VARIOUS

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Содержание

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ORNITHOLOGOI.[1]

BY J. M. LEGARE

[WITH AN ENGRAVING.]

Thou, sitting on the hill-top bare,
Dost see the far hills disappear
In Autumn smoke, and all the air
Filled with bright leaves. Below thee spread
Are yellow harvests, rich in bread
For winter use; while over-head
The jays to one another call,
And through the stilly woods there fall,
Ripe nuts at intervals, where'er
The squirrel, perched in upper air,
From tree-top barks at thee his fear;
His cunning eyes, mistrustingly,
Do spy at thee around the tree;
Then, prompted by a sudden whim,
Down leaping on the quivering limb,
Gains the smooth hickory, from whence
He nimbly scours along the fence
To secret haunts.

But oftener,
When Mother Earth begins to stir,
And like a Hadji who hath been
To Mecca, wears a caftan green;
When jasmines and azalias fill
The air with sweets, and down the hill
Turbid no more descends the rill;
The wonder of thy hazel eyes,
Soft opening on the misty skies —
Dost smile within thyself to see
Things uncontained in, seemingly,

[1] Bird-voices.

The open book upon thy knee,
And through the quiet woodlands hear
Sounds full of mystery to ear
Of grosser mould – the myriad cries
That from the teeming world arise;
Which we, self-confidently wise,
Pass by unheeding. Thou didst yearn
From thy weak babyhood to learn
Arcana of creation; turn
Thy eyes on things intangible
To mortals; when the earth was still.
Hear dreamy voices on the hill,

In wavy woods, that sent a thrill
Of joyousness through thy young veins.
Ah, happy thou! whose seeking gains
All that thou lovest, man disdains
A sympathy in joys and pains
With dwellers in the long, green lanes,
With wings that shady groves explore,
With watchers at the torrent's roar,
And waders by the reedy shore;
For thou, through purity of mind,
Dost hear, and art no longer blind.

Croak! croak! – who croaketh over-head
So hoarsely, with his pinion spread,
Dabbled in blood, and dripping red?
Croak! croak! – a raven's curse on him,
The giver of this shattered limb!
Albeit young, (a hundred years,
When next the forest leaved appears,)
Will Duskywing behold this breast
Shot-riddled, or divide my nest
With wearer of so tattered vest?
I see myself, with wing awry,
Approaching. Duskywing will spy
My altered mien, and shun my eye.
With laughter bursting, through the wood
The birds will scream – she's quite too good
For thee. And yonder meddling jay,
I hear him chatter all the day,
"He's crippled – send the thief away!"
At every hop – "don't let him stay."
I'll catch thee yet, despite my wing;
For all thy fine blue plumes, thou'lt sing
Another song!

Is't not enough

The carrion festering we snuff,
And gathering down upon the breeze,
Release the valley from disease;
If longing for more fresh a meal,
Around the tender flock we wheel,
A marksman doth some bush conceal.
This very morn, I heard an ewe
Bleat in the thicket; there I flew,
With lazy wing slow circling round,
Until I spied unto the ground
A lamb by tangled briars bound.
The ewe, meanwhile, on hillock-side,
Bleat to her young – so loudly cried,
She heard it not when it replied.
Ho, ho! – a feast! I 'gan to croak,
Alighting straightway on an oak;
Whence gloatingly I eyed aslant
The little trembler lie and pant.
Leapt nimbly thence upon its head;
Down its white nostril bubbled red
A gush of blood; ere life had fled,
My beak was buried in its eyes,
Turned tearfully upon the skies —
Strong grew my croak, as weak its cries.

No longer couldst thou sit and hear
This demon prate in upper air —
Deeds horrible to maiden ear.
Begone, thou spokest. Over-head
The startled fiend his pinion spread,
And croaking maledictions, fled.

But, hark! who at some secret door
Knocks loud, and knocketh evermore?
Thou seest how around the tree,
With scarlet head for hammer, he
Probes where the haunts of insects be.
The worm in labyrinthian hole
Begins his sluggard length to roll;
But crafty Rufus spies the prey,
And with his mallet beats away
The loose bark, crumbling to decay;
Then chirping loud, with wing elate,
He bears the morsel to his mate.
His mate, she sitteth on her nest,
In sober feather plumage dressed;
A matron underneath whose breast
Three little tender heads appear.
With bills distent from ear to ear,

Each clamors for the bigger share;
And whilst they clamor, climb – and, lo!
Upon the margin, to and fro,
Unsteady poised, one wavers slow.
Stay, stay! the parents anguished shriek,
Too late; for venturesome, yet weak,
His frail legs falter under him;
He falls – but from a lower limb
A moment dangles, thence again
Launched out upon the air, in vain
He spread his little plumeless wing,
A poor, blind, dizzy, helpless thing.

But thou, who all didst see and hear,
Young, active, wast already there,
And caught the flutterer in air.
Then up the tree to topmost limb,
A vine for ladder, borest him.
Against thy cheek his little heart
Beat soft. Ah, trembler that thou art,
Thou spokest smiling; comfort thee!
With joyous cries the parents flee
Thy presence none – confidingly
Pour out their very hearts to thee.
The mockbird sees thy tenderness
Of deed; doth with melodiousness,
In many tongues, thy praise express.
And all the while, his dappled wings
He claps his sides with, as he sings,
From perch to perch his body flings:
A poet he, to ecstasy
Wrought by the sweets his tongue doth say.

Stay, stay! – I hear a flutter now
Beneath yon flowering alder bough.
I hear a little plaintive voice
That did at early morn rejoice,
Make a most sad yet sweet complaint,
Saying, "my heart is very faint
With its unutterable wo.
What shall I do, where can I go,
My cruel anguish to abate.
Oh! my poor desolated mate,
Dear Cherry, will our haw-bush seek,
Joyful, and bearing in her beak
Fresh seeds, and such like dainties, won
By careful search. But they are gone
Whom she did brood and dote upon.
Oh! if there be a mortal ear

My sorrowful complaint to hear;
If manly breast is ever stirred
By wrong done to a helpless bird,
To them for quick redress I cry."
Moved by the tale, and drawing nigh,
On alder branch thou didst espy
How, sitting lonely and forlorn,
His breast was pressed upon a thorn,
Unknowing that he leant thereon;
Then bidding him take heart again,
Thou rannest down into the lane
To seek the doer of this wrong,
Nor under hedgerow hunted long,
When, sturdy, rude, and sun-embrowned,
A child thy earnest seeking found.
To him in sweet and modest tone
Thou madest straight thy errand known.
With gentle eloquence didst show
(Things erst he surely did not know)
How great an evil he had done;
How, when next year the mild May sun
Renewed its warmth, this shady lane
No timid birds would haunt again;
And how around his mother's door
The robins, yearly guests before —
He knew their names – would come no more;
But if his prisoners he released,
Before their little bosoms ceased
To palpitate, each coming year
Would find them gladly reappear
To sing his praises everywhere —
The sweetest, dearest songs to hear.
And afterward, when came the term
Of ripened corn, the robber worm
Would hunt through every blade and turn,
Impatient thus his smile to earn.

At first, flushed, angrily, and proud,
He answered thee with laughter loud
And brief retort. But thou didst speak
So mild, so earnestly did seek
To change his mood, in wonder first
He eyed thee; then no longer durst
Raise his bold glances to thy face,
But, looking down, began to trace,
With little, naked foot and hand,
Thoughtful devices in the sand;
And when at last thou didst relate
The sad affliction of the mate,

When to the well-known spot she came,
He hung his head for very shame;
His penitential tears to hide,
His face averted while he cried;
"Here, take them all, I've no more pride
In climbing up to rob a nest —
I've better feelings in my breast."

Then thanking him with heart and eyes,
Thou tookest from his grasp the prize,
And bid the little freedmen rise.
But when thou sawest how too weak
Their pinions were, the nest didst seek,
And called thy client. Down he flew
Instant, and with him Cherry too;
And fluttering after, not a few
Of the minuter feathered race
Filled with their warbling all the place.
From hedge and pendent branch and vine,
Recounted still that deed of thine;
Still sang thy praises o'er and o'er,
Gladly – more heartily, be sure,
Were praises never sung before.

Beholding thee, they understand
(These Minne-singers of the land)
How thou apart from all dost stand,
Full of great love and tenderness
For all God's creatures – these express
Thy hazel eyes. With life instinct
All things that are, to thee are linked
By subtle ties; and none so mean
Or loathsome hast thou ever seen,
But wonderous in make hath been.
Compassionate, thou seest none
Of insect tribes beneath the sun
That thou canst set thy heel upon.
A sympathy thou hast with wings
In groves, and with all living things.
Unmindful if they walk or crawl,
The same arm shelters each and all;
The shadow of the Curse and Fall
Alike impends. Ah! truly great,
Who strivest earnestly and late,
A single atom to abate,
Of helpless wo and misery.
For very often thou dost see
How sadly and how helplessly
A pleading face looks up to thee.

Therefore it is, thou canst not choose,
With petty tyranny to abuse
Thy higher gifts; and justly fear
The feeblest worm of earth or air,
In thy heart's judgment to condemn,
Since God made thee, and God made them.

DEATH: – AN INVOCATION

BY THOMAS DUNN ENGLISH

Thou art no king of terrors – sweet Death!
But a maiden young and fair;
Thine eyes are bright as the spring starlight,
And golden is thy hair;
While the smile that flickers thy lips upon
Has a light beyond compare.

Come then, Death, from the dark-brown shades
Where thou hast lingered long;
Come to the haunts where sins abound
And troubles thickly throng,
And lay thy bridal kiss on the lips
Of a child of sorrow and song.

For I can gaze with a rapture deep
Upon thy lovely face;
Many a smile I find therein,
Where another a frown would trace —
As a lover would clasp his new-made bride
I will take thee to my embrace.

Come, oh, come! I long for thy look;
I weary to win thy kiss —
Bear me away from a world of wo
To a world of quiet bliss —
For in that I may kneel to God alone,
Which I may not do in this.

For woman and wealth they woo pursuit,
And a winning voice has fame;
Men labor for love and work for wealth
And struggle to gain a name;
Yet find but fickleness, need and scorn,
If not the brand of shame.

Then carry me hence, sweet Death —*my* Death!
Must I woo thee still in vain?
Come at the morn or come at the eve,
Or come in the sun or rain;
But come – oh, come! for the loss of life
To me is the chiefest gain.

GOLD

BY R. H. STODDARD

Alas! my heart is sick when I behold
The deep engrossing interest of wealth,
How eagerly men sacrifice their health,
Love, honor, fame and truth for sordid gold;
Dealing in sin, and wrong, and tears, and strife,
Their only aim and business in life
To gain and heap together shining store; —

Alchemists, mad as e'er were those of yore.
Transmuting every thing to glittering dross,
Wasting their energies o'er magic scrolls,
Day-books and ledgers leaden, gain and loss —
Casting the holiest feelings of their souls
High hopes, and aspirations, and desires,
Beneath their crucibles to feed th' accursed fires!

FIEL A LA MUERTE, OR TRUE LOVE'S DEVOTION

A TALE OF THE TIMES OF LOUIS QUINZE

BY HENRY WILLIAM HERBERT, AUTHOR OF "THE ROMAN TRAITOR," "MARMADUKE WYVIL," "CROMWELL," ETC

There was a mighty stir in the streets of Paris, as Paris' streets were in the olden time. A dense and eager mob had taken possession, at an early hour of the day, of all the environs of the Bastile, and lined the way which led thence to the Place de Greve in solid and almost impenetrable masses.

People of all conditions were there, except the very highest; but the great majority of the concourse was composed of the low populace, and the smaller bourgeoisie. Multitudes of women were there, too, from the girl of sixteen to the beldam of sixty, nor had mothers been ashamed to bring their infants in their arms into that loud and tumultuous assemblage.

Loud it was and tumultuous, as all great multitudes are, unless they are convened by purposes too resolutely dark and solemn to find any vent in noise. When that is the case, let rulers beware, for peril is at hand – perhaps the beginning of the end.

But this Parisian mob, although long before this period it had learned the use of barricades, though noisy, turbulent, and sometimes even violent in the demonstrations of its impatience, was any thing but angry or excited.

On the contrary, it seemed to be on the very tip-toe of pleasurable expectation, and from the somewhat frequent allusions to *notre bon roi*, which circulated among the better order of spectators, it would appear that the government of the Fifteenth Louis was for the moment in unusually good odor with the good folks of the metropolis.

What was the spectacle to which they were looking forward with so much glee – which had brought forth young delicate girls, and tender mothers, into the streets at so early an hour – which, as the day advanced toward ten o'clock of the morning, was tempting forth laced cloaks, and rapiers, and plumed hats, and here and there, in the cumbrous carriages of the day, the proud and luxurious ladies of the gay metropolis?

One glance toward the centre of the Place de Greve was sufficient to inform the dullest, for there uprose, black, grisly, horrible, a tall stout pile of some thirty feet in height, with a huge wheel affixed horizontally to the summit.

Around this hideous instrument of torture was raised a scaffold hung with black cloth, and strewed with saw-dust, for the convenience of the executioners, about three feet lower than the wheel which surmounted it.

Around this frightful apparatus were drawn up two companies of the French guard, forming a large hollow-square facing outwards, with muskets loaded, and bayonets fixed, as if they apprehended an attempt at rescue, although from the demeanor of the people nothing appeared at that time to be further from their thoughts than any thing of the kind.

Above was the executioner-in-chief, with two grim, truculent-looking assistants, making preparations for the fearful operation they were about to perform, or leaning indolently on the instruments of slaughter.

By and bye, as the day wore onward, and the concourse kept still increasing both in numbers and in the respectability of those who composed it, something of irritation began to show itself, mingled

with the eagerness and expectation of the populace, and from some murmurs, which ran from time to time through their ranks, it would seem that they apprehended the escape of their victim.

By this time the windows of all the houses which overlooked the precincts of that fatal square on which so much of noble blood has been shed through so many ages, were occupied by persons of both sexes, all of the middle, and some even of the upper classes, as eager to behold the frightful and disgusting scene, which was about to ensue, as the mere rabble in the open streets below.

The same thing was manifest along the whole line of the thoroughfare by which the fatal procession would advance, with this difference alone, that many of the houses in that quarter belonging to the high nobility, and all with few exceptions being the dwellings of opulent persons, the windows, instead of being let like seats at the opera, to any who would pay the price, were occupied by the inhabitants, coming and going from their ordinary avocations to look out upon the noisy throng, when any louder outbreak of voices called their attention to the busy scene.

Among the latter, in a large and splendid mansion, not far from the Porte St. Antoine, and commanding a direct view of the Place de la Bastille, with its esplanade, drawbridge, and principal entrance, a group was collected at one of the windows, nearly overlooking the gate itself, which seemed to take the liveliest interest in the proceedings of the day, although that interest was entirely unmixed with any thing like the brutal expectation, and morbid love of horrible excitement which characterized the temper of the multitude.

The most prominent person of this group was a singularly noble-looking man, fast verging to his fiftieth year, if he had not yet attained it. His countenance, though resolute and firm, with a clear, piercing eye, lighted up at times, for a moment, by a quick, fiery flash, was calm, benevolent, and pensive in its ordinary mood, rather than energetical or active. Yet it was easy to perceive that the mind, which informed it, was of the highest capacity both of intellect and imagination.

The figure and carriage of this gentleman would have sufficiently indicated that, at some period of his life, he had borne arms and led the life of a camp – which, indeed, at that day was only to say that he was a nobleman of France – but a long scar on his right brow, a little way above the eye, losing itself among the thick locks of his fine waving hair, and a small round cicatrix in the centre of his cheek, showing where a pistol ball had found entrance, proved that he had been where blows were falling thickest, and that he had not spared his own person in the *melée*.

His dress was very rich, according to the fashion of the day, though perhaps a fastidious eye might have objected that it partook somewhat of the past mode of the Regency, which had just been brought to a conclusion as my tale commences, by the resignation of the witty and licentious Philip of Orleans.

If, however, this fine-looking gentleman was the most prominent, he certainly was not the most interesting person of the company, which consisted, beside himself, of an ecclesiastic of high rank in the French church, a lady, now somewhat advanced in years, but showing the remains of beauty which, in its prime, must have been extraordinary, and of a boy in his fifteenth or sixteenth year.

For notwithstanding the eminent distinction, and high intellect of the elder nobleman, the dignity of the abbé, not unsupported by all which men look for as the outward and visible signs of that dignity, and the grace and beauty of the lady, it was upon the boy alone that the eye of every spectator would have dwelt, from the instant of its first discovering him.

He was tall of his age, and very finely made, of proportions which gave promise of exceeding strength when he should arrive at maturity, but strength uncoupled to any thing of weight or clumsiness. He was unusually free, even at this early period, from that heavy and ungraceful redundance of flesh which not unfrequently is the forerunner of athletic power in boys just bursting into manhood; for he was already as conspicuous for the thinness of his flanks, and the shapely hollow of his back, as for the depth and roundness of his chest, the breadth of his shoulders, and the symmetry of his limbs.

His head was well set on, and his whole bearing was that of one who had learned ease, and grace, and freedom, combined with dignity of carriage, in no school of practice and mannerism, but from the example of those with whom he had been brought up, and by familiar intercourse from his cradle upward with the high-born and gently nurtured of the land.

His long rich chestnut hair fell down in natural masses, undisfigured as yet by the hideous art of the court hair-dresser, on either side his fine broad forehead, and curled, untortured by the crisping-irons, over the collar of his velvet jerkin. His eyes were large and very clear, of the deepest shade of blue, with dark lashes, yet full of strong, tranquil light. All his features were regular and shapely, but it was not so much in the beauty of their form, or in the harmony of their coloring that the attractiveness of his aspect consisted, as in the peculiarity and power of his expression.

For a boy of his age, the pensiveness and composure of that expression were indeed almost unnatural, and they combined with a calm firmness and immobility of feature, which promised, I know not what of resolution and tenacity of purpose. It was not gravity, much less sternness, or sadness, that lent so powerful an expression to that young face; nor was there a single line which indicated coldness or hardness of heart, or which would have led to a suspicion that he had been schooled by those hard monitors, suffering and sorrow. No, it was pure thoughtfulness, and that of the highest and most intellectual order, which characterized the boy's expression.

Yet, though it was so thoughtful, there was nothing in the aspect whence to forebode a want of the more masculine qualifications. It was the thoughtfulness of a worker, not of a dreamer – the thoughtfulness which prepares, not unfits a man for action.

If the powers portrayed in that boy's countenance were not deceptive to the last degree, high qualities were within, and a high destiny before him.

But who, from the foreshowing and the bloom of sixteen years, may augur of the finish and the fruit of the three-score and ten, which are the sum of human toil and sorrow?

It was now nearly noon, when the outer drawbridge of the Bastile was lowered and its gate opened, and forth rode, two a-breast, a troop of the mousquetaires, or life-guard, in the bright steel casques and cuirasses, with the musquetoons, from which they derived their name, unslung and ready for action. As they issued into the wider space beyond the bridge, the troopers formed themselves rapidly into a sort of hollow column, the front of which, some eight file deep, occupied the whole width of the street, two files in close order composing each flank, and leaving an open space in the centre completely surrounded by the horsemen.

Into this space, without a moment's delay, there was driven a low black cart, or hurdle as it was technically called, of the rudest construction, drawn by four powerful black horses, a savage-faced official guiding them by the ropes which supplied the place of reins. On this ill-omened vehicle there stood three persons, the prisoner, and two of the armed wardens of the Bastile, the former ironed very heavily, and the latter bristling with offensive weapons.

Immediately in the rear of this car followed another troop of the life-guard, which closed up in the densest and most serried order around and behind the victim of the law, so as to render any attempt at rescue useless.

The person, to secure whose punishment so strong a military force had been produced, and to witness whose execution so vast a multitude was collected, was a tall, noble-looking man of forty or forty-five years, dressed in a rich mourning-habit of the day, but wearing neither hat nor mantle. His dark hair, mixed at intervals with thin lines of silver, was cut short behind, contrary to the usage of the times, and his neck was bare, the collar of his superbly laced shirt being folded broadly back over the cape of his pourpoint.

His face was very pale, and his complexion being naturally of the darkest, the hue of his flesh, from which all the healthful blood had receded, was strangely livid and unnatural in its appearance. Still it did not seem that it was fear which had blanched his cheeks, and stolen all the color from his

compressed lip, for his eye was full of a fierce, scornful light, and all his features were set and steady with an expression of the calmest and most iron resolution.

As the fatal vehicle which bore him made its appearance on the esplanade without the gates of the prison, a deep hum of satisfaction ran through the assembled concourse, rising and deepening gradually into a savage howl like that of a hungry tiger.

Then, then blazed out the haughty spirit, the indomitable pride of the French noble! Then shame, and fear, and death itself, which he was looking even now full in the face, were all forgotten, all absorbed in his overwhelming scorn of the people!

The blood rushed in a torrent to his brow, his eye seemed to lighten forth actual fire, as he raised his right hand aloft, loaded although it was with such a mass of iron, as a Greek Athlete might have shunned to lift, and shook it at the clamorous mob, with a glare of scorn and fury that showed how, had he been at liberty, he would have dealt with the revilers of his fallen state.

"*Sacré canaille!*" he hissed through his hard-set teeth, "back to your gutters and your garbage, or follow, if you can, in silence, and learn, if ye lack not courage to look on, how a man should die."

The reproof told; for, though at the contemptuous tone and fell insult of the first words the clamor of the rabble route waxed wilder, there was so much true dignity in the last sentiment he uttered, and the fate to which he was going was so hideous, that a key was struck in the popular heart, and thenceforth the tone of the spectators was changed altogether.

It was the exultation of the people over the downfall and disgrace of a noble that had found tongue in that savage conclamation – it was the apprehension that his dignity, and the interest of his great name, would win him pardon from the partial justice of the king, that had rendered them pitiless and savage – and now that their own cruel will was about to be gratified, as they beheld how dauntlessly the proud lord went to a death of torture, they were stricken with a sort of secret shame, and followed the dread train in sullen silence.

As the black car rolled onward, the haughty criminal turned his eyes upward, perchance from a sentiment of pride, which rendered it painful to him to meet the gaze, whether pitiful or triumphant, of the Parisian populace, and as he did so, it chanced that his glance fell on the group which I have described, as assembled at the windows of a mansion which he knew well, and in which, in happier days, he had passed gay and pleasant hours. Every eye of that group, with but one exception, was fixed upon himself, as he perceived on the instant; the lady alone having turned her head away, as unable to look upon one in such a strait, whom she had known under circumstances so widely different. There was nothing, however, in the gaze of all these earnest eyes that seemed to embarrass, much less to offend the prisoner. Deep interest, earnestness, perhaps horror, was expressed by one and all; but that horror was not, nor in anywise partook of, the abhorrence which appeared to be the leading sentiment of the populace below.

As he encountered their gaze, therefore, he drew himself up to his full height, and laying his right hand upon his heart bowed low and gracefully to the windows at which his friends of past days were assembled.

The boy turned his eye quickly toward his father as if to note what return he should make to that strange salutation. If it were so, he did not remain in doubt a moment, for that nobleman bowed low and solemnly to his brother peer with a very grave and sad aspect; and even the ecclesiastic inclined his head courteously to the condemned criminal.

The boy perhaps marveled, for a look of bewilderment crossed his ingenuous features; but it passed away in an instant, and following the example of his seniors, he bent his ingenuous brow and sunny locks before the unhappy man, who never was again to interchange a salute with living mortal.

It would seem that the recipient of that last act of courtesy was gratified even beyond the expectation of those who offered it, for a faint flush stole over his livid features, from which the momentary glow of indignation had now entirely faded, and a slight smile played upon his pallid lip,

while a tear – the last he should ever shed – twinkled for an instant on his dark lashes. "True," he muttered to himself approvingly – "the nobles are true ever to their order!"

The eyes of the mob likewise had been attracted to the group above, by what had passed, and at first it appeared as if they had taken umbrage at the sympathy showed to the criminal by his equals in rank; for there was manifested a little inclination to break out again into a murmured shout, and some angry words were bandied about, reflecting on the pride and party spirit of the proud lords.

But the inclination was checked instantly, before it had time to render itself audible, by a word which was circulated, no one knew whence or by whom, through the crowded ranks – "Hush! hush! it is the good Lord of St. Renan." And therewith every voice was hushed, so fickle is the fancy of a crowd, although it is very certain that four fifths of those present knew not, nor had ever heard the name of St. Renan, nor had the slightest suspicion what claims he who bore it, had either on their respect or forbearance.

The death-train passed on its way, however, unmolested by any further show of temper on the part of the crowd, and the crowd itself following the progress of the hurdle to the place of execution, was soon out of sight of the windows occupied by the family of the Count de St. Renan.

"Alas! unhappy Kerguelen!" exclaimed the count, with a deep and painful sigh, as the fearful procession was lost to sight in the distance. "He knows not yet half the bitterness of that which he has to undergo."

The boy looked up into his father's face with an inquiring glance, which he answered at once, still in the same subdued and solemn voice which he had used from the first.

"By the arrangement of his hair and dress I can see that he imagines he is to die as a nobleman, by the axe. May Heaven support him when he sees the disgraceful wheel."

"You seem to pity the wretch, Louis," cried the lady, who had not hitherto spoken, nor even looked toward the criminal as he was passing by the windows – "and yet he was assuredly a most atrocious criminal. A cool, deliberate, cold-blooded poisoner! Out upon it! out upon it! The wheel is fifty times too good for him!"

"He was all that you say, Marie," replied her husband gravely; "and yet I do pity him with all my heart, and grieve for him. I knew him well, though we have not met for many years, when we were both young, and there was no braver, nobler, better man within the limits of fair France. I know, too, how he loved that woman, how he trusted that man – and then to be so betrayed! It seems to me but yesterday that he led her to the altar, all tears of happiness, and soft maiden blushes. Poor Kerguelen! He was sorely tried."

"But still, my son, he was found wanting. Had he submitted him as a Christian to the punishment the good God laid upon him – "

"The world would have pronounced him a spiritless, dishonored slave, father," said the count, answering the ecclesiastic's speech before it was yet finished, "and gentlemen would have refused him the hand of fellowship."

"Was he justified then, my father?" asked the boy eagerly, who had been listening with eager attention to every word that had yet been spoken. "Do you think, then, that he was in the right; that he could not do otherwise than to slay her? I can understand that he was bound to kill the man who had basely wronged his honor – but a woman! – a woman whom he had once loved too! – that seems to me most horrible; and the mode, by a slow poison! living with her while it took effect! eating at the same board with her! sleeping by her side! that seems even more than horrible, it was cowardly!"

"God forbid, my son," replied the elder nobleman, "that I should say any man was justified who had murdered another in cold blood; especially, as you have said, a woman, and by a method so terrible as poison. I only mean exactly what I said, that he was tried very fearfully, and that under such trial the best and wisest of us here below cannot say how he would act himself. Moreover, it would seem that mistaken as he was perhaps in the course which he seems to have imagined that honor demanded at his hands, he was much mistaken in the mode which he took of accomplishing

his scheme of vengeance. It was made very evident upon his trial that he did nothing, even to that wretched traitress, in rage or revenge, but all as he thought in honor. He chose a drug which consumed her by a mild and gradual decay, without suffering or spasm; he gave her time for repentance, nay, it is clearly proved that he convinced her of her sin, reconciled her to the part he had taken in her death, and exchanged forgiveness with her before she passed away. I do not think myself that to commit a crime himself can clear one from dishonor cast upon him by another's act, but at the same time I cannot look upon Kerguelen's guilt as of that brutal and felonious nature which calls for such a punishment as his – to be broken alive on the wheel, like a hired stabber – much less can I assent to the stigma which is attached to him on all sides, while that base, low-lived, treacherous, cogging miscreant, who fell too honorably by his honorable sword, meets pity – God defend us from such justice and sympathy! – and is entombed with tears and honors, while the avenger is crushed, living, out of the very shape of humanity by the hands of the common hangman."

The churchman's lips moved for a moment, as if he were about to speak in reply to the false doctrines which he heard enunciated by that upright and honorable man, and good father, but, ere he spoke, he reflected that those doctrines were held at that time, throughout Christian Europe, unquestioned, and confirmed by prejudice and pride beyond all the power of argument or of religion to set them aside, or invalidate them. The law of chivalry, sterner and more inflexible than that Mosaic code requiring an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, which demanded a human life as the sacrifice for every rash word, for every wrongful action, was the law paramount of every civilized land in that day, and in France perhaps most of all lands, as standing foremost in what was then deemed civilization. And the abbé well knew that discussion of this point would only tend to bring out the opinions of the Count de St. Renan, in favor of the sanguinary code of honor, more decidedly, and consequently to confirm the mind of the young man more effectually in what he believed himself to be a fatal error.

The young man, who was evidently very deeply interested in the matter of the conversation, had devoured every word of his father, as if he had been listening to the oracles of a God; and, when he ceased, after a pause of some seconds, during which he was pondering very deeply on that which he had heard, he raised his intelligent face and said in an earnest voice.

"I see, my father, all that you have alleged in palliation of the count's crime, and I fully understand you – though I still think it the most terrible thing I ever have heard tell of. But I do not perfectly comprehend wherefore you ransack our language of all its deepest terms of contempt which to heap upon the head of the Chevalier de la Rochederrien? He was the count's sworn friend, she was the count's wedded wife; they both were forsworn and false, and both betrayed him. But in what was the chevalier's fault the greater or the viler?"

Those were strange days, in which such a subject could have been discussed between two wise and virtuous parents and a son, whom it was their chiefest aim in life to bring up to be a good and honorable man – that son, too, barely more than a boy in years and understanding. But the morality of those times was coarser and harder, and, if there was no more real vice, there was far less superficial delicacy in the manners of society, and the relations between men and women, than there is nowadays.

Perhaps the true course lies midway; for certainly if there was much coarseness then, there is much cant and much squeamishness now, which could be excellently well dispensed with.

Beside this, boys were brought into the great world much earlier at that period, and were made men of at an age when they would have been learning Greek and Latin, had their birth been postponed by a single century.

Then, at fifteen, they held commissions, and carried colors in the battle's front, and were initiated into all the license of the court, the camp, and the forum.

So it came that the discussion of a subject such as that which I have described, was very naturally introduced even between parents and a beloved and only son by the circumstances of the day. Morals, as regards the matrimonial contract, and the intercourse between the sexes, have at all times been

lower and far less rigid among the French, than in nations of northern origin; and never at any period of the world was the morality of any country, in this respect, at so low an ebb as was France under the reign of the Fifteenth Louis.

The Count de St. Renan replied, therefore, to his son with as little restraint as if he had been his equal in age, and equally acquainted with the customs and vices of the world, although intrigue and crime were the topics of which he had to treat.

"It is quite true, Raoul," replied the count, "that so far as the unhappy Lord of Kerguelen was concerned, the guilt of the Chevalier de la Rochederrien was, as you say, no deeper, perhaps less deep than that of the miserable lady. He was, indeed, bound to Kerguelen by every tie of friendship and honor; he had been aided by his purse, backed by his sword, nay, I have heard and believe, that he owed his life to him. Yet for all that he seduced his wife; and to make it worse, if worse it could be, Kerguelen had married her from the strongest affection, and till the chevalier brought misery, and dishonor, and death upon them, there was no wedded couple in all France so virtuous or so happy."

"Indeed, sir!" replied Raoul, in tones of great emotion, staring with his large, dark eyes as if some strange sight had presented itself to him on a sudden.

"I know well, Raoul, and if you have not heard it yet, you will soon do so, when you begin to mingle with men, that there are those in society, *those* whom the world regards, moreover, as honorable men, who affect to say that he who loves a woman, whether lawfully or sinfully, is at once absolved from all considerations except how he most easily may win – or in other words – ruin her; and consequently such men would speak slightly of the chevalier's conduct toward his friend, Kerguelen, and affect to regard it as a matter of course, and a mere affair of gallantry! But I trust you will remember this, my son, that there is nothing *gallant*, nor can be, in lying, or deceit, or treachery of any kind. And further, that to look with eyes of passion on the wife of a friend, is in itself both a crime, and an act of deliberate dishonor."

"I should not have supposed, sir," replied the boy, blushing very deeply, partly it might be from the nature of the subject under discussion, and partly from the strength of his emotions, "that any cavalier could have regarded it otherwise. It seems to me that to betray a friend's honor is a far blacker thing than to betray his life – and surely no man with one pretension to honor, would attempt to justify that."

"I am happy to see, Raoul, that you think so correctly on this point. Hold to your creed, my dear boy, for there are who shall try ere long to shake it. But be sure that is the creed of honor. But, although I think La Rochederrien disgraced himself even in this, it was not for this only that I termed him, as I deem him, the very vilest and most infamous of mankind. For when he had led that poor lady into sin; when she had surrendered herself up wholly to his honor; when she had placed the greatest trust – although a guilty trust, I admit – in his faith and integrity that one human being can place in another, the base dog betrayed her. He boasted of her weakness, of Kerguelen's dishonor, of his own infamy."

"And did not they to whom he boasted of it," exclaimed the noble boy, his face flushing fiery red with excitement and indignation, "spurn him at once from their presence, as a thing unworthy and beyond the pale of law."

"No, Raoul, they laughed at him, applauded his gallant success, and jeered at the Lord of Kerguelen."

"Great heaven! and these were gentlemen!"

"They were called such, at least; gentlemen by name and descent they were assuredly, but as surely not right gentlemen at heart. Many of them, however, in cooler moments, spoke of the traitor and the braggart with the contempt and disgust he merited. Some friend of Kerguelen's heard what had passed, and deemed it his duty to inform him. The most unhappy husband called the seducer to the field, wounded him mortally, and – to increase yet more his infamy – even in the agony of death the slave confessed the whole, and craved forgiveness like a dog. Confessed the *woman's crime*– you

mark me, Raoul! – had he died mute, or died even with a falsehood in his mouth, as I think he was bound to do in such extremity, affirming her innocence with his last breath, he had saved her, and perhaps spared her wretched lord the misery of knowing certainly the depth of his dishonor."

The boy pondered for a moment or two without making any answer; and although he was evidently not altogether satisfied, probably would not have again spoken, had not his father, who read what was passing in his mind, asked him what it was that he desired to know further.

Raoul smiled at perceiving how completely his father understood him, and then said at once, without pause or hesitation —

"I understand you to say, sir, that you thought the wretched man of whom we spoke was bound, under the extremity in which he stood, to die with a falsehood in his mouth. Can a gentleman ever be justified in saying the thing that is not? Much more can it be his bounden duty to do so?"

"Unquestionably, as a rule of general conduct, he cannot. Truth is the soul of honor; and without truth, honor cannot exist. But this is a most intricate and tangled question. It never can arise without presupposing the commission of one guilty act – one act which no good or truly moral man would commit at all. It is, therefore, scarcely worth our while to examine it. But I do say, on my deliberate and grave opinion, that if a woman, previously innocent and pure, have sacrificed her honor to a man, that man is bound to sacrifice every thing, his life without a question, and I think his truth also, in order to preserve her character, so far as he can, scathless. But we will speak no more of this. It is an odious subject, and one of which, I trust, you, Raoul, will never have the sad occasion to consider."

"Oh! never, father, never! I," cried the ingenuous boy, "I must first lose my senses, and become a madman."

"All men are madmen, Raoul," said the church-man, who stood in the relation of maternal uncle to the youth, "who suffer their passions to have the mastery of them. You must learn, therefore, to be their tyrant, for if you be not, be well assured that they will be yours – and merciless tyrants they are to the wretches who become their subjects."

"I will remember what you say, sir," answered the boy, "and, indeed, I am not like to forget it, for, altogether, this is the saddest day I ever have passed; and this is the most horrible and appalling story that I ever have heard told. It was but just that the Lord of Kerguelen should die, for he did a murder; and since the law punishes that in a peasant, it must do so likewise with a noble. But to break him upon the wheel! – it is atrocious! I should have thought all the nobles of the land would have applied to the king to spare him that horror."

"Many of them did apply, Raoul; but the king, or his ministers in his name, made answer, that during the Regency the Count Horn was broken on the wheel for murder, and therefore that to behead the Lord of Kerguelen for the same offence, would be to admit that the Count was wrongfully condemned."

"Out on it! out on it! what sophistry. Count Horn murdered a banker, like a common thief, for his gold, and this unhappy lord hath done the deed for which he must suffer in a mistaken sense of honor, and with all tenderness compatible with such a deed. There is nothing similar or parallel in the two cases; and if there were, what signifies it now to Count Horn, whether he were condemned rightfully or no; are these men heathen, that they would offer a victim to the offended manes of the dead? But is there no hope, my father, that his sentence may be commuted?"

"None whatsoever. Let us trust, therefore, that he has died penitent, and that his sufferings are already over; and let us pray, ere we lay us down to sleep, that his sins may be forgiven to him, and that his soul may have rest."

"Amen!" replied the boy, solemnly, at the same moment that the ecclesiastic repeated the same word, though he did so, as it would seem, less from the heart, and more as a matter of course.

Nothing further was said on that subject, and in truth the conversation ceased altogether. A gloom was cast over the spirits of all present, both by the imagination of the horrors which were in progress at that very moment, and by the recollection of the preceding enormities of which this

was but the consummation; but the young Viscount Raoul was so completely engrossed by the deep thoughts which that conversation had awakened in his mind, that his father, who was a very close observer, and correct judge of human nature, almost regretted that he had spoken, and determined, if possible, to divert him from the gloomy revery into which he had fallen.

"Viscount," said he, after a silence which had endured now for many minutes, "when did you last wait upon Mademoiselle Melanie d'Argenson?"

Raoul's eyes, brightened at the name, and again the bright blush, which I noticed before, crossed his ingenuous features; but this time it was pleasure, not embarrassment, which colored his young face so vividly.

"I called yesterday, sir;" he answered, "but she was abroad with the countess, her mother. In truth, I have not seen her since Friday last."

"Why that is an age, Raoul! are you not dying to see her again by this time. At your age, I was far more gallant."

"With your permission, sir, I will go now and make my compliments to her."

"Not only my permission, Raoul, but my advice to make your best haste thither. If you go straight-ways, you will be sure to find her at home, for the ladies are sure not to have ventured abroad with all this uproar in the streets. Take Martin, the equerry, with you, and three of the grooms. What will you ride? The new Barb I bought for you last week? Yes! as well him as any; and, hark you, boy, tell them to send Martin to me first, I will speak to him while you are beautifying yourself to please the *beaux yeux* of Mademoiselle Melanie."

"I am not sure that you are doing wisely, Louis," said the lady, as her son left the saloon, her eye following him wistfully, "in bringing Raoul up as you are doing."

"Nor I, Marie," replied her husband, gravely. "We poor, blind mortals cannot be sure of any thing, least of all of any thing the ends of which are incalculably distant. But in what particular do you doubt the wisdom of my method?"

"In talking to him as you do, as though he were a man already; in opening his eyes so widely to the sins and vices of the world; in discussing questions with him such as those you spoke of with him but now. He is a mere boy, you will remember, to hear tell of such things."

"Boys hear of such things early enough, I assure you – far earlier than you ladies would deem possible. For the rest, he must hear of them one day, and I think it quite as well that he should hear of them, since hear he must, with the comments of an old man, and that old man his best friend, than find them out by the teachings, and judge of them according to the light views of his young and excitable associates. He who is forewarned is fore-weaponed. I was kept pure, as it is termed – or in other words, kept ignorant of myself and of the world I was destined to live in, until one fine day I was cut loose from the apron-strings of my lady mother, and the tether of my abbé tutor, and launched head-foremost into that vortex of temptation and iniquity, the world of Paris, like a ship without a chart or a compass. A precious race I ran in consequence, for a time; and if I had not been so fortunate as to meet you, Marie, whose bright eyes brought me out, like a blessed beacon, safe from that perilous ocean, I know not but I should have suffered shipwreck, both in fortune, which is a trifle, and in character, which is every thing. No, no; if that is all in which you doubt, your fears are causeless."

"But that is not all. In this you may be right – I know not; at all events you are a fitter judge than I. But are you wise in encouraging so very strongly his fancy for Melanie d'Argenson?"

"I'faith, it is something more than a fancy, I think; the boy loves her."

"I see that, Louis, clearly; and you encourage it."

"And wherefore should I not. She is a good girl – as good as she is beautiful."

"She is an angel."

"And her mother, Marie, was your most intimate, your bosom friend."

"And now a saint in Heaven!"

"Well, what more; she is as noble as a De Rohan, or a Montmorency. She is an heiress with superb estates adjoining our own lands of St. Renan. She is, like our Raoul, an only child. And what is the most of all, I think, although it is not the mode in this dear France of ours to attach much weight to that, it is no made-up match, no cradle plighting between babes, to be made good, perhaps, by the breaking of hearts, but a genuine, natural, mutual affection between two young, sincere, innocent, artless persons – and a splendid couple they will make. What can you see to alarm you in that prospect?"

"Her father."

"The Sieur d'Argenson! Well, I confess, he is not a very charming person; but we all have our own faults or weaknesses; and, after all, it is not he whom Raoul is about to marry."

"I doubt his good faith, very sorely."

"I should doubt it too, Marie, did I see any cause which should lead him to break it. But the match is in all respects more desirable for him than it is for us. For though Mademoiselle d'Argenson is noble, rich, and handsome, the Viscount de Douarnez might be well justified in looking for a wife far higher than the daughter of a simple Sieur of Bretagne. Beside, although the children loved before any one spoke of it – before any one saw it, indeed, save I – it was d'Argenson himself who broke the subject. What, then, should induce him to play false?"

"I do not know, yet I doubt – I fear him."

"But that, Marie, is unworthy of your character, of your mind."

"Louis, she is *too* beautiful."

"I do not think Raoul will find fault with her on that score."

"Nor would one greater than Raoul."

"Whom do you mean?" cried the count, now for the first time startled.

"I have seen eyes fixed upon her in deadly admiration, which never admire but they pollute the object of their admiration."

"The king's, Marie?"

"The king's."

"And then – ?"

"And then I have heard it whispered that the Baron de Beaulieu has asked her hand of the Sieur d'Argenson."

"The Baron de Beaulieu! and who the devil is the Baron de Beaulieu, that the Sieur d'Argenson should doubt for the nine hundredth part of a minute between him and the Viscount de Douarnez for the husband of his daughter?"

"The Baron de Beaulieu, count, is the very particular friend, the right hand man, and most private minister of his most Christian Majesty King Louis the Fifteenth!"

"Ha! is it possible? Do you mean that? – "

"I mean even *that*. If, by that, you mean all that is most infamous and loathsome on the part of Beaulieu, all that is most licentious on the part of the king. I believe – nay, I am well nigh sure, that there is such a scheme of villany on foot against that sweet, unhappy child; and therefore would I pause ere I urged too far my child's love toward her, lest it prove most unhappy and disastrous."

"And do you think d'Argenson capable – " exclaimed her husband —

"Of any thing," she answered, interrupting him, "of any thing that may serve his avarice or his ambition."

"Ah! it may be so. I will look to it, Marie; I will look to it narrowly. But I fear that if it be as you fancy, it is too late already – that our boy's heart is devoted to her entirely – that any break now, in one word, would be a heart-break."

"He loves her very dearly, beyond doubt," replied the lady; "and she deserves it all, and is, I think, very fond of him likewise."

"And can you suppose for a moment that she will lend herself to such a scheme of infamy?"

"Never. She would die sooner."

"I do not apprehend, then, that there will be so much difficulty as you seem to fear. This business which brought all of us Bretons up to Paris, as claimants of justice for our province, or counters of the king's grace, as they phrase it, is finished happily; and there is nothing to detain any of us in this great wilderness of stone and mortar any longer. D'Argenson told me yesterday that he should set out homeward on Wednesday next; and it is but hurrying our own preparations a little to travel with them in one party. I will see him this evening and arrange it."

"Have you ever spoken with him concerning the contract, Louis?"

"Never, directly, or in the form of a solemn proposal. But we have spoken oftentimes of the evident attachment of the children, and he has ever expressed himself gratified, and seemed to regard it as a matter of course. But hush, here comes the boy; leave us awhile and I will speak with him."

Almost before his words were ended the door was thrown open, and young Raoul entered, splendidly dressed, with his rapier at his side, and his plumed hat in his hand, as likely a youth to win a fair maid's heart as ever wore the weapon of a gentleman.

"Martin is absent, sir. He went out soon after breakfast, they tell me, to look after a pair of fine English carriage horses for the countess my mother, and has not yet returned. I ordered old Jean François to attend me with the four other grooms."

"Very well, Raoul. But look you, your head is young, and your blood hot. You will meet, it is very like, all this canaille returning from the slaughter of poor Kerguelen. Now mark me, boy, there must be no vaporing on your part, or interfering with the populace; and even if they should, as very probably may, be insolent, and utter outcries and abuse against the nobility, even bear with them. On no account strike any person, nor let your servants do so, nor encroach upon their order, unless, indeed, they should so far forget themselves as to throw stones, or to strike the first."

"And then, my father?"

"Oh, then, Raoul, you are at liberty to let your good sword feel the fresh air, and to give your horse a taste of those fine spurs you wear. But even in that case, I should advise you to use your edge rather than your point. There is not much harm done in wiping a saucy burgher across the face to mend his manners, but to pink him through the body makes it an awkward matter. And I need not tell you by no means to fire, unless you should be so beset and maltreated that you cannot otherwise extricate yourself – yet you must have your pistols loaded. In these times it is necessary always to be provided against all things. I do not, however, tell you these things now because you are likely to be attacked but such events are always possible, and one cannot provide against such too early."

"I will observe what you say, my father. Have I your permission now to depart?"

"Not yet, Raoul, I would speak with you first a few words. This Mademoiselle Melanie is very pretty, is she not?"

"She is the most beautiful lady I have ever seen," replied the youth, not without some embarrassment.

"And as amiable and gentle as she is beautiful?"

"Oh, yes, indeed, sir. She is all gentleness and sweetness, yet is full of mirth, too, and graceful merriment."

"In one word, then, she seems to you a very sweet and lovely creature."

"Doubtless she does, my father."

"And I beseech you tell me, viscount, in what light do you appear in the eyes of this very admirable young lady?"

"Oh, sir!" replied the youth, now very much embarrassed, and blushing actually from shame.

"Nay, Raoul, I did not ask the question lightly, I assure you, or in the least degree as a jest. It becomes very important that I should know on what terms you and this fair lady stand together. You have been visiting her now almost daily, I think, during these three months last past. Do you conceive that you are very disagreeable to her?"

"Oh! I hope not, sir. It would grieve me much if I thought so."

"Well, I am to understand, then, that you think she is not blind to your merits, sir."

"I am not aware, my dear father, that I have any merits which she should be called to observe."

"Oh, yes, viscount! That is an excess of modesty which touches a little, I am afraid, on hypocrisy. You are not altogether without merits. You are young, not ill-looking, nobly born, and will, in God's good time, be rich. Then you can ride well, and dance gracefully, and are not generally ill-educated or unpolished. It is quite as necessary, my dear son, that a young man should not undervalue himself, as that he should not think of his deserts too highly. Now that you have some merits is certain – for the rest I desire frankness of you just now, and beg that you will speak out plainly. I think you love this young girl. Is it not so, Raoul?"

"I do love, sir, very dearly; with my whole heart and spirit."

"And do you feel sure that this is not a mere transient liking – that it will last, Raoul?"

"So long as life lasts in my heart, so long will my love for her last, my father."

"And you would wish to marry her?"

"Beyond all things in this world, my dear father."

"And do you think that, were her tastes and views on the subject consulted, she would say likewise?"

"I hope she would, sir. But I have never asked her."

"And her father, is he gracious when you meet him?"

"Most gracious, sir, and most kind. Indeed, he distinguishes me above all the other young gentlemen who visit there."

"You would not then despair of obtaining his consent?"

"By no means, my father, if you would be so kind as to ask it."

"And you desire that I should do so?"

"You will make me the happiest man in all France, if you will."

"Then go your way, sir, and make the best you can of it with the young lady. I will speak myself with the Sieur d'Argenson to-night; and I do not despair any more than you do, Raoul. But look you, boy, you do not fancy, I hope, that you are going to church with your lady-love to-morrow or the next day. Two or three years hence, at the earliest, will be all in very good time. You must serve a campaign or two first, in order to show that you know how to use your sword."

"In all things, my dear father, I shall endeavor to fulfill your wishes, knowing them to be as kindly as they are wise and prudent. I owe you gratitude for every hour since I was born, but for none so much as for this, for indeed you are going to make me the happiest of men."

"Away with you, then, Sir Happiness! Betake yourself on the wings of love to your bright lady, and mind the advice of your favorite Horace, to pluck the pleasures of the passing hour, mindful how short is the sum of mortal life."

The young man embraced his father gayly, and left the room with a quick step and a joyous heart; and the jingling of his spurs, and the quick, merry clash of his scabbard on the marble staircase, told how joyously he descended its steps.

A moment afterward his father heard the clear, sonorous tones of his fine voice calling to his attendants, and yet a few seconds later the lively clatter of his horse's hoofs on the resounding pavement.

"Alas! for the happy days of youth, which are so quickly flown," exclaimed the father, as he participated the hopeful and exulting mood of his noble boy. "And, alas! for the promise of mortal happiness, which is so oft deceitful and a traitress." He paused for a few moments, and seemed to ponder, and then added with a confident and proud expression, "But I see not why one should forebode aught but success and happiness to this noble boy of mine. Thus far, every thing has worked toward the end as I would wish it. They have fallen in love naturally and of their own accord, and d'Argenson, whether he like it or no, cannot help himself. He must needs accede, proudly and joyfully, to my

proposal. He knows his estates to be in my power far too deeply to resist. Nay, more, though he be somewhat selfish, and ambitious, and avaricious, I know nothing of him that should justify me in believing that he would sell his daughter's honor, even to a king, for wealth or title! My good wife is all too doubtful and suspicious. But, hark! here comes the mob, returning from that unfortunate man's execution. I wonder how he bore it."

And with the words he moved toward the window, and throwing it open, stepped out upon the spacious balcony. Here he learned speedily from the conversation of the passing crowd, that, although dreadfully shocked and startled by the first intimation of the death he was to undergo, which he received from the sight of the fatal wheel, the Lord of Kerguelen had died as becomes a proud, brave man, reconciled to the church, forgiving his enemies, without a groan or a murmur, under the protracted agonies of that most horrible of deaths, the breaking on the wheel.

Meanwhile the day passed onward, and when evening came, and the last and most social meal of the day was laid on the domestic board, young Raoul had returned from his visit to the lady of his love, full of high hopes and happy anticipations. Afterward, according to his promise, the Count de St. Renan went forth and held debate until a late hour of the night with the Sieur d'Argenson. Raoul had not retired when he came home, too restless in his youthful ardor even to think of sleep. His father brought good tidings, the father of the lady had consented, and on their arrival in Britanny the marriage contract was to be signed in form.

That was to Raoul an eventful day; and never did he forget it, or the teachings he drew from it. That day was his fate.

[To be continued.

THE LAND OF THE WEST

BY THOMAS BUCHANAN READ

Thou land whose deep forest was wide as the sea,
And heaved its broad ocean of green to the day,
Or, waked by the tempest, in terrible glee
Flung up from its billows the leaves like a spray;
The swift birds of passage still spread their fleets there,
Where sails the wild vulture, the pirate of air.

Thou land whose dark streams, like a hurrying horde
Of wilderness steeds without rider or rein,
Swept down, owning Nature alone for their lord,
Their foam flowing free on the air like a mane: —
Oh grand were thy waters which spurned as they ran
The curb of the rock and the fetters of man!

Thou land whose bright blossoms, like shells of the sea,
Of numberless shapes and of many a shade,
Begemmed thy ravines where the hidden springs be,
And crowned the black hair of the dark forest maid: —
Those flowers still bloom in the depth of the wild
To bind the white brow of the pioneer's child.

Thou land whose last hamlets were circled with maize,
And lay like a dream in the silence profound,
While murmuring its song through the dark woodland ways
The stream swept afar through the lone hunting-ground: —
Now loud anvils ring in that wild forest home
And mill-wheels are dashing the waters to foam.

Thou land where the eagle of Freedom looked down
From his eyried crag through the depths of the shade,
Or mounted at morn where no daylight can drown
The stars on their broad field of azure arrayed: —
Still, still to thy banner that eagle is true,
Encircled with stars on a heaven of blue!

GOING TO HEAVEN

BY T. S. ARTHUR

Whatever our gifts may be, the love of imparting them for the good of others brings Heaven into the soul. Mrs. Child.

An old man, with a peaceful countenance, sat in a company of twelve persons. They were conversing, but he was silent. The theme upon which they were discoursing was Heaven; and each one who spoke did so with animation.

"Heaven is a place of rest," said one – "rest and peace. Oh! what sweet words! rest and peace. Here, all is labor and disquietude. There we shall have rest and peace."

"And freedom from pain," said another, whose pale cheeks and sunken eyes told many a tale of bodily suffering. "No more pain; no more sickness – the aching head will be at rest – the weary limbs find everlasting repose."

"Sorrow and sighing shall forever flee away," spoke up a third one of the company. "No more grief, no more anguish of spirit. Happy, happy change!"

"There," added a fourth, "the wounded spirit that none can bear is healed. The reed long bruised and bent by the tempests of life, finds a smiling sky, and a warm, refreshing, and healing sunshine. Oh! how my soul pants to escape from this world, and, like a bird fleeing to the mountains, get home again from its dreary exile."

"My heart expands," said another, "whenever I think of Heaven; and I long for the wings of a dove, that I may rise at once from this low, ignorant, groveling state, and bathe my whole soul in the sunlight of eternal felicity. What joy it will be to cast off this cumbersome clay; to leave this poor body behind, and spread a free wing upon the heavenly atmosphere. I shall hail with delight the happy moment which sets me free."

Thus, one after another spoke, and each one regarded Heaven as a state of happiness into which he was to come after death; but the old man still sat silent, and his eyes were bent thoughtfully upon the floor. Presently one said,

"Our aged friend says nothing. Has he no hope of Heaven? Does he not rejoice with us in the happy prospect of getting there when the silver chord shall be loosened, and the golden bowl broken at the fountain?"

The old man, thus addressed, looked around upon his companions. His face remained serene, and his eye had a heavenly expression.

"Have you not a blessed hope of Heaven? Does not your heart grow warm with sweet anticipations?" continued the last speaker.

"I never think of going to Heaven," the old man said, in a mild, quiet tone.

"Never think of going to Heaven!" exclaimed one of the most ardent of the company, his voice warming with indignation. "Are you a heathen?"

"I am one who is patiently striving to fill my allotted place in life," replied the old man, as calmly as before.

"And have you no hopes beyond the grave?" asked the last speaker.

"If I live right here, all will be right there." The old man pointed upward. "I have no anxieties about the future – no impatience – no ardent longings to pass away and be at rest, as some of you have said. I already enjoy as much of Heaven as I am prepared to enjoy, and this is all that I can expect throughout eternity. You all, my friends, seem to think that men come into Heaven when they die. You look ahead to death with pleasure, because then you think you will enter the happy state you

anticipate – or rather *place*; for it is clear you regard Heaven as a place full of delights, prepared for those who may be fitted to become inhabitants thereof. But in this you are mistaken. If you do not enter Heaven before you die, you will never do so afterward. If Heaven be not formed within you, you will never find it out of you – you will never *come into it*."

These remarks offended the company, and they spoke harshly to the old man, who made no reply, but arose and retired, with a sorrowful expression on his face. He went forth and resumed his daily occupations, and pursued them diligently. Those who had been assembled with him, also went forth – one to his farm, another to his merchandize, each one forgetting all he had thought about Heaven and its felicities, and only anxious to serve natural life and get gain. Heaven was above the world to them, and, therefore, while in the world, they could only act upon the principle that governed the world; and prepare for Heaven by pious acts on the Sabbath. There was no other way to do, they believed – to attempt to bring religion down into life would only, in their view, desecrate it, and expose it to ridicule and contempt.

The old man, to whom allusion has been made, kept a store for the sale of various useful articles; those of the pious company who needed these articles as commodities of trade, or for their own use, bought of him, because they believed that he would sell them only what was of good quality. One of the most ardent of these came into the old man's store one day, holding a small package in his hand; his eye was restless, his lip compressed, and he seemed struggling to keep down a feeling of excitement.

"Look at that," he said, speaking with some sternness, as he threw the package on the old man's counter.

The package was taken up, opened, and examined.

"Well?" said the old man, after he had made the examination, looking up with a steady eye and a calm expression of countenance.

"Well? Don't you see what is the matter?"

"I see that this article is a damaged one," was replied.

"And yet you sold it to me for good." The tone in which this was said implied a belief that there had been an intention of wrong.

A flush warmed the pale cheek of the old man at this remark. He examined the sample before him more carefully, and then opened a barrel of the same commodity and compared its contents with the sample. They agreed. The sample from which he had bought and by which he had sold was next examined – this was in good condition and of the best quality.

"Are you satisfied?" asked the visitor with an air of triumph.

"Of what?" the old man asked.

"That you sold me a bad article for a good one."

"Intentionally?"

"You are the best judge. That lies with God and your own conscience."

"Be kind enough to return every barrel you purchased of me, and get your money."

There was a rebuke in the way this was said, which was keenly felt. An effort was made to soften the aspersion tacitly cast upon the old man's integrity, but it was received without notice.

In due time the damaged article was brought back, and the money which had been paid for it returned.

"You will not lose, I hope?" said the merchant, with affected sympathy.

"I shall lose what I paid for the article."

"Why not return it, as I have done?"

"The man from whom *I* purchased is neither honest nor responsible, as I have recently learned. He left the city last week in no very creditable manner, and no one expects to see him back again."

"That is hard; but I really don't think you ought to lose."

"The article is not merchantable. Loss is, therefore, inevitable."

"You can, of course, sell at some price."

"Would it be right to sell, at any price, an article known to be useless – nay, worse than useless, positively injurious to any one who might use it?"

"If any one should see proper to buy from you the whole lot, knowing that it was injured, you would certainly sell. For instance, if I were to offer you two cents a pound for what I bought from you at six cents, would you not take me at my offer?"

"Will you buy at that price?"

"Yes. I will give you two cents."

"What would you do with it?"

"Sell it again. What did you suppose I would do with it? Throw it in the street?"

"To whom would you sell?"

"I'd find a purchaser."

"At an advance?"

"A trifle."

The inquiries of the old man created a suspicion that he wished to know who was to be the second purchaser, in order that he might go to him and get a better price than was offered. This was the cause of the brief answers given to his questions. He clearly comprehended what was passing in the other's mind, but took no notice of it.

"For what purpose would the individual who purchased from you buy?" he pursued.

"To sell again."

"At a further advance, of course?"

"Certainly."

"And to some one, in all probability, who would be deceived into purchasing a worthless article."

"As likely as not; but with that I have no concern. I sell it for what it is, and ask only what it is worth."

"Is it worth anything?"

"Why – yes – I can't say – no." The first words were uttered with hesitation; the last one with a decided emphasis. "But then it has a market value, as every article has."

"I cannot sell it to you, my friend," said the old man firmly.

"Why not?" I am sure you can't do better."

"I am not willing to become a party in wronging my neighbors. That is the reason. The article has no real value, and it would be wrong for me to take even a farthing per pound for it. You might sell it at an advance, and the purchaser from you at a still further advance, but some one would be cheated in the end, for the article never could be used."

"But the loss would be divided. It isn't right that one man should bear all. In the end it would be distributed amongst a good many, and the loss fall lightly upon each."

The good old man shook his head. "My friend," he said, laying his hand gently upon his arm – "Not very long since I heard you indulging the most ardent anticipations of Heaven. You expected to get there one of these days. Is it by acts of over-reaching your neighbor that you expect to merit Heaven? Will becoming a party to wrong make you more fitted for the company of angels who seek the good of others, and love others more than themselves? I fear you are deceiving yourself. All who come into Heaven love God: and I would ask with one of the apostles, 'If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?' You have much yet to learn, my friend. Of that true religion by which Heaven is formed in man, you have not yet learned the bare rudiments."

There was a calm earnestness in the manner of the old man, and an impressiveness in the tone of his voice, that completely subdued his auditor. He felt rebuked and humbled, and went away more

serious than he had come. But though serious, his mind was not free from anger, his self-love had been too deeply wounded.

After he had gone away, the property about which so much had been said, was taken and destroyed as privately as it could be done. The fact, however, could not be concealed. A friend of a different order from the pious one last introduced, inquired of the old man why he had done this. His answer was as follows:

"No man should live for himself alone. Each one should regard the common good, and act with a view to the common good. If all were to do so, you can easily see that we should have Heaven upon earth, from whence, alas! it has been almost entirely banished. Our various employments are means whereby we can serve others – our own good being a natural consequence. If the merchant sent out his ships to distant parts to obtain the useful commodities of other countries, in order to benefit his fellow citizens, do you not see that he would be far happier when his ships came in laden with rich produce, than if he had sought only gain for himself? And do you not also see that he would obtain for himself equal, if not greater advantages. If the builder had in view the comfort and convenience of his neighbors while erecting a house, instead of regarding only the money he was to receive for his work, he would not only perform that work more faithfully, and add to the common stock of happiness, but would lay up for himself a source of perennial satisfaction. He would not, after receiving the reward of his labor in a just return of this world's goods, lose all interest in the result of that labor; but would, instead, have a feeling of deep interior pleasure whenever he looked at a human habitation erected by his hands, arising from a consciousness that his skill had enabled him to add to the common good. The tillers of the soil, the manufacturers of its products into useful articles, the artisans of every class, the literary and professional man, all would, if moved by a regard for the welfare of the whole social body, not only act more efficiently in their callings, but would derive therefrom a delight now unimagined except by a very few. Believing thus, I could not be so blind as not to see that the only right course for me to pursue was to destroy a worthless and injurious commodity, rather than sell it at any price to one who would, for gain, either himself defraud his neighbor, or aid another in doing it. The article was not only useless, it was worse than useless. How, then, could I, with a clear conscience sell it? No – no, my friend. I am not afraid of poverty; I am not afraid of any worldly ill – but I am afraid of doing wrong to my neighbors; or of putting it in the power of any one else to do wrong. As I have said before, if every man were to look to the good of the whole, instead of turning all his thoughts in upon himself, his own interests would be better served and he would be far happier."

"That is a beautiful theory," remarked the friend, "but never can be realized in actual life. Men are too selfish. They would find no pleasure in contemplating the enjoyments of others, but would, rather, be envious of others' good. The merchant, so little does he care for the common welfare, that unless he receives the gain of his adventures, he will let his goods perish in his ware-house – to distribute them, even to the suffering, would not make him happier. And so with the product of labor in all the various grades of society. Men turn their eyes inward upon the little world of self, instead of outward upon the great social world. Few, if any, understand that they are parts of a whole, and that any disease in any other part of that whole, must affect the whole, and consequently themselves. Were this thoroughly understood, even selfishness would lead men to act less selfishly. We should indeed have Heaven upon earth if your pure theories could be brought out into actual life."

"Heaven will be found nowhere else by man," was replied to this.

"What!" said the friend, in surprise. "Do you mean to say that there is no Heaven for the good who bravely battle with evil in this life? Is all the reward of the righteous to be in this world?"

One of the pious company, at first introduced, came up at this moment, and hearing the last remark, comprehended, to some extent, its meaning. He was one who hoped, from pious acts of prayer, fastings, and attendance upon all the ordinances of the church, to get to Heaven at last. In the ordinary pursuits of life he was eager for gain, and men of the world dealt warily with him – they had reason; for he separated his religious from his business life.

"A most impious doctrine," he said, with indignant warmth. "Heaven upon earth! A man had better give all his passions the range, and freely enjoy the world, if there is to be no hereafter. Pain, and sorrow, and self-denial make a poor kind of Heaven, and these are all the Christian man meets here. Far better to live while we do live, say I, if our Heaven is to be here."

"What makes Heaven, my friend?" calmly asked the old man.

"Happiness. Freedom from care, and pain, and sorrow, and all the ills of this wretched life – to live in the presence of God and sing his praises forever – to make one of the blessed company who, with the four-and-twenty elders forever bow before the throne of God and the Lamb – to have rest, and peace, and unspeakable felicity forever."

"How do you expect to get into Heaven? How do you expect to unlock the golden gates of the New Jerusalem?" pursued the old man.

"By faith," was the prompt reply. "Faith unlocks these gates."

The old man shook his head, and turning to the individual with whom he had first been conversing, remarked —

"You asked me if I meant to say that there was no Heaven for the good who bravely battle with evil in this life? If all the reward of the righteous was to be in this world? God forbid! For then would I be of all men most miserable. What I said was, that Heaven would be *found* no where else but in this world, by man. Heaven must be entered into here, or it never can be entered into when men die."

"You speak in a strange language," said the individual who had joined them, in a sneering tone. "No one can understand what you mean. Certainly I do not."

"I should not think you did," quietly replied the old man. "But I will explain my meaning more fully – perhaps you will be able to comprehend something of what I say. Men talk a great deal about Heaven, but few understand what it means. All admit that in this life they must prepare for Heaven; but nearly all seem to think that this preparation consists in the *doing*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.