she had left behind her in England. None of the comtesse's fine French clocks had to Faith the charm of the old rattling timepiece from Golden

Square, which she had admired from her earliest childhood. When Faith heard the lowing of cattle from the fertile meadows of Provence, she would sometimes close her eyes, and try to fancy that the familiar sound came from Woodlands Farm, a spot a thousand times dearer to her than any in the realm of France. Was Edward thinking of her? had her departure given him pain? Often, very often did Faith find herself asking her heart such questions. When she most admired fine prospects, or the sight of grand works of art, "Oh, if *he* were only beside me!" was her instinctive reflection.

Faith also remembered her father with tender affection; and while her hands went busily on with her daily work, her mind was full of little plans for giving him pleasure. What long closely-written letters she would write to him; with what interesting descriptions of life in Provence would she fill them! The letters must indeed be "few and far between," for in those days postage was heavy, and Faith doubted whether she could prepay it. Once or twice in the course of a

year would be as often as the young servant could indulge in the luxury of sending off a letter; but what an event would its arrival be at home—dear home!

Amidst the beautiful objects which Faith saw in Château Labelle, there were some which she could not behold with feelings of unmixed pleasure. Annette, the lively, good-humored *servante* who took an especial pleasure in showing off the place to the English stranger, drew her one day into the chapel in which the comtesse performed her daily devotions. The many-colored stains thrown by painted windows on marble carvings and tessellated floor, the delicate traceries, the graceful ornaments of the little chapel, struck Faith at the first glance with admiration; but the feeling changed to one of pain as the young Protestant raised her eyes to the image of the Virgin Mary which occupied the principal position over the altar.

"Is it not beautiful—superb! a gem of a chapel!" cried Annette to her companion.

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a new language to enable her to do more than give assent ; she could not explain with sufficient fluency why that assent was rather a cold one.

The chapel was indeed beautiful ; but with that image—that idol, as Faith deemed it—over the altar, the whole place, designed for Christian worship, was defiled by superstition. Faith remembered the altar at Bethel, and the doom pronounced upon it ; she recalled the Commandment given amongst the thunders and lightnings of Sinai : *Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image. Thou shalt not bow down unto them, nor worship them ;* and she dared not let the admiration of the eye mislead her judgment, or deaden her conscience. Faith left the gorgeous shrine of mariolatry with a fervent though silent prayer : “ O Lord, open the eyes of my dear lady, that she may look on Thee as the only Intercessor for sinners, the only Saviour of the world ! ”

The English girl was not only painfully impressed by the disregard of the Second Commandment shown at Château Labelle, she was also struck by the habitual dis-

regard of the Third. The most sacred names were constantly taken in vain; they were brought into the lightest exclamations uttered by the laughing lip, and seemed, in the minds of her companions, to be associated with no idea of reverential awe.

"I think that I must try to get enough courage to speak about this, at least to Annette," said Faith to herself, "as soon as I know enough of the language to enable me to explain with clearness how the Bible forbids us to take God's holy name in vain."

Faith was very rapidly acquiring the language; she seemed to draw in knowledge of its phrases and idioms with the air which she breathed, and this was in itself a source of enjoyment to an intelligent mind. The French tongue, mixed as it is in Provence with the musical *langue d'oc*, the language of troubadours, poetry, and love, had a great charm for Faith, and appeared to suit the lovely country where it is spoken. Faith heard little besides, for in the château there was no one who could talk English but herself and Ninon La Fère, and that young lady seldom now cared to speak it.

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It pleased her better to babble lively French nonsense with Diane, than to converse with Faith, whose quiet, modest demeanor was in itself a silent reproof to folly. Ninon had soon lost her fancy for basket-making when she found that the art could not be acquired without trouble. Unfinished baskets were tossed aside as lumber, or given to Faith to complete.

"To twist bits of osier in and out is more tiresome than to dance without a partner, or to walk round and round you dismal parterres of roses, with nothing to listen to but the screams of those odious peacocks!" exclaimed Ninon one morning, as she petulantly flung down a shapeless thing to which flattery itself could scarcely have given the name of a basket.

It cannot be said that Faith at all regretted being now in less constant attendance on Ninon La Féro. The English maid preferred more of house-work and less of hair-dressing. It was a pleasure to her, however, when she was called, as occasionally happened, to wait on the comtesse.

• Faith felt intuitively that she was trusted

and liked by the noble lady, and the kindness of her mistress was repaid by her with a warmth of attachment which made a smile from the comtesse encouragement sufficient for any exertions. It was the desire to understand the words uttered by Gabrielle's musical voice that made Faith most anxious to improve her own knowledge of French ; but words were scarcely needed, for Faith read her lady's wish in her looks, and a glance was usually sufficient. The service of love requires little guidance beyond that of the eye.





CHAPTER XIX.

A LETTER.

“**W**HAT is it that I bring thee?—guess!” and the merry eyes of Annette sparkled with fun as she stood one morning before Faith, holding a hand behind her, so as to hide the thing which it held.

“Oh, is it a letter?” exclaimed Faith, eagerly glancing up from the work on which she was engaged, the scarlet *jupe* which she was quilting for Mademoiselle Ninon.

“You Protestants are all conjurors,” laughed Annette; “how couldst thou guess the truth at once!” and she produced the letter, which was directed in a well-known, straggling handwriting, and bore an English post-mark upon it.

"It is from my father!" cried Faith, and she eagerly held out her hand; but Annette would not so readily yield up her charge.

"No, no; it must be paid for first," she said, merrily shaking her head; "it must be paid for," she repeated, "money given—so many *sous*" [halfpence]; for she thought from Faith's perplexed look that she did not understand her. But Faith's perplexity did not arise from not knowing French, but from not knowing how to find money. She had placed her dearly-earned ten guineas in the carrier's hands to be taken to her father; she had not since then touched a coin, nor could she expect any wages for months. It was tantalizing to the poor young servant to see Annette counting on her brown fingers how many *sous* were to be paid (and the number did not appear to be few), and not to have a single one to help in purchasing the coveted treasure—a letter from home.

"I have them not," said Faith sadly, looking wistfully at the letter.

"Ah, thou hast no money, *mon amie*, not even to pay the post!" cried Annette with

ready sympathy; "see then, I will trust—I will lend—and pay the postman myself;" and gayly tossing the letter to its owner, the French girl tripped out of the room.

Who does not know how welcome is a letter from home after a first long absence! Not a month, indeed, had elapsed since Faith, with an almost breaking heart, had left her father's cottage; but so much had happened during the time, the current of her life had so changed its course, and brought her amongst scenes so new and so strange, that to her feelings it might have been six. Like a child feasting its eyes upon some dainty before proceeding to enjoy it, Faith read each word of the address in the dear, familiar hand, ere she broke the broad wafer which fastened the sheet. It was a little mistake to direct to her as *Miss Stanby*; Faith scarcely recognized herself under the title, but smiled to herself as she said, "It was so like dear father to write it."

It should be held in mind that Faith had reason to expect that the contents of her parent's letter would be especially tender

and loving. This was the first time that Stanby had written to his daughter since she had rescued him from a very distressing position by what was, from the maiden, a very large gift, purchased by her at a heavy price,—no less than that of her own freedom. Faith had often longed to hear what her father had said, and how he had looked, on first knowing of the proof which his only child had given of her filial affection. Now she would see his own words. It was with very pleasant anticipations that Faith began to read his letter; but these anticipations were certainly not to be realized by the following characteristic epistle from Gentleman Jos:

“DEAR CHILD,—I own that I was not a little surprised to find that you had gone off to *France*. I never thought a daughter of MINE would have entered service, and least of all the service of a Frenchwoman! I am, as you well know, a staunch subject of good King George, and, if I'd only been offered a commission, there's nothing I'd have liked better than to have helped Will Pitt to thrash those Jacobin dogs—*écraser ces vilains sans-culottes!*” [Gentleman Jos had picked up this solitary French phrase, which he was fond of showing off on every possible occasion.] “But it's natural enough that young folk at your age should like *change*; and

don't suppose that I *blame* you for consulting your own advantage. Only mind that you don't learn foreign ways ; like my old school-fellow, Sam Johnson, I'm English from cocked-hat to shoe-buckle ; no French fripperies or frogs for me ! By-the-by, when you are sending anything home, don't forget that you are in the land of lace. I gave Deborah my ruffles to mend, and she has patched them up with *worsted yarn*, as if they were a pair of *old stockings*. I wish you had not run away ; everything here is at sixes and sevens. I've not had a well-cooked meal since you left ; the chimney smokes, and times are harder than ever. When you send home money, mind I'll have none of your *assignats*, your dirty bits of French paper, only fit to *light pipes* with. Honest good COIN for me. Whatever you do you must be quick about it, for I'm certain that we'll have *war* with France next year, and then you'll be as much cut off from us as if you had gone to the moon. Deborah sends her love. She has the rheumatics, as usual.—I remain your affectionate father,

“ JOSIAH STANBY.”

Faith sighed as she laid the letter down on her knee ; it was not what she had expected—it was not what she had hoped to receive from her home. She was too loyal and loving a daughter to accuse a parent, even in thought, of covetousness or weak pride ; but she could not help perceiving that her father did not like to acknowledge that she had already made a sacrifice for

his sake, and she saw that he wished to spur on to further efforts in his behalf one who had never required such spurring. Mortified and disappointed by what she had read, Faith did not at first notice that there was a postscript to the letter, crossed over the first page; for Gentleman Jos's straggling writing had so covered his large sheet of paper, that it was only by crossing that he had found space for a postscript. On a second perusal, however, Faith repaired her omission, and in the crossed portion of the epistle read as follows:

"*P.S.*—Edward Stanton's marriage with Matty Doyle is to come off three days before Christmas. We are not asked to the wedding; but I mean to go up to the church, and see a bit of the fun. Deborah hopes for a good slice of the cake, as she is to help Mrs. Doyle in the making of it."

The letter dropped from the hand of Faith Stanby; a keen pang shot through her heart. Edward had then, indeed, forgotten her—and so soon; he could never have cared much for her—never as she had cared for him! It would have been a relief to Faith to have burst into a passionate flood

of tears when the last fragment of her wrecked hopes was thus swept away from her forever; but she had no time for weeping, for she heard the silvery tinkle of the comtesse's bell. Faith bit her lip hard, so hard that she almost brought blood, and trying to repress all outward sign of emotion, hastened to obey her mistress's summons.

"The only earthly pleasure left to me is that of serving my sweet lady," thought the poor young maid, as she ran down the steep turret-stair.

In two minutes another step than Faith's had ascended that staircase, and sharp curious eyes were peering over the letter which had brought such pain to her who had received it. As the eyes, though keen as serpent's, had no power to penetrate the meaning of sentences written in English, Diane derived no great satisfaction from the act of meanness into which curiosity had betrayed the *femme-de-chambre*.





CHAPTER XX

TEMPTATION.



IN a beautiful apartment, which was known as the comtesse's boudoir, sat Gabrielle and Ninon La Fère. The former had apparently been engaged in the occupation of spinning, for her hand rested on an elegant spinning-wheel formed of ebony chased with silver, and part of the linen yarn on the little machine had already been drawn into a delicate thread. Ninon seemed to have no occupation but that of pulling to pieces, petal by petal, a magnificent rose of Provence which she held in her hand. There had been a silence of a few seconds, when Ninon resumed the thread of a conversation which that silence had broken.

"Of course thou art perfectly right, Gabrielle," she said, with one of her affected shrugs; "every one ought to think alike, and pray alike, *cela va sans dire*. I hope thou wilt not take it into thy head that every one ought to dress alike also, and preach a crusade against shoe-buckles and silk stockings, because St. Agatha or St. Veronica made a point of going barefoot."

"Thou dost talk lightly, Ninon," said the comtesse. "I should have thought that even thou must have seen that it would be a meritorious act to draw a poor heretic into the bosom of Holy Church, and teach her to adore blessed Mary, the Queen of Heaven." Gabrielle crossed herself as she spoke. "I like Faith," continued the lady; "she is frank, affectionate, willing. The more I like her, the more anxious I am that she should enter that Church, out of the pale of which we are taught that there can be no salvation. Her conversion is much to be desired, both for her own sake and that of others."

"I cannot see what others have to do with the matter," observed Ninon. "Thou

do not suppose," she continued laughing, "that Faith's heretical notions can be caught like the plague?"

"I do not forget how in this very Provence the heresy of the Albigenses once spread," observed Gabrielle La Fère. "It is to be feared that the poison has not even yet died out, as one of my father's best servants, Le Roy, was said to have been tainted with it. Remember, also, how numerous in France were the heretic Huguenots not more than a century ago."

"And a fine work our pious kings made of converting them!" cried Ninon La Fère. "Thou thyself hast spoken to me with horror of the hunting down of the Albigenses; the plundering—shooting—burning! And as for the Huguenots whom our *Grand Monarque* turned wholesale out of the kingdom, because, like thee, he believed that people should all think alike, I'll be bound they were not half so bad as the Jacobins now. England, when I was there, seemed to me to get on pretty comfortably without the blessing of the Pope, or the special care of the saints. Her king, at least, keeps his

head on his shoulders, which is more than ours —poor good man —is likely to do!"

Gabrielle was shocked by her *belle-sœur's* levity, and, without condescending to reply, rose and rang the bell for Faith. The comtesse would have preferred speaking to her intended convert without the presence of Ninon, had she not deemed it needful to have some one beside her who could, if required to do so, translate her words into English. Ninon was rather disposed to remain in the room, in the hope of glean- ing some little amusement from the attempt of Gabrielle to make a Papist of a stubborn *Anglaise*. On Faith's appearing in answer to the bell, Ninon, who had finished her occupation of pulling the rose into pieces, took advantage of the comtesse's being engaged in speaking to her maid, to take possession of the spinning-wheel of her sister. While the following conversation went on, Ninon first snapped the thread, and then, in a mischievous fit of industry, managed to bring the linen yarn into a condition little better than that of the rose.

In depressed spirits from the effect of

reading her father's letter, poor Faith entered the boudoir little prepared to encounter any fresh trial. She was like a bird with a broken wing; unfit either for flight or resistance.

"Madame rang?" she said timidly in French, without advancing much further than the door.

"Close the door and come nearer," said Gabrielle, with more than her usual graciousness of aspect and manner. Faith obeyed, and the lady went on, speaking slowly and distinctly, and occasionally pausing to select some word more easy to be understood by a stranger than that which had first come to her lips.

"I feel an interest in thee, Faith; it is my wish and intention to have thee much with me as my personal attendant."

"Madame is very good," murmured Faith, who regarded waiting upon the comtesse as by far the pleasantest of her household duties.

"But there is one thing which I wish thee to understand," said her mistress. "From the unhappy circumstances of these

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times, it is but seldom that either myself or my servants can enjoy the higher privileges which our Holy Church offers to faithful believers; but thou must be aware that my chapel is always open for worship. Within it I expect and require that every one attached to my service should pay his devotions, at least once in the course of the day. The priest may not be there to receive confession and give absolution; but the place is itself consecrated, and the shrine contains a piece of the true cross, which must be sacred to every Christian, as well as other relics scarcely less precious than this."

Seeing that Faith looked perplexed, Ninon took up her office of interpreter, her light accents contrasting with the low earnest tones of her sister.

"Madame la Comtesse tells thee, Faith, that she wants thee to be a good Catholic, and pray at least once a day in her chapel, because she has in it some holy bones, and a still holier fragment of wood."

Faith, from her first acceptance of a situation in France, had looked forward

to the probability of having to meet some such temptation as that which had now come upon her, and she had prayed for grace to hold fast to the truth; and yet, when the temptation came, it seemed to take her by surprise. Here, then, she was called to make her first stand against Romanist superstition, and that at a time when her spirit felt broken and crushed, and the favor of the one being whom in a land of strangers she loved and revered might be forfeited by such opposition. It cost Faith much not to courtesy silent submission to her mistress's will; it was with a painful effort that, clasping her hands, she faltered forth in her broken French, "Madame, forgive me; it is against my conscience."

"Thy conscience!" laughed Ninon La Fère; "what has a *femme-de-chambre* to do with a conscience?"

Gabrielle rebuked the laugh by a glance; then said, addressing herself to Faith: "It is impossible that a young maiden like thee should have any fixed ideas on a subject so vast—so sublime as that of religion. Thou

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canst not have the presumption to set up thy views against those held by all the holy fathers of the Church—by all the successors of the apostles? Brought up, as thou hast unhappily been, in a benighted land, I blame thee not for having hitherto embraced errors which thou hast been led to regard as truths. Thou art not yet sufficiently familiar with our language to read books which I design to place in thine hands, therefore I cannot expect thee at once to give up erroneous views; but I do expect, and require, outward conformity to that form of worship which is mine, and that of all my dependants; and I desire that from this time forth thou wilt daily offer up thy devotions in the chapel of Mary the most blessed."

Gabrielle spoke as one accustomed to command, and, by a slight movement of her hand, dismissed her maid out of her presence, as if disobedience, or even hesitation in compliance with her will were out of the question. But Faith did not retire; she remained in her attitude of pleading distress.

"What matters it, foolish girl, where thou dost say thy prayers?" exclaimed Ninon in English. "No one knows what thou art saying. I suppose that thy religion doth not forbid thee to worship in any place under the sun!"

Faith for a moment caught at the suggestion as a means of escape from what was to her a distressing difficulty. Her prayers—her silent prayers—could and should be addressed to her Maker only, though she might be surrounded by relics and images regarded by Papists with idolatrous veneration. But Faith's hesitation was brief. *Abstain from all appearance of evil: Be not conformed to the world*, were the warnings that flashed on her mind. What would the outward conformity required by the comtesse be but the first downward step which must inevitably lead to others? Having yielded on one point, would a weak girl have the courage, the power to make a firm stand on doctrinal questions? It was easier to decline praying at all before the shrine of the Virgin, than for Faith to defend scriptural views of pure

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worship in a language which she imperfectly knew. The English maiden dared not retreat from her first position of passive resistance, because she could not possibly maintain an argument in any tongue but her own. She could not tell her lady how the Word of God forbids bowing down to a graven image; she could not tell of that precious relic, the brazen serpent itself, broken to pieces and called *Nehushtan*,* when it became an object of idolatrous worship. Faith could only repeat timidly, but earnestly, without raising her eyes, "I cannot—it is against my conscience."

Gabrielle was unaccustomed to opposition, and, above all, opposition from a dependant. The reiterated refusal of a servant-girl to perform what appeared to the lady an act of religious duty, as well as one of obedience to herself, raised anger in the naturally proud heart of the Comtesse La Fère.

"Self-willed girl, as presumptuous as thou art ignorant, since thou dost refuse to do my bidding, thou canst not expect my favor," said the lady coldly, the tones of her

* A brazen bauble—*Cruden*. See 2 Kings xviii. 4.

voice as well as her words betraying anger, though her manner was perfectly calm. "Leave me!" she added, with an imperative gesture, which Faith instantly obeyed.

"I have lost the only friend who was left to me!" thought the poor girl, as she passed through long galleries and passages on her return to her room. "What will follow? The comtesse, good and merciful to all, will hardly turn even a Protestant adrift. I shall be suffered to remain in her service—at least I think so; but in how painful a position! A stranger, despised as irreligious, and in disgrace as disobedient." Faith drew a heavy sigh as she re-entered her turret chamber. Her glance fell on the letter from England, which Diane had left in the same place as that in which she had found it. "Three days before Christmas, Edward to be *married*!" murmured poor Faith. "Ah, well, I care very little what becomes of me now!"

Faith was not long left in doubt as to the consequences of having offended the comtesse. She had not been an hour at her work when she heard Diane's quick step on

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the stair, and then the door was unceremoniously pushed open, and the French maid's dark face appeared, with a smile of malignant satisfaction on the thin lips.

"No more riding in coaches for the girl picked out of some English hovel!" cried Diane, with a toss of the head. "Madame has condescended to listen to what I proposed from the first. The heretic, who won't kneel in the chapel, shall go and scrub pots and pans in the kitchen, and serve under Marie, whose temper is as hot as her fire, and who hates Protestants worse than cannibals!" Then, with a mocking laugh, Diane slammed the door, and ran down the staircase again.





CHAPTER XXI.

RICH AND POOR.

HER change of work and position in the household establishment of Château Labelle was by no means pleasant to Faith. She had very little taste for cookery, and it was no small trial of temper to be ordered about, scolded at, and abused by Marie, a little, irritable, bustling Frenchwoman, who seemed at first to be determined to find fault with everything that she did.

Nor was Marie by any means the only one of her fellow-servants from whom Faith had to bear unkindness. For some days after her interview with the comtesse, Faith met with coldness, if not with actual insult, from every one around her, the good-



natured Annette herself not excepted. The old traditions of the *ancien régime* lingered in Château Labelle even in those days of social change; to be in disgrace with madame was to be in disgrace with every one who looked up to the *grande dame* as obsequious courtiers to a despot. The object of madame's displeasure could be deserving of no one's regard; was not the lady of the château infallible; could the comtesse make a mistake!

Thus, under a kind of social ban, to a gentle and loving spirit especially painful, Faith had to bear a daily cross; but it was rendered endurable by the consciousness that it had been taken up in obedience to the dictates of conscience. In her humble, but not degrading position, Faith was winning the blessing pronounced by lips divine upon those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. And as the maiden braced up her mind to endure hardness, oppression, and injustice, gradually not only the power of endurance increased, but the strain on endurance lessened. Faith had resolved to do her new kind of work

well, though she did not like it; and with improvement in it came interest also. Marie had a quick temper, but not an unkindly heart, and Faith's gentleness and readiness to learn ere long won her favor in the Frenchwoman's eyes. Marie had begun with a violent prejudice against every one holding Protestant views; but her prejudice gradually melted, like ice in sunshine, under the influence of the kindly feelings which Faith's sweetness of temper inspired. Marie had thought that Protestantism was bad, and that every one professing it must of necessity be bad also; but before Faith had served under her for many weeks, Marie had reversed the proposition, and held that as the Protestant was good, so likewise must be her religion.

"I never had under me a girl so quick and willing, so neat and good-tempered, so truthful and honest," said Marie one day, in indignant reply to a contemptuous sneer at the English *heretique*, made by Diane. "If never speaking an angry word to any one present, or a spiteful word of any one absent, comes of being a Protestant, I



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declare, Mademoiselle Diane, it's a pity that thou thyself art not a *heretique* also !”

For even the worldly intuitively judge of the tree by its fruits ; and Faith, before she could string together two sentences in good French, had been unconsciously preaching to the household of which she was one of the lowliest members. It was known through the château that the cause of Faith's disgrace and change of position had been her refusal to do something inconsistent with her religion. A desire to know something more of a religion which was so dear to the English girl's heart, and had such influence over her actions, was raised amongst several of her companions. The light of Faith was shining, and shining clearly, whilst she was performing the lowliest duties of a kitchen-maid in Château Labelle.

Annette was the first of the servants from whom the cloud of coldness towards *la petite Anglaise* entirely passed away ; no cloud of any kind could remain long in the mind of the light-hearted girl. Annette soon showed to Faith more than her former kindness,

and with it a frank confidence and esteem, which encouraged the English maiden to venture sometimes to drop a word in season to her ignorant but not ill-disposed companion.

Annette, like too many servants who, after the hardships of a very poor home, find themselves amidst the luxuries of a grand mansion, indulged in a wastefulness of her mistress's property which Faith's more sensitive conscience regarded as scarcely honest.

"Is it well to burn daylight, dear Annette?" Faith asked one morning, when she entered a room which her fellow-servant was cleaning. "The sun has been up two hours, and thou hast thy candle burning still."

"*Ah, qu'importe?*" [what matters it?] laughed Annette. "Were I to keep as many candles lighted to sweep by as madame does to do honor to the shrine of the Virgin, they would not be missed at Château Labelle."

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the most important question," replied Faith, expressing herself with a good deal of difficulty in French, and yet managing to make her meaning tolerably clear. "Is not waste in itself wrong, even waste of our own things? And if so, how much more that of our mistress's goods—things with which we are *trusted*!"

"Thou hast ideas so strange!" exclaimed Annette, to whom this view of the subject was entirely novel. "Where didst thou learn that to waste is a sin?"

"From my Bible," answered Faith simply. "I read there that after the grandest of feasts—that where thousands of guests were fed, where the King of kings was the Master, and His servants the holy apostles—the Lord gave the command, *Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost*. If He who could have rained bread from heaven thus thought of the crumbs, and St. Peter and St. John but obeyed Him in gathering them up, dare we think it no sin to waste, however great be the plenty around us? I have sometimes thought that account in the Bible was given expressly for servants,

lest they should think the wealth of their masters any excuse for wasting their goods."

"Thou hast reason, Faith," said Annette. "See, I blow out the candle;" and she suited the action to the word.

Faith in the service of any mistress would have regarded economy in the light of a duty, but she had a double motive in wasting nothing that belonged to the Comtesse La Fère. To save her needless expense was to economize charity funds—the crumbs gathered up from her table helped to feed the suffering poor. Especially at the season of Christmas the lady gave liberally to the needy around her of *potage* [soup], prepared in her own château. During the winter of 1792-3, the very great distress which prevailed in the country from various causes so moved the pity of the comtesse, that she doubled her usual benefactions. From morning till night, and sometimes far into the night, Faith was either busy preparing food in what resembled a soup-kitchen for the poor, or in dispensing it to the hungry multitudes who surrounded the postern-gate of Château Labelle. This

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was to the Christian servant a most congenial occupation, while, from the trouble and fatigue which it caused, it left her but little time for fretting over private sorrows. Faith's untiring zeal on behalf of the poor tended more than anything else to remove Marie's prejudice against her; and it was with honest admiration that she, who had once hated Protestants "worse than cannibals," watched the movements of *la petite Anglaise*, as from a kettle, almost too heavy for her strength to lift, she filled with steaming soup one after another of the mugs and jars stretched out eagerly to receive it.

One of the recipients of the comtesse's bounty especially attracted the notice and excited the pity of Faith. This was a man almost bent double with age, with hair and beard silvery white. His mien was timid, almost cringing, as though he feared to claim even the slightest attention. Every one seemed to push past the poor old Frenchman; hungry children thrust him against the wall; he seemed never likely to approach near enough to the soup-kettle to have the tiny mug which he held in his

trembling fingers filled with its savory contents.

"Stay, the old man must have his share!" cried Faith, moving nearer to him who appeared to be unable to get nearer to her. With some little difficulty the English girl succeeded in making her way through the press of hungry applicants; she poured warm soup into the mug of the aged man, whose hand shook so that half of the contents were lost in conveying them to his mouth.

"It is such a tiny mug, I must fill it again," said Faith, with a sunshiny smile.

The poor old man invoked the blessing of all the saints on her head.

"I was glad to see thee caring for old Antoine," observed Marie to Faith in the evening, when, wearied with a hard day's work, the two servants sat together by the blazing fire in the kitchen.

"Is that the name of the silver-haired man who looked scarcely able to stand?" asked Faith in her broken French.

"Yes; he is a regular pensioner of madame," was Marie's reply. "Antoine

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was gardener to her grandfather, and to his father before him, they say; but it is twenty years since the old man has been able to dig up an onion, or tie up a lettuce. Madame allows him to remain in his own little cottage at the end of the olive plantation; it is a very lonesome place to live in, yet to leave it would break the old man's heart. Some folk—and Antoine is one of them—get rooted to one spot like a tree, which stands where it always has stood, even when old age has hollowed it out, and it has no more core than an empty nutshell."

"Does he live all by himself?" asked Faith.

"All by himself, like a hermit," answered Marie. "I guess Antoine will be found some day stark and stiff in his chair. But who can help it? he chooses to live alone. Madame sends to him every month a present of money and coffee, and he sometimes comes here for *potage*, but he can seldom manage the distance. I'd not seen him this winter till to-day; but folk in January come for the crumbs like birds."

"Madame is very kind to the poor," observed Faith, whose disgrace had by no means lessened her loving admiration for her mistress.

"Madame is an angel!" replied the warm-hearted Marie. "If she had not been so good, dost thou think that Château Labelle would have stood the first storm of the Revolution, when feudal *seigneurs* were murdered on their own thresholds, and because the Bastille was destroyed in Paris, madmen all over the land thought that every other big building must come down! Why, hast thou not heard," continued Marie, with raised voice and excited gesture, "that in *Franche Compté* the château of some noble was burned every day to the end of that dreadful July, and that in the *Maçonnais* six thousand peasants rose against the *ancienne noblesse*, and in one fortnight destroyed seventy-two dwellings of the *aristocrates*! * Woe then to those who had ground down the poor, woe to those who had treated the peasants worse than African slaves! But here—in Château Labelle—

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there was not so much as a window broken, nor a branch torn from the trees. Madame's guards were her own tenants; they rose like one man in her defence! Ah, when the peasants came swarming up the avenue armed with scythes and pitchforks, some folk cried to the comte and comtesse, 'Fly for your lives,—the *Jacquerie* has begun! trust not a Provençal; all the country is mad, all the country is athirst for the blood of the old *noblesse*.' But thou shouldst have seen the comtesse then. She had no fear. Why, said she, should she fear the people amongst whom she had dwelt from her cradle, she and her fathers, and fathers' fathers before her? Ah, it was grand to hear how the peasants shouted when madame rode up to them with her husband, and to see how they made way to the right and the left, and waved their caps, and cried *Vive la comtesse*! There was not a single *bonnet rouge* nor a tricolor ribbon amongst them!"

"Was the comte as much beloved as his lady?" inquired Faith.

"He was a goodly gentleman, the Comte

La Fère; but thou dost understand, the estates were not his, the comtesse is *dame propriétaire*, it was to her that the peasantry looked. But *monsieur* was very good," continued Marie, in a more nonchalant tone; "he was gracious and pleasant in manner, and when on horseback looked like another St. George. I often say that it was a pity, a great pity, that he and madame ever left their château in Provence to go to that terrible Paris. But when they first went, just after their marriage (that was five years ago), the Revolution had not broken out. It was natural that a young belle like madame should like to go to the grand receptions at the Tuileries, and show her diamonds at the balls at Versailles; and that Monsieur le Comte should be proud of a high place at court. Who could tell what would follow?"

"Such fearful troubles!" exclaimed Faith; "how sorely madame must have suffered!"

"When the news came of the comte's murder," said Marie, "I thought madame would have died. She wished she had been beside him. Had she been," con-

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tinued Marie with enthusiasm, "I don't believe that there's a Jacobin as could have laid a finger on him, no more than if the blessed Virgin herself had stood at his side. Ah, I forget," and Marie's voice dropped; "those *sans-culottes* care neither for Virgin nor saint; they have stabled horses in convents, pulled down chapels for firewood, made church-bells into *sous*, and melted down into money madame's beautiful silver shrine! Dost thou think," and Marie looked inquiringly into the face of her English companion as the new thought struck her—"dost thou think that the poor comte will have to stop longer in purgatory because these *vilains* Jacobins stole what was meant to win for him the martyr's intercession? St. Pancratius knows that it was not the comtesse's fault: it would seem hard if the comte had to suffer; for the holy saint had the treasure, though he was not able to keep it out of the Jacobins' hands."

The question seemed a strange one to Faith, and might almost provoke a smile, though it was put in sober earnestness by the ignorant woman beside her. "I should

think that holy saints above want no treasure but what is heavenly," replied Faith; "and as for intercession, we need no intercessor but One."

"Ah, thou art *Protestante—heretique—Anglaise!*" cried Marie, but without the bitterness of tone with which she would have pronounced the words a few weeks before; "what canst thou know of purgatory, or of what is going on there! It can scarcely be worse," she added, "than what is going on in poor France. Ah, I hope and pray that it may soon, soon come to an end, this terrible Revolution!"



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CHAPTER XXII.

HIGH AND LOW.



MARIE'S hopes were not to be realized. The year 1793, which had just opened, was to witness some of the most atrocious crimes committed during that fearful period which has filled so many blood-stained pages of the history of fair France. On the 21st day of January, Louis XVI., the descendant of a long line of kings, stood on that scaffold which had already reeked with the blood of so many of the noblest of his subjects.

The tidings of the execution of the king were received with horror by Gabrielle La Fère. The cup of her country's iniquity seemed to her to be full, and had guilty Paris shared the fate of Gomorrah, the

comtesse would have seen in the deluge of fire only the righteous vengeance of Heaven. The good—the pious—the merciful had been ruthlessly slain : why did the thunderbolts sleep, why did not the wrath of Omnipotence sweep the murderers from the face of the earth !

Most especially was the indignation of Gabrielle aroused by the conduct of Philippe, Duc d'Orleans, at the trial of Louis XVI. Egalité had voted for the death of his cousin and king ! Gabrielle would not let his name be uttered in her presence ; it never passed her own lips ; she never alluded to the due but as *le traître*, until, on the following November, Egalité suffered the same fate as his sovereign, and at the hands of the very democrats to win whose favor he had sacrificed conscience and king.

"We are now certain of a war with England," observed Marie to Faith, on the evening of the day on which news of the death of the king had reached Château Labelle. "The messenger who brought the shocking tidings from Paris said also that there were rumors that war had already

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been declared, and that the booming of your big English guns would soon be heard off Toulon."

"It will be a bitter thing to me to be quite cut off from my country, never to hear from my home," sighed Faith; for even when the fate of nations hangs in the balance, the most patriotic and unselfish cannot help anxiously pondering over the question how the crisis of public events will affect their own private interests.

"Hear from thy home! ah, that reminds me that a letter for thee was brought in the comtesse's post-bag," said Marie. "I meant to give it to thee in the morning, but the murder of the poor dear king—rest his soul!—put everything else out of my head. Hold, here is the letter;" and Marie, after fumbling for two or three minutes amongst the various articles kept in her capacious pocket, produced the crumpled, soiled, folded sheet of paper, which looked, as she observed, as if it had lain for a year in a dust-hole.

"It may be the last letter from dear England which I shall receive for a very,

very long time," thought Faith sadly, while Marie was exploring the depths of her pocket to find the epistle. The first glance at the back of the letter showed the English girl that it had not been written by her father.

"If my black hen had dipped her claw in ink and taken to scratching on paper, she'd have made just such a scrawl as that," observed Marie, as she handed the letter to Faith.

"Who can have written to me? it must have been my step-mother," said Faith, wondering at Deborah's having made so very singular an effort. Mrs. Stanby had never been known to write two lines when she could employ the ready pen of her step-daughter, and it could have been no slight cause that had induced her to perform the astonishing feat of scrawling over two pages of a sheet of large-sized paper. Faith could not avoid suspecting that the letter would contain an urgent request for money. How to send any to her home the young servant knew not; her first quarter's wages were not yet due, and before the time for

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payment arrived, it was likely that all peaceful communication would be closed between the two nations on the opposite sides of the Channel.

But the unselfish, affectionate daughter was never again to be called upon to sacrifice comforts, almost necessities, to supply the need of an indolent, thriftless parent. Before Faith had finished reading the ill-spelt, unpointed scrawl, the tears were falling fast on the soiled and blotted sheet which contained the following lines :

"dear faith this is to say and youl Be Sory to here i writes to give bad noos of yer father but he wood go to Marston's weding tho it snowed ard and Catchd cold and kep his bed and niver no more Got up but parson seed him several times and Died Sunday last quite esy and he litle thout in Goldn squar as hed iver hav come to Be Berried by the parrish but i puts him on his Laco rufels so he loked like a gemman as he Alays was and no more at Present from yer moter debrah stanby."

Yes, the life of poor Gentleman Jos had closed ; the end had come of his vain hopes, idle regrets, and petty follies. He had been all his days running after shadows, and had met at last with the great reality, Death. A solemn messenger is Death,

wheresoever and to whomsoever he comes : whether to monarchs, the shock of whose fall startles nations ; or to the cottager who drops into the grave almost as silently and as little noticed as a withered leaf into a stream. Death is the angel that summons to the Master's great tribunal alike him to whom the many talents have been entrusted, and him who buried the one. How little it matters to the disembodied spirit obeying that solemn summons whether it rise from the palace, the hovel, or the scaffold ; whether there be at the funeral many mourners or few ! Little it recks whether the name which the lifeless form once bore be inscribed in the records of history, or ere the year close, be well-nigh forgotten. Few were the tears shed for Josiah Stanby save by one faithful, loving girl, who treasured up memory of every little act or word of kindness that had chequered his selfish life, and who forgot nothing connected with a parent's memory except that there had ever been anything for his family to forgive.



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CHAPTER XXIII.

CONFESSION.

CABRIELLE LA FÈRE felt compassion for her young English servant when, a few days afterwards, she accidentally heard that Faith had lost her last surviving parent. The conscience of the comtesse was not quite easy as regarded the orphan girl who had come to a foreign land, trusting at least in the justice if not in the kindness of strangers. "Have I not dealt harshly with Faith?" thought her mistress; "did I do well to show displeasure towards her because my servant would not barter conscience to win my favor? Faith may be—must be fearfully mistaken in the views to which she so obstinately clings, but

haughtily to drive her from me was scarcely the way to win her to mine."

Gabrielle took a practical way of showing sympathy; she both advanced Faith's wages, to enable the orphan to procure decent mourning, and also from her own wardrobe the comtesse helped to supply her with many suitable articles of dress, to the scarcely concealed dissatisfaction of the *femme-de-chambre*, Diane. Gabrielle did not, however, bestow her gifts in person. "How could I speak to Faith any word of comfort?" thought the Romanist lady. "Doubtless her poor father lived and died holding Protestant errors, despising the intercession of the Blessed Mary, and without extreme unction to smooth his path to the grave. No priest has given him absolution; no masses will be said for his soul; by what arguments, then, could I console the grief of his daughter?"

The lady was, however, undecided as to whether she should not bring back Faith to her former place in the household, and let the English maid resume her attendance on Ninon, and—as Gabrielle had once de-

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signed—wait more frequently on herself. But the comtesse had at this time many matters of deep interest to herself to prevent her mind dwelling on what only concerned the welfare of an humble dependant.

“Ninon, my sister,” said Gabrielle, as she entered her boudoir one evening, and, after closing the door behind her, went up to Mademoiselle La Fére, and laid her hand on her shoulder, “I have heard from Père la Porte.”

Ninon was on her knees before the gilded cage of a new favorite, a paroquet gay in plumage of crimson and green, which, in default of more exciting amusement, the young lady was trying to teach to call out her own name.

“Ah, Gabrielle, I would give the world that thou hadst come in here but a minute ago; I am certain that he said something like ‘Ninon!’ the charming, beautiful creature!” exclaimed the girl with a delight quite disproportioned to its cause.

“Leave the bird, and try, if possible, to listen quietly and seriously to what I am going to tell thee,” said Gabrielle La Fére,

with a touch of severity in her tone, for she was in no mood for trifling. The comtesse seated herself on the high-backed, richly carved chair which she usually occupied opposite the wide hearth, on which a fire of wood fagots was blazing, for even in Provence January weather was cold. Ninon turned her face towards her *belle-sœur*, but without rising from her former position before the cage, and during the conversation which ensued, the eyes and the attention of the French girl frequently wandered towards her new pet.

"I have heard from Père la Porte," repeated the comtesse. "Thou art aware that the good priest has not quitted the province, but, observing due precautions, has gone from place to place, secretly performing his spiritual duties. He is, I need not say, overwhelmed like ourselves with indignation and grief at the murder of our good king. All open marks of respect to the memory of the sovereign are forbidden by those who, under the name of freedom, have destroyed all freedom in France. The very body of Louis XVI. has been consumed by quick-

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lime, that no loyal mourner may ever be able to say, 'Here lies the dust of the descendant of St. Louis.'" Gabrielle paused for a moment from emotion, then went on. "But the faithful still find some way of showing their loyal devotion, and Père la Porte has——dost thou attend to me, Ninon?" The question was asked with abruptness, and with an air of displeasure.

"I am all attention," said Ninon, whose looks contradicted her words.

"The good father," continued Gabrielle, "has arranged to have a private funeral mass for the king's soul to-morrow, in the little ruined chapel of St. Catherine, which stands, as thou knowest, in the *Forêt Verte*. I intend to assist at the holy service, and to take the opportunity of confessing my sins to the priest."

"I thought," observed Ninon, "that thou hadst told me that the coachman was scarcely to be trusted in these dangerous times, and that thou wert in constant fear of getting the priest into trouble."

"I shall not use my carriage," said Gabrielle. "Diane, who is as anxious to

confess and receive absolution as I am, will go with me to the chapel on foot. I came to ask thee, Ninon, whether it be not thy wish to accompany me also?"

Ninon started up from her kneeling position with an exclamation of surprise. "I go, indeed!" she exclaimed; "two miles there, two miles back, through a dreary forest, on foot! impossible—quite impossible! And for what? To hear a funeral mass, of all things the most *triste*; for there will not even be music, no requiem, no procession, no incense, not so much as the ringing of a bell! For such a dismal entertainment I will assuredly not run the risk of having some horrid Jacobin mob hunting me down like a hare! I may be made a martyr against my will, but *with* it never, never!"

"There is but little danger to be apprehended, I believe," observed Gabrielle coldly.

"Oh, a little goes a long way with me," cried Ninon, with an affected shudder. "I've not forgotten the ghastly look of that wretched baker at Lyons, the eyes half

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starting out of his head, and the red drops falling over his face! Thou mayst like to run into the den of a lion, but I would far rather keep outside it. There are plenty of troublesome spirits at Aix, and we are not so very far from Marseilles itself, where Jacobins swarm like bees, and are furious as hornets. What could make thee imagine, Gabrielle, that *I* should take it into my brain to go on a dangerous pilgrimage on foot to a ruined chapel, to hear old Père la Porte perform a funeral mass?" Ninon could scarcely stifle her laughter at an idea so absurd.

"I thought that it might be a comfort to thee to confess and receive absolution for thy sins," said Gabrielle with a sigh, for she felt how sorely she herself needed spiritual comfort. "It is, I fear, a long time, Ninon, since thou hast enjoyed such privilege."

"I have never been to confession at all since I went with Madame de Genlis to England," replied Ninon, resuming both her carelessness of tone and position in front of the cage.

Gabrielle looked grave—almost distressed. “I always feared,” she observed, “that no good would come of thy being sent to a land of heretics at so early an age.”

“No harm came of it—none in the world : I wish I were in England now !” said Ninon, tantalizing her bird with a lump of sugar all the time that she was speaking. “I never could see the use of whispering to a stout elderly man all one’s little childish follies, and having him put naughty things into one’s head, that would never have come there but for his questions. I once asked Faith, ‘Dost thou ever confess thy sins?’ She looked surprised at my asking her, and said, ‘Oh yes ; I confess them every night.’ I was surprised in my turn. ‘Dost thou find a priest to hear thee so often?’ Gabrielle, thou shouldst have seen her bright, peaceful look as she answered, ‘No need of a priest, mademoiselle ; I go straight to the Lord.’”

“I regret that thou shouldst have held any such conversation with a misguided Protestant,” observed Gabrielle La Féré.

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wilt," cried Ninon; "but somehow she seems to go pretty straight with all her misguiding. My window, as thou dost know, commands a view of the postern gate, where Faith deals out thy charities to the poor. For lack of better amusement, I have sat for hours watching the giving out of *potage*. It was some fun to see the pressing and the jostling. If one cannot have court lords and ladies to look at, better have beggars than no one at all."

"What have the beggars to do with the question of Faith?" inquired Gabrielle La Fère.

"Faith had a great deal to do with the beggars," laughed Ninon; "and she did it well, and with all her heart, as if she could never be tired while a single poor child was hungry. Misguided Protestant indeed! Faith is a sister of mercy in disguise! If I worked as she works, I'd expect to be canonized as a saint, without any help from good Père la Porte!"

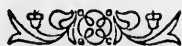
The comtesse rose from her seat and walked to the window. She had come to the decision that it would neither be safe

nor right to bring Faith again into close intercourse with one like Ninon, who had no settled religious views. "It is only the frivolity of Ninon's character," thought Gabrielle, "that has prevented her visit to England having a very dangerous effect on her mind." But a doubt would arise even in that of the bigoted Romanist lady, whether to be as utterly careless of all religion as was her husband's young sister were not worse than even refusing to kneel before the shrine of the Virgin, or to adore as divine a piece of consecrated wafer.

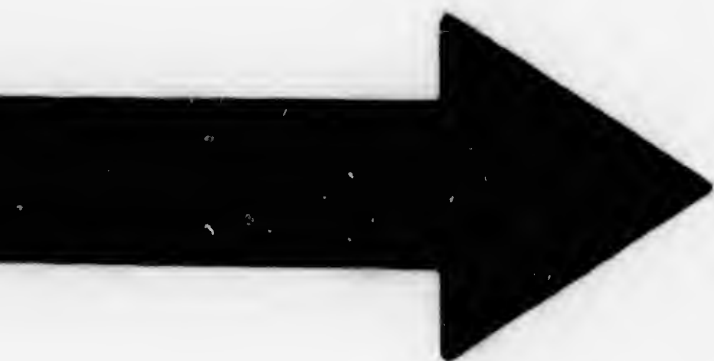
"It is strange," reflected Gabrielle that night, after restless hours during which she had vainly attempted to sleep; "how strange it is how I am haunted by these words of Faith which Ninon repeated to-day,—*I go straight to the Lord*. It sounded so child-like, so trustful! I could half envy the poor heretic a faith so simple and so peace-giving. She goes straight to the Lord with her burden of sins, lays them down at His feet, and her heart is lightened of its weight; she believes that she is forgiven! Oh, what would I not give for such

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blessed assurance!" moaned the unhappy lady. "I labor, I fast, I pray, I give of my substance, I try in every possible way to obey the rules of the Church, and yet I find no peace—no peace! I am like the poor wretch in the mythic story, ever rolling and rolling a stone up a hill, and just as it reaches the summit, seeing it bound back down the steep, so that he must begin anew all his labor and trouble! It is very hard to win heaven by our works; harder still to feel sure that we have won it. I go to the Virgin, I go to the saints, I go to the priest, to seek comfort for a grief-burdened heart, healing for a sin-diseased soul; Faith—were she right, O most happy Faith!—she goes *straight to the Lord!*"

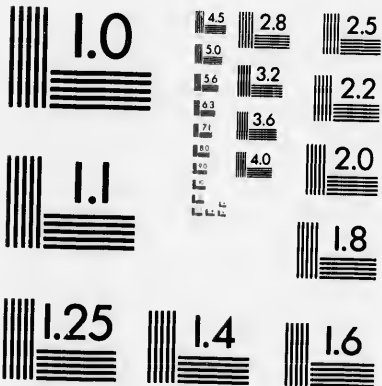






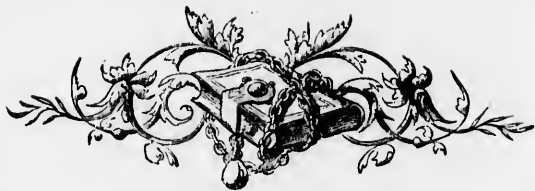
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CHAPTER XXIV.

PASSING ON.

TIME flowed rapidly onwards, bearing fearful events on its current. Spring, summer, autumn of 1793 passed away, and still, like the car of the idol Juggernaut, which used to be driven over living human bodies, the French Revolution rolled on, crushing under its ponderous wheels victims from every rank of life. In October the beautiful widowed Queen of France, Marie Antoinette, ended her sufferings beneath the flashing steel of the guillotine. In the following month, Egalité, Duke of Orleans, also died on the scaffold. Nor was he, by any means, the only Revolutionist who perished by the French Revolution. It

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was as if those who dragged forward the ponderous car of death oft lost their footing, and falling, were crushed by their Jugger-naut as remorselessly as the king and the nobles whose blood had already stained its wheels. The ferocious Danton himself, in his turn, fell a victim to the hatred of those with whom he had joined in destroying so many innocent lives.

War added its miseries to that of anarchy. There was civil strife in La Vendée, where the loyal peasantry, under gallant leaders, made a desperate but ineffectual effort to stop the death-car of Revolution. They fought, suffered, and died in the cause of loyalty and order. There was war with Holland, Germany, and Spain; and Great Britain in that momentous year also entered the arena of strife. In August the Union Jack of Old England floated from the walls of Toulon, which had been taken by Admiral Hood.

But foreign intervention did not arrest the fearful course of the Revolution in Paris. The cannon of the Allies could not silence the roar of a savage population

thirsting for blood. One crime succeeded another: the crowning horror of all occurred on the 10th of November. Then the Parisians, or those who bore rule in Paris, solemnly, in the face of day, under the light of the sun, denied the Creator, renounced all belief in Him by whose power they lived, and moved, and had their being! What was called by the impious blasphemers the Feast of Reason was held in Paris. A wretched woman, dressed in white, with sky-blue mantle, and wearing a cap of liberty, was actually set on high as representing the Goddess of Reason! Were not these monstrous events recorded in history, they would appear to be too horrible and strange to be imagined even by the brain of a madman. It is well that they are recorded, that the world may never forget to what lengths of wickedness, what depths of madness and crime, human nature may be brought when the savage passions of men are set loose, unrestrained by religion. These are days when nations need to be reminded how closely linked together are the two commands, *Fear God, honor the king,*

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and what an awful torrent of guilt and misery may rush in when once the protecting sea-wall of those commandments is broken.

Again Christmas-time came round ; but who in miserable France joined in the angels' song, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men* ? Glory had not been given to God, and on earth there was a devouring sword. The cry of the few faithful still left in the land was, *How long, Lord, how long* ? Gabrielle La Fère, with deepening sadness, saw a new year again open upon her distracted country. She indeed had been spared when so many innocent victims had fallen around her. King, queen, husband, friends had perished on the scaffold, or been murdered by the mob ; and here she was still unharmed in her stately château, dwelling amongst her own people. This was partly owing to Gabrielle's personal popularity, to the affection which she had won from the peasantry around her ; partly to the circumstance previously mentioned, the obligation under which the family of Danton lay to the late

Comtesse La Fère. But Gabrielle found it absolutely necessary to exercise an amount of caution which, to one of her fearless spirit, was irksome. She rarely quitted her own grounds, which were extensive; very seldom was the comtesse's carriage seen even in the city of Aix—most of her horses had been taken for the use of the army. Gabrielle in various other ways reduced her daily expenditure. Not only would the appearance of wealth have been dangerous in times when the possession of rank and riches was often treated as a crime, but the wealth itself was greatly diminished. The enormous circulation of *assignats* through the land occasioned wide-spread distress. Such few of the comtesse's tenants as paid rent at all to the *dame propriétaire*, who had no means to enforce payment, brought only *assignats* to her steward, who dared not refuse them. Gabrielle privately disposed of both jewels and plate, but a considerable portion of their price was returned in paper money. Complaints would have been worse than useless; they would have been perilous in the extreme if

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made by an *aristocrate*. For the first time in her life the once wealthy lady of Château Labelle had to practise rigid economy. Gabrielle saved on herself; for she would not curtail her charities, nor pay her servants' wages in that wretched substitute for silver and gold with which Jacobin rulers had flooded the country. Solitary, unprotected, and forlorn, Gabrielle felt much like a shipwrecked mariner whom the waves have dashed, bruised and bleeding, upon shore; and who, from that shore, watches the vessel in which he had sailed sinking under the furious billows; she felt like one who, hearing from afar the cries of drowning companions whom he cannot save, in his desolation could almost wish to share their fate.

It seemed strange to the widowed lady that nature should still look so peaceful and fair, that the changes of the seasons should still succeed each other so regularly, while the whole framework of society was shattered to pieces, and crime and anarchy prevailed. How was it that the rose-tints of dawn still lay so softly on the wooded hills, that

trees budded and blossomed and shed fragrance around, and the lark carolled gayly on high, just the same as if sorrow and sin were unknown upon earth? Gabrielle did not see in this the tender mercy of Him who is kind to the unthankful and evil, and who maketh His sun to rise on the just and the unjust. There was still in her heart a gloomy dread of the power of the Supreme Being, a secret questioning of His wisdom and justice, an impatient rebellion against His will. Gabrielle was still blindly trying to feel her own way to salvation without the light which could guide her to the one, the only way opened by the mercy of God. The Lady was still like Naaman in his Syrian palace; the whole head was sick, the whole heart was faint (Isa. i. 5); and she knew not where to find a cure for the deep-seated disease of the soul.

And how passed the months with Faith Stanby? In a routine of lowly duties, and mingled trials and blessings, that left her humble and thankful, *rejoicing in hope*. It was no light trial to be, as Faith was, utterly alone in the world. The maiden's

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heart clung with love, only increased by absence, to the thought of country, and king, and the associations of home; but even if Faith could have returned to her native land, she would have been homeless there. It was no light trial to have her lot cast amongst those who, instead of sympathizing with her deepest feelings, often through those very feelings found means of giving her pain. At times—and especially after the taking of Toulon by the British, and the naval victory of Howe—the English maid was something in the position of a foreign bird that, loosed from its cage, is mercilessly attacked by the wild ones. French vanity, mortified by defeat, found bitter gratification in wounding *la petite Anglaise*. It was the delight of the servants at Château Labelle, and especially Diane, to heap abuse upon everything connected with England; and if Faith's color rose, and her lip quivered, her persecutors looked upon her pain as a triumph of their own national pride.

But Faith's trials only drove her more close to the shelter of the great Rock of her

strength. She increasingly realized what it is to dwell *under the shadow* of the Almighty. The maiden went straight to the Lord, not only to confess and receive forgiveness of sins, but for comfort under trouble, and grace to bear meekly and cheerfully whatever sorrows He in His wisdom might send. It was the habitual lifting up of the heart in silent prayer that enabled the English girl to act so consistently that the most bigoted Romanist could find no fault in her, save in the matter of her religion. And respect for that religion was gradually gaining ground, especially with Marie and Annette, the two domestics in Château Labelle who were brought into most frequent intercourse with the Protestant maiden. Faith was often questioned as to what *heretiques* really believed, how they worshipped, and what was the source of their hopes as regarded the life beyond the grave. The English girl had from her childhood known enough of the Bible to be able to give a reason for the hope which was in her; and her influence, like hidden leaven, was gradually

spreading amongst the household at Château Labelle. Romanist servants saw in their companion the power of evangelical faith to guard from temptation, and to support under all the troubles of life.

Faith had earthly blessings as well as earthly trials, and she enjoyed them with a thankful and cheerful spirit. It was a blessing, indeed, to know no want, no care for the morrow, and to have health and strength to do her work. Faith's affectionate attachment to the comtesse was also a source of pleasure. Not that the servant saw much of her mistress. It was but seldom that Faith had even a glimpse of that noble form in its drapery of mourning, that beauteous face so expressive of silent sorrow; and still more rare was it for the English servant to have a word from the Lady of Provence. But the word, whenever it was spoken, was a kind one; and the comtesse's trials, her generosity, her nobleness of conduct, made a very strong impression on Faith. To work for her, to pray for her, to love her, gave Faith an interest in her own humble duties which

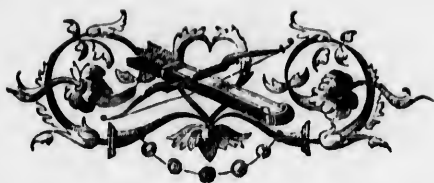
prevented their sameness from ever becoming irksome. It was from affection, as well as from conscientious regard for duty, that the servant girl cared for her mistress's interests as if they had been her own.

Thus the orphan and the exile, in her lowly estate, was actually far happier than the noble lady whom she served. The one had found rest on the Rock, while the other was tossing still on a dreary sea of doubt. While Gabrielle La Fère was murmuring in her heart because she saw not her Maker's wisdom and love amid the earthquake, the whirlwind, and the fire, the fearful judgments which were desolating a guilty country, Faith was listening to the *still small voice* within, which spoke comfort and peace to her soul, and looking forward to a home in that better land to which every day was bringing her nearer.



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CHAPTER XXV.

THE ERRAND.

AGAIN summer had come with its brightness. On one of its loveliest afternoons Mario sent Faith into the kitchen-garden to gather herbs. The occupation was a pleasant one; and Faith, as she bent low to cull the fragrant sage and thyme, was so much absorbed in thoughts of her own little garden in England, that she did not hear a light step on the path behind her.

"I would speak with thee, Faith," said a voice which, from its peculiarly rich sweetness, Faith recognized as that of her mistress. It was very unusual for the Lady of Provence to visit this part of her grounds, and Faith rose from her stooping position with a little surprise, to receive the orders of madame.

"I am going with Diane to—it matters not whither; but we shall be absent for several hours," said the Comtesse La Féré. "This is the first day of July" (Gabrielle would not adopt the new name of *Thermidor*, given to the month by those who affected change in all things), "and on the first day of each month I am wont to send by the hand of Diane, a little pension to an aged gardener, Antoine Le Roy. Diane has been unable to go this morning; she will be absent with me this afternoon; and the old man would be disappointed by delay." Gabrielle drew out an embroidered purse, and took from it twelve silver francs. "Thou wilt bear these to Antoine. Marie will tell thee where he dwells; and do thou ask her for a half *kilogramme* of coffee. It is my custom to add that to the silver which I send to the poor old man."

Faith courteseyed, in sign of obedience; and, well-pleased at the commission entrusted to her, with the money in one hand, and a basket of herbs in the other, returned to the kitchen. Marie, with heated face, was standing by the fire, engaged with the

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bouilli, which she was preparing for madame's repast. Faith repeated to her what the comtesse had said.

"She is going to confession in the ruined chapel, no doubt," observed Marie. "Madame always takes Diane with her—Diane is so eager to confess. It suits her so well to hand over her *fagot* of sins to the priest, that she may have her hands free to go picking up more, I suppose."

There was satire in the observation of Marie; for Diane's religion was well known by her fellow-servants to be a mere form without life, the form itself being probably kept up chiefly to please madame and retain her confidence.

"Is it not dangerous for madame to go to that chapel?" asked Faith, whose attachment to her mistress made her uneasy whenever she happened to know of the comtesse's going on a secret expedition through the forest on foot.

"Not so dangerous as thou mayest think," answered Marie. "I don't mind telling thee; thou art faithful and discreet." Marie dropped her voice as she went on,

and glanced round to see that no second listener was present. "Few know that a priest is ever to be found in St. Catherine's Chapel. It looks empty; the rain can come in; the wind blows the leaves over the floor; there is no holy vessel to be seen, or the Jacobins would, long ere this, have carried it away, as they did madame's beautiful shrine. But there is a secret place in that ruined Chapel in which everything is kept that is needed for celebrating mass; and the priest himself can hide there. There is an old faded painting of St. Catherine and her Wheel on the chapel wall. One might look at it a thousand times and not guess that it is anything but a picture, very much the worse for time and weather, left there because no one thought it worth removing. But let one but press a finger in the middle of that painted wheel, and one touches a secret spring—one can draw back a panel—there is a closet in the wall behind, where the paten and chalice are kept, and the Host itself" (Marie crossed herself as she spoke), "so that nothing is wanting for the holy service; and yet nothing is seen

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should a stranger enter the chapel. Ah! I forgot that thou art a Protestant. Thou hast nothing to do with priest or high mass. But thou wilt not betray the secret?" Marie bit her lip, aware that her talkativeness had led her to disclose what only a few, and those zealous Romanists, were intended to know.

"I would rather die than betray my lady's secret," said Faith. "But my present business is with my lady's errand. I was to ask thee for half a kilogramme of coffee, to carry with this money to poor old Antoine."

"He always has it, on the first of each month, and must have it of the very best, madame's own Mocha," said Marie, bustling off with her large bunch of keys to the closet in which the stores were kept. "Diane always insists upon that, and on good full measure besides; Antoine's half kilogramme must weigh heavier than any one else's, or I never should hear the end of the matter."

"Is Diane, then, so warm a friend of the poor old gardener?" inquired Faith.

"She speaks of him as her second father,"

said Marie, who with a liberal hand was measuring out the coffee. "I think that Antoine is some kind of relation to Diane; anyways she has known him since she was a child, and says that she can never forget the *bon-bons* with which he treated her then. Diane has a very good memory—very—for other things than *bon-bons*. She never forgets an affront, as a younger Le Roy found to his cost; so it's well that she can remember a kindness also."

"And is Diane always the person to carry madame's bounty to Antoine?" asked Faith.

"Always; he cannot abide the sight of any one else. Antoine is a little wrong here," Marie touched her forehead with her finger; "he is timid, he is a hermit, he would scarcely open his lips to strangers. Diane says that it would throw Antoine into a fit if any one whom he did not know should come suddenly into his cottage. Thou must knock first, Faith, and gently. Perhaps the francs and the coffee may prove to the old man that thou art no stranger; and I remember that thou didst show him

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kindness when *potage* was given out in the winter. Surely thou wilt have a welcome; no one could be frightened to look on thee. Antoine will be glad of the money; good, hard, ringing coin goes a great way, specially in these days when—what between the *assignats* and the war—silver is as scarce as strawberries in *Brumaire* [November]. Ah! that Pitt—that *vilain* Pitt!—he's at the bottom of the mischief!" And Marie clenched her teeth and gave a little menacing shake of her head, as she always did when she mentioned the name of the great Prime Minister of England, who was regarded by the French in those days something as Prince Bismarck is in these.

Faith smiled; she was more than usually cheerful that day. "It seems to me," she playfully observed, "that if the vintage failed, or the silkworms refused to spin, it would be said that Mr. Pitt was at the bottom of the mischief."

Marie laughed as she tossed the packet of coffee to Faith. "Ah! thou art *Anglaise*; thou dost stand up for him who has bribed all the world to attack poor France from

without, as if she had not trouble enough within. The saucepan boils over fast enough without Pitt's stirring the fagots." Marie ran to the fireplace, where a hiss and a fizz had probably suggested the not very poetical simile to the mind of the cook. "And now, away with thee, Faith. Take the right hand path after leaving the back garden-gate, thou canst not lose thy way. Antoine's cottage stands all alone; thou wilt see its red chimneys above the olive-trees. And do not loiter," continued Marie, "for there are a hundred things for thee to do; Annette wants help with the linens; Diane will be furious if her skirt be unfinished; the muslin curtains must be changed; the coffee-pot rubbed bright; there are peas to be shelled, and potatoes to be peeled; and I can't begin the preserving of the currants till thou art here to assist."

Of all the members of the household at Château Labelle, the most hard-worked was *la petite Anglaise*, for she was the servant of servants. Faith, the orphan and foreigner, was expected to perform every service that no one else liked to perform; she had to be

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up early and late, and to give help in every domestic department. It was by her quickness, her attention, her orderly habits alone, that Faith was able to make her services keep pace with the unreasonable requirements made upon them. She had so much to do within the château that she never was able to quit it, except when sent to gather kitchen-herbs for the table, a favorite occupation with Faith, for it gave her a little fresh air; and the sight of plants, though only vegetables, was always refreshing and pleasant. It was a rare treat to the *petite Anglaise* to be sent on an errand through a plantation, especially as that mission both implied trust on the part of her mistress, and was one of kindness to an afflicted old man. With the light-heartedness of a child about to enjoy a holiday, Faith made her short preparations for her walk; and as she passed through the back-gate into what looked to her like a leafy paradise, she warbled in low but cheerful tones the notes of a hymn of praise which she had last sung in dear Old England.



CHAPTER XXVI.

FRAUD AND FEAR.

HONEY tastes as sweet out of a crockery vessel as out of one of gold ; and the amount of pleasure which an individual receives from any source of gratification cannot be measured by the value which the world would put on that source. To Ninon La Fère, a walk through a plantation, with a visit to a cottage as its goal, would have been intolerably irksome. She would never have noticed the elastic softness of the turf, the purity of the air, the deep exquisite blue of the sky ; the songs of happy birds would have been no sweet music to her. Ninon could not even have understood how any one could experience a sense of delight in a

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solitary ramble. Yet Faith's heart almost bounded with joy as she pursued her lonely way, wishing that her walk could be prolonged for hours. The beautiful wild-flowers which bordered her path, the gorgeous butterfly which basked in the sunshine, then fluttering, rose and flew on before her, as if to tempt pursuit,—these trifles gave keen pleasure to Faith. Or rather they were *not* trifles which yielded enjoyment to the lowly-hearted young Christian. As the flowers and the butterfly owed their brilliant hues to the sunshine, so Faith's simple delights owed their keen relish to the highest and holiest source. Assured of pardoning mercy as she was, and full of grateful love, Faith at that moment realized something of that "perfect peace" which is reserved for them—and for them alone—whose souls are "stayed" on the Lord. There was no more cloud on her conscience than in the glorious sky above her; the deep heavenly depths of the one were emblematic of the other; and beneath such a sky it was no marvel that the humblest object looked bright. Why should

heirs of heaven go mourning in sackcloth when the great Father's works and words alike bid them rejoice? Shall the Christian forget that joy—holy joy—is amongst the fruits of the Spirit?

Faith had no difficulty whatever in finding the cottage of Antoine Le Roy; she only felt sorry to see its red chimneys so soon. The dwelling was small, but prettily situated. It was partly covered with a vine, whose large green leaves, unripe clusters, and delicate tendrils formed a natural curtain to the single window, and drapery over the door.

Gently the maiden tapped on the panel, which looked worm-eaten and old. An eager, tremulous "*Entrez, entrez, mademoiselle,*" made her lift the latch and cross the threshold. The cottage had appeared picturesque and pretty when seen from without, but the squalor and misery within it made themselves at once disagreeably perceptible to more than one of the visitor's senses. It seemed to Faith, on her entrance, as if the place could not have been cleaned for years; dust lay on every object, accu-

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mulated in every corner, the very air was heavy with dust, while the unplastered rafters above were covered with the gray cobwebs of successive generations of spiders. Light, even on that warm bright day, feebly struggled into the cottage, being not only obscured by vine-leaves without, but by an inner coating of dirt within. Faith's eyes soon became accustomed to the twilight dimness of the place; but on her first entering it from the blaze of daylight, she could scarcely distinguish the features of its aged, solitary inmate.

And what penury and misery were stamped on those features! Antoine, whom Faith had not seen since the winter, looked little more than a living skeleton. He made a feeble attempt to rise from the chair on which he had been sitting by a table, with his bony hands resting on his knees, and his bearded chin sunken on his chest. But the effort to rise was a vain one; he had not strength sufficient to stand upright.

"Is it Mademoiselle Diane?" asked Antoine, with nervous eagerness.

"No, not Diane; but I have come in her

place," added Faith quickly, fancying that she saw a look of disappointment pass over the face of the poor old man. "This month madame has sent her present by me."

Faith counted out the twelve francs on the table, and at the clink of each one, as it fell, Antoine uttered an ejaculation of thankfulness to the Virgin, the saints, or madame—a thankfulness mixed with surprise.

"All these for me—all—*all!*" he exclaimed, clutching the silver in his thin fingers when Faith had finished counting it out.

"All," she replied, with a smile. "But wherefore art thou thus surprised at my lady's kindness? Doth not Diane bring thee the like gift from madame every month in the year?"

"Ah! yes, yes; madame never forgets the poor old gardener; Mademoiselle Diane always comes with a present," replied Antoine. "But six francs in *les assignats* does not go far—one gets so little of bread—so little—it would not keep soul and body together; but I dig up roots for my *pot-au-*

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"Six francs, and only in paper!—is that all that thou dost receive through Diane?" asked Faith, the dark suspicion which crossed her mind giving to her usually gentle countenance an expression almost of sternness.

"I have no more, mademoiselle; not a sous more," replied the pensioner. "I used to have twelve francs in silver every month, with the poor king's face (peace to his soul!) stamped on them every one. But Mademoiselle Diane says that times are now changed, and that Madame la Comtesse cannot give as she gave in the days of the *ancien régime*, when the *noblesse* had plenty of horses in their stables, and of *louis d'or* in their coffers."

"But Diane, doubtless, always brought you a supply of coffee, like this?" asked Faith, holding out the large fragrant packet which she had carried with her from Château Labelle.

Antoine seized hold of the parcel with a wondering joy, an extravagant delight which

it was almost painful to see. "Ah! what perfume—what luxury!" he cried; "it is long—very long—since I have tasted a drop of warm coffee!"

"Then it would serve Diane right if she were never to taste a drop of warm coffee again!" exclaimed the English girl, with a burst of indignation which she could not repress.

The old gardener looked startled at her words, which at the first instant he scarcely understood. Their meaning, however, soon dawned upon him; and the pensioner became suddenly aware both that he had been cruelly defrauded of his due, and that he had been letting out to a stranger facts which Diane would undoubtedly wish to be most carefully concealed.

"Don't let Diane know that I told you. O mademoiselle, for the love of the blessed saints, don't let her know!" exclaimed the trembling old man in pleading accents, as if he himself had been the criminal who had reason to dread a discovery of a system of fraud.

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reply to the reiterated entreaty. She only assured the old gardener that she would think of him, and care for him, and that she had hopes that he would soon see better days. Would it not be far better for him, she suggested, to come and live in the château, if madame, who was so kind and good to all, would give him leave? He might then, perhaps, receive her bounty from her own hand. Marie would see that he wanted nothing; he would never be hungry again.

But Antoine, after years of utter seclusion, was too timidly nervous to admit the possibility of changing his place of abode. He trembled violently, tears gushed from his aged eyes at the very idea of quitting his cottage. Faith saw that the point could not be pressed. All that she could do at that time was to try, by slight attentions, to mitigate the discomfort in which she had found Antoine. Faith filled his kettle, lighted his fire, and would have remained with Antoine till she had brought his miserable little den into something like order, but for the charge of Marie that she should not

delay her return. Faith was not sorry on her own account that she must not remain many minutes in the cottage, from which air, as well as light, was so much excluded; it was a relief to leave the close, sickening atmosphere within, for the freshness of the soft, warm breezes without. The last sound which Faith heard from the lips of Antoine, as she closed his door behind her, was the repeated entreaty that she would not bring him into trouble with Mademoiselle Diane.

"Oh, the wickedness, the deceit, the cruelty of that woman!" exclaimed Faith to herself in her native tongue, as she turned from the wretched hovel, "to betray the trust of her generous mistress, to rob one so very poor as Antoine, and under the pretence of old friendship, of gratitude for past kindness! Could anything be more base? Antoine is afraid of Diane's anger—no wonder that he is afraid. She who is capable of such meanness, such cruelty, would be capable of any other sin. But what is to be done?" thought Faith. "Is this wicked course of fraud to be still carried

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Faith unconsciously slackened her steps, for the new subject offered to her thoughts was very difficult and perplexing. The English girl shared that dislike to anything resembling tale-bearing which in schools and in households prevents one member from informing against another. Faith had seen many things at Château Labelle of which she could not possibly approve, but she had not deemed it to be her duty to carry a report to the comtesse of the shortcomings of her servants. But was the present case similar to the rest? Was silence to be justified by necessity, or made a point of honor? Faith would gladly have persuaded herself that it was so. She was not by nature possessed of a high degree of courage; she had already suffered greatly from the dislike of Diane: dare she draw down upon herself the intense, the vindictive hatred of that unprincipled woman by accusing her to her mistress? Diane was, more or less, an object of fear to every member of the household at Château Labelle; no one cared to

have her as an enemy, though no one sought her as a friend. It was Diane's boast that she never forgot or forgave an affront; and, however regardless of truth she might usually be, few doubted that in this matter the *femme-de-chambre* spoke truly.

Faith was a gentle girl, of a very peaceable disposition: she never willingly gave, nor readily took offence. In a peculiarly difficult position she had succeeded in passing more than eighteen months in a foreign land, amongst those who professed a different religion from her own, without having an actual quarrel with any one. She had suffered, but she had not striven; when reviled, she had not reviled again. Faith was ready to make any sacrifice for the sake of peace, except the sacrifice of conscience. Had the time come when all hope of peace must be given up, and with peace perhaps personal safety? For the peril involved in making a deadly enemy of a Frenchwoman in the year 1794 cannot be measured by what it would cost to offend a superior in Britain. In her own country, Faith had been under the shield of the law; in France,

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law afforded little or no protection to the weak. Anarchy on every side afforded tearful opportunities to the bold and unscrupulous to gratify personal malice and revenge. There had been women in France, and those not very few in number, who seemed to have exchanged the natural tenderness of their sex for more savage cruelty than that shown by the Jacobin men. Faith had heard with shuddering horror of women sitting in view of the scaffold, as at a play, knitting, talking, jesting, as they counted head after head falling under the stroke of the guillotine. The maiden felt intuitively that from none of these harpies could less mercy be hoped for than Diane was likely to show to one who should give her mortal offence.

"I dare not—oh, I dare not incur her hatred!" thought Faith, as again she quickened her steps; "I am so helpless, so friendless!" Faith's eyes glanced upwards into that clear blue ether which had looked to her, but a short time before, like the sapphire pavement of heaven. "Helpless, friendless!" repeated Faith, in a tone of self-

reproach, "while I can ask for help from above—when the Lord Himself is my friend! Oh, this coward fear of man, shall I never break from its bondage? *'Who is he that will harm ye, if ye be followers of that which is good?'*" Faith tried calmly to look her new difficulty in the face. "That poor old man is starving; he is dying a lingering death from actual want, because he is defrauded of his own; or he is given just enough to keep him alive, that Diane may continue to make wicked gain by robbing the poor! If I keep silent, knowing what I know, will not the wasted, withered face of that old man haunt me? Shall I not be Diane's accomplice in guilt? Antoine cannot, dare not plead his own cause; is not the cause of the poor the cause of the Lord? In past days I was tempted, sorely tempted to disobey the voice of conscience through the snare of earthly love; now I flinch back through earthly fear. The snare is laid, as it were, on the opposite side of my path; but it is prepared by the same spiritual enemy.

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How strong still in my soul must be the power of self and sin!"

Faith dreaded meeting Diane, now that she was conscious of possessing the *femme-de-chambre's* secret. Intercourse with her had never been pleasant, now it would become very painful. The young servant re-entered the château, and resumed her domestic duties with a preoccupied mind; she was so taken up with what she had seen and heard at Antoine's cottage, and the difficulty of deciding upon what course she should pursue, that for once, by her inattention, Faith tried the temper of Marie, a temper which was very easily set in a blaze.

"What has come over thee, stupid? Hast thou no hands, no eyes? Canst thou not set down a tray of currants without letting half of them tumble down on the floor? I'll take good care that thou dost not go gadding through the plantation again, for thou hast left thy wits behind thee!"

Such was the angry rebuke of Marie, uttered in the shrillest tones of her voice, which was naturally shrill. But Faith

scarcely heard what she said, and was unconsciously treading under foot some of the berries which she had dropped in her sudden start on Diane's entering the kitchen. The *femme-de-chambre* advanced, and stood directly in front of and almost close to the frightened girl.

"So madame tells me that thou hast carried her present to Antoine," said Diane, in tones much lower than those of Marie, but more terrible in their measured distinctness than the loudest chiding of the angry cook. "Thou didst doubtless find the dear old gardener comfortable and in good health?"

"I cannot say so," began Faith, while the nervous movements of her foot made more havoc amongst the red currants. Marie had quitted the kitchen, or Faith's attention would have been unpleasantly drawn to this fact.

"But *I* say it," observed Diane, advancing still closer to Faith, and bending forward till the poor girl could feel her warm breath on her brow. Faith saw the blood-red bow of ribbon which the *femme-de-*

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chambre wore quiver with emotion like that which a spider gives to its web when a prey is caught in its toils. "I say it, and *thou* must say it also, or it will be the worse for thee! *Heretique, Anglaise*, thou dost understand me?"

It was impossible not to understand the menace conveyed in the words. Faith had not courage to reply, even had she had time to do so; but Diane turned sharply away as Marie bustled back into the kitchen. Faith had to bear a pelting storm of abuse for her carelessness in not only throwing down but crushing the currants, as she knelt to pick up the fruit, and then to wash the red stains from the floor. But the chiding of Marie, compared to the threat of Diane, was as the pelting of summer rain compared to the barbed arrow that silently strikes deep into the quivering flesh.

Yet even as Faith on her knees was engaged in gathering up the trampled fruit, she was forming a resolve that, let the consequences be what they might, she should not be frightened out of performing a Christian duty. She would watch for the very

first opportunity of speaking alone with her mistress; the comtesse should know that she had placed false confidence in one who had shamefully abused her trust; and the lady in her wisdom might find some way of protecting Antoine from future wrong, possibly without bringing on Faith all the tempest of wrath which she dreaded. The maiden, as she knelt, was silently praying for discretion and courage, and strengthening herself by repeating and appropriating the divine promise of protection: *Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.*



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CHAPTER XXVII.

DURING THE WORST.

WHEN the servants met around the supper-table that evening, Diane was more than usually animated in manner, and full of conversation. Her talk flowed entirely in one channel. She related tale after tale, all bearing upon the same subject of hatred and vengeance, shown in secret plots and in midnight murders. Each story seemed to be more horrible than the one which had preceded it; and Diane told it with the skill of an actress—darkening countenance, deepening tones giving added effect to her narration, till she made the flesh of her listeners creep, and their blood run cold. Ever and anon, at the close of some

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tale, the *femme-de-chambre* would give a glance of triumphant defiance at Faith, who looked, as she felt, shocked and sickened at the records of cruelty and crime.

"I am in no danger of exposure by yon pale, puny *Anglaise*," thought Diane; "she is weak and soft as a feather, and will never venture for a moment to match her strength against mine."

But even a feather, with all its softness and pliability, has an inherent power of resistance: of feathers have been formed breastplates which could turn the edge of a weapon. Diane might easily succeed in frightening Faith, but in shaking her resolve she did not succeed. The effect of fear on the English girl was to make her mistrust her own firmness, and therefore determine to do a painful duty so promptly as to leave herself no time for retreat. Faith dared not wait even till the following day, lest the morning should find her irresolute. Only pausing, therefore, until she saw Diane sit down as she usually did after supper, to a game of *rouge-et-noir* with one of the other servants, Faith set about her appointed task.

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She slipped quietly out of the servants' hall ; but not to go, according to usual routine, to help to prepare the sleeping apartments. The maid turned down a picture-hung corridor, and proceeded towards the boudoir in which, as she well knew, the comtesse was wont to pass her evenings, frequently alone.

Faith had never before gone unsummoned into the presence of Gabrielle La F  re. The poor girl's heart beat very fast, as her timid tap at the door was answered by the lady's voice bidding her enter.

Gabrielle sat at a small inlaid table, with her desk before her ; she was engaged in looking over old letters by the light of a bronze candelabrum. Such occupation is often a sad one ; and the lady, as she pursued it, looked even more pensive than usual. The window of the boudoir was wide open, for the evening was warm, and the breeze that gently stirred the curtains was fragrant with the perfume of orange-blossoms from the garden below. The comtesse appeared to be alone, for Faith did not observe that Ninon La F  re was seated at

the open window, she being almost concealed by one of the curtains. Tired of the novel with which she had been trying to kill time, Ninon was indulging in the *dolce far niente* ;* she might be supposed to be gazing on the glimmering stars, but the thoughts of the young lady were engaged on objects very far below them.

Gabrielle looked up from her papers, as Faith, after closing the door behind her, respectfully approached her mistress.

"Thou hast visited Antoine Le Roy, and hast doubtless come to tell me of thy visit. How fares the old man?" asked the comtesse.

"But ill, madame," replied Faith.

"What is his malady?" inquired the lady.

"I believe, want of proper food and proper care," answered Faith, with an effort.

Gabrielle La Fère looked surprised. "I provide what the old gardener needs; he cannot know want," she observed.

"No, madam, not *if* he receives what your bounty provides." That *if*, uttered with nervous emphasis, was the passage of the

* *Sweet do nothing*, an Italian term for idle lounging.

Rubicon to Faith. Gabrielle's attention was instantly fixed, and her suspicions awakened. The comtesse bade Faith give her a detailed, minute account of all that she had seen and heard during the visit to the gardener's cottage.

The maid could not choose but obey. Uninterrupted, save by an occasional question from Gabrielle La Fère, Faith simply and truthfully narrated all that had passed, neither omitting nor exaggerating aught.

A cloud of stern displeasure gathered on the brow of the listening lady. Gabrielle kept her dark eyes steadily fixed on the speaker, and Faith met that searching gaze without blenching. There was a pause of silence when the English maiden had finished her account. Faith was startled at that silence being broken by a laugh from behind the curtain.

"I declare, *ma belle-sœur*," cried Ninon, "that thou dost look as stern and solemn about this trifling affair as if it concerned some handsome young marquis being sent to the guillotine just set up in Aix, instead

of a wretched old man grumbling in a miserable cottage!"

"It is no light matter to me if I find that one of my dependents has been wronged and oppressed, and that another has been guilty of fraud and falsehood," said the Comtesse La Fère. "I must sift this affair to the bottom. It is too late to send for Antoine to-night, but I will see him myself to-morrow."

"I hope that thou art not going to do or say anything to put Diane out of humor," cried Ninon. "She is the only person in this tomb of a château with whom I can laugh and converse; I shall die of *ennui* if she grows sulky. Faith talks nonsense about this old man. He has been bent double and has looked like a scarecrow for years. He must have died long ago had he not been well cared for by Diane. But these *canaille* have no gratitude; and pensioners, as all the world knows, never die!"

Gabrielle was not wont to pay much heed to the babble of her *belle-sœur*, and her mind was now too painfully occupied by the disclosures made by Faith to take in even

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the purport of what Ninon was saying. The comtesse pressed her hand to her forehead, remained some moments in reflection, and then addressed Faith Stanby :

"Mention to no one what thou hast told me to-night," said the lady ; "I will not fail to look into this matter;" and with a gesture of her hand the lady dismissed her maid from her presence.

"I have done my part ; I am so thankful that I have been given courage to speak," said Faith to herself as she quitted the apartment. "All now rests with madame. She is just and good ; what is wrong she has power to set right. That poor old man will have cause to bless the chance—but surely it was not *chance* which made the comtesse send her gifts for once by another hand than Diane's."

But though the conscience of Faith was satisfied, and she could lie down to rest that night with a sweet consciousness that a dangerous duty had been bravely performed, she could not easily sleep. Her mind was haunted by the horrible stories which Diane had related, and for some time she vainly

tried to banish them from memory by repeating psalms and old English hymns. The hooting of an owl, which Faith had occasionally heard before, now troubled and disturbed her, as if a death-wail were in the night-bird's cry. At length, however, drowsiness overpowered thought, and Faith was forgetting in sleep all her cares and fears, when she was startled from her first slumber by the glare of a candle on her closed eyelids. Opening them in sudden alarm, Faith beheld standing at her bedside, with a lighted candle in her hand, the woman whom she most dreaded. The dark complexion of Diane had almost a greenish hue, and the expression of her eyes looked wolfish to the imagination of the terrified girl, who thus suddenly roused from sleep, regarded her enemy as she might have done some hideous apparition.

"I owe thee something—I know it, *perfidie!*" said Diane, glaring down at Faith, and speaking in a voice tremulous from fury. "I owe thee something, and I never forget such debts,—*jamaïs, jamaïs!*" The last words were hissed out rather than

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spoken; and before their sound had died away in the ears of the trembling listener, the *femme-de-chambre* had turned and glided out of the apartment, which was again left in utter darkness, save from glimmering starlight dimly visible through the casement.

Faith sprang from her bed, and was at the door in the twinkling of an eye, from an instinctive desire to lock and bolt it so as to render impossible a repetition of such a visit. But there was no key to turn, no bolt to fasten; the door of the little turret-chamber had merely a latch. The frightened girl dragged the only chair in the room from its place, set it against the door, and put her heavy box upon it; a poor barrier they formed, but at least no one would be able to enter that chamber again without rousing its inmate. Faith had seen at Lyons the countenances of men inflamed with savage fury; she had seen them when it appeared but too likely that actual murder was to be committed before her eyes; but no face that she had ever looked on left on her memory such an impression of hor-

ror as that pale, livid one on which the glare of the candle had fallen that night.

"I will go to Annette—I will entreat her to let me sleep with her—I dare not stay here alone," cried poor Faith, trembling from head to foot with nervous excitement. In order to carry out her design, she began removing her little barrier from the door to enable herself to open it; but Faith changed her intention before she had effected her purpose.

"Foolish and cowardly that I am," murmured the maid. "Of what use would it be for me to have the protection of a companion for a short space of time, when every hour of the day—and the night—I am liable to meet with Diane? She will try to harm me, that I doubt not, but scarcely by stabbing or shooting me in the château. I must be on my guard, and trust in the Lord. Who is it that can hurt me if the Almighty be my defence and shield? Are not the hairs of my head all numbered? Can even a sparrow fall to the ground without the permission of my heavenly Father? The very worst that human hatred can do to a

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Christian is to send him a little sooner to the home above, where all is safety, and rest, and peace!" Faith pressed her hands tightly over her throbbing heart, and looked forth from the casement on the stars in the deep blue sky, so calm in their radiant beauty. She thought on the majesty of Him who had studded the firmament with those orbs of light, and who for thousands of years had upheld and guided them, while generation after generation of men had passed away like waves that successively break on the shore. There are few things that bring more forcibly before the mind of the Christian the shortness of life below, and the vanity of earthly hopes and fears, than contemplation of the sky at night. It is not only literally that the world becomes hidden from the view; not the bodily eyes alone are raised upwards; faith, looking at the stars, looks beyond the stars, and thought is intuitively shaped into prayer.

At least thus it was with the young exile. Gradually the tumult in Faith's spirit became hushed into peace; her heart ceased to flutter so wildly. The owl had left off

hooting, and sweetly the nightingale's song came from the distant grove. Faith's heart had also its music, though her lips did not breathe it aloud. A song heard in England recurred to her mind; a melody, sad and plaintive indeed, but with something soothing in its sadness. Faith returned to her bed, laid her head on her pillow, and at last dropped again into slumber with the strain in her ears :

SONG.

When darkness broods around,
All is night—drear night ;
The breezes bear no sound—
All is night—still night ;
The watchers' weary eyes
Gaze on the eastern skies,
Where soon the sun will rise—
All be light—clear light.

When o'er the spirit crushed
Broods the night—sad night ;
Earth's sounds of joy are hushed—
All is night—still night ;
Hope, with more earnest gaze,
Through the deepening gloom surveys
Where will burst the glorious rays—
All be light—bright light.



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CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE RED RIBBON.



IT must be owned that Faith awoke on the morrow with a weight on her mind, an undefined sense of dread which oppressed her even before her senses were sufficiently clear to make her aware of its cause. She arose very early; the sun had scarcely risen, the dew lay thick on the lawn which spread beneath that part of the château to which her turret belonged. Faith went to the casement to refresh herself by one glance at the glorious eastern prospect, bathed in the rosy glow of sunrise, and canopied by its golden clouds. Chancing to look down from her height on the lawn, Faith's attention was attracted by some

small red object, which seemed to her, at the first glance, like a stain of blood on the green grass below. The events of the preceding night had made the poor girl so nervous that a thrill of fear ran through her frame, till, looking down more intently on the object, Faith perceived that it was nothing but a bow of red ribbon.

"I am more timid than a child, if a bit of colored silk makes me tremble," said Faith to herself, with an attempt to smile at her own cowardice. "But that looks like the bow which Diane wore yesterday evening; no one at the château wears a red bow but herself. It is somewhat strange that it should be lying there on the lawn, before any one but myself is awake in Château Labelle!"

Faith had another question to solve as she turned away from the casement. How was it that Diane knew, as she evidently did know, that the comtesse had been informed of her base conduct towards Antoine? Faith concluded, and was correct in the conclusion, that Mademoiselle Ninon, whose delight was in gossip, had told

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all to the *femme-de-chambre* when Diane waited upon the young lady at night.

Faith's morning preparations never occupied much of the time of which she had so little to spare. Being, however, up so early this morning, she was able to devote some more minutes than she usually did to the Bible-reading and prayer in which she found her greatest refreshment. The maiden then went again to the casement and looked down to see the red ribbon once more. To her surprise, not a trace of it could she perceive. In vain Faith's gaze searched the lawn from side to side; there was nothing on the green grass but the dew-drops that shone in the glittering sun-beams.

"I could almost fancy that I had only dreamed that I saw the red bow, my mind being so full of Diane," thought Faith. But the English girl was not given to idle fancies; and common sense made her decide that some one must have picked up and taken away the ribbon during the interval between her first and second look from the casement. Faith thought that she

could even trace something like footprints on the dewy lawn, though the height of her turret made it difficult to assure herself of the fact. But who was likely to have been there at so early an hour? The gardener had not yet come to his work, and all was still as death in Château Labelle. Faith tried to dismiss the subject from her mind, but again and again caught herself conjecturing how that ribbon had fallen on the grass, and how it had so suddenly vanished from it. She could not but reflect that from the front of the château the nearest way to the olive plantation lay across that lawn.

When Faith entered the servants' hall, she found no one in it but Marie.

"What's in the wind now, I wonder, Faith?" was her first greeting, as she looked with curiosity at *la petite Anglaise*. "What sort of report didst thou bring to madame yesterday of thy visit to Antoine Le Roy?"

"Wherefore dost thou ask me?" said Faith, who remembered her mistress's injunction that she should keep silence on the subject.

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"Because madame gave me so strange an order last night. As soon as breakfast is over I am to go alone in the pony-cart to the cottage, and bring back old Antoine to the château, and suffer him to speak to no one till he has seen my lady herself. I was never sent on so strange an errand before. Didst thou—but, hush! the others are coming in to breakfast, and madame desired me not to mention the business before the rest of the household."

"Madame is prompt in taking her measures," thought Faith; "but I much wonder that red ribbon shows that some one else has been quicker still."

Diane now entered the hall. The blood-red bow was fastened on her dress, but Faith fancied that it looked damp, and it had certainly been pinned on awry. This was the first time that a crookedly put on bow had ever been seen in the dress of the accomplished *femme-de-chambre* of the Comtesse La Fére.

"Thou hast a look of weariness, Diane," observed Marie, as she handed to her, at breakfast, her cup of chocolate. "Hast

thou been dreaming of that horrid murder at the mill, of which thou wert telling us last night?"

Diane did indeed look haggard and tired, and her manner was irritable and restless. Faith tried to avoid looking at her enemy, but a strange kind of fascination seemed to draw her eyes in the direction of Diane.

At the conclusion of the morning meal Diane went, as was her custom, to assist Mademoiselle Ninon at her toilette; that of the comtesse was already completed. To attire mademoiselle, build up over its cushion the pile of her hair, duly apply pomatum and powder, and give the finishing touch of rouge to her cheeks, was usually a tedious affair. To Ninon, her toilette was perhaps the most interesting business of the day, and she spun out the time which it occupied by light gossip with her *femme-de-chambre*, so that hours were consumed in front of the mirror. Ninon did indeed sometimes complain that all her trouble and Diane's were wasted, since only the crows and the peacocks saw the result of an elaborate toilette. But dressing herself

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out as if to receive visitors was the young lady's favorite amusement, and as it was well-nigh her only one at Château Labelle, she usually made it a protracted one. Faith could not help hoping that on this critical morning it might be even longer than usual.





CHAPTER XXIX.

A VERDICT.

MARIE soon set off on her little expedition to the cottage of Antoine Le Roy. The way by which she drove the pony-cart was longer than the foot-path through the olive plantation, but still would not take many minutes to traverse. Not more than a half-hour elapsed before Faith heard the sound of approaching wheels. The pony stopped at the back entrance to Château Labelle, and then the tones of Marie's voice were heard speaking encouragement to Antoine.

"Come, come, my good friend, what ails thee? Thou hast nothing to fear from madame."

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Faith, from motives of delicacy, avoided meeting Marie and Antoine at the door; she did not show herself to them at all. She knew, however, from the sound of the old gardener's slow, limping steps that Marie, doubtless in obedience to her mistress's orders, was taking him straight to the boudoir. Faith was naturally very anxious to know the result of his interview with the comtesse. With an abstracted mind she mechanically went on with her household duties. The maiden had not much time, however, for speculating on what would be said or done. In about ten minutes Faith heard the tinkling bell which summoned her to the presence of Gabrielle La Fére. At the door of the lady's boudoir Faith suddenly encountered Diane, who brushed past her so rudely, in order to enter the room before her, as to thrust the young maid against the wall. Faith, however, instantly recovered her balance; and with emotions of mingled anxiety and hope followed the *femme-de-chambre* into the boudoir.

"Pardon me, madame," said Diane in

tones of suppressed passion, as she entered the presence of the comtesse; "madame is too just to let an accusation—a most slanderous, wicked, atrocious accusation—be brought against her faithful servant, without giving her an opportunity of answering it, and of facing her malignant enemy!" As she uttered the last word Diane glared upon Faith with a look of the most intense hatred.

"Do not trouble or excite thyself, Diane," cried Ninon, who was seated near the window, a little to the rear of her sister; "Antoine has set the whole matter right. He assures us that thou art the best of his friends."

Faith, in no small surprise, glanced at the old man, who was standing trembling before the comtesse, who was herself also standing. Marie, an interested witness of the scene, appeared at a few paces' distance. Faith's glance at the aged gardener convinced her at once that he was under the influence of strong personal fear. Antoine shook so violently, that at a gesture from her mistress Marie placed a chair for the poor old man; but he did not avail himself of it, except by

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grasping the back of it with his bony hands, to steady himself on his feet.

"Art thou willing, Antoine, to repeat in the presence of Faith and Diane what thou hast said to me now?" asked the comtesse.

Antoine glanced nervously from the one servant to the other, without venturing, however, to raise his sunken head high enough to look at their faces.

"Compose thyself," said Gabrielle encouragingly; "if thou dost speak the truth, there is nothing that thou needst fear. Dost thou still aver, according to what thou has just told me, that Diane has every month, constantly, and without fail, brought thee coffee in good measure from me, and twelve francs in fair silver coin?"

"Always—always, madame; and Mademoiselle Diane has often added gifts of her own,—mademoiselle is so kind. May the saints reward her!"

"Thou dost hear him, Diane!" cried Ninon.

"Madame hears him!" cried the *femme-de-chambre*.

But the comtesse did not look perfectly

satisfied still. She turned towards Marie, with the grave dignity of a judge questioning a witness.

"In what state, Marie, didst thou this morning find the cottage of Antoine?"

"In a state neither better nor worse than that of most peasants' cottages, madame," replied Marie. "It looked tolerably clean, but I did not search into the holes and crannies."

"Faith made it out to be a den of dirt," said Ninon.

"And perhaps it looked so to Faith, mademoiselle," observed Marie quickly. "She comes from a land where I'm told there's no end of mopping and scrubbing, till folk could eat their dinner off the floor—if they only knew how to cook a dinner worth eating," added the cook in parenthesis. "Faith had never so much as seen an omelet before she came to Provence! But I must say this for her," continued the warm-hearted Frenchwoman, turning to address herself to her mistress, "Faith is an honest girl, and a truthful girl; I'd take her bare word against the oath of any one else."

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Marie's frank testimony in her favor went warm to the heart of poor Faith, who was feeling her own position intensely painful, and who sorely needed the support of a friend. She was accused to her dear mistress of falsehood and slander; and the wretched old man, in whose behalf she had risked so much, had evidently been frightened into saying anything and everything that suited the purpose of Diane.

"I think that Faith will scarcely receive so fine a character again," said Diane with bitterness; "at least from none but idiots. I ask madame's pardon for using angry words in her presence, but a saint could not stand being insulted and slandered as I have been by a *heretique Anglaise*. Madame has heard what Antoine has said—dear, good old Antoine, who loves his friends; madame will punish the wicked wretch who has tried to rob me of madame's favor, which to me is so precious."

Gabrielle La Fère turned towards Faith "What has thou to say in thine own defence?" asked the lady. "Dost thou still hold to thy statement of wrongs received by

Antoine Le Roy, which wrongs he himself denies?"

"I told madame the simple truth yesterday," said poor Faith; "I cannot say aught else to-day."

There was a profound silence in the room for several moments, only broken by the heavy breathing of Antoine, and the little sound caused by the trembling of the chair on the back of which he was leaning.

"What is thy verdict, Gabrielle?" cried Ninon, who was the only person present who felt rather amused than pained by the scene.

"My sentence is this," said the comtesse. "Faith, who asserts, but cannot prove the truth of her statement, that Antoine has been neglected and defrauded, shall be constrained to carry to him every day from my servants' table a plate of warm viands in lieu of the little pension. She shall also be obliged to spend at least an hour in his cottage in cleansing it, or in any other way attending to the old man's comfort."

The sentence was heard with surprise; a gleam of something like pleasure came to the

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old gardener's face, but that of Diane expressed great dissatisfaction and disappointment.

"Is that all, madame?" she inquired. "Is such a mild punishment sufficient for a—" Diane paused, as if no epithet of abuse which she might choose could be sufficiently strong.

"I have given my decision," said Gabrielle firmly. "Marie, see that my behest is obeyed. Take now Antoine under thy charge; give him refreshment, which he seems much to need; and then let him be conveyed back to his cottage, since I find that he still refuses to leave it to dwell under this roof. Faith is to carry him his meal to-morrow; see thou that it be not a scanty one. And now, you may all retire."

"Diane, come with me," cried Ninon, rising with alacrity from her seat; "now that this absurd business is over, I must return to my half-finished toilette. Thou shalt try on me that new cosmetic, for the sun has scorched my complexion."

Faith and Marie, leading with them the feeble, trembling Antoine, retired to the

servants' hall; while Diane, chafing with inward fury, followed the young lady to her private apartment. As soon as Diane was out of hearing, Marie turned laughing to Faith.

"Well done, bravely done, *petite Anglaise*!" she exclaimed; "who would have thought that thou, with all thy quietness and meekness, wouldst be the one to venture to hit such a telling blow at the proud Diane!"

"I was not able to defend myself, but I felt thy kindness, Marie," said Faith, with grateful emotion. "Thou at least dost not believe that I have uttered untruth."

"Nor does the comtesse believe it either," cried Marie with animation. "Dost thou think that if she had deemed thee a liar and slanderer, she would have let thee off so easily, or have chosen thee to be the one to carry food to Antoine? Doubtless madame saw, as any one might see, that there has been tampering with this miserable old man.—Come, Antoine," continued Marie, "let me be thy father-confessor; tell the truth now, Diane is not here to threaten thee with a thrust of her bodkin!"

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But not another word, bad or good, could be wrung from the trembling Antoine; it seemed as if he had either lost the power of speech, or had made a vow not to utter another sentence. The servants gathered around him, listening with much interest to Marie's vivacious account of all that had occurred. Faith was surprised and relieved to find that the general feeling amongst her fellow-servants was in her favor. The English maiden now experienced the advantage of having gained a high character for truthfulness; not a single individual in the servants' hall believed for a moment that she had slandered Diane.

"There had not been time for Diane to go to the cottage of Antoine," observed Annette, "madame sent for him so early; otherwise I should have been pretty certain that Diane had bribed or coaxed him to say whatever she pleased."

"Or frightened him out of his wits," added Marie. "Diane keeps her coaxing for Mademoiselle Ninon."

Faith remembered the red ribbon on the lawn, and was on the point of telling of

what she had seen, when another remark made by Marie restrained her.

"Diane's anger might frighten a stouter heart than that of the poor old gardener. You should have seen her face to-day, pale to the very lips with passion. I thought that she would have flown at madame herself."

It flashed across the mind of Faith Stanby that even were it in her power to convict Diane of the treachery which she suspected, she had better refrain from doing so, lest she should place her mistress in a situation of difficulty, possibly even of danger. Gabrielle La Fère, the *aristocrate*, trod already on ground sufficiently slippery in those perilous times of revolution; she could not afford to make an enemy even of one of her servants. Faith knew enough of the character of the high-spirited comtesse to feel certain that were Diane to be actually convicted of treachery, falsehood, and fraud, no considerations of prudence would induce the lady to retain in her service one so utterly base. And if the *femme-de-chambre* were to be dismissed in disgrace, it was

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too likely that she would at least attempt to drag down others with her in her fall.

"It is better, far better," thought Faith, "that I should be the only object of the malice and hatred of Diane. Far be it from me to draw down the lightning upon my dear mistress. Madame doubts my guilt; I hope and believe that she doubts it; and even if it be not so, in another world she will know my innocence of that sin of which Diane has falsely accused me. One great object is gained—that poor old man can no longer be starved that Diane may heap up her ill-gotten gains. May the Lord forgive him as freely as I do for the weakness which has made him utter so many falsehoods to-day!"

Diane was very little seen in the servants' hall during the remainder of that day; she had a headache, she said, and did not choose to join the rest of the household at meals. Her absence was little regretted. The *femme-de-chambre* had made no friends in Château Labelle. No one either respected or liked her, but her fierce, revengeful character made her rather an object of

fear. Few cared to rouse the resentment of one who was known to nurse, year after year, the memory of an offence, biding her time till she could wreak her malice upon the offender. Faith found that, instead of incurring opprobrium, as might have been expected, by informing against a fellow-servant, she had risen in the estimation of the rest of the household, especially in that of Marie, for her courage in attacking a petty tyrant.

"I never thought that the *petite Anglaise* would have had the spirit to tackle Diane," said the laughing Marie to Annette; "I'd have as soon expected our white kitten to spring at a wolf! And she nearly had the best of the battle, too," continued the cook, with a burst of mirth; "had that wretched Antoine had but half the courage of the meek little maid, we'd have had proud Mademoiselle Diane down in the dust, as sure as my name is Marie!"

"That *petite Anglaise* is very quiet, very gentle," cried Annette, her eyes brimming over with glee; "but if it comes to a matter of right or wrong—bah! I do believe

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she would face the terrible Robespierre himself!"

"I half forgive Faith for being the countrywoman of that *méchant* Pitt!" laughed Marie.





CHAPTER XXX.

A DISCOVERY.

IN the following morning there seemed to be a lull after a storm. Diane appeared as usual amongst the rest of the household, and with her accustomed manner. No change in her was to be perceived, save that she never spoke to Faith, though she not unfrequently spoke *at* her; but there was nothing very unusual in this.

Faith, however, knew her enemy much too well to trust the deceitful calm. It must be owned that when the young Englishwoman started after the mid-day meal with the dinner provided for Antoine, the possibility of meeting Diane by the way by no means increased the enjoyment of her little walk.

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The rustle of a bird stirring amongst the leaves of the olives made Faith start; she repeatedly turned and looked behind her to see that her footsteps were not dogged. But Faith chid herself for her fears; and after a rapid walk arrived in safety at the vine-mantled cottage of Antoine.

The appearance of the interior of that cottage, as seen by Faith when she now entered it, confirmed her impression that it had been visited by Diane at a very early hour on the preceding day. There had been a partial cleaning and tidying of the miserable place; fresh air had been admitted, and the atmosphere was no longer difficult to breathe in. The holes and crannies, had, indeed, never been touched; dust lay in rolls in every place where its presence would not immediately strike the eye; and in many an obscure corner the spiders still had an undisturbed, and peaceful reign.

Faith found old Antoine still very nervous and tremulous, and apparently afraid to utter a word. To her his timid, deprecatory manner seemed to be a mute entreaty

for pardon ; and her cheerful, kindly smile told that she freely gave it.

"I have brought thee a plentiful supply—see!" said Faith, as she opened her little basket ; "enough for dinner and supper besides. And now I am about to clean thy pretty cottage, and make it as neat as madame's own boudoir. As the day is so bright, and the air so warm, wilt thou take thy meal outside, under the shade of yon beech, and so escape the discomfort of being in the midst of the dust which I must needs raise?"

Antoine shook his head, and looked alarmed at the suggestion. He did not care to cross his threshold, and showed by signs that he wished to remain while the cottage was being set to rights. He did not mind the dust, he had been accustomed to it for years.

Faith placed the dinner before the old man, and then, while he partook of it with evident relish, she sat vigorously to work with the implements for cleansing which she had brought over with her from the Château. Marie had not been incorrect in saying

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that her young assistant had known nothing of French cookery until she had come to Provence; but few girls had been so quick, orderly, and thorough as regarded house-work. Antoine looked up from his dinner in mute surprise at the vigorous onslaught made by the English maid upon the accumulated rubbish of years.

Faith had before long almost completed her work, for the thorough scrubbing that was to follow clearing out she deferred until the following day; but an old cabinet, as yet undusted, still required her attention. It seemed to Faith as if the top of that cabinet, which she could only reach by standing on a stool, might not have been touched for a hundred years, so thick was the layer of dust upon it, and upon some object which had apparently been left there to be out of the way. Half choked by the dust which she was raising, the maiden took down the neglected volume—for such it was—that lay before her. She stepped down from the stool, and carried the book to the door, to subject it to a necessary process of wiping and clapping, so as partially at

least to remove the thick coating upon it. Soon the brown leather binding and red edges of the book became visible under the quick discipline of the duster; and Faith, opening the volume, glanced at the contents of the pages, yellow with age.

"Oh, it is a Bible!" exclaimed Faith Stanby, with the joyful surprise of one who has unexpectedly lighted upon a treasure.

Faith had, of course, brought her English Bible with her to Provence, but she had often greatly wished to possess a French one. The Scriptures in the language of the country in which she now dwelt would be of the greatest use to the Protestant maid in speaking on religious subjects, as she now not unfrequently did both with Marie and Annette. Though Faith, by this time, spoke French as fluently as English, she feared to mar the sense of quotations from Scripture by attempting herself to translate them. Glad as one who has found great spoil, Faith carried back the precious Book into the cottage of Antoine, leaving the door open, as was needful, to enable her to bear out the dust and rubbish.

"Didst thou know, Antoine, that thou hadst a Bible on the top of thy cabinet?" asked Faith, placing the volume on the table before the gardener, who had by this time finished his meal.

Antoine slowly turned over the pages one by one with his withered fingers and looked at them, but with no intelligence in his bleared old eyes. It was evident that he could not read the volume.

"It must have been my grandfather's Bible," he said slowly; "my grandfather, he was a Huguenot—that was long, long ago, in the days of the *Grand Monarque*."

"I daresay that thy grandfather loved and prized his Bible," said Faith; "will not thou love and prize it also? This is a blessed Book—so full, oh, so full of comfort! It gives us God's own message of mercy and love. If thou canst not read it thyself, wouldst thou not like to hear it read, Antoine?"

The old man nodded his gray head, and Faith required no further permission. A door of usefulness had been suddenly opened before her, and it was with no lag-

gard spirit that the English girl entered on the blessed work which she hoped that her Master had given her to do. Here was this old Romanist, the descendant of Hugue not parents, trembling on the verge of the grave; and into her hand had a torch been entrusted to lighten the gloom, and perhaps guide a poor wanderer home. Faith had been the means of supplying a sufferer's bodily wants; and now she might be the honored channel of conveying to him spiritual nourishment, *wine and milk without money and without price*. Faith was too eager to impart religious consolation to the afflicted to defer, even for a day, the reading of the Scriptures to poor old Antoine. She only waited until she had washed the dust from her hands and face in a little brook which flowed at the back of the cottage. Faith then re-entered the humble dwelling, drew the stool to the feet of Antoine (who occupied the only chair in the place), and took her seat upon it, resting the Bible on her knee. After a short, earnest prayer for a blessing upon what she and her companion should hear, Faith began to read aloud a portion

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of holy Scripture. She did not pause long to select, nor did she attempt to offer any comment of her own upon the divine words of tenderness and love which she read from the fourteenth chapter of the Gospel of St. John. Antoine listened with clasped hands, and in silence the most profound; and when Faith glanced up into his face, as she finished reading the chapter, she saw that tears were flowing down the cheeks of the poor old man.

"Are they not sweet, are they not precious, the sayings of our dear Master?" said Faith, as without closing the volume she reverentially laid it on the table.

A well-spring of feeling had been opened in the poor old gardener's heart. It was many, many years since he had heard that chapter read, and perhaps it had brought back recollections of his childhood. Bending down his face on his folded hands he murmured, in a scarcely audible tone, "I am such a sinner—a poor old sinner—the good Lord have mercy upon me!"

"He will—be assured that He will," cried the English girl; "if thou dost look in

simple faith to Him who died for sinners!"

"Dost *thou* forgive me?" asked Antoine anxiously. Now that the ice of reserve had once been broken, the aged man was no longer able to keep back the words which he had been longing to pour forth. "O mademoiselle, I have wronged thee, but I did not mean it—I could not help it—oh no, I could not help it! Diane she is cruel—she is terrible; she came and awoke me from sleep; it is dreadful to be so wakened in dim twilight! Diane told me that she would kill me—and kill thee—if I told the real truth to madame."

Faith uttered an exclamation of surprise, not at what she heard, but at what she saw; for the comtesse herself stood on the threshold! Gabrielle's light footstep had been unheard as she approached the cottage; and now the expression of her countenance showed that part at least of the last sentence uttered by her old pensioner had reached her indignant ear.



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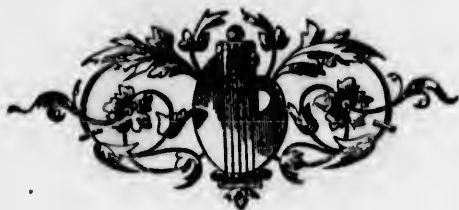
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CHAPTER XXXI.

FLIGHT.

“**W**HAT do I hear!” exclaimed the comtesse, advancing into the cottage with that grave dignity which to Faith’s eyes always made her look like a queen. Antoine, grasping the table to assist himself in rising, stood on his feet, and by the lowliness of his obeisance tried to cover the confusion which he felt at the entrance of such a visitor.

“Is it possible,” continued Gabrielle, “that thy very life was threatened, and the life of this innocent girl, to induce thee to cover by falsehood the guilt of an artful enemy?”

Concealment had from the first been irk-

some and painful to poor old Antoine, and now that it had also become useless, he threw it aside altogether. As the comtesse knew so much, there was no reason why she should not know all. It was a relief to her pensioner to tell everything; not only to relate the circumstances attending Diane's last stealthy visit to his cottage, but to recount the sufferings which her grasping cupidity had for years inflicted upon the timid, helpless old man.

Gabrielle had declined taking the solitary chair, which Antoine had humbly offered for her accommodation; she had preferred remaining on her feet; and her figure seemed now to rise to more than its usual height as she stood, a silent, indignant listener to the tale of tyranny, fraud, and cruelty poured forth by the injured old man. In the darkest coloring was the character of Diane presented to the eyes of her mistress.

"And this is the viper who has been for so long nurtured under my roof!" cried the comtesse, as Antoine concluded his story. "I suspected that all was not right; it was this suspicion which made me suspend my

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final judgment until I could thoroughly sift truth from error; it was this suspicion which induced me to come, unattended, to this cottage to day. Now the course before me is clear. I will instantly dismiss from my service the base woman who has so shamefully abused my trust."

"Ah, mercy!" gasped Antoine suddenly, his eyes dilating with terror as he stared fixedly at the little window, towards which the backs of Gabrielle and Faith were turned. The old man's exclamation was sharp as a cry of pain.

"What ails thee?" inquired the comtesse.

The answer was given in one word, "*Diane!*"

Without waiting for a command from her lady, Faith ran hastily out of the cottage to see if the *femme-de-chambre* were actually eaves-dropping beside the vine-mantled window. The English girl could, however, see no one; but she had no time to examine thoroughly, for she was almost instantly called back into the cottage by a heavy sound of a fall, and then the voice of her lady calling to her to come and help her.

Antoine had fallen on the floor, either in a fit or a swoon. To raise him, to bring restoratives, to bear him to his little pallet, required the united strength of Gabrielle and her attendant. The comtesse did not shrink from making the personal exertions to which she was altogether unaccustomed. Her slender delicate fingers gave their help to the fainting old man as readily, though not as effectually, as the toil-strengthened hands of Faith Stanby. Water was quickly brought from the streamlet, wine from the table,—a bottle of the latter having been amongst the provisions selected by Marie and brought by Faith. The invalid's hands and feet were chafed, his temples bathed, and gradually he revived, to the great relief of Gabrielle and her maid, who had feared that the stroke of death was upon him. It was a considerable time before the eyes of Antoine unclosed, and then they were turned anxiously, fearfully towards the little window; and the first word that passed his quivering lips was "Diane!"

"Thou art nervous and ill, my friend," said the comtesse; "thou must remain no

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longer alone in this desolate cottage; thou shalt be carefully removed to Château Labelle,—no one shall harm or frighten thee there."

The proposal was wise and considerate, but it met with the most vehement opposition on the part of the eccentric old man. Antoine clung to his little habitation as if it were part of himself, trembled at the thought of quitting it, and implored with tears and sobs to be left to die where his father and grandfather had died before him, in the place where he had drawn his first breath, and where he had hoped to draw his last also. In vain Gabrielle attempted to reason with the old gardener, and persuade him to submit, if but for a time, to a change which was so obviously for his welfare; the agitation of Antoine became so distressing, that the comtesse was obliged to desist, lest she should bring on a fit.

"He must not be left in solitude to-night," said the lady to Faith. "I will bid Jacques come and sleep in the cottage; Jacques is a good and kindly lad, and my stables are now so empty that he can be easily spared.

Remain here, Faith, for a brief space, till I send him to relieve thee of thy watch by poor Antoine. Thou hast acted nobly, my girl; thou hast not feared to speak the truth, and to plead the cause of the poor: thou must never leave me, Faith; the place of Diane shall be thine."

Faith thanked her lady with her loving, grateful eyes; very sweet to the young servant was such praise from her mistress's lips. The comtesse was about to quit the cottage of Antoine, when her glance fell on the open book which lay on the table. A little surprised to see it there, as she knew that Antoine could not read, Gabriello went up to the table and laid her hand on the volume.

"What is this book?" the comtesse inquired of Faith as she did so.

"It is the Word of God, madame," Faith answered, her heart fluttering from mingled emotions of hope and fear, as in a tone of reverence she made the reply.

Gabrielle took up the Bible. "Our Church wisely selects from the Scriptures such parts as she thinks suited for the

laity," the comtesse observed; "the Holy Mother breaks the bread for her children, and gives them their allotted portions."

"And mixes with these portions a great deal that is anything but bread," thought Faith, remembering the false doctrines and vain traditions of which she had heard much since she had come to Provence.

"Thus I have never till now seen the Scriptures in a complete form," continued the comtesse, who had for a long time indulged a secret desire to do so. Gabrielle had not the slightest fear of being drawn into what she deemed Protestant errors by reading the Scriptures which Papists profess to honor: to the poor and ignorant, indeed, the lady believed that the Bible might be a dangerous book; but the comtesse could trust her own intellectual acuteness and her strong attachment to her Church to guard her from being drawn into adopting Huguenot views.

"I shall be better able to win my poor Faith to the bosom of the Catholic Church," thought Gabrielle, "if I can meet her on her own ground, and convince her out of the

Bible which she regards with such reverence. Now that I value my young maid more than I ever did before, I shall more earnestly strive to draw her into communion with Rome."

With this hope on her mind Gabrielle asked, and readily obtained, leave from Antoine to take his Bible with her to Château Labelle, and with the Holy Book in her hand the comtesse quitted the cottage.

"My mistress has the Bible; she will read it, she will study it!" thought Faith Stanby with thankful joy as she saw the lady depart. "Oh, if the good seed of the Word do not spring up and grow, and bring forth a thousandfold in that noble, generous nature, it will not be for want of being watered by my constant and fervent prayers!"

Slowly and thoughtfully Gabrielle retraced her steps through the plantation on her return to her home. She had a painful duty before her; she had to dismiss from her service one who had been her attendant for many years, in the time of her greatest joy and of her deepest affliction;

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one whose talents had made her exceedingly helpful, and who had professed the strongest attachment to her mistress's person. Gabrielle was not a woman to regard her servants as she might have done useful pieces of furniture, made to add to her comfort or luxury,—things to be set aside or exchanged for others without a pang of regret. To the mind of the Lady of Provence there was, between her as mistress and the long familiar members of her household, a tie not to be broken lightly, nor without a feeling of pain.

And Gabrielle thought sadly of the perilous state of the soul of Diane. That covetous oppressor, that false-hearted woman, had been diligent in the outward performance of religious duties; she had appeared zealous for the Catholic faith. It was painful to Gabrielle to reflect that Diane had accompanied her to confession, and had repeatedly partaken with her of the most solemn rite of her Church, while all the time the *femme-de-chambre* had been acting the basest of lies.

"Of what avail," thought Gabrielle,

"could confession have been, or even the priest's absolution, when Diane was systematically pursuing a course of cruelty and deception? Can there be really remission of sins where there is no true repentance, no renunciation of sin? Did not my unhappy servant rather add to her guilt by varnishing it over with hypocrisy so revolting?"

Still absorbed in these painful reflections, Gabrielle La Fère re-entered her stately mansion. As the comtesse was passing through a corridor she met Annette, and bade her call Diane, to whom she wished to speak alone in her chamber.

"Madame, Diane went off to Aix, scarce ten minutes ago," answered Annette, looking surprised at her lady's command.

"To Aix! without my permission or knowledge!" cried the Comtesse La Fère.

Anything of mystery was a delight to Annette, the young French servant, and there was clearly some mystery here. With such animation and lively gestures Annette related how Diane had come in much heated, much excited, panting and out of breath, about half an hour before, and had

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bidden Jacques get the pony-cart ready *vite, vite*, for that madame had ordered her to drive off at all speed to Aix, to bring a doctor to poor old Antoine, dear old Antoine, who was lying at the point of death. Diane had just come from his cottage—she had run till she was ready to drop, she was so very anxious to bring help to her faithful old friend. Jacques had been quick, but not quick enough for the impatience of Diane. While he was harnessing the pony Diane had rushed up-stairs. She had not remained there many minutes; she had come running down with a box covered up in a shawl; not a large box, but Annette said that she thought that it looked heavy, and it must have held something very particular, for Diane would not trust it for a moment out of her hands. Diane had stood on the lawn stamping her foot with impatience because Jacques could not harness the pony as fast as she could tie a bonnet-string.

"As soon as the little cart came out of the yard," continued the animated French girl, "Diane rushed to it, almost stumbling in her haste, sprang into it, and snatched

the whip and the rein from Jacques. She plied the whip so hard," said Annette, mimicking the action of flogging, "that the poor pony flew like the wind! Diane nearly upset the cart as she turned round the corner of the road,—she drove as though all *les Anglaise* and Pitt himself were behind her!"

Annette's lively narration was interrupted by the voice of Ninon, heard from the gallery at the top of the broad staircase. The voice was raised in a far louder, more excited tone than usual; and with agitation in her manner and alarm on her face, the young lady came rushing down-stairs.

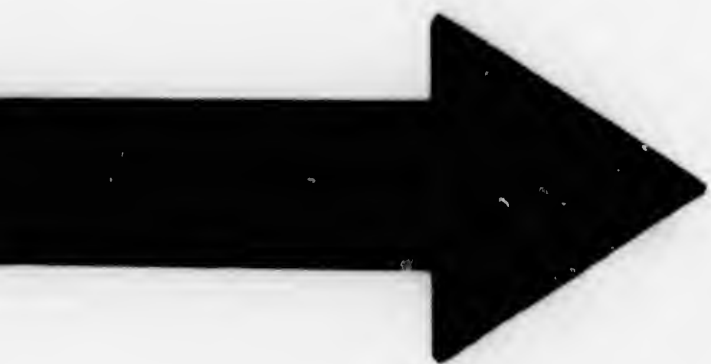
"My jewel-case gone! The casket—rings—bracelets—brooches,—all gone—gone!" Ninon almost shrieked out as she descended. "Some thief must have been in my room! Call Diane—oh, where is Diane?" It was to the *femme-de-chambre* that Ninon constantly turned for help or advice in all her petty troubles. The sudden disappearance of every trinket that she had possessed, except a few that chanced to be on her person, was the most distressing blow that had ever befallen Ninon La Fère.

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Gabrielle at once divined what had occurred during her own absence from Château Labello. She now felt certain that Antoine had actually seen Diane at his window, and that the *femme-de-chambre*, playing the spy, had discovered that all her treachery was known. She had, then, with her usual promptitude of action, availed herself of the brief space of time which remained before her mistress should return to the château to dismiss and disgrace her; Diane had fled to Aix, after robbing Ninon of her jewels. It would be vain to attempt pursuit, or recovery of the stolen property, for in the city of Aix a democratic commune bore rule, and the self-constituted mayor was Cochon, a Jacobin butcher.

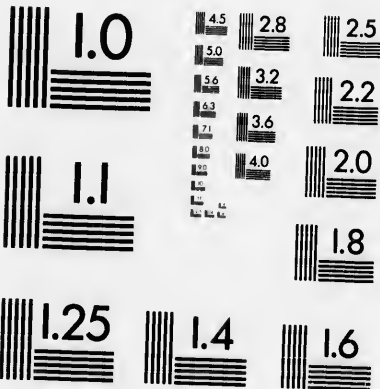
"I fear, my sister," said Gabrielle gravely, "that thou wilt never behold either Diane or thy jewels again." And while Ninon wrung her hands in distress and dismay, the comtesse gave orders that Jacques should at once repair to Antoine's cottage, and send Faith back to the château.





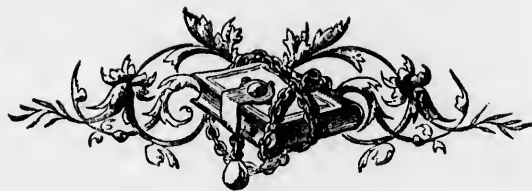
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CHAPTER XXXII.

THE SERVANTS' HALL.

FOR the ensuing week the flight of Diane, and its attendant circumstances, formed the one topic of never-failing interest amongst the household at Château Labelle. Even Lord Howe's victory was forgotten, and the war raging between France and the Allies comparatively seldom alluded to; talk over the latest horrors of Paris was exchanged for conversation on a subject in which every one felt a personal interest.

"Surprised at the conduct of Diane!—no, I was not surprised!" said Marie, one day, as she sat with the rest of the household at dinner. "I knew Mademoiselle Diane well enough to believe her to be

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capable of anything wicked. She is as full of malice as a melon is of seeds. Diane had not been a year at the château before she ruined poor Claude Le Roy,—got him dismissed at an hour's notice, though he was as good and steady a young man as ever put saddle and bridle on a horse."

"When did that happen?" asked Faith.

"Oh, eight or nine years ago," replied Marie, "in the days of madame's father, Comte Louis Labelle, whose monument stands in the Cathedral of Aix, at least if the Jacobins have not smashed it. The comte was gay and fond of a life at Court, and while he amused himself in Paris, he cared not to inquire too closely into what was passing here in Provence. Monsieur le Comte did not know a good servant when he had one, or he would never have sacrificed Claude Le Roy to the malice of his lady's fine *femme-de-chambre*."

"How had Claude offended Diane?" said Faith.

"Who knows," replied Marie, with a meaning smile and shrug; "perhaps Claude did not look upon Mademoiselle Diane as

the perfection of women; perhaps he did not fancy her as much as she chose at first to fancy him. At any rate, Claude was not one of Diane's flatterers, so she naturally became his foe. I know that she hated him, after her own fashion of hating, and hunted him down as the bloodhound hunts, till she got him turned out of the place. By the way, Claude was nephew of old Antoine; I should not be surprised if Diane owed madame's old pensioner an extra grudge for being related to Claude;—one never forgives those whom one has wronged. Poor Claude! I never knew anything worse of him than his singing one of Marot's hymns, when he was in the loft over the stable,—and a fine rich voice he had for singing. I wonder what has become of him now?"

"I will ask Antoine if he knows what has become of his nephew," said Faith, who had been occupied, while Marie was talking, in filling a small covered dish with the viands which she was about to take to the cottage in the olive plantation.

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inquired Annette. "Did not madame give leave that Jacques should take thy place in carrying the meal to Antoine, and in seeing that his room is kept clean? To wait on a poor, wretched old man is no part of the duty of a comtesse's *femme-de-chambre*."

"It is a pleasure which I would not willingly give up to any one," said Faith with a beaming smile, as she bore away the little supply of good things for her aged friend. And the English maid spoke truly, for her daily visits to the cottage were indeed a source to Faith of the purest pleasure. It was during the hour which she spent with the aged gardener that she felt herself most directly engaged in work for her heavenly Master. Old and ignorant, but of a child-like, teachable spirit, Antoine was receiving day by day, as it were drop by drop, spiritual nourishment from her who brought to him earthly food. The old man delighted to hear of the love of a Friend above; sweet to the soul of Antoine, as golden drops from the honeycomb, were promises from Scripture repeated by Faith. Antoine had been in sore dread of purgatory, and had, conse-

quently, shrunk from the thought of approaching death; but the tidings that his sins were not to be purged out by fire, but had already been washed out by blood, and that to the lowly believer death is but the entrance into life everlasting,—these tidings filled the old man's eyes with tears and his heart with joy. Faith knew how anxiously her daily visit was expected in the vine-mantled cottage, how Antoine's withered face brightened as he heard her step and her light tap at the door, and for no amusement that the world could offer would she have given up the office of cheering, instructing, and blessing the aged invalid, who seemed to be given to her as her especial charge from the Lord.

"There goes a true-hearted girl, if ever there was one!" cried Marie, when Faith had quitted the servants' hall, to go on her errand of kindness.

"Thou wert not always her friend," said Annette.

"Friend indeed!" laughed Marie. "I began by disliking Faith heartily, for the double crime of being English and Protest-

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ant; and I gave her pretty good cause to dislike me in her turn. I take shame to myself when I think how I badgered and baited the poor young thing, stranger as she was, and an orphan besides. But Faith's patience fairly tired out my temper. I can't keep my dislikes always a-simmering, as does Diane; with me they boil over at once, and there's an end of the matter. Says I to myself, 'Faith can no more help the ill-luck of having been born in England, then she could have helped it had she been born deaf or blind; and as to her being a Protestant, Claude had Huguenot blood in his veins—ay, and some Huguenot notions in his head; and yet he and this Faith Stanby are about the two best Christians as ever I knew.'

"There's heresy, Marie, downright heresy!" exclaimed one of her companions. "What would madame say if she were to hear thee?"

All present burst into a laugh at the question,—a laugh in which Marie merrily joined.

"I can't tell what madame would say,"

answered Marie; "but I'll be bound that she would think of the matter much as I do. Madame is sharp enough to see that the kind of religion which makes man or woman keep fasts and feasts, and repeat Paternosters and Aves by the score, while hating, robbing, and slandering their neighbors, is but like a glaze upon upper crust. Give me the religion that goes through and through like leaven," continued Marie, unconsciously making use of a Scriptural illustration; "thou dost not see much of it—it makes no show—but it changes the whole nature, every crumb of conduct is the better for it; that is the kind of religion for me."

Was it nothing that, in a land where superstition on the one hand, and infidelity on the other, pervaded all ranks of the people—was it nothing that a servant girl had shown to a single household, or even to a single individual, that such a religion is possible, and that it springs from living faith in the pure, simple truths of the gospel?

"Certainly Faith is the happier for her Bible-reading," observed Annette, who was

perhaps the one of the comtesse's household over whom the example of *la petite Anglaise* had most influence.

"When she has had the worst troubles, I never knew Faith appear half so wretched as poor Mademoiselle Ninon is now."

"Ah, mademoiselle was so fond of Diane!" observed one of the servants.

"Fond!" repeated Marie, with a shrug of contempt; "it was the kind of fondness which she has for her fan in summer, or for her fur tippet in winter. Mademoiselle likes to be served, flattered, amused,—Diane understood that well enough; but I doubt whether the young lady ever was, or ever will be, really fond of any one, if she lives to the age of a hundred."

"She is scarcely likely to have a long life, if mademoiselle goes on as she is doing now," observed Annette. "She sits in her room, or on the terrace, crying over the loss of her jewels."

"How was it that Diane carried off all poor mademoiselle's jewels, and none of madame's?" asked a servant who sat opposite to the last speaker.

"Madame's cabinet was locked," began Annette in reply; she was interrupted by Marie.

"Madame has not now many jewels to lose," said the cook. "As the comtesse turned most of her silver plate into that beautiful shrine which the Jacobins stole and melted down into money, so she has turned most of her diamonds and rubies into *potage* and bread for the poor. There is no danger of thief or Jacobin laying hands on those jewels now."

"Mademoiselle Ninon would not have given the tiniest ring from her finger to save a family from starvation," observed one of the household.

"Ah, poor mademoiselle, I am sorry for her," said the more tender-hearted Annette. "She has grown so thin, so wasted,—all the powder and rouge cannot hide the change in her looks. Indeed, for months before this trouble came, mademoiselle had been losing her strength and spirits. She says that a country life is killing her inch by inch. Madame thought it at first all fancy; but now she is half afraid that her *belle-sœur* is

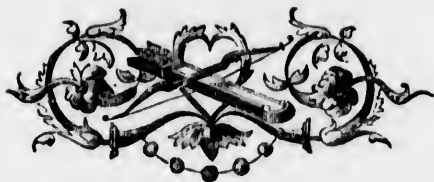
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going into a decline. Mademoiselle herself declares that nothing will cure her but a visit to some grand watering-place, where there is a famous doctor, whose name I forget."

"Doctor—bah!" exclaimed Mario; "a visit to a play or an opera is all that mademoiselle wants. She is simply sick with *ennui*. The champagne is merely flat; stir it with a crumb of amusement, and you'll set it fizzing again."

With a laugh at Mario's illustration of the young lady's malady, the circle round the dinner-table broke up; and Annette and the rest of the servants dispersed to their various occupations.





CHAPTER XXXIII.

FEELING AFTER TRUTH.

GABRIELLE, with the Bible in her hand, was like a traveller making his way alone and on foot through a difficult country which he has only traversed before by star-light, and in a conveyance driven by another. While the student was constantly struck by new beauties in the sacred volume, she was also frequently startled by fresh difficulties, altogether unexpected, as if the traveller's course should be arrested by rock or river, forcing him to turn aside from the direction which he wished to pursue. Gabrielle had commenced her study of the Scriptures partly from curiosity, partly from the hope of finding in them

spiritual consolation, partly—as we have seen—from the desire to discover arguments by which to draw over Faith to the Romanist Church. The comtesse, in pursuance of the last-named object, spent hours in diligently searching the Bible for proofs that her Church, in obedience to apostolic command and example, paid adoring reverence to the Virgin Mary, as Intercessor, Queen of Heaven, and Mother of God. This doctrine, which practically places a woman on a level with Him by whom and for whom all things were created, was especially dear to the heart of Gabrielle. It was with something like dismay that she discovered that this is a doctrine which it is impossible to confirm by any candid interpretation of Scripture.

“And is this all—all that I can collect about the latter life of the Blessed Virgin!” exclaimed Gabrielle, as, after carefully searching through the New Testament for confirmation of legends and traditions concerning the Mother of our Lord, she returned to the very brief mention of Mary contained in the first chapter of the Acts of the

Apostles. "It is not from the Scriptures, then, that the Fathers of the Church have gathered materials for the lofty shrine raised to the honor of the Madonna. I marvel that there is so little mention of Mary even in the Gospels. Twice the Lord addresses her almost in the tone of gentle rebuke; as though to remind her that, though blessed amongst women, she was but a woman still! And was it not to her—the Blessed Virgin herself—that Christ referred when He said, '*Yea, rather blessed* are they that hear the word of God and keep it.' *Yea, rather blessed,*" repeated Gabrielle, pressing her hand to her brow, and feeling troubled at the conclusion which she could not avoid drawing from the words of the Lord; "can it be that the glorious Virgin herself is placed, as regards salvation, on the same footing as the lowliest Christian; that even she needed, like the rest of mankind, to be saved by the death of her Son; and that she acknowledged such need when in her inspired song she exclaimed, *My spirit hath rejoiced in God my SAVIOUR?* A physician is not required

for the whole, nor a Saviour for the sinless."

Gabrielle also vainly endeavored to reconcile other articles of belief held by the Romish Church, and its numerous rites, ceremonies, and traditions, with the pure unmixed Word of God. How could the celibacy of priests be required, the lady reasoned with herself, when St. Peter himself had a wife, and St. Paul declared marriage to be honorable in all? Where was purgatory to be found in the Bible, or the doctrine that the merits of saints or the prayers of priests could save souls from its awful flames? Where was the sacrifice of the Mass enjoined? Did not the Scriptures refute the doctrine that Christ's sacrifice is renewed every time when the Host is consecrated by the priest, since it is written of the Lord, *Not yet that He should offer Himself often Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.* Gabrielle was perplexed and distressed by the numerous discrepancies which she discovered between the teaching of the inspired writers and the teaching of those whom she had hitherto regarded as

her spiritual guides. Many a time the lady was tempted to close the Bible, and lock it up where no eye could ever see it again ; and yet she was drawn by an irresistible impulse to read more and yet more, rising early and retiring late to her rest, in order to spend hours in searching the sacred pages.

The Epistles, a portion of Scripture which was to Gabrielle almost entirely new, were especially full of difficulties to the mind of the Romanist lady. She could not avoid seeing that the doctrines held by the apostles on the deep truths of Christianity were unlike those of her priests. Gabrielle met with such numerous passages in which faith is set forth as saving, justifying, giving access to grace, that a conviction was forced upon her reluctant mind that simple faith in a crucified Saviour must be the very root and stem of such religion as would grow from diligent study of the Bible. What, then, were all the doctrines, rites, and observances, all the worship of Virgin and Saints, the reverence for relics, the bodily exercises sanctioned and maintained

by the Romanist Church? These things, like some parasite plant, had almost hidden from Gabrielle's view the stem of pure Scriptural faith; but she had been brought up so firmly to believe them to be an essential part of religion, that she now regarded her doubts concerning their real value with pain, if not with remorse.

"Would that I could but consult with Père la Porte!" exclaimed Gabrielle to herself; "he would silence my doubts, he would guide my conscience."

Then with a feeling of painful perplexity the lady revolved in her mind the Master's words, *Call no man your father on earth.* The command could not be taken literally; could it be that it forbade yielding up the control of conscience to any mortal whatever—could it be that it forbade blind obedience even to the Pope himself as a spiritual father? Gabrielle tried hard to believe that the divine command must have some other meaning; but the attempt to discover such other meaning always ended in disappointment.

It was with intense pleasure that Faith

observed that the Bible was her mistress's frequent companion, and the young servant passed few waking hours in which she did not uplift a silent prayer for a blessing on its perusal. Faith wondered, indeed, to see that diligent study of the Scriptures seemed to bring no comfort to the lady. Gabrielle's brow was more clouded with gloom than it had previously been, and her manner had become more grave and reserved. Faith could not help contrasting the comtesse's melancholy with the peace and joy experienced by the aged Antoine. Why should the self-same truths have such a different effect upon the souls of the two Romanists? Faith could not answer the question; but the cause was simply this: the old gardener was receiving the kingdom of heaven as a little child, content to accept salvation as a free gift, with simple gratitude and faith; Gabrielle, on the contrary, had a rooted persuasion that she must herself pay some price for her soul's redemption, that with the merits of Christ some other merits must be mixed. The simplicity of the gospel scheme offended the pride

which lurked in the comtesse's heart ; there was in it secret resistance to doctrines so humbling to the natural man. The Bible was to the Romanist lady like Elisha's message to the Syrian leader, bidding her simply wash in the Fountain opened for sin and be clean ; but—like Naaman—the spiritual leper turned proudly from the means of grace provided for her cure. Were not her Abana and Pharpar—were not gorgeous rites and meritorious works better than all the waters of Israel ? Gabrielle had indeed tried them for years in vain, but still would fain indulge the hope,—“ May I not wash in them, and be clean ? ”





CHAPTER XXXIV.

MISTRESS AND MAID.

FAITH had silently observed for some days that her lady was deeply engaged in the study of the Scriptures. The time came when she could remain silent no longer. It was on a morning when the English maiden was standing behind her mistress, employed in combing out and arranging her long dark tresses; while the comtesse occupied the time, as she now usually did, in reading the Bible of Antoine. On that morning, for the first time since Faith had refused to worship in the Chapel of the Virgin, Gabrielle broke through the reserve which she had observed towards Faith on the subject of religion.

"Faith," said the comtesse abruptly, half closing the book which lay on her knee, "dost thou think that thy sins are forgiven?"

The maiden was a little startled at the unexpected question; it was one, however, to which she had for long been able to give an answer, and she timidly, but without hesitation, replied in the words of St. John, "'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.'"

"Yes, I know it," said Gabrielle La Fère; "and yet not all sinners are saved. How are we—how art thou—to be sure that that blood hath sufficed to make thee whole?"

Faith paused for a moment to reflect, then replied again in the words of Scripture, "'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' I know that I do believe," added the maiden.

"*Believe, and thou shalt be saved*; that was the answer given by the apostle to the jailer at Philippi," observed Gabrielle, as she opened the Bible and turned over its pages till she had found the sixteenth

chapter of Acts. "But would St. Paul have given the same simple answer to every inquirer? Would he not have spoken to many of prayers and repentance and good works as helping to render them acceptable in the sight of the Lord?" Gabrielle was thinking of her own splendid offerings and deeds of mercy, her self-denial and acts of devotion. Could she not rest upon any of those meritorious things as a means of winning favor from Heaven?

Faith almost trembled from a feeling of fear that by her own ignorance she might in any way darken the light of truth beginning, as she trusted, to shine on her lady. She considered herself to be unfit for argument on any topic whatever; how should she dare to attempt to handle subjects too lofty to be grasped even by an intellect the most exalted! Yet she must not leave the comtesse, by silence on her part, to conclude that no reply could be given. "I can only speak for myself, madame," answered Faith in a low, humble tone; "I rest my hopes on nothing but God's free grace through Christ, offered to all who truly believe in Him."

"Dost thou deem, then, that there is no merit, no value in the holy lives and good deeds of the saints?" asked Gabrielle, with slight impatience in her accents.

"Oh, madame, saints are but pardoned sinners," cried Faith; "their robes are only white because they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb." She stopped abruptly, wondering at having ventured to say so much.

"But how was the merit of that blood applied to them—how can it be applied to us?" asked the Comtesse La Fère.

The English girl, with nervous eagerness, was searching her memory to find some verse which should express what her mind grasped, but which she had no power to put into words of her own. The first verse which occurred to her, and which she uttered aloud, was, as she knew, but one out of many bearing upon the same life-giving truth. "*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*" said the English maiden.

"Peace with God! peace with God!" murmured Gabrielle La Fère to herself.

Here was the healing which her soul needed; here was the blessing immeasurably more precious than the cure of any physical disease. But Gabrielle was not yet prepared to throw herself entirely and without reserve upon God's mercy sought through Christ's atonement alone; she was not prepared entirely to renounce all merit of her own and say, as a holy man once said, "I put all my good deeds and my evil deeds into one heap together, and flee from them both unto Christ." Gabrielle could not give up the idea that the belief that man is justified by faith only would cause good works to be neglected, and holiness of life disregarded. The comtesse did not see that if living faith, the root and stem of religion, be vigorous, the fruits of pure thoughts and pious deeds must be produced naturally and of necessity; for we have divine authority for declaring that if the tree be good, so is its fruit good also.

Gabrielle did not choose to continue the conversation with her servant, and Faith ventured on no attempt to renew it. While in meek silence she waited on her lady, she

little guessed what thoughts concerning herself were passing through the mind of the comtesse.

"This girl--this Protestant servant--who so firmly believes that she is and can be justified by faith only, and who has found peace in that belief, she certainly shows forth in her life that such simple faith has power, with some natures at least, to produce holiness, obedience, and love. Is it impossible that she may be as right in her doctrine as she seems to be in her practice? Can it be that this lowly believer, who seeks for truth in her Bible, has actually found the water of life, whilst I perish with thirst?"

Faith was too much occupied with household duties to have time to ponder over the foregoing conversation with her mistress during the earlier portion of that day, though she found that her thoughts were constantly reverting to it, however her hands might be employed; but when Faith started on her usual errand to the cottage of Antoine Le Roy, Gabrielle, and what she had said on that morning, filled the mind of the maiden to the exclusion of every other subject.

The ten minutes spent in passing through the garden and olive plantation were what Faith deemed her golden time; prayer and praise, and thoughts of gratitude and love, usually made the shady path to her as the house of God and the gate of heaven. She was never so happy as when thus alone with nature and nature's Creator. But on this occasion Faith sang no hymn as she walked; instead of meditating on passages from Scripture to raise her own hopes towards heaven, she was mentally going over again the conversation held with the Lady of Provence.

"Oh, would that my mistress had asked those important questions of some one able to answer them fully!" thought Faith. "I am so ignorant and slow of speech, and madame knows everything far, far better than I do, except the Bible, which she has but lately begun to study. There seem to me now to be so many things which I might have said, if I had only had the courage and presence of mind to say them. I am afraid that the very freeness of God's grace is a stumbling-block in the way of my dear lady.

She has been so accustomed to think that many things are needful before the soul can have peace with God ; she has been taught to mix so much of her own doings with humble faith in the Saviour's work, that simply to believe and live, believe and be saved, believe and be happy, is a hard saying to her,—or rather, the news seems to be too good to be true. And yet, if I could only have remembered them at the moment, I could have mentioned so many, many things in the Bible that explain to us how sinners are freely saved through faith !” The maiden thought of prophecy and type, the brazen serpent, the paschal lamb, the Redeemer's gracious invitation given in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, *Look unto Me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth.* The English girl felt, though she had no power to explain her conviction in words, that the look of faith is enough for salvation, for the healing of the sin-sick soul, since a life of obedience must follow upon it. The Israelite, cured by a look at the brazen serpent lifted up in the wilderness, received not healing that he should lie down and sleep

away the rest of his days, but that he should be up and doing, and steadily follow on whithersoever the fiery pillar should lead him. The blood of the paschal lamb would have been shed in vain for any child of Jacob who should have chosen wilfully to remain in Egyptian bondage when his tribe marched forth to freedom. The meaning of these types was clear to the mind of the simple, unlearned servant, for she herself had looked and lived; and having been freely saved by grace, had turned her back on the spiritual Egypt forever.

But no really earnest Christian is content to go to heaven alone; and personal attachment to the Lady of Provence intensified Faith's desire to see her in possession of the blessing which had been granted to herself. "Oh, I would give my right hand; I would give the sight of my eyes," thought the young servant, "that my dear mistress should know and experience all that is meant by that precious verse: *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*"



CHAPTER XXXV.

A CHASE.



HE attention of Faith was so entirely absorbed by her reflections on what had passed between herself and the comtesse, and the intercessory prayer to which those reflections now led, that she had neither eyes nor ears for any external object, but walked on like one in a dream, looking neither to the right nor to the left. Very rudely was the mind of the maiden recalled to earth by a sudden shout, or rather yell, from many voices, which greeted her as soon as a bend in the pathway brought her in view of the cottage of Antoine.

"'Tis she!—she comes—seize her—kill her—*à bas l'Anglaise !* death to l'Anglaise !"

such were the cries which startled Faith. A mob of savage men, mingled with women yet more savage, had gathered in front of the cottage. They had been watching for the coming of their victim as wolves might watch for their prey.

To go forward would be madness; Faith could not mistake the import of that fearful howl for blood, which she had heard before at Lyons. Her momentary glance at the enemies in front had sufficed for recognition of the face of a man named Butin, whom Diane had several times brought to the château without the knowledge of its mistress, and of whose character Marie had expressed a very low opinion indeed. The appearance of that man in the crowd made Faith certain that she heard Diane's hatred in the cry, "Death to l'Anglaise," and saw it in the dark fierce faces before her, though Diane herself did not seem to be present. Despairing of finding mercy from the rabble, the poor girl turned and fled for her life, hoping by her speed of foot to distance her pursuers, and regain the shelter of the château. But scarcely had Faith turned

and begun her rapid flight, when, to her terror, she found that her retreat was cut off by another band of ruffians, who had just burst through the coppice which bordered the olive plantation, and whose shouts echoed back those of the fierce pursuers behind her. Thus hemmed in both in front and rear, Faith felt that her last hour had come; for as well might she have implored pity from a pack of ravening wolves as from that Jacobin mob.

But life is dear, and not to be yielded up without a desperate effort. Spurred to exertion by the strong instinct of self-preservation, Faith again turned, and, leaving the path beset by enemies, plunged amongst the trees through which that path ran. She flung away the basket which she carried on her arm, that her flight might be unimpeded, and rushed wildly on,—as the hunted doe might rush, straining every muscle—panting—gasping—flying—urged on to her utmost speed by the fearful sounds behind her, which told that her enemies were hot in pursuit. Faith had the strength and activity of youth; and extreme peril will

incite to efforts of which, in calmer moments, the human frame may seem incapable. How the poor fugitive tore through brambles and plunged over brushwood, leaving fragments of her garments behind her; how she bounded down this steep descent, or with agonizing gasps, struggled up that mount—now stopping for a few seconds to regain her breath—then driven forward again by a shout, or the noise of crashing of branches by her pursuers,—may only be imagined by those who in some fearful nightmare have dreamed of flying for life! Faith knew not whither she was rushing; she but knew that she must struggle on—on—and yet on—till her powers should fail, and she should drop down in utter exhaustion. She was no longer now in the plantation; something like a fence had been scrambled over, and the dull green foliage of the olive had been exchanged for the leafy covert of large forest trees, under whose shade ferns and mosses grew in profusion. Faith paused, when her breath and strength were almost gone, to lean—if but for a second—against some bossy trunk, and gaze up at the branches

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above her, and ask herself whether it might not be possible to climb up into some hiding-place where she might remain concealed from her dreaded pursuers. But such climbing was impracticable for a woman; the maiden had neither time nor the requisite strength to make even an attempt to clamber up. Her breath came in painful gasps, and her heart throbbed so fearfully from the rapidity and length of her flight, that a wild hope rose in the poor girl's mind that her heart might literally burst, and that so her pursuers might find but a lifeless corpse on which to wreak their fury! Such was the only way of escape from a death of violence which seemed to be before the exhausted maiden. Faith could scarcely forbear praying in her terror that she might thus be caught up to safety where the murderers would have no power to follow her—that she might die before they could reach her. She thought that she could not fly a single step further, and that she had passed the utmost limit of possible endurance; and yet, like a dying horse, goaded and lashed to make one last effort, again and again cries

and yells from the approaching rabble made Faith start again on her course.

The terrible strain could not have been borne much longer; Faith knew that she must give in, and nothing seemed before her but to sink on the ground, and there await her terrible fate, when the fugitive suddenly came in sight of a small chapel which stood on the edge of the forest. It was a deserted-looking building, partly in ruins; the glass had been shattered in the windows, the door torn from its hinges; grass grew between the marble squares which had once paved its floor. But Faith intuitively fled to the building, little suited as it seemed to be to afford her shelter. It was something to die in a place that had been raised by human hands, and intended for the worship of God. The fugitive rushed into the chapel, and beheld straight before her, dimmed by time and stained by weather, a picture painted in fresco upon a panel opposite to the door. Then flashed upon the memory of Faith something which she had heard—when, where, or from whom, at that moment she could not remember--

about a picture of St. Catherine and her Wheel. Faith darted across the narrow chapel, her finger pressed the centre point of the dimly-pictured wheel, rather with the energy of despair than with the vigor of hope. To her surprise and delight she found that the panel yielded, that the quick movement of her arm could push it aside, and that as she did so an opening appeared in the wall. In an instant Faith was through the opening, and with a last convulsive effort was drawing back the panel so as completely to hide her place of retreat from any one who should enter the chapel. Then, sinking at last under the strain which had been undergone both by mind and body, the fugitive, with almost suffocating gasps, fell prostrate upon the paved floor of her secret recess.





CHAPTER XXΛVI.

THE RECESS.

FAITH had barely recovered the power of breathing again without extreme distress when she heard the sounds made by her approaching pursuers, and then the loud clatter of wooden shoes on the chapel pavement. She had no means of seeing how many of the mob had entered the building ; there were at first a good many voices speaking outside it, but she could only distinguish two voices within, one of which she felt certain was that of Butin, for his accents had a peculiar harshness which made them easy to be recognized. In silence profound as that of death, almost afraid even to breathe, the concealed maiden listened with intense interest to the

following conversation between Butin and some companion. They — after a brief search—stood in the chapel, so close to her place of retreat that, but for the panel which separated her from them, Faith could, by putting out her hand, have touched the man who was nearest.

"I fancied that she'd have run to earth here," said Butin in his most grating accents.

"Thou seest that she has not," returned his companion; "there's not a corner here in which a rat could hide—not so much as a door behind which she could crouch."

"She ran like a hare—ha! ha! ha!" laughed Butin; "I wish, Simon, that her red-jacketed countrymen"—the Jacobin added a curse—"would show that they knew how to make as good use of their legs!"

"Thou wouldst run too," observed his panting companion, "if thou knewest that the first man who overtook thee would smash in thy skull with a hammer."

"The Anglaise cannot escape us, Simon, run as she may; if our citizens do not catch her to-day—and there are fifty at least on

her scent—she'll be arrested with the comtesse, her mistress, to-morrow. But for the fun of the chase, it was hardly worth while to heat ourselves on a day in *Thermidor* with hunting down a wretch who may just as well die under the national razor* as under hammer or knife."

"Ah! what about that arrest? I've not heard the whole of the story; let's leave the rest to wear out their breath and muscle in the chase. I don't care to be in at the death," observed Simon. Faith could hear that, as he spoke, the man wearily throw himself down to rest; she believed that his head was actually leaning against the painted panel which served as her screen.

"The story is easily told," said Butin, who also appeared disinclined to run further. "Diane—brave woman that she is!—started for Paris early on the morning after the day when she had been forced to leave the château. She is not one to let the grass grow under her feet, especially when she has a wrong to avenge. Diane saw Robespierre himself."

* A playful name given to the guillotine.

Simon uttered an abrupt exclamation, which might indicate either satisfaction or surprise.

"Matters were easily arranged between the two," said Butin. "The only wonder is that the bloodhounds have not been slipped from their leashes before. The messenger from Robespierre with the warrant for arrest comes down from Paris by the coach which will reach Aix some time about midnight."

"But is there enough against this said Comtesse La Fère to make it a business for the executioner to settle?" asked Simon.

"Enough!" repeated Butin; "there's enough to bring a score of vile aristocrats to the guillotine; especially," he added with a grating laugh, "if they have wealth in plenty, as she has. Bees might be left alone to die a natural death, if they had not honey in their cells.

"I thought that this comtesse had given away her wealth pretty freely, and that she was rather popular in this part of the country," said Simon.

"Popular—bah!" exclaimed his compan-

ion. "A few whining women, or peasants soft-hearted as women, may lift up their hands and cry out for mercy on the aristocrat; but Cochon knows his work, and will do it: he's a pupil of Robespierre, and an apt one; it won't be his fault if our city of Aix does not follow the glorious lead of Paris. But why stop we here?—art thou still weary? Methinks, from the yelling I hear yonder, our brave citizens have pulled down their quarry at last. I must lend a hand to finish the job, or Diane will never forgive me!"

Faith heard the rapid clatter of their *sabots* as the two democrats hurried out of the chapel, in hopes of witnessing her last agonies. The noises in the distance soon died away, and silence succeeded—such a silence that it seemed to Faith as if she were lying, cold and still, a corpse in a tomb.

But the first agony of terror had passed away. Faith was now calm, and wondered at her own calmness. Her first emotion was that of thankfulness, not so much for her own strange preservation, as for the discovery

which she had made of the danger which threatened her mistress. A warrant of arrest was then actually on its way from Paris, and would reach Aix at midnight; the men of blood would arrive at the château, and find their intended victim—gone! Faith almost started to her feet, from the impulse to rush forth at once from her place of concealment and hasten to Château Labelle to warn Gabrielle La Fère of her danger. But a moment's reflection showed her the folly of acting upon such an impulse.

"I should only be throwing away my own life, and by so doing endanger one far more precious," said the servant girl to herself. "No; I must remain hidden here till night and darkness come on; by that time my pursuers will—at least I trust so—have become weary of their long search. I shall then steal quietly out of the chapel, and speed back again to the château. But how shall I find my way?" Faith turned cold as this new difficulty suggested itself to her mind. "I have not the smallest recollection of anything that would serve to guide me after I plunged into the wood. I have only

a confused remembrance of tangled brushwood and thickets, and ferns as high as my knee, that caught my feet as I struggled on, and great trees with gnarled roots over which I stumbled, and bossy trunks behind which I thought of hiding. I could not find my way back by day, and by night—oh yes," Faith suddenly interrupted herself with an exclamation of joy, "I can better direct my steps by night than by day, for the stars will be shining—heaven's own light to guide me! I remember Annette's showing me the great map of Provence which hangs in the hall, and pointing out the ruined Chapel of St. Catherine just to the south of Château Labelle. If I fix my eye upon the pole-star, it will guide me straight to the olive plantation, and from thence I will need no guide. Oh, Heaven be praised for the mercies, the wondrous mercies of this day! But for my fearful chase; but for its accidentally—no, not *accidentally*—bringing me into this chapel, and but for Marie's having given me the clue to find this cell of refuge, my mistress, my beloved mistress would have been betrayed into the hands of her foes! To

me it may be given to warn her—to help her—to save her! The mere hope of such a blessed reward overpays me for all I have suffered.”

Faith had abundant leisure for reflection, for there still remained some hours of daylight. It was well that such a breathing-space was given to the poor girl after the great fatigue and terror which she had undergone. It was a time for bodily rest sorely needed by strained muscles and quivering nerves. It was also a time for spiritual refreshment, for reviewing the mercies of the past, and recalling promises from Holy Writ to strengthen the soul to meet whatever trials the future might bring. Faith gave herself anew to her Lord—to live or to die, as might please Him—and asked for courage that she might be raised above the fear of those who could only kill the body. Great peace came in answer to prayer; the throbbing heart could be stilled into quiet trust even when, as twice happened, parties of her pursuers entered the chapel, proving to Faith how absolutely necessary it was for her to make no attempt

to leave her hiding-place until darkness should have closed in.

The maiden was able at leisure to survey that hiding-place, as, with her arm for her pillow, she stretched her aching frame at full length on its floor. The recess which had proved to her such a refuge was simply a long narrow strip of space between the false wall of the chapel and the true one. This space was little more than a foot in breadth. Hung up on pegs fixed into the wall were various articles of dress, such as are used by Romanist priests when performing mass. There were also vessels of silver on a shelf at the end of the narrow cell. The place was not dark, light and air being admitted from above by a long opening in the ceiling, through which Faith could see the blue sky, and a portion of the old ruined tower.

The mind of Faith, as may be supposed, was much engaged in revolving plans for the flight of the Comtesse La Fère. How should she flee, and whither? To find any satisfactory solution of so difficult a problem was beyond the power of the English girl.

Disguise was scarcely likely to be effectual in a place where the face of the lady was familiar to hundreds. "Who could once look upon that countenance," thought Faith, "and ever forget it!" To escape by land into Switzerland appeared to be impracticable; the fugitives would be almost certain to be overtaken before they could reach the frontier; and even if they could succeed in travelling that distance, at the frontier they would be arrested. Was there any hope of escaping by sea? The Mediterranean was not many miles distant from Château Labelle; Faith knew that well, for she had often gazed from her turret on the bright silver rim which bounded the southern horizon, but she knew of no port that was near. Marseilles, which was about twenty miles off, was itself the very hot-bed of revolution, and perhaps the last place in France to which one of the old *noblesse* would willingly flee. Faith, after long anxious pondering over these difficulties without coming to any clue by which she could find her way through them, gave up all attempt to do so. The comtesse, she earnestly

trusted, would find out some means of escaping when once she was made aware of the peril before her.

Thus Faith watched and waited until the long turquoise-like strip of blue above her deepened in tint, and gradually the various objects in the recess became less and less visible in the dimness of gathering twilight. When Faith could no longer distinguish chalice from paten, she softly raised herself from her recumbent position, listened intently for several minutes, and then slowly drew back her panel. The chapel into which she looked forth was perfectly still, nothing was moving in it but a bat flitting restlessly about the ruined building. Faith stepped forth from her place of hiding, with a silent prayer and thanksgiving. She then carefully reclosed the panel behind her; that secret cell might afford refuge to others.

"But it will not avail my mistress," thought Faith as she left the chapel. "Alas! that the secret should be known to the treacherous Diane!"



CHAPTER XXXVII.

A FRIEND IN NEED.



TO find one's way through a forest, even when the stars are glittering brightly, is no easy task, and Faith soon, to her distress, experienced such to be the case. The pole-star, indeed, to a certain extent served to guide her, when she could succeed in getting a glimpse of the sky from some of the more open spaces which were in the wood; but very frequently the foliage prevented the wanderer from seeing it at all. She had miscalculated also in supposing that the most direct road to St. Catherine's Chapel lay through the olive plantation. When Faith had been fleeing from her foes, her course had not been a straight one; she

had darted now to the right, then plunged to the left, as the thicket appeared to offer better cover, or when sounds of pursuit had made her suddenly change her direction. The poor girl was now utterly bewildered in trying to retrace her steps, and almost in despair lest daylight should find her wandering still in the forest, while Jacobins were sacking and destroying Château Labelle.

Faith had been nearly two hours in the wood, feeling her way, trembling and praying very fervently to be guided aright, when she came to a break in the wood, and saw beyond it a twinkling light as from a cottage window. Wearily the maiden dragged her steps in that direction, uncertain as she was whether she were approaching the habitation of friend or foe. The crescent moon had just risen, and to her intense relief Faith recognized by its light the well-known outline of the vine-mantled dwelling of Antoine. The moonbeams gleamed on the little brook in which Faith was wont to dip her jar to bring water to her aged friend. The maiden had approached his cottage

from an opposite direction from that by which she usually reached it.

Here was at least a safe landmark ; there would no longer be difficulty in finding her way. Faith was so eager to reach the château that she had passed the cottage without attempting to enter it, when a little reflection made her return on her steps.

"Antoine is not asleep, for his light is burning. Poor old man ! he has had no one to bring him food to-day, and doubtless he has been terrified by the dreadful cries of that fearful mob that gathered in front of his door. He will fear that I have been murdered, and may be in trouble and suspense on my account. Antoine is so timid and so old, that anxiety and fear might bring on another fainting fit—and he might die here alone and unaided ! I will but tell him that I am safe, explain that I cannot come to-morrow, but that doubtless Marie will do so, and then speed on my way home with an easier mind."

In such haste that she omitted even her customary tap, Faith Stanby lifted the latch of the cottage door, and then darted back in

alarm, for Antoine was not, as usual, alone. A man, seated on the table for lack of a second chair, was apparently engaged in finishing a substantial supper, for a savoury scent pervaded the little room.

"Faith Stanby! Oh! the All-merciful be praised!" exclaimed Antoine, lifting his trembling hands as he caught a glimpse at the door of the friend whom he had never expected to look on again.

The stranger sprang to his feet and approached Faith with a ready courtesy which lessened her fear. She glanced up anxiously into his face, and all dread of him vanished at once; nothing could be more unlike the fierce, cruel countenances of Butin and his rabble than that which was before her now, beaming with gratitude and kindness.

"Come in, Mademoiselle Faith," said the stranger; "my uncle has been telling me how much, how very much he owes to your goodness."

"Come in, my guardian angel!" cried the poor old man, who had melted into tears of thankful joy; "there is no one here to harm

thee ; there is no one near but Claude Le Roy, and he is faithful and true as thou art, and loves the Bible almost as well."

Faith raised her hand to her brow, and looked again at the stranger. She thought that she remembered his name, and she then recalled to mind what Marie had said in her presence of a nephew of old Antoine who had been driven from Comte Labelle's service by the malice of the wicked Diane. This recollection increased the feeling of confidence with which the appearance of the Provengal had inspired her, and it suddenly occurred to Faith that here might be a Heaven-sent helper whom she could trust in this time of great need.

Claude knew not, of course, what was passing in the mind of the maiden, but Faith's pale, anxious look, disordered dress, and dishevelled hair, with what he had heard from his uncle of the brutality of the mob, made the Provengal feel certain that the English girl was in a grievous strait. He was desirous to re-assure her, and to make her aware how eager he was to do anything that lay in his power to serve and protect her.

"You are surprised to find a stranger here at this late hour, Mademoiselle," said Le Roy, partly to explain his position, partly to give Faith time to recover her self-possession; "but I am a native of this place, and was born and reared in this cottage. Being on a coasting expedition in a fishing-smack with a friend, I could not forbear taking the opportunity of re-visiting my old home, and seeing my aged relative once more."

"Ah! and Claude wanted a glimpse of the old château," added Antoine; "there never lived a Le Roy that was not faithful to the house of Labelle."

"You would then serve the comtesse, you would help her were she in peril?" cried Faith eagerly, addressing herself to the stranger.

"With my life," answered Le Roy, and Faith saw in the expression of his fine manly features that he meant what he said.

Faith would hesitate no longer; there might be some possible risk in throwing herself on the mercy of a stranger, but the peril of the time made such risk appear as

nothing in comparison of that which she sought to escape. The idea of a coasting expedition in a fishing-smack suggested hopes of a means of deliverance for the comtesse which were eagerly grasped by Faith. Speaking rapidly, and in as few words as possible, for every minute was precious, Faith told of the position of danger in which her mistress now stood; she told of the warrant of arrest which was on its way from Paris; and it was quite unnecessary to add that safety could only be hoped for from immediate flight.

Claude listened quite as eagerly as Faith spoke, and caught up her meaning more rapidly than she could express it.

"I have it!" exclaimed the Provençal, with joyous animation, as soon as the maiden paused in her narrative. "My friend Martin the skipper is a Royalist, like myself, and even were he not so, he is a brave fellow, and the last man who would betray or desert a lady in distress. I will at once hasten back to the shore,—the boat is lying under the beach, close to one of the numerous channels by which the Rhone empties

itself into the sea, almost opposite to Rochenoir. Madame la Comtesse will know the place well; she used in her childhood to ride thither on her white pony to gather up shells on the beach, or to enjoy an hour's sail on the Mediterranean with Monsieur le Comte Labelle."

Faith's wan countenance brightened into delight at such a definite plan, such a feasible scheme for escape being brought before her. She felt that in Claude Le Roy, she had found a strong staff on which to lean, he was so bright, bold, and intelligent, as well as kind; he had not only sympathy to feel for those in peril, but he had readiness to suggest, and resolution to act. Claude's manner, gesture, tone, all inspired confidence and courage.

"It will not be difficult, I think," continued Claude Le Roy, for madame and yourself to reach the place to-night. The distance from the château to Rochenoir is barely five miles; at least, by the bridle-path through the wood, and then across the stony plain of La Crau. You will have scarcely a human habitation to pass. A light shall

be burning at midnight in our little vessel to guide you, and I myself will be waiting on the beach to receive you. Before dawn we shall be far away on the blue waves on our course to Italy; and unless madame's enemies have fins like fish, or wings like birds, they will scarcely follow her across the wide waters."

The blithe laugh with which Claude concluded the sentence, had an exhilarating effect upon the spirits of Faith. The Provençal evidently enjoyed the thoughts of an adventure, and the danger attending the one in prospect seemed to shrink into insignificance from the cheerful, hopeful tone in which it was spoken of by Le Roy. Only five miles of quiet road to be traversed—there could be little difficulty in accomplishing so short a journey by moonlight; and then freedom on the fresh briny waves, safety beyond reach of the cruelty of man or the malice of woman; a life of peace with a dearly loved mistress whom she would have been the means of rescuing from death,—the prospect of all this was so transporting to Faith, that she almost forgot her

fatigues and her fears, as, after grasping old Antoine's hand as a farewell, and receiving his fervent blessing, she turned to depart.

"You will let me escort you to the château?" said Claude.

"Oh no, no! I could find my way blindfold ; you must hasten down to the sea-side. I would not be the cause of your delaying one minute," cried Faith.

Claude did not press the offer, but hastily poured out a glass of light French wine from a bottle which stood on the table, and with kindly courtesy presented it to the weary maiden. "You will require all your strength," said Le Roy.

Faith took the much needed refreshment, and then, with Antoine's blessings and Claude's kindly farewell ringing in her ears, with a lightened and most thankful heart, the maiden sped by moonlight along the path through the olive plantation.





CHAPTER XXXVIII.

WELCOME.



THE time spent in wandering through the forest had appeared to Faith so fearfully long, so much longer than it actually was, that she believed that midnight must already have arrived, if indeed it were not far past. She expected to find the doors of the château closed, and lights put out; for early hours were kept at Labelle the bolts were always drawn, the chains fastened, and the keys brought to the comtesse at ten. But lights still gleamed in the windows, and there were sounds within the château, indistinct and faint, but sufficient to show that some at least of the household were still astir. Faith opened the back-door with-

out any obstruction, and had scarcely done so when she was met by Marie, who, to the English girl's great surprise, caught her in her arms, and, with passionate ejaculations to half-a-dozen saints of the Romish Calendar, kissed her again and again.

"Oh, *mon enfant*, we thought thou wert lost, we thought thou wert murdered! Madame has been so wretched!" almost sobbed forth the excitable woman. "The mob has been here—they smashed some of the windows—they called out such dreadful things—but retired when madame addressed them. But her fear was for thee—for thee! Oh, *mon enfant*, how hast thou escaped from their hands?"

At the sound of Marie's loud welcome all the household hurried to the place and crowded round Faith, overwhelming her with eager questions.

"I can answer nothing now—I must speak to madame—this moment—this moment—oh, do not delay me!" cried Faith in a tone of entreaty, with a painful effort to make her way through the throng.

"Stand back all of ye!" exclaimed Marie;

"Faith looks ready to drop. Go to madame, *mon enfant*," she added, patting, with rough kindness, the weary girl on the back; "I will see that thou has a warm supper, and a good one, when thou hast said thy say to my lady."

Faith hurried off in extreme impatience to give her warning to the comtesse. She was met at the door of the boudoir by Gabrielle, to whom Annette had already conveyed the glad tidings of the absentee's safe return. A mountain weight of anxiety had been lifted from the heart of the lady, and if her welcome to Faith was not as demonstrative as that of Marie, it was as full of kindness and feeling.

"I am so thankful to see thee here safe! Where hast thou been; and how"—commenced the comtesse; but for once Faith sacrificed outward respect to her mistress, and for that mistress's sake ventured to interrupt her.

"O madame—forgive—suffer me to speak. I have much, much to tell, and my life may depend on my telling it quickly," cried Faith.

Gabrielle instantly led the way into the boudoir, and motioned to Faith to close the door behind her. Sinking down beside the sofa, on which Gabrielle then took her seat, Faith, in a position which relieved her own weariness, whilst it enabled her to look up into the face of her lady, in language as clear and concise as she could use, described the events of the day. She related what she had overheard in the chapel, her interview with Le Roy, and his plan for effecting the escape of the comtesse by means of the boat and the fishing-vessel now lying off Rochenoir.

Gabrielle remained perfectly silent until Faith had concluded her rapid narrative. The lady then glanced at the richly ornamented clock which adorned her mantelpiece. The gilded hands pointed to a quarter past eleven. Faith's eyes followed the direction of those of her mistress, and she was greatly relieved to see that the hour was far less advanced than she had feared that it might be.

"I must go and rouse Ninon," said the comtesse rising, "and tell her to prepare

for instant departure. Faith--noble, true-hearted Faith--thou must be the partner of our flight; nothing but death shall separate thee and me. Go now to Marie, bid her attend me in mademoiselle's chamber, and take heed to speak to no one but her of what thou hast told me now. The other women must retire at once to rest--the sooner the château is still the better; if I could trust the fidelity, I could not trust the discretion of all. And take thou thyself wine and refreshment; thou must need them," continued the comtesse kindly, not so absorbed by her own peril as not to notice the weary looks of her faithful attendant.

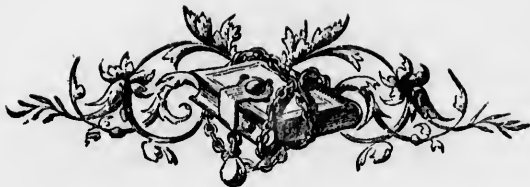
Faith obeyed her lady's command; and while she hastened to convey her orders to Marie, Gabrielle, with firm step and calm demeanor, proceeded to the chamber of Ninon in order to awaken her. The comtesse found, however, that Ninon had not yet gone to sleep. The young lady, who could not disrobe herself without the help of a *femme-de-chambre*, was still sitting reading a novel, and only raising her eyes now and then from its pages to complain, in accents

of peevish displeasure, at the tiresome absence of Faith. Ninon was somewhat startled by the unexpected appearance of her *belle-sœur*, and read at once in the countenance of Gabrielle that some matter of no light importance had brought the lady into her room at an hour so unusually late.



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CHAPTER XXXIX.

PREPARATIONS.

QUICK in half-an-hour! Oh! it can't be—it is impossible! everything to pack, and Faith away!" exclaimed Ninon La Fère, after she had heard, with very conflicting feelings, and many interruptions, her *belle-sœur's* account of the position in which they now stood. The changes in Ninon's frivolous mind, as she listened, had been various as those in a kaleidoscope. First came terror, amounting to agony; Ninon was almost stupefied with fear at the idea of Jacobins invading the château, and was certain that she, as well as Gabrielle, would be dragged to the guillotine, or slaughtered like the *Princesse de Lamballe*. Then, by a sudden

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change of ideas, pleasure succeeded to alarm. Ninon thought of leaving the hated château and going forth into the world that she loved. To the French girl any change was delightful, and to escape from her present gloomy abode was to her like escaping from prison. Vibrating between hope and fear, pleasure and pain, restless-- startled-- frightened, yet not without a sensation of pleasant excitement, Ninon, with her powdered hair down on her shoulders, her tight-fitting boddice half unlaced, and her pinched features varying in expression with every exclamation that she uttered, Ninon looked a striking contrast to the fair calm lady beside her.

"We must start before midnight," said Gabrielle La Fère, laying a slight but perceptible emphasis on the word "must." "The difference between one half-hour and another may make all the difference between life and death. Ah! here comes Marie," she added, as, flushed with excitement by what she had just heard from Faith, the servant entered the apartment. "Marie, I see that thou knowest all; thou wilt help me in this

strait," said the lady. "Go and bid Jacques saddle the horses—we have still two left—for mademoiselle and myself, and put a pillion on the pony for Faith. Her danger is equal to my own; I will not leave her here to meet it."

"Saddle the horses indeed!" exclaimed Ninon, starting up from her seat in a state of irritable excitement. "I cannot ride—thou knowest it—I have not ridden for years; I do not like the saddle, and never did. To dream of setting me on a great trotting carriage-horse too, weak and delicate as I am! how canst thou be so barbarous as to think of so cruel a thing!"

"It is only by riding that we can take the shorter bridle-path through the wood, or be able indeed to reach the shore without walking the last part of the way," observed Gabrielle, whose manner was much more calm than the looks of Marie, who was unconsciously clenching her fists and grinding her teeth at the young lady who could raise frivolous difficulties at so critical a time.

"I tell thee I can't ride—and won't ride.

I would rather remain here by myself, if thou hast the heart to desert me—thy dead husband's only sister!" cried Ninon, sinking down again on her seat, and bursting into a violent flood of tears.

"Marie, desire Lemoino then to put the horses into the carriage—it must be ready by midnight," said the comtesse, yielding the point without further attempt to argue it with the unreasonable, self-willed girl. "See that Faith has refreshment," Gabrielle added to Marie, as the lady and her servant quitted the apartment. The comtesse had much to arrange before leaving—perhaps for ever—the home of her fathers, not only as regarded her own needs, but the comfort and security of the dependents whom she must leave behind.

"Then Faith has returned—I am glad at least of that," muttered Ninon, starting up, and making her way to the bell-rope. The young lady pulled it twice briskly, well satisfied that she would at any rate have a *femme-de-chambre* to assist her in making preparations which were to Ninon a very important affair.

Faith, as was her wont, obeyed the summons without a minute's delay. She was always ready for duty, even when, as on the present occasion, scarcely able to perform it. Often, very often, had the froward young lady sorely tried the maiden's patience; but all former trials of the kind were as nothing compared with what Faith had to endure on that night. It was not merely that she was half dead with fatigue after that terrible day, and that she had had no time to partake of refreshment, save the glass of weak wine so considerably proffered by Claude; the faithful servant, intent on the danger incurred by her mistress, was in a state of feverish impatience to start. Ninon, who never considered the welfare of any one but herself, and to whom the smallest things often appeared more important than great ones, was as much taken up by preparations for her journey as if some pleasure-trip were before her, and she had days and weeks in which to make such preparations.

"Oh no, not that box!" she cried with an impatient movement of hand and foot. "I want the other—the large one at the bottom

of the three, that holds my favorite dresses. Lift down the others—how slow thou art! Diane was a *monstre*, but at least she was a first-rate *femme-de-chambre*!”

“But mademoiselle cannot take with her large boxes, or much luggage of any kind,” faintly suggested Faith Stanby.

“Who asked thee for thy advice?” was the angry rejoinder. “Of course I could have taken nothing larger than a pocket-handkerchief, if Gabrielle had kept to her insane plan of riding on horseback; but the carriage is large, we can pile it well up—so be quick and pull out that box! There, there—thou hast managed to drag it out at last: now get the dressing-case down.”

“But, mademoiselle—” expostulated Faith, who had almost strained herself in the effort to move the large boxes.

“Of course the dressing-case must go with me; dost thou imagine, *bête*, that I could travel without my powder-box and my perfumes?”

Faith bit her lip hard, and then in an imploring tone urged speed, as on it everything might depend.

"I do make all possible speed, *bête* ; it is thou who dost work as if all thy fingers were thumbs! What! thou hast not found the lace handkerchiefs yet, and my *chapeau bleu*—the most charming of little hats—and the wreaths—the beautiful wreaths! Ah, I do so hope that we shall go to Naples—delightful Naples! I shall be sure to see plenty of company there!"

"Ah, twelve o'clock is striking!" exclaimed Faith, looking up almost despairingly from a pile of dresses, mantles, ribbons, lace, linens, and finery of all sorts, from which Ninon was trying to make a selection. It was never very easy to the weak girl to make up her mind, and it was more difficult now than ever, so reluctant was she to leave any pet piece of luxury behind her. It is likely that Ninon would have continued hesitating and doubting until daybreak, but for a sudden interruption.

"Mademoiselle, the carriage is ready," said Marie, abruptly entering the chamber in which for more than a half-hour Faith had been endeavoring to pack for Ninon.

"But I am not ready—shall not be ready

for the next hour or more!" exclaimed the young lady, who had not so much as laced up her boddice, or exchanged her light satin slippers for travelling shoes. "Look thou at that box, there is scarcely one article yet packed in it!"

"No article need be packed in it," said Marie angrily, her impatience getting the better of her manners. "Mademoiselle can't take with her a trunk large enough for a bedstead! Faith, madame has been asking for thee. Leave me to attend to mademoiselle."

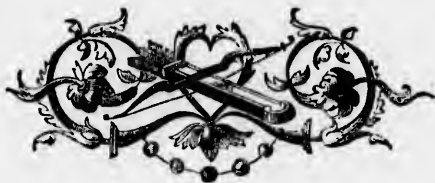
Nothing loath to make her escape from the room, Faith hurried out to join the comtesse, after one more imploring entreaty to Mademoiselle Ninon not to delay. The prompt action of Marie was, however, far more effectual than any words could have been.

"Madame cannot be kept waiting at risk of her life," cried the warm-tempered Provençale, her impatience blazing up into passion. Catching up a large shawl, she flung it round the astonished Ninon, and then clapped—wrong side foremost—a hat

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upon her dishevelled hair. Marie then snatched up with her left hand the smallest box, which chanced to contain but white kid gloves and flowers, and with her strong right arm half carried half dragged Ninon La Fère out of the room, down the staircase, and into the hall, where the comtesse was only awaiting the coming of her sister-in-law to start on her critical journey.





CHAPTER XL.

THE FUGITIVES.

NINON found herself in the carriage, and the carriage itself in motion, almost before she had recovered from the shock of amazement given to her nerves by the audacious conduct of Marie. Then in no measured terms she gave vent to her indignation, and in despair at finding that she was actually starting without carrying anything worthy the name of luggage, she passionately entreated, even with tears, that Gabrielle would instantly order the coachman to drive back to Château Labelle.

“Oh, for pity’s sake, tell him to turn round the horses—to drive back at speed! Did ever a young lady go on a journey to

other lands fitted out only with flowers, gloves, and satin slippers!" At less anxious a time the fervent petition and its cause must have raised a smile even on the lips of Gabrielle, but now she only gravely replied:

"I cannot go back, my sister; life itself is at stake. Thou shalt share with me what I have brought; and the few jewels which I bear with me in my casket will, I hope, procure for us the necessaries of life, at least for a time."

The comtesse's own preparations for the journey had indeed been but slight. A single box of moderate size contained all the lady's travelling wardrobe; but in a black velvet reticule suspended from her girdle Gabrielle carried a greater treasure than all that Ninon parted from with such passionate regret,—Antoine's old copy of the Scriptures.

When Ninon found that all her entreaties and tears were useless, she relapsed into gloomy silence; and as neither Gabrielle nor Faith were at all inclined for conversation, each of the three occupants of the

carriage pursued her own train of thought without breaking in, even by an observation, on those of her companions. It might not be uninteresting to read the varied nature of these thoughts as the carriage rolled on, under the pale light of the moon, along a rough and desolate road.

Faith was, indeed, almost too weary for any connected chain of reflection. The motion of the carriage was at first soothing to her, connected as it was with the feeling that her own part in contributing to the escape had now virtually been played out; that she had nothing now left to do but simply to obey the orders of another. It has been well said that rest is "a sense of duty performed," and that rest was now in some measure enjoyed by Faith, but it was disturbed by the intense desire to push forward—to be fairly out of France with her mistress. Faith longed for the power to give wings to the horses that appeared to drag the carriage so slowly; and tender as she was towards dumb creatures, she was inclined to wish that Lemoine would less sparingly use the whip. There were but

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few houses to be passed on the road (by the
bridle-path there would have been none),
but these houses caused some uneasiness to
the faithful servant. This was especially
the case with one lonely *cabaret*, which had
a tree of liberty planted in front of the door.
A window in one of its upper rooms was
thrown up as the carriage rumbled past, and
Faith caught a glimpse of a head in a red
night-cap stretched out to see who could be
driving towards the coast at the stillly hour
of midnight.

Ninon's feelings were divided between
pleasure at leaving Château Labelle, with
hopes of a future life of amusement, bright-
ened by all the world's petty vanities, and
the annoyance of having to begin that life so
utterly unprovided with the means of making
the most of it. Her memory did not cling
to friends or country with the tendril-like
clasp of Faith's; it rested, like mould, on
every object that had ministered to her vanity.
Hope was, however, Ninon's predominating
emotion; and while Gabrielle La Fère was
fleeing for her life, her sister-in-law, loung-
ing back on cushions by her side, was weav-

ing a little romance, of which she herself was, of course, the heroine.

Gabrielle, on the contrary, could not quit the home of her childhood, the abode of her youth, the scene of her wedded happiness, without deep feelings of sadness. The lawn and shrubbery through which she had so often wandered with her Henri in bright days gone for ever, the turrets and battlements of the old château which she had so often surveyed with emotions of worldly pride, the galleries hung with familiar portraits,— Gabrielle felt pain in bidding to all these inanimate objects a long, probably a last, farewell. She grieved more at having to leave her dependents; she had done all that lay in her power to preserve them from suffering want during her absence, and had specially commended poor old Antoine to the care of Marie; but still, in the present condition of France, all the future must be very uncertain. It was far from improbable that Château Labelle might share the fate of many a lordly mansion that the Jacobins had burned to the ground, and Marie and

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the other servants would have to begin their course anew in the world.

The carriage which conveyed the fugitives went at moderate speed until it entered the stony plain of La Crau. Here the road, which was scarcely ever used for vehicles, became exceedingly rough, and the violent jolting of the carriage called forth occasional exclamations of annoyance from the lips of Ninon. The coachman plied his whip more freely, but the horses made slow progress, and sometimes came to an actual halt. The scent of the sea was, however, now perceptible, and that scent was more welcome to the fugitives than the perfume of fields of roses; to the young islander, especially, that scent breathed of freedom and home.

Presently, in dragging the vehicle over a pebbly ridge, one of the horses stumbled and fell. The carriage came, of course, to a dead stop. The coachman Lemoine, and Jacques, who accompanied the party, got down to try to disengage the fallen animal from its harness. The delay at such a time was terrible; even the comtesse could not help betraying some impatience.

"If all should be lost, and we so near safety," she murmured; then leaning forward from the carriage-window, the lady endeavored by her voice to quicken and incite to more vigorous efforts the servants engaged with the fallen horse.

"It is of no use trying to get him up, madame," said Lemoine, coming to the carriage-door after ten long minutes thus spent; "the beast is much hurt; we can't get him on his legs; and if we could, it would be idle to try to drag the carriage over these heaps of shingle. There's not a coachman in Provence as would attempt to drive horses down to that beach." The man's manner was sulky, and scarcely respectful.

"Then we must get out and walk," said the lady.

Faith was so stiffened by fatigue after the exertions of the last day, that but for her exceeding impatience to reach the boat, she would have felt unable to drag herself along that stony, difficult way. But it was a relief to her that the tedious halt should come at last to an end, and that the fugitives

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should have rather to trust to their own feet than to stumbling horses and wheels that seemed as if they would not turn round.

"There is a light—see!—down by the shore!" she joyfully exclaimed as soon as she had followed the ladies out of the carriage. "Claude Le Roy has not failed us."

That spark was as the beacon of hope to the fugitive women, though its smallness, alas! showed how great a distance still intervened between them and safety. Gabrielle ordered Jacques to carry down to the boat the small amount of luggage which the travellers had brought with them, and leaving Lemoine with the carriage and horses, she began to make her way in the direction of the guiding light, accompanied by Ninon and Faith. It was not to be expected that the progress of the three could be rapid over such difficult ground; and before they had gone many yards, Ninon suddenly came to a stop.

"It is impossible that I should walk, and in my thin slippers!" she exclaimed. "The stones hurt my feet; I cannot get on."

Faith was ready to walk barefoot over

sharp flints rather than pause at such a moment. But her offer to let mademoiselle wear her *sabots* was received with peevish anger.

The remonstrances of Gabrielle had, indeed, the effect of making Ninon move forwards a few steps farther, leaning very heavily upon the arm of her poor *femme-de-chambre*. But these few steps did not bring the ladies sensibly nearer to that light on which their eyes were so anxiously bent.

"Hark!" exclaimed Gabrielle suddenly, turning back her head to listen; "what is that sound that I hear in the distance?"

"O mademoiselle, hasten on!—hasten on!" cried Faith, in an agony of impatience; "the enemy is in pursuit."

"I can't go one step farther!" exclaimed Ninon, and she threw herself down on a ridge of pebbles, and began to ring her hands, and cry like a helpless child with terror and pain.

"Madame, I implore you, fly—fly!" cried Faith to the comtesse. "I know these dreadful sounds too well; they are coming nearer and nearer. I will remain with

mademoiselle, you may yet escape and live. Oh, for the love of Heaven, fly while there yet is time !”

“Not alone,” said Gabrielle La F  re; “I will never leave thee, Faith, to be torn to pieces by those ruffians.” Laying a firm hand on her sister’s shoulder, the comtesse, with a few earnest words, compelled her to rise, but no persuasion or remonstrance could compel her to walk. After a feeble effort to make two forward steps, Ninon again fell down, crying, upon the hard shingle.

“Faith, make thy way to the boat; thy young life must not be uselessly thrown away,” said Gabrielle, as shouts and cries and trampling of feet crunching over the pebbles told that the pursuers were fast gaining upon the fugitives. “Go, I command thee, go; and may the Almighty protect and bless thee for all thou hast done to save me, albeit it be done in vain !”

Whether the strength of Faith would have sufficed under any circumstances to enable her, worn out as she was, to reach the distant boat, may well be doubted;

but the very idea of forsaking her mistress at such a critical moment deprived the faithful girl of the little power of motion which had hitherto remained in her weary limbs. Faith made no attempt to reply, but she also made no attempt to flee. For once she disobeyed the command of her lady. Where the comtesse remained, she would remain; the fate of mistress and maid, whatever that fate might be, would at least be met together.

A few more minutes, a few more terrible minutes, rendered more dreadful by vain attempts to rouse Ninon to make efforts on which the safety of others might depend, and all suspense was over. It was evident that it was now too late for escape,—the Jacobins were close on their prey. Faith clasped her hands, closed her eyes, and resigned herself to the worst. A brief ejaculatory prayer burst from her lips; ere it was ended the fugitives were overtaken and surrounded.

Ninon, who had no more courage to meet disaster than energy and presence of mind to enable her to escape it, was the most

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terrified of the three women when she saw dark forms in the moonlight rushing down from the higher part of the shingle, and throwing down before them showers of pebbles from the heaps over which and through which they were tramping. Ninon uttered two piercing shrieks,—shrieks so loud that they reached the ear of Le Roy, who was anxiously watching in the boat for the coming of the ladies from Château Labelle. Then, all her powers collapsing from the extremity of her terror, Ninon swooned away on the shingle, where she remained for nearly an hour in an insensible state, quite unconscious of all that was passing around her.

Gradually, however, the unhappy girl awoke to consciousness, which brought with it only misery. Dizzy and faint, with quivering limbs and swimming brain, Ninon with some difficulty raised herself to a sitting posture and gazed around. She was utterly alone on that dreary, desolate shore, over which the moonbeams cast such a dim and ghastly gleam. Even the distant light had disappeared from the beach, and no-

thing was to be heard but the faint sigh of the breeze and the answering moan of the sea. Where was Gabrielle? what had happened? what horrible scene had been acted upon that desolate spot? Ninon trembled and shivered. Those who had borne off her sister to prison or to death, had from herself merely torn off the shawl which Mario had wrapped around her, and left behind them the senseless form which it had enfolded, and which they cared not to carry away. Ninon was not, like Gabrielle and Faith, a special object of Jacobin pursuit; no warrant had been drawn out for her arrest, like that which had that night reached Aix from Robespierre in Paris. Ninon was simply left to live or die on the shingle, watched over, cared for by no one. The child of luxury, the pampered young *aristocrate*, was more helpless, desolate, and wretched, than any gypsy wanderer begging her way from hamlet to hamlet.

Long after sunrise had flushed the sky, a miserable object, notwithstanding the satin boddice and richly brocaded skirt which she wore, with bruised and bleeding feet which

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left red traces on the hard stones over which she so wearily dragged them, poor Ninon reached the cabaret which she had passed on the preceding night in the comtesse's carriage.

The wretched condition of the *aristocrate* excited the mirth rather than the pity of the inmates of the cabaret, which was one of the lowest sort, and kept by a violent Jacobin. The few denizens of the place soon gathered around the weeping, trembling young lady, made her the butt of their heartless gibes.

"Ah ha!" laughed one; "here is a pretty *demoiselle*, who has been late out at a masquerade, and who has worn out her dainty slippers with dancing."

"Or at the *spectacle*," chimed in the landlord, rubbing his unshaven chin; "it seems that there's been a tragedy acted, in which *mademoiselle* has been taking her part."

"No, no; the tragedy has not come off yet," cried the first speaker, who set up as a wag; "it will come off to-day at Aix, where Madame la Comtesse and her English spy will appear before a large audience."

"I'm going to the trial," cried out the landlord.

"And I—and I"—exclaimed other voices.

"That's only the first act of the tragedy," laughed the wag; "the second will come off to-morrow, when the drop will fall, and the last scene close with tumultuous applause!" He mimicked with his hand the descending movement of the too familiar instrument of death, amidst uproarious mirth.

Ninon, with horror and bewilderment, heard the words and saw the action which announced to her the destined fate of her sister-in-law and Faith. They had been carried off to undergo the mockery of a trial at Aix. The miserable girl's anguish was less on account of the danger in which lay her nearest relative and only protector, than from a dread that she also might be seized upon and borne off to Aix. Ninon had, with efforts which had cost her almost intolerable suffering, dragged herself as far as the cabaret, hoping to find in it pity and protection. Now her strongest desire was to escape from the place, a desire intensi-

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fied by an evident design on the part of some of the Jacobins to detain her.

• “No, no; let her go—let her go!” cried the landlord; “this is no cage for so gay-plumed a bird. Let her fly home, if her lame wing will let her, and tell her sister’s hired sycophants that Henri La Fère’s widow is going the same way to freedom as Capet’s wife took before her! Did she think, forsooth, to roll past here unheard in her fine carriage! The next carriage that she mounts will be paid for by the people, and her journey will be but a short one!”





CHAPTER XLI.

THE TRIAL.



It was the most sultry day of the most sultry month of July. The sun shone down with glare more intense than is usual even in the warm latitude of Provence. Not a cloud tempered his rays, not a breath of wind relieved the oppressive stillness of the atmosphere charged with heat. Through each southern window of the large old town-hall of Aix, streamed in fiery floods of light in which dust-motes glanced and quivered, and which lit up hundreds of faces turned in eager expectation towards the dais on which sat the *Maire*, Cochon, and his fellow-judges, with a semi-circle of ruffianly-looking jurors, assembled to pro-

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Notwithstanding the sultry heat of the day, the town-hall was crowded, for the trial of the *Dame Propriétaire* of Château Labelle was the cause of extraordinary excitement in Aix and the adjacent country, where her ancestors had for centuries lived in almost princely state. The fearful scenes of judicial murder to which Paris had become familiar were comparatively new at Aix, and in that provincial city, therefore, excited interest more keen. The pressing, jostling, hustling amongst the crowd in the hall, rendered the heat of the weather more intolerable still. Several women had, with difficulty, to be borne out in a fainting state, and those who remained seemed to be trying the experiment how much heat the human frame can endure, and how little of fresh air it requires in order to escape actual suffocation.

"Gabrielle, widow of Henri La Fère, stand forth!"

There stood the Lady of Provence, unprotected and defenceless, before the

tribunal of those from whom she well knew that no mercy was to be hoped for, no justice was to be expected. The countenance of Gabrielle was usually pale, but now a bright rose-tint flushed her cheek, and gave more than their wonted brilliancy to her beautiful eyes. She looked more queenly than ever as she stood erect, with folded hands, listening to the charges brought by the public prosecutor against her. But there was more mournful dignity still in her mien as she confronted the witness who afterwards bore testimony that might bring her mistress to the scaffold; for that witness was her own *femme-de-chambre*, Diane!

"Widow La Fère," said Cochon, a burly butcher, proud of the position of brief authority to which he had climbed, "thou hast heard the accusation against thee. Thou art charged with having at divers times spoken against the Republic, one and indivisible; of having abetted a priest in the secret performance of rites prohibited by the National Committee; of having sympathized with Louis Capet and his widow,

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and of having even attempted, before their trials, to convey to them money, which, had it reached them, they might have used to defeat the sacred ends of justice. What hast thou to say in answer to such capital charges as these?"

Clear and silvery sounded the voice of Gabrielle La Fère in reply; the throngs in the town-hall held their breath to listen.

"To avow under my own roof principles in which I had been reared from my cradle to keep loyal to my sovereigns in their adversity, to dare to worship my Creator according to the dictates of my conscience,—if there be guilt in these things, then indeed am I guilty. But it was not always in chivalrous France that such things have been reckoned as crimes."

"She is condemned by her own confession!" cried Cochon with wolfish eagerness. And then followed the mockery of voting, the vain attempt to fling over murder the ermine mantle of justice. A deep murmur—partly of stern assent, partly perhaps of pity—rose from the assembled throng, as the iniquitous sentence was pronounced

which condemned Gabrielle, widow of La Fère, to suffer death on the following morning, by the guillotine, in the market-place of the city of Aix.

The comtesse heard the sentence without blenching, without so much as a quiver of the eyelid. Her calm reproachful gaze fell for a moment on Diane, and the wretched woman dared not meet it. She turned her head away with evident confusion, which she tried to hide by engaging in conversation with Butin, who stood behind her, until her betrayed mistress had been removed from the prisoner's bar.

But it was otherwise when Faith Stanby was the accused one, and Diane was again called forward by name, this time to bear witness against the pale English girl. Then indeed the keen, beady eyes of the *fenme-de-chambre* gleamed with malignant triumph, and Diane poured forth her words fluently; the only trace of inward agitation being that livid hue which overspread her face, as it had done on that night when she had stood, candle in hand, beside the bed of Faith Stanby.

The doom just pronounced upon her beloved mistress had not taken from Faith the natural desire to avoid a violent death for herself; but it had been like the heavy blow which for a time deadens the sense of personal fear. The faithful servant cared less for life, since the Comtesse La Fère must die. The maiden's perceptions, however, were not dulled as to what was passing before and around her. Faith felt intuitively that far less sympathy than the Lady of Provence had excited in the crowd of spectators was extended to the servant girl, the foreigner, the *Anglaise*,—accused, as to her surprise she found herself to be, of having been bribed by Pitt to act the part of a spy.

"Is it true, prisoner, as this witness affirms, that thou didst receive treasonable letters from England, and that one of them contained a large remittance of money from the British minister?" was demanded of Faith.

"I never received a *sous* of money; I never received any letters, save two from my poor home, and that was before the war broke out, long, long ago," replied Faith, in

a voice rather low, raising for a moment her eyes, which had been modestly bent on the marble-paved floor.

"Had those letters anything in them relating to the probability of a war between England and the great Republic; or any remarks concerning the political state of France?" asked Cochon.

Faith was about to reply in the negative, when she suddenly remembered the incautious phrases contained in the letter of Gentleman Jos. It had been the last letter ever received by her from her father, and had been perused so often that Faith knew every sentence in it by heart; but she had destroyed the paper itself as dangerous, on the night on which she had quitted Château Labelle. Startled at having been almost drawn into uttering a falsehood, Faith hesitated, blushed, and with a little embarrassment replied, "The letter was only from my father, a laborer; he merely wrote his own private thoughts, as any parent might, to his absent child."

"Thou dost evade the question, girl!" cried Cochon, in a bullying manner. "Did

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the letter, by whomsoever written, contain any mention of George's minister, Pitt?" There was a low growl of imprecation amongst the spectators at the mention of a name so detested by the democrats in France.

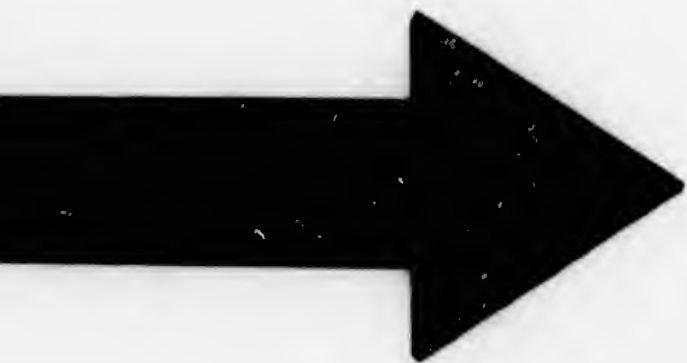
Again Faith hesitated a moment; but the Englishwoman's spirit was roused by the evident desire to browbeat her, and wrest whatever she might say to her condemnation. "The letter contained nothing, sir," she answered firmly, "that could do harm to France or its rulers. My father was only a poor man; but in England the poorest may write what they please to their children."

"Again I demand, *Anglaise*, did that letter contain any mention of Pitt?"

Faith was silent. She could not with truth say "No," and her silence was instantly construed into a confession of guilt. The cruel verdict quickly followed; it was crime enough to be even suspected of being an agent of the dreaded minister of King George.

"Have I not paid my debt, *Anglaise*?"





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hissed out Diane in a loud whisper, as the sentenced maiden passed her to rejoin the other prisoner.

"Ah, my poor Faith!" was the comtesse's greeting, "thou and I, like so many before us, were condemned before we were tried."



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CHAPTER XLII.

THE CONDEMNED.

"**S**IT down side by side, widow La Fére and maiden Faith, comtesse and soubrette; take your last meal together. 'The guillotine cuts away all idle distinctions!' Such were the parting words of the jailer, as he left the prison chamber in which Gabrielle and her servant were immured for the night preceding execution.

"There is some truth in what he says," observed the comtesse with a faint smile, as she motioned to Faith to occupy the chair by her side at the table on which a coarse meal had been placed.

But to the faithful servant it would have been distressing to have changed towards

her fellow-sufferer, even in the slightest degree, the lowly, respectful demeanor which she had shown to the comtesse in Château Labelle. Nor had Faith any vain ambition to rise above the station in which Providence had placed her; in the position of a servant, as she had lived, so was she contented to die. Faith, with tears in her eyes, so earnestly begged to be allowed to wait on madame "this last night," that Gabrielle let her have her own way. It was a mournful gratification to Faith to serve her lady both at meal-time and afterwards at her evening toilette. It was a pleasure once more to comb out those long dark tresses; and as the maid did so she thought, "How can any one have the heart to hurt one dear hair on this head! But it is a comfort to remember that all those hairs are numbered."

It was from no emotion of pride that Gabrielle suffered herself to be waited on thus by her partner in tribulation; never had there been less of pride in the soul of the high-born lady. Death is indeed a great leveller, and Gabrielle La Fère felt him to

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be so, as his dark shadow fell on her path. Very solemn thoughts were passing that night through the mind of the doomed Lady of Provence. With the Bible in her hand, Gabrielle was steadfastly looking at herself in the mirror of Truth; she was examining her own soul as became one who knew that in a few short hours she might be called upon to render account of all that she had done in the body during her sojourn on earth. And how did the actions of her life appear to the Romanist lady in that solemn review of the past? All marred by self-seeking, and stained by sin. Gabrielle saw how love of praise and love of popularity had mixed with other motives to incite her to perform munificent works of charity. She saw how her heart had been estranged from her Maker,—how she had presumptuously questioned His wisdom, ungratefully doubted His love, even when her knees had been bent in apparently devout adoration. Gabrielle saw that her exercises of self-denial, her mortification of the flesh, had sprung from a proud desire to purchase some right to the grace offered *without money and*

without price. The penitent was discovering that in self-righteousness there is sin,—that they who cherish it in their secret hearts are defrauding God of His glory. It is not in the chariot of meritorious works, with splendid gifts but unhumbled heart, that the spiritual leper must approach the Fountain of grace; but lowly, contrite, self-renouncing, with the believer's hope in his heart and the suppliant's cry on his lips, *Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean!*

"Faith, art thou afraid of death?" asked Gabrielle La Fère, raising her eyes from the pages of the Bible which she for the last hour had been perusing and pondering over in silence.

Faith was seated on a low stool near her mistress's feet. The thoughts of the poor prisoner had been wandering back to her childhood's home in the dear land to which she felt it sad never more to return. In dreamy meditation Faith was again listening to the twitter of the birds under the eaves, the lowing of cattle rising from the meadows, and the soft chime of

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church-bells borne on the breeze. Roused suddenly from such pensive recollections, Faith paused for a few moments before replying to Gabrielle's question, and then said in a tremulous tone, while a tear moistened her lashes, "Madame, my courage is not like yours. I own I would rather—if it had been the Lord's will—have died quietly in my bed."

"I meant not the mere act of dying, the short, sharp pang when soul is separated from body," observed the lady; "it seems to me that it matters little whether that come to us in the quiet chamber or on the scaffold. But this is what I would ask, Art thou afraid of that which lies beyond death?"

"No, Heaven be praised!" replied Faith, clasping her hands, and looking up at her mistress with a peaceful smile on her pale features. "*Absent from the body, present with the Lord!* I would not wish to be always on earth,—*to be with Christ is far better!*"

"But is thy soul then so pure and spotless that thou art certain that no punishment awaits thee in the dread Hereafter?" asked

the comtesse. "Is it not according to the justice of the Most Holy, that sin—even if it be but sin of thought—should not go altogether unpunished?"

"My sins have already been punished," replied Faith simply; "all my many sins of thought, word, and deed."

"When?" inquired Gabrielle quickly.

"When my Redeemer died on the cross, and paid the forfeit for them all!"

Faith glanced up at her mistress as she spoke, and saw that the dark eyes of Gabrielle were glistening with tears.

"Ah! my child, thine is a blessed—most blessed assurance!" said the lady with emotion, laying her hand on the shoulder of her servant. "Such thoughts came even into my soul this day, when I stood before that tribunal, — surely that comfort must have been sent to me from Heaven! I thought how the Most Holy, the Most Exalted, had Himself stood arraigned before a mortal judge, had Himself listened in silence to accusations from mortal lips. He did not defend His own spotless character, He was mute before His accusers; and

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wherefore?" Faith felt the pressure of Gabrielle's hand heavier on her shoulder, and the hand itself trembled with emotion as the lady went on. "It was because He stood in our place—*my* place; He was judged for *my* sins, condemned for *my* guilt! Christ was sentenced that I might go free! O Faith, Faith, I do believe that I am saved—for Christ died for sinners—there is no condemnation, NO CONDEMNATION for them who trust only in Him!"

The heart of Faith bounded with joy—joy so strong that it seemed to sweep away all other feelings in the fulness of its sparkling current. Her prayers then had been answered at last; her mistress had found peace in believing!

Blessed indeed is the time when the leprosy of sin is purged from the soul, and from the healing Fountain of Grace the forgiven penitent rises with a new nature, as of a little child, imparted by the Spirit of God! With some, as with Faith Stanby, the great change comes early; so early that it is only known to have taken place by spiritual health shown in a holy, consistent life.

With others, as with Gabrielle La Fère, there is a marked and never-to-be-forgotten time, of which the Christian can say, "It was then that my leprosy was healed ; it was then that, like Naaman, I washed and was clean !"

In peaceful, happy communion of spirit, the rest of that evening was passed by the two prisoners sentenced to die on the following morning. The comtesse and her servant knelt side by side, fellow-heirs of a heavenly kingdom, whilst Gabrielle poured out aloud in words the prayers and thanksgivings which welled from the hearts of both. When the two had risen from their knees, Gabrielle observed to the English maiden,—"There is but one thing which makes me a little regret being called away so soon from this earthly scene. I could have wished to have lived a little longer, dear Faith, to do something for Him who has done everything for me ; to have done it," she added, fearing her meaning might be mistaken, "not as a work of merit, but *only* as a proof of my grateful love."

"I have been thinking the same, madame," replied Faith. "It seems to me that there is just one thing which is still left for me to do."

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"What is that one thing?" inquired the comtesse.

"It is—from my heart to forgive Diane!"

Gabrielle was silent for a space. Hers was a spirit keenly sensitive to wrong, and deep were the wrongs which she had sustained from a perfidious betrayer, one whom she could not but regard as the murderess not only of herself but of her faithful servant. The lady paused before she answered, but the pause was not a long one.

"Yes, my child," said Gabrielle mildly; "freely have we been forgiven, freely must we forgive. May the Almighty pardon that unhappy woman, even as I do now!"

Then the two prisoners laid themselves down to rest, and their slumber was sweet and untroubled even by dreams of the coming morrow. The moon glanced in through the grating of iron, and her rays fell softly on the sleeping face of Gabrielle La Fére, like the smile of a guardian angel waiting to whisper to the widowed prisoner,

"Rise, mourner of earth, rise; for the Master hath come, and he calleth for thee!"



CHAPTER XLIII.

THE GUILLOTINE.



VERY large concourse of people had assembled, even before sunrise, in the market-place of Aix, to witness the execution of the Comtesse La Fère. Almost every window that commanded a view of the scaffold and guillotine was filled with spectators, though in some few houses the shutters were closed in token of mourning, for there were many citizens who looked on the condemnation of Gabrielle with feelings of indignation and grief. There were many in France who mourned over the crimes committed in the name of Freedom.

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this round the great door of the Cathedral yonder, to see the comtesse come forth as a bride in her white satin and glittering jewels!" observed a peasant woman, who, with her basket poised on her head, stood in the skirt of the throng.

"Thou mayst well remember it, Madeleine," said a fishwoman who overheard the remark, "for that dress of thine was new on that day, and a gift from the bride of Château Labelle."

"There be many as took her gifts then as have been waiting here for hours to see her die," observed Madeleine sadly. "Alas! how little they who pressed and crowded to get a sight of the bride, guessed that it would ever come to this! I wish that when that horrid steel, that flashes up yonder in the sun, comes down, it might be Robespierre's head, and not the comtesse's, that should drop down into the basket."

"Hist!" said her companion, in a warning tone, "unless thou dost think that thine own head hath been long enough on thy shoulders."

"See, see! they come!" exclaimed Mad-

eleine suddenly, pointing towards the scaffold, at the further side of which the prisoners had just dismounted from the death-cart. There was a universal movement amongst the crowds at the moment, as when a wind sweeps over a field of corn, and a murmuring sound which denoted that the climax of interest had come. Madeleine raised herself on tiptoe to look over the sea of heads between her and the scaffold, and then exclaimed, "There she is—the good, the beautiful lady! Ah! can the blessed Saints let her die thus?"

"On whose arm is she leaning?" asked the other.

"Dost thou not know?" cried Madeleine; "that is the *Anglaise* who is to be guillotined with her lady. Poor soul, how gentle she looks; it is a sin and a shame to kill her!"

"A sin and a shame indeed!" repeated an indignant voice behind the peasant. It was that of Marie, who had walked from Château Labelle to have a last sight of her mistress and of her friend. The heart of the impetuous Provençale was full almost to bursting, and she cared not who overheard

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the passionate exclamations which she uttered from time to time.

Though Gabrielle had mounted the scaffold with her arm resting on that of Faith, she was really rather supporting than leaning on her attendant. The French comtesse was possessed of more physical courage than belonged by nature to her young English maid; but both, upheld by the same spirit of devotion, were serenely calm, even when standing so close as actually to touch the fearful apparatus of death prepared for their destruction.

"Faith, dear Faith," whispered Gabrielle, gently pressing the arm of her maid, "what a priceless blessing thou hast been unto me!"

"It is sweet to me that I may be with you to the last," was the softly murmured reply.

"What can be passing yonder?" said Gabrielle suddenly, glancing over the mass of upturned faces below, in the direction of the spot where Marie and Madeleine were standing. "Faith, dost thou not mark how the multitude sway backwards and forwards,

like a sea agitated by the sudden gust of a tempest?"

"They are trying to get nearer to you," began Faith; but the comtesse gave her no time to finish the sentence.

"No, no; the people yonder are not so much as looking towards us; the scaffold—the victims—are not the point of interest with them. Dost thou not see the man yonder, waving a paper on high; all are crowding towards him—ha! they are raising him aloft on their shoulders!"

"How the people shout!—oh! what can they be shouting?" cried Faith eagerly, as much convinced now as was her mistress that something of a very extraordinary and exciting nature must have occurred. The distance from the scaffold of the man who was waving the paper on high, and gesticulating with frantic vehemence, was almost too great for her to distinguish his features; but there was something in his appearance which reminded Faith of Claude Le Roy. Whoever the man might be, he was evidently the bearer of tidings, and tidings of interest so thrilling that spectators, execu-

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tioner, victims,—all seemed to forget the terrible cause that had drawn them together. From the spot where Le Roy (for it was he) appeared, raised on the shoulders of wildly excited men, there spread rapidly some electric-like influence, which in less than two minutes had converted the whole multitude in the market-place into a loudly shouting, madly rejoicing, frantic looking mass of enthusiasts! Had each man and woman in the throng suddenly received pardon when about to die on the scaffold, there could not have appeared to be greater rapture amongst them than that which burst forth in the now clearly audible shouts, "Robespierre is fallen—is fallen! Robespierre to the guillotine!"

The mad excitement of delight with which the destruction of the Jacobin leader was hailed in Paris is matter of history, and forms a striking page in the records of that marvellous time. We read that Robespierre's fall, in that eventful July, caused a joy which could not be calmed down for several days.* The intoxication of delight

* Thiers.

was almost universal throughout the city. Men deemed that the Reign of Terror was over; Paris again could take breath! Crowds rushed to the prisons, the doors were flung open, and captives were released *en masse*. Those who had never expected to come forth, except to mount the death-cart, were now, amidst frantic rejoicings, restored to their families and friends. The pendulum of the Revolution had begun on that *Thermidor* to swing backwards, and it did so with a force resembling that with which the thunderbolt speeds.

The spirit which animated Paris spread to the provinces, as life-blood circulates from the heart to the farthest extremities of the body. Aix, like other French cities, was wild with joy and excitement. Men who had heard, if not with approval, at least without open indignation, the sentence of death passed on a noble lady, now made the echoes ring again in the streets with shouts of "*Vive la Comtesse La Fère!*" Those who, the day before, would scarcely have moved a finger to save her, now unharnessed the horses from the first carriage on which

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they could lay hands, and insisted on drawing her themselves, in a kind of triumphal procession, back to Château Labelle. Instead of a victim, the comtesse suddenly found herself the idol of the volatile people.

Faith, who, in a minor degree, came in for a share of the popularity of her mistress, felt herself like one in a dream. She was utterly amazed by the display of the wonderful versatility of the French character now before her, and could with difficulty believe the evidence either of her eyes or her ears. The English girl looked with mute inquiring wonder from the car of triumph to the instrument of death, where the steel which was ere this time to have been dripping with her blood, was still flashing diamond bright in the sun. The first thing which made Faith realize that the astonishing events of the morning were facts, and not dreams, was the sight of Marie's familiar face, beaming with joy, and the strong grasp of her hand, as, after forcing her way through excited crowds up to the carriage, she exclaimed, "Ah! had this blessed news but come ten minutes later, I should never

have looked on thy living face again." And, at a sign from her mistress, mounting to a seat on the box of the carriage, Marie, who had left the château not two hours before in grief and despair, formed one of the party who with glad exultation escorted back to her home the Lady of Provence.



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CHAPTER XLIV.

CONCLUSION.

MY story might here close, for though the tempest of Revolution was by no means over, its bolts never again reached Château Labelle. Should the tale, however, have been perused with any interest, a brief glance at the future lives of some of its characters may not be unwelcome to the reader.

Animated by higher motives, the joy that springs from a sense of sin forgiven, and the love which that joy must inspire, Gabrielle returned to her charitable works. She now gave to them not only her money, but her cheerful interest, her personal attention. When Antoine peacefully fell asleep, his mis-

tress, as well as Claude and Faith, stood by the dying-bed of the good old man. Le Roy then became the occupant of the vine-mantled cottage ; and the comtesse appointed him to be her steward and almoner, in which situation the Provençal showed the noble qualities of head and heart which he possessed.

Though Gabrielle had fully embraced the great leading doctrine of Protestantism, justification by faith, she would at first have been startled by the idea that she was anything but a devoted member of the Church of Rome. Gradually, very gradually, through perusal of the Scriptures and prayer, clearer light dawned on the mind of the lady. Ancient superstitions, erroneous views, dropped away one by one, like the old leaves of the laurel in spring, when the fresh new shoots are expanding ; till at length Gabrielle learned to regard her late forms of worship as a bowing down in the house of Rimmon ; and would have shrunk as much as Faith herself from addressing the Virgin in prayer.

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influence over her lady Faith had dreaded, had very different results from what she had feared. The priest, a devout man, who at risk of his life had ministered to his flock during the worst times of the Revolution, had had his mind much opened by a residence in England. On him also the light of truth had dawned; and when in many an earnest conference he compared his new views with those of Gabrielle, he was so confirmed in his impression that the Romish Church had darkened that light by superstition, that he felt that he could no longer remain a member of her communion. Boldly coming forward to avow his conscientious opinions, La Porte became the first Evangelical pastor ministering in that part of the province, since Louis XIV. had driven the last one from the domains of the Comtes de Labelle.

The Protestant pastor soon collected around him a little flock, chiefly gathered from the tenants and servants who followed Gabrielle in renouncing the errors of Rome. The first of the household at the château who adopted a purer faith were Marie and

Annette; but the number gradually increased, till the little chapel in the mansion could no longer contain the congregation who assembled in it to worship in spirit and in truth.

Gabrielle then had the ruined chapel of St. Catherine enlarged and put into perfect repair. There was indeed in it no gorgeous shrine, no splendid ornaments, no carved image of Virgin or of Saint; but with simplicity beauty was combined. Faith took special delight in watching the progress made in preparing this chapel for Evangelical worship: with deep feelings of gratitude she regarded the place where she had found shelter in the hour of extreme peril. With the permission of her mistress, Faith, on the day before it was opened for divine service, went to adorn the chapel with flowers. This was to her a delightful task; and as she placed a rich wreath over the spot where she had once crouched in concealment, a thanksgiving arose from her grateful heart, like the perfume from the flowers.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "what cause have

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I to remember this chapel with gratitude!"

"And wilt thou not give me cause also to remember it, dear Faith?" said the voice of Claude Le Roy, who, unheard, had approached her. "Wilt thou not here give me the reward of seven years of patient waiting and of faithful attachment?"

Faith turned round with a smile on her lips which was sufficient reply, for Claude had long known that her heart was his own. She took from his hand a basketful of orange-blossoms, fragrant and white, which Le Roy had brought to help her in adorning the chapel.

And as Faith took the basket with its beautiful contents, what strange remembrances came into the mind of the maiden, of another basket, empty, soil-stained and crushed, which she had raised from the road on one chilly November evening! The damp and cold dreariness of that day, with its piercing wind and rising mist, had not been a greater contrast to the brightness of the summer morn in Provence, than the sadness which had then darkened the soul

of Faith, to the joy which filled it now. The bitter trial of the time when, for her Master's sake, she had given up her dearest earthly hopes, had led to the happiness of this! In a few days more, the bells of St. Catherine's chapel rang forth a blithe peal for the wedding of Faith and Le Roy, and the bridal morn was for them the commencement of a married life of singular happiness and peace. Fervently grateful was Faith that she had been preserved in her early youth from the temptation which had nearly made her forsake the path of duty, and that she had been given grace to obey the command to marry *only in the Lord*.

Though now a wife, and occupying the cottage which she looked upon as a little paradise, Faith, as well as her husband, never quitted the service of the Comtesse La Fère. Faith Le Roy remained to the end of her days the confidential, valued attendant of the Lady of Provence.

One of the brightest spots in the life of Faith (in which there was so much of brightness), was a visit, of several months' duration, which she and her husband, accom-

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panying their mistress, paid to England, after the peace of Amiens had closed the long war between that country and France. To Faith, who had never lost her love for her native land, this was a period of intense enjoyment, only heightened by the object which had induced the Comtesse La Fère to visit England. Gabrielle, whose now lowly spirit earnestly sought and thankfully received instruction, was desirous to meet and converse with some of the English leaders in works of mercy, the report of whose successful labors had reached her ears in Provence. The comtesse was strengthened and encouraged by intercourse with those devoted Christians to go on in an extending career of usefulness in her own beautiful country. Gabrielle carried back from England knowledge which helped her to make Château Labelle a central point of light and love, in a land where there was so much of spiritual darkness. Gabrielle labored much for the Lord,—it was her delight thus to labor; but she never looked upon her works or her gifts as anything but pledges and proofs of grateful love to Him

whose merits and mercy alone had made her—the leper—clean.

Once, during her sojourn in England, Faith chanced to see Edward Marston. Many years had elapsed since their last painful meeting; but it was not merely Time that had wrought the change which startled Faith in him whom she had once regarded, as in all points save one, the noblest of men. While Faith in her upward path had gone from strength to strength, becoming ever more pure-minded and unselfish, Marston had been constantly yielding to temptations from which religious principle is the only effectual safeguard. Edward had been a too prosperous man; his goods had increased, but there had been no blessing upon them. The farmer had drunk of the cup of worldly enjoyment till he had come to the poisonous dregs. When Faith looked on the countenance, once so fine, bloated by self-indulgence, and with a coarse, sensual expression upon it, left by unrestrained passions, she could scarcely believe that the horse-racing, high-betting, hard-drinking man of the world before her,

was the same Edward for whom she had once felt such deep attachment, such fond admiration. More than ever did the wife of Le Roy bless her heavenly Guide that she had wedded one whom to her dying day she could honor.

This little sketch of the later careers of the characters in this story would not be complete without some mention of Ninon La Fère.

Ninon had suffered so severely on the night of Gabrielle's arrest, and the miserable day which succeeded it, that it seemed doubtful whether her already feeble health would ever recover from the effect of terror and fatigue which she had undergone at that time. For months the poor girl was prostrated by nervous fever, which threatened to destroy not only her bodily powers, but those of her mind. By care and nursing, however, the invalid rallied at last, and her health and spirits were afterwards to a considerable degree restored by a visit which she paid to some friends at a fashionable watering-place on the coast. There Ninon met with a Corsican officer, who,

though possessed of no recommendation beyond that of a handsome person and flattering tongue, easily succeeded in winning the hand of Mademoiselle La Fère. The union was by no means a happy one to the weak and frivolous woman, who discovered, when it was too late, that she had given herself to a spendthrift and tyrant. Ninon had cause bitterly to regret that she had ever quitted the quiet home where she had thought her existence so intolerably tedious and dull.

About ten years after her marriage, Ninon, now Madame Parrocca, paid a visit to Gabrielle La Fère. This was the first time that the Corsican's wife had been able to obtain permission from her tyrannical lord to accept the repeated invitations which she had received to visit Château Labelle. Poor Ninon, wasted and withered in appearance, notwithstanding false hair and rouge, came back to her old home a weary, broken-spirited woman; an object of pity to those who had not seen her since the days of her youth. Her disposition, however, was little altered save that her temper was more irritable, her

spirits more uneven than they had been when she was first introduced to the reader. Madame Parrocca was much the same volatile, frivolous creature as she who had petted Jacobin and tyrannized over Faith. But if Ninon was little altered, the place which she visited was much so ; and Madame Parrocca saw with surprise and curiosity, though not with much real interest, the many changes which had taken place in Château Labelle since her marriage. These were particularly brought to her notice when, on the morning following her arrival, Marie showed Ninon over the place.

"What! dost thou mean to tell me that a school for the tenants' children is held in the hall every day!" she exclaimed.

"Ah! yes, madame," Marie replied; "and it does one's heart good to hear their merry voices as they come out for their play. And then there's the festival at Christmas—the feasting—the toys; Madame la Comtesse knows so well how to make the little ones happy; and she enjoys their sports as much as they do themselves."

"I cannot imagine Gabrielle enjoying

anything, she used to be so *triste*," muttered Madame Parrocca, who had no idea of the pleasure derived from giving pleasure to others.

"If madame will turn in this direction," suggested Marie, "she will see the beautiful corridor laid out as a ward for the sick."

"A ward for the sick!" echoed Ninon, with a look of disgust. "I used to say that Gabrielle made the château into a convent; it seems to be a hospital now. This all comes of the new-fangled ideas on religion which she seems to have taken up."

"La comtesse spends hours daily in teaching the little ones in the school, or in reading the Bible in the sick-ward," said Marie, who herself took an active part in the work of charity carried on around her.

Ninon shrugged her thin shoulders with an air of affected compassion. "I wonder how the comtesse can lead such a galley-slave's life!" she exclaimed. "And yet she looks wonderfully little changed; Gabrielle does not seem to grow old," added Madame Parrocca, as Marie's throwing

open a door gave her a view of the Lady of Provence, at the farther end of the corridor, smiling as she placed some deliciously ripe grapes in the hand of a sick child.

"Madame's beauty is of the soul—and the soul never grows old," said Marie, with an affectionate look at her mistress.

Madame Parrocca shrugged her shoulders again. The meaning of Marie's observation was beyond the comprehension of the woman of fashion.

"I suppose that Faith, whom I see yonder, is also very busy in this charity drudgery," said Ninon; "it would be just in her line, she was always so insufferably good."

Marie was nettled by the remark, and by the tone of contemptuous superiority in which it was made. Marie had still a battle to maintain with her own quick temper. "Faith is madame's right hand," she replied with a little tartness; "I do not know how Madame la Comtesse, or any one else in the château, would manage without her; she has such thought, such quickness, such kindness for all! The very best thing for us all which you, madame, ever did, was to

bring *la petite Anglaise* over with you from England."

The words had in them much more of truth than politeness ; Marie was still noted for bluntness of speech. The befrizzled and beflounced lady beside her made no reply, but carefully gathering the folds of her dress around her, that they might not so much as touch the snowy-white counterpanes of the beds, Ninon slowly made her way towards the place where both the comtesse and her servant were now engaged with another patient. Faith was gently supporting the sufferer's head on her bosom, while Gabrielle, with a look of tender compassion, was holding a cup to her lips.

"That woman looks awfully ill, really a shocking object !" exclaimed Madame Parrocca with a gesture of disgust. "I wonder how the comtesse can bear to wait like a nurse upon such a miserable wretch !"

"Many may wonder at it," answered Marie. "That case is the worst in the ward the only one which is hopeless. That woman is slowly dying of a most painful disease ; she will never rise again from that

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bed; her sufferings have been very dreadful. But she wants for nothing here; she has every attention, every comfort,—and Faith sat up with her all last night.”

“I suppose that she has plenty of praying and preaching too,” said Ninon, with a scornful emphasis which told how little she would value such religious exercises herself.

“Monsieur le Pasteur has seen the sufferer often; but I scarcely think that he makes any impression upon her,” answered Marie gravely. Madame and Faith pray much for her, I know, and will not give up all hope for her soul,—especially after some words that she uttered last night. But where there has been hypocrisy for years,” continued Marie, “who can say whether there be real penitence, when the dying in their agony cry out for that mercy from God which they themselves never showed!”

“Surely I have seen that wretched creature’s face before!” exclaimed Madame Parrocca, leaning forward to obtain a nearer view of the patient whom she was approaching. “But no; I must be mistaken,—it is

impossible, quite impossible that *she* should ever be found under this roof!"

"You are not mistaken, madame," said Marie with animation; "nothing is impossible to Christian mercy and Christian forgiveness: that dying woman is—*Diane!*"



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