

VALENTINE DUVAL:

AN

Autobiography of the Last Century.

EDITED BY

THE AUTHOR OF "MARY POWELL."

Manning



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MY DEAREST BEATRICE,

Many years ago, when I was about your age, in turning over the leaves of Dr. Aikin's "Biographical Dictionary," I happened to read the notice of Valentine Duval. It interested me so much that I thought I should like to read the fragment it mentioned of his autobiography, should I ever have the opportunity; and, to keep it in mind, I wrote the words "Valentine Jameray Duval" in a blank leaf of an old atlas that lay beside me.

Long years afterwards, which is to say last year, in using this atlas I saw this old memorandum, "Valentine Jameray Duval;" and though so long a time had passed that my handwriting had quite altered in the interim, I instantly recollected all about it, and turning to the aforesaid Dictionary, found all my old interest in the subject revive. I sent an abridgment

of the article to you and one of your brothers, and as neither of you seemed inclined to undertake the subject, I resolved to do so myself. My idea was to write a story about Duval; and as I could not go to the British Museum to collect materials, you affectionately did so yourself, day by day, for two or three months, till you had translated for me not only all the biography, but a great many of the letters. Meantime I found, from what you daily sent me, that the plain narrative so little required the aid of foreign ornament, or rather would be so hurt by it, that I thought it due to Duval and to the public merely to fill up blanks, subdivide into chapters, and abridge very little except the correspondence. I hope others will like *Valentiné* as much as you and I do. The little book will remind you in India of our joint labour of love.

Your ever affectionate friend,

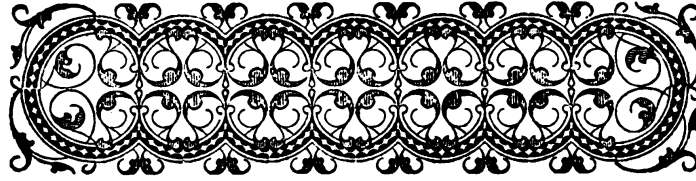
ANNE MANNING.

Reigate Hill, August 22nd, 1860.

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Valentine Duval.

CHAPTER I.

A JEST AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

DURING the long winter evenings of 1709, when the ground was crisp with frost and wolves howled in the woods, a little group of peasant women used to gather, for company's sake, round the hospitable hearth of the Provost of Artonay, a little village in Champagne, where, as they knitted and spun, they beguiled the time by relating stories of ghosts, witches, and fairies.

Doubtless they had something to say of the were-wolf, that horrid bugbear of the French peasantry, which partakes alike of the nature of man and wolf, assuming the form of each at pleasure. Dismal tales are related of this were-wolf prowling round and

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about this and that lone farm-house in the guise of a handsome young man that has lost his way, and requesting a night's lodging, which is readily granted by the unsuspecting inmates; and how they accord him the warmest corner by the fire, and the largest handful of chestnuts; and how he says charming things to Suzanne and Jeannette, till they all disperse to their beds somewhere about midnight, when, having verified their being fast asleep, the were-wolf assumes his horrid form, and eats them all up!

Nay, if the spinsters and knitters contented themselves with the bare recital of facts, and related the true wolf stories of the Pyrenees, picked up of pedlars and smugglers, how whole packs of them, desperate with hunger, trotted along the plains in single file, leaving only the track of one—stopped, listened, snuffed the air, went on again, surrounded lone houses, leaped over walls eight feet high, devoured every living thing, man, woman, child, beast, and fowl, and then silently returned as they came—such narratives could easily be sufficiently heightened and horrified to make night hideous.

But such are the terrors we all enjoy, more or less; and such were the tales that interested the poor women of Artonay as they spun round the provost's fire.

Now, there was a poor, half-starved, ill-clad lad, with large brown eyes and very white teeth, passing

A Jest and its Consequences. 3

in and out of the kitchen on some chance job of rustic work, who saw and heard them thus employed, and whose eyes danced with merry light, while the corners of his mouth gave an involuntary curl, as he thought he would amuse himself with the fears of these credulous dames on their way to their homes.

He must be a funny boy or a naughty boy, according to the temper of his judges. He was about fourteen years old, having been born in the year 1695, of poor parents, and orphaned at the age of ten, when his father, a common labourer, died, leaving a numerous family completely destitute at a time when France was being ravaged by war and famine.

The boy's name was Valentine Jameray Duval. His wretched mother had looked at her famished, half-naked little ones with a bleeding heart; and, bathed in tears, had prayed for their death, as the greatest boon that a merciful Heaven could bestow upon them; instead of which she seems to have died herself.

Under these circumstances Valentine had been accustomed from his earliest infancy to a life of hardship and privation; but this, instead of deadening his naturally good and happy dispositions, tended but to develope that enterprise and self-reliance which distinguished him to the end of his life.

His thirst after knowledge appeared in his very childhood; and, for want of other means of gratify-

ing it, he made a collection of snakes, toads, &c., and amused himself by examining their conformations. The village afforded no one who could direct his researches into natural history, and the answers with which he was cut short were generally such as rendered him less satisfied than before.

One day, happening to see Æsop's Fables, with woodcuts, in the hands of another country boy, he eagerly desired to acquaint himself with them, and, being unable to read, begged his companion to teach him. The boy was seldom in the humour to do so; he therefore applied to other and older lads, who probably were not much of scholars themselves, for he learnt little more than his alphabet.

Meanwhile, a farmer of Artonay employed him to keep his turkeys—an occupation little suited to the lively temperament of the lad, who repaid himself for the drudgery by a thousand frolics, which made him the delight of all the boys in the neighbourhood.

An opportunity of playing a practical joke on the peasant women assembled, for warmth, light, and company, in the provost's kitchen, proved too tempting to him to be resisted.

He repaired to the little churchyard immediately opposite the provost's house, and, choosing several of the most perfect skulls he could find, ranged them in a row along the top of the low churchyard wall facing the road. He then placed within each a little earthen

A Jest and its Consequences. 5

lamp filled with oil, and, having lighted the wicks, had the pleasure of seeing that each skull appeared on fire.

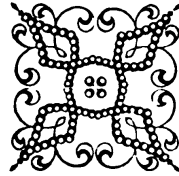
Secure of the effect they would produce, Valentine concealed himself behind the house to await the exit of the women.

Presently the unsuspecting party came forth chattering, and hastening homewards through the cold night air, when, lo! the grisly row of ignited skulls confronted the terrified women, and sent most of them shrieking in various directions, while one or two fainted away.

This rough piece of fun had scarcely ceased to be the talk of the village when Valentine tried another, the consequences of which affected the whole of his future life. He had heard it said that anything scarlet would make turkeys savage; and, to convince himself of the fact, he attached a strip of scarlet cloth to the neck of one of his brood. The turkey became violently enraged, flapped his wings, and pecked himself for some time, and finally took to flight, suffering no one to catch him, till he fell dead on the ground.

For this prank Valentine was discharged from office — a sequence that can excite little surprise; and, having thus proved himself a mischievous and incompetent turkey-captain, he applied in vain throughout the neighbourhood for some other employment. As his relatives were utterly unable to

keep him, the orphan lad found himself cast upon the world at the beginning of one of the severest winters ever known, and compelled to seek work in some new neighbourhood. From this point he tells his own story better than any one can tell it for him.





CHAPTER II.

A HARD WINTER.

The soul of man dies in him, loathing life,
And black with more than melancholy views.
The cattle droop, and o'er the furrowed land,
Fresh from the plough, the dun, discoloured flocks,
Untended spreading, crop the wholesome root.
Along the woods, along the moorish fens,
Sighs the sad genius of the coming storm;
And up amidst the loose, disjointed cliffs,
And fractured mountains wild, the brawling brook
And cave, presageful, send a hollow moan,
Resounding long in listening fancy's ear.

THOMSON—*Winter.*

“**A**FTER quitting the farmer,” says he, quaintly enough, “under whose roof I had begun to turn my powers of reflection to account, I was overtaken by the severe winter of 1709, which was accompanied by famine and all its attendant calamities; and, as if these were not sufficient of themselves, I was attacked by yet another, which, indeed,

taught me what misery could be in its most frightful and revolting form.

“I have felt strongly tempted to pass over this passage of my life, being aware how difficult it is to treat certain subjects without exciting disgust and repulsion. But, after having reflected a little on this scruple of delicacy, I have decided that I ought not to give way to it, since it would hinder me from revealing an instance how the Almighty God can deliver from the greatest perils; and pluck, so to speak, from the very arms of death, those who put their trust in Him.

“To give a just idea of the winter in question, I will here subjoin the admirable description given of it by a Latin poet:—

“ *Festa dies aderat prisco sanctissima ritu,
 Quæ Christi cunas et inops præsepe quotannis
 Nobilitat Regum donis
 Sarmaticis Aquilo nobis invectus ab oris,
 Sithonias secum glacies et acuta Getarum
 Frigora conuectans glacialibus evolat alis,
 Et cælum terrasque gelu constringit inertes
 Intremuere viri totasque ardentibus ulmos,
 Advolvere focis: positoque labore sua se
 Quisque domo sepsit, largo vix igne trementes
 Frigore defendens multis sub pellibus artis,
 Palluit ægra seges, sulcisque rigentibus acri,
 Decubuit moritura gelu, sylvasque per altas
 Insonuit magno quercus discissa fragore;
 Dissiluere jugis, et quæ durissima sensu
 Hac caruere tenus, frigus penetrabile saxa,*

A hard Winter.

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Per medias sensere nives, sensere sub altis
Gurgitibus Boream fluvii, frænique moraque
Impatiens Rhodanus gelidis consistere ripis
Jussus, et ignoto sua jungere littora ponte,
Substinuit tergo ferratos pervius orbis
Ipsum etiam in cellis sub opaco fornice Bacchum
Aspera vincit hyems, et stantia vina securi
Cæduntur, neque jam liquido sitentia potu,
Ora rigant, sed dente, cibos imitata teruntur.
Torpentes aër avibus non æquior alas
Illigat; et rigidæ, timidissima turba columbæ
Hospitium quærulo gemitu petiere; cibique
Et famis immemores, posita formidine, nostris
Accessere focus; quæ mox exempla secutæ
Perdices turdique, fidem violataque jura
Ingemuere, manu capti; subit ipse penates
Oblita feritate lupus, nemorumque relictio
Hospitiis, fugere vagi per compita cervi.
Communes habuere casas, pecudesque virique,
Nec potuere tamen sævum defendere frigus.
Lanigeræ non vellus ovi, non seta capellis
Profuit, aut forti pellis durissima tauro.
In stabulis periere greges; periere ferarum
Per sylvas armenta; vagæ periere volucres:
Quos et opum vesana fames decedere tectis
Impulit, et rigido sere committere cælo
Occubuere viri, aut pedibus visere minores:
Auxilium neque enim præsentius horrida passis
Frigora, quam ferro sævire salubriter; imos
Cædendo quos aëre gelu nodoverat, artus.
Perstitit hæc hyemis solidum vis improba mensem.
Intermissa virum commercia; rure labores
Cessarunt, et jura foro: sacra ipsa quierunt:
Nam neque fas illis vinum libare diebus.
Non miror potuisse mora durescere dios
In glaciem latices, licet additus ignis ad aras;

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Si tepido de fonte, caris qui flumina palmis
 Hauserat, admovit labris sitientibus amnem
 Frigore concretum ; projectaque lympha per auras
 Insonnuit terris, lapidosæ grandinis ictu.
 Diffugère nives tandem, vinclisque solutis
 Deseruere toros fluvii ; dorsoque rigenti
 Portarunt gelidas, onus intractabile, males.
 Fluctuat, et pontes ruit insula vitrea, secum.
 Obvia quoque trahens, pelagoque licentior errans
 Fert ratibus nautisque novos infracta timores
 Aspera ponit hyems ; et cum jam Thracius ultra
 Nil habuit Boreas, gelida quod perderet aura
 Vastatis excessit agris, ventosque tepentes
 Africus inducens, terrasque domosque recludit.
 Quis dolor heu ! luctusque fuit ! quæ cura futuri !
 Extremo jam vere, fides cum certa malorum ;
 Cum neque vastatis seges illa repullulat agris ;
 Alta nec in sylvis quercus revirescit ; ademptas
 Nec reparant ollæ frondes ; nec vinea trudit
 Germina, nec flores nux induit ulla renatos.
 Horret adusta seges glacie ; pallorque rigentes
 Qui deformat agros, idem notat ora colentum.”*

* “Lo! hallowed by old rites, the festal day,
 That still with royal offerings, year by year,
 Honours Christ's cot and lowly manger-bed.
 And lo! from Poland's shores the northern blast
 Hath borne, on chilling wings, the frosts of Thrace,
 And Danube's nipping rigours in its train:
 Quick in its icy fetters sleep, benumbed,
 Earth, air—men cower, though whole elms they roll
 To heap the blazing hearth. What now avails
 The rustic's labour? He, meanwhile, indoors
 Keeps watch and ward 'gainst Winter; yet scarce so,
 Wrapped in warm skins, beside the kindly blaze,

A hard Winter.

I I

It is a finished piece, and I doubt much whether the most scrupulous and exact of historians could better have described the particulars of this frightful event. It proves that poetry is no less adapted to

Can soothe the shiverings of his frozen limbs.
No yellow harvests wave; the sickly blade,
Doomed, frozen in the hardening furrows, droops,
And deep-embowering groves echo the crash
Of frost-split oaks; e'en rocks on mountain tops
Feel their pulse throb to an unwonted sense
Of piercing cold (strange wonder!), rent in twain
Beneath their mantling snows: deep in their pools
The streams grow conscious of the north wind's breath;
And Rhone, that never bore a curb before,
Must stay its course between its ice-bound banks,
Obedient, and link its shores awhile
With unaccustomed bridge, and bear the tramp
Of iron wheels upon its broad highway.
Then, too, though closed in cells and dusky vaults,
The grape-juice stiffened, winter-tamed, scarce cleft
By axe, and now a task for teeth to tear,
Denied the longing lips the liquid draught.

E'en birds partook the common woe; their wings
Hung frost-bound. First, with rigid pinions, doves
In thickening troops, least brave of birds, erewhile
Pleading for shelter came, with piteous plaint
Nestling about our hearths, nor thought of fear,
Nor more of hunger. Close upon their track
Partridge and thrush flocked fast, but learnt too late,
Prisoned in hands, man keeps no faith with birds.
The wolf's self ceased to raven, lurking near
The cottage door. O'er village greens the stag,
Its leafy haunts forsaken, aimless strayed.

depict truth than to adorn fiction. By the testimony of this author it will be seen that the severity of the cold was such that the tribunals of justice were deserted, and that even the services presented by re-

E'en man himself housed with his flocks and herds,
 Nor so escaped the cruel, biting cold.
 Its woolly fleece the sheep, its hair the goat,
 Availed not, nor the bull its strong, tough hide.
 Each pen was full of dying flocks; each wood
 Of dying beasts, of dying birds the air;
 And men no less, whom frenzied thirst of gain
 Drew forth from home to trust the unyielding skies,
 Frost-bitten limped thenceforth, crutch-borne, or died.
 Such the alternative; no surer aid
 To such, than this, th' harsh medicine of the knife,
 To sever the hard knots the frost had tied.
 For one whole month the winter held its way
 In strange, sad fury. Hushed their busy trade,
 The husbandmen kept holiday; the courts
 Were silent; hushed the church's solemn voice,
 Since flowed no wine in sacramental cup.
 What wonder that the consecrated draught,
 Though brief the pause, and though the live, quick flames
 Blazed by the altar, hardened into ice
 E'en in the moment, when the draught, but now
 Scooped boiling in the hollow of the hand,
 Would cheat the thirsting lips, a frozen mass;
 Or, did one sprinkle the hot spray aloft,
 Clashed on the earth a shower of stony hail?
 But when, at length, the frost fled, and, set free,
 The rivers glided past their banks, yet all
 Must bear upon their sluggish bosoms still,
 Unwieldy burden! floating piles of ice.

ligion, to render to the Creator the worship due to Him, were discontinued on account of the impossibility of preserving the wine and the water in the fluid state requisite for the administration of the holy communion. From these circumstances an idea may be formed of the intensity of the cold."

Such was the dreadful winter in the depth of which Valentine Duval found himself thrown out of work, and reduced to wander from one farm-house to another in search of bread.

Heaves to and fro the glassy isle ; down sink,
O'erwhelmed, the bridges ; what it roaring meets
Must join its train ; and so it wanders free
Lawless as ocean, scaring ships and crews
With novel terrors, till the harsh season lulled.
Then, when now Thracian Boreas found himself
With nothing more to spoil, forth sallied he
From the despoiled fields ; and in his stead,
Leading a train of balmy breezes, came
The warm south-west wind, that did straight ope wide
The cottage door, and beckoned nature forth.
But ah, the paining, saddening, sickening cares !
And ah, the sober certainty of woe !
Vanished the bloom of springtide—now no more
A hope of harvests from the blasted soil !
The oak may not renew its green ; in vain
The olive mourns the promise of its leaves ;
Not twice the vineyards bud ; the nut trees boast
No second birth, no new array of flowers ;
Parched, ragged crops instead ; sad, sallow hues
Stamped on the face of nature and of man ! " *

* Translated by William Stebbing Esq.

“At this period,” he continues, “when the most robust travellers were falling victims to the severities of the season, I was vainly traversing villages and hamlets, offering my services from door to door, and seeking an asylum from the cold and hunger, which made me ready to perish.

“As I was on my way from Provins to Brie, to a farm about a league and a half from the latter town, I was suddenly seized with such violent pains in the head, that it seemed as though it would split open, and force my eyes from their sockets.

“On arriving at the farm-house door, I piteously besought the woman who opened it to let me at least take shelter in some corner, where I might warm myself and lie down, so as to alleviate the intolerable pain I was enduring.

“The woman compassionately took me to the covered sheepfold, where the breath of the gentle creatures around me dispelled the numbness induced by cold; but the violence of the pain by which I was racked almost drove me mad.

“Early next morning the farmer came to see how I was, and was alarmed to see my eyes sparkling and inflamed, my face swollen, and my body as red as scarlet, and covered with an eruption. He told me at once that I had the small-pox, and that he feared I should die of it; for, not having anything to subsist upon himself, he could not possibly support

me during a long illness. Besides, the inclemency of the season was of itself enough to make my disease mortal, and yet I was not in a condition to be safely removed to a more proper place.

“I had no strength to reply to his dismal statement; and he, touched with compassion, yet nearly at his wits’ end what to do with me, went away for a moment, and quickly returned with a bundle of old linen, in which, having stripped me of my clothes, he rolled me like a mummy. He then removed several layers from the sheepfold dungheap, and covered the space thus left with a quantity of chaff, in the midst of which he laid me. He then strewed a good deal more chaff over me, in lieu of a down quilt, and finally deposited over it all the manure he had removed. Having thus truly planted me in a hot-bed, he devoutly made the sign of the cross over me, and commended me to God and the saints, assuring me, as he departed, that if I ever arose from that place it would be an evident miracle wrought in my favour.

“Here, then, I remained, buried up to the throat in manure, and only awaiting death to transfer me from one grave to another.

“My prostration was so great that it seemed to me as if life were already ebbing away; but I was no longer alarmed at the idea, because I felt as if my soul would quit my body almost insensibly, and

without any of those painful struggles which make death so terrible.

“However, my disease took a turn that could neither have been hoped nor expected. The warmth of the dungheap, and the breath of my companions, the sheep, occasioned profuse perspiration, which seemed the vehicle appointed to carry off the infectious matter that tainted my blood; so that the eruption having come fully out in a very short time, the disease departed, leaving no other ill effects behind it than certain marks, which would have been more formidable to an established beauty than to me. The horrible deformity, which for a time must almost have deprived me of the human likeness, had had nothing repellent in it to the sheep, who had kindly paid me frequent visits. As I had not strength to drive them away, they often took the liberty of licking my face; and the roughness of their tongues made me experience the severest pain. I did my best to avert these cruel caresses, not only on my own account, but for fear of infecting the poor sheep with my terrible disease.

“While I thus lay inhumed, the winter continued to devastate the country in the most frightful manner. Behind the sheepfold in which I triumphed over all the severities of the season, there arose a clump of oaks and walnuts, whose branches extended over the roof that sheltered me. I passed few nights without

being awakened by sudden and startling sounds, resembling thunder or the discharge of artillery; and when, in the morning, I asked the cause of the uproar, the farmer told me that the severity of the frost was such, that even stones of immense size had been shivered to atoms, and several walnut and other trees had been split open and rent asunder to the roots.

“I have already related how the poor farmer had told me that his own indigence prevented his assisting me according to his wishes. The taxes and imposts had, in fact, ruined him to such a degree, that the ruthless collectors had at length seized his furniture, and even the oxen kept for the cultivation of the land. The sheepfold would have shared the same fate had it been the property of the farmer. Thus it was not his own fault that he had to forewarn me, as he did, of the poor hospitality he could afford me.

“At the beginning of my illness, it is true, I was no great burden to him; for during several days I could not partake of the smallest nourishment. Probably I should have perished of inanition, had not the worthy farmer, in the absence of nourishing broths, bethought him of preparing me a sort of water-gruel, with very little salt in it. He sent me this twice a day in a large flask-shaped vessel with a cork, so that I could keep it unharmed in my warm bed, and thus prevent its freezing. This was all I lived upon for more than a fortnight. I was forced to be satisfied

with plain water to drink, and this was often brought to me half frozen.

“When my appetite began to require more solid food, all they could give me was a little soup meagre, and some pieces of brown bread so hardened by the cold that they had been obliged to divide it with a hatchet. Consequently, though ravenous with hunger, I was obliged to suck it, or to wait till I had thawed it like my gruel.

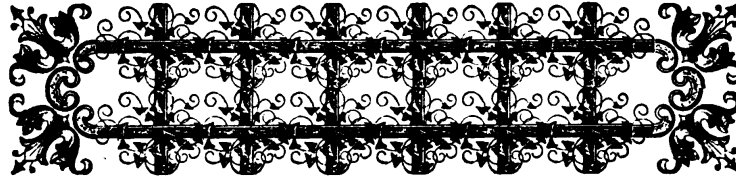
“Though my diet was austere enough for a sinner doing penance, the farmer at length declared that he could keep me no longer, and must look about for some one better able to do so than himself. He related my story to the *curé* of the parish, who lived about three-quarters of a league off, and the good priest consented to my being removed to a small out-house adjoining his dwelling.

“They drew me, therefore, from my living tomb as well as they could, and, having wrapped me in some old clothes, and two or three trusses of straw, to secure me from the cold, they tied me on an ass, and thus, with some one walking beside me, I was conveyed into the village.

“On reaching it I was found nearly dead with cold, and they thought that even if I survived it, it would be at the price of the use of my limbs. This disaster would probably have befallen me had they carried me at once to the fire; but they took the wise

precaution of rubbing my face, arms, and legs with snow till sensation was restored. They then conveyed me to a lodging similar to that I had quitted; and eight days afterwards, the cold having meanwhile somewhat abated, I was transferred into a room and a bed, where, thanks to the care of the benevolent and charitable *curé*, I soon regained health and strength."





CHAPTER III.

“ EASTWARD HO ! ”

“ Barbara,” said Robin, “ have you ever heard tell of a place they call the East ? ”

“ The East, Robin ! ” cried Barbara ; “ where is that ? ”

Mrs. S. C. HALL—*The Buccaneer.*

“ UNFORTUNATELY, however, I found that I should again be cast on my own resources. I must go forth into the wide, unknown world, and seek a maintenance : there was no choice left me.

“ It will have been seen from what I have said, and still better from the Latin verses already quoted, that whatever earth produces for the sustenance of man, not excepting fruit trees of the hardiest description, had been destroyed by the severity and long continuance of the frost.

“ Writers are not wanting who have exercised their genius in composing learned and curious dis-

sertations on the quantity of snow, and the violence of the wind, during that terrible winter ; and on the thickness of the ice, the different degrees of cold, and the depth at which it was felt beneath the surface of the ground. But I know of none who have had the courage to depict the frightful misery occasioned among the common people, or to recount how numerous were the unfortunates who, blockaded by the snow, and consumed by hunger, were afterwards found lying dead in their miserable cabins. Not one of these authors has alluded to the hard-heartedness, the criminal insensibility of the rich, the scandalous rapine of usurers, sacred and profane, who, taking advantage of the general distress, raised the price of provisions by closing their granaries, and shutting up their cold hearts to the dictates of compassion.

“ I know not whether government was aware of the full extent of the public calamity, nor what means it employed for its alleviation ; but I *do* know that youths were drawn for the militia, and that the tallage, gabelle, and other taxes were levied with unabated strictness and rigour.

“ Besides the war with the elements, another was being waged more bloody and equally ruinous. Nine years previously a branch of the house of Austria reigning in Spain had become extinct, having languished out its existence in the species of

lethargy into which unmeaning etiquette, and the refinements of the dark and timid policy of its ministry, had plunged it. The house of Bourbon, skilled in diplomacy as in arms, succeeded in being nominated to the succession. France spared neither treasure nor life in endeavouring to obtain a vast monarchy which had ruined itself by its vain and cruel conquests, and whose members, dispersed through the four quarters of the globe, and consequently too far removed from the soil that should have animated them, more resembled the spectre of a kingdom than one embodied and full of life. After much expenditure of gold and blood, a French prince was seated on the throne of Spain, and doubtless turned some of the treasures of Peru to account in testifying his gratitude to those who set him there.

“While so much ado was made by rival nations to impose this or that master on a kingdom comprising countries in both hemispheres, I was vainly seeking one for myself. I was consumed by hunger, without any means of appeasing it where I was, and one day I bethought me to ask whether the famine were all over the world, or whether there might not be some corner of it where the grain had not been destroyed by frost.

“I was told that towards the south and east there were countries which, either from their proximity to

the sun or other causes, had probably been spared the miseries of the *grand hiver*, as it was popularly called.

“ This news overjoyed me. It gave rise to a train of deep reflection in my mind. Until then the great spectacle of the universe had not affected me more than others. The sun had warmed and enlightened me ; I had beheld the smiling face of nature, the variations of the seasons, and the wonderful alternations of day and night effected through the instrumentality of that luminary, but had taken no intelligent note of it. All I knew was that the years, the seasons, the days, had their regular beginning and end ; that it was warm in summer, and cold in winter. Truly I was like those vain idols which ‘ have eyes and see not.’ It was reserved for the ministers of religion to waken my dormant vision, by pointing out to me God in His visible works.

“ If the aspect of His divinity, as manifested in nature, has formed great men even in the bosom of paganism, what ought not to be the effect of it on professors of the religion to which we belong ? a religion which teaches that ‘ the heavens declare the glory of God,’ and that ‘ the firmament showeth forth *His handiwork.*’ Why not pay attention to the praises that they sing ? Ought the daily observation of the marvels of creation to diminish our gratitude and

admiration, instead of more powerfully kindling those emotions in our hearts? On the contrary, I feel persuaded that a few traits of natural theology, clearly and simply expounded with a dignity suitable to the subject, would do far more substantial good than many of the drowsy homilies and cold moralities with which poor ignorant people are now put off. Were a few of the mysteries of nature revealed to them, they would learn to reverence those of religion. I have known many among the lower orders who called themselves Christians, and believed themselves such, simply because they had been baptized, while, at the same time, their words and actions clearly betrayed that they stood in great need of having even the existence of a God proved to them. Proofs of such divine existence, though buried by scholiasts beneath a mass of syllogisms and sophistries, may be found dispersed throughout the whole book of nature; but unfortunately, this book, which is open and might be intelligible to all, is the very one least consulted.

“In consequence of my ignorance of the structure and arrangement of the universe, I had the most ridiculous notions concerning it. I measured the extent of what I called the world by that portion of it which I could see on a fine, clear day. I imagined the earth a flat surface, similar to a vast circular prairie, the outer edge of which served as a basis and support to that part of the heavens apparent to my

sight. Without ever having heard of Aristotle or Ptolemy, I thought, like them, that the sky was solid, and transparent as crystal, and that the stars were affixed to it like so many lamps, which went out during the day, but flamed up again at night. When I heard talk of the sun's rising, setting, and reaching the meridian, I took it for an animated, intelligent being! and what tended to confirm me in my error was, that I had seen it portrayed as a human head surrounded with rays. However, I was persuaded that it was the principle of heat; and as its distance from the earth, when rising and setting, seemed to me very small, I really thought that if I could but approach near to it I should find refuge from the terrible miseries produced by the hard winter.”





CHAPTER IV.

VALENTINE TRIES TO REACH THE SUN.

Nations move westward; but the tendency of individuals, perhaps, is to move eastward.

Friends in Council.

“**F**ULL of this project, I directed my steps towards the east. This point now became my guide. I looked to it as mariners on the deep look to the polar star. A mechanical progression brought me to the arid plains of Champagne. Poverty and hunger seemed to have taken up their abode in this melancholy district. The houses were falling to the ground, and looked more like ice-huts than dwellings for human beings; their roofs were covered with reeds and ragged thatch, and the walls were of clay, mixed with a little straw.

“As to the inhabitants, their appearance was in

Valentine Tries to Reach the Sun. 27

keeping with the wretchedness of their huts. The rags with which they were covered; the pallor of their complexions; their glassy, sunken eyes; their languid, dull, and heavy demeanour; the nakedness and leanness of their children, who, wasted with hunger, were dispersed among the bushes and hedges, seeking for roots, which they eagerly devoured—all these fearful symptoms of general misery alarmed me, and impelled me to hasten from so sinister a country. I traversed it as rapidly as I could, having no sustenance meanwhile but herbs and a little hemp bread, which I obtained with great difficulty. This heating, corrosive food, intended only for the lowest of animals, impaired my strength, injured my constitution, and brought on infirmities the consequences of which affected me long after.

“Continuing my course towards the east, I arrived at the summit of a hill, at the foot of which appeared a town or village enveloped in a dense cloud of vapour, which I supposed to be smoke from a fire; but I was informed that it arose from some springs which issued boiling from the earth.

“On reaching these springs I lay down on the ground to examine them the more attentively. Nothing can express the astonishment I felt when, on plunging my hand into the water, the extreme heat made me suddenly withdraw it. I repeated the experiment several times, and as I saw that there was

no furnace or fire near the springs, I believed for a certainty that I was in the immediate vicinity of hell !

“It annoyed me that any one could endure for an instant to live at Bourbonne-les-Bains ; and, for my own part, I hastened from it as quickly as I could.

“I continued my oriental route, and next morning reached Senaide, the first boundary village of a province which, from its flourishing condition, appeared to me a new world. The face of the earth was, as the Scriptures express it, *renewed*. Had day suddenly changed into night, I could hardly have been more surprised than I was at the remarkable difference between the district I had just quitted and that which I had now entered.

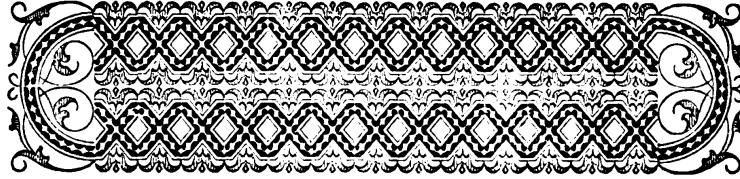
“Here I no longer saw miserable huts built of clay, and roofed with reeds and straw—dens harbouring wretchedness of every description ; no longer beheld human beings looking like gaunt spectres, habited in rags and tatters. Here the peasants’ feet were not incumbered with clumsy *sabots*, which indigence had compelled them to substitute for decent, comfortable shoes and stockings. The youths seemed to know nothing of the horrors of war, unless through rumours from the neighbouring states ; and as to the children, their healthy looks, their activity and mirth, their clear complexions, and rosy, rounded cheeks, made them appear like so many little Cupids

Valentine Tries to Reach the Sun. 29

in comparison with the poor, famished little mummies that had lately so excited my compassion.

“Here the houses were fit dwellings for *men*, spacious and substantial, with well-built walls and good tiled roofs. I observed some built like those in towns, with upper stories; and what struck me as very singular, they were almost all surmounted by a double cross. I remarked the same decoration painted on the door of the village church, together with some birds without beaks, and with outspread wings, which I did not then know by the name of *alérions*.

“While I was examining this curious decoration, a bell began to ring to summon the villagers to mass, for it was Sunday. I was the first to enter the little sanctuary, and presently had the pleasure of seeing a number of peasants flocking in, dressed in cloth suits with silver buttons, and wearing shoes instead of *sabots*. As for the women, they were so well clad that they appeared to me the smartest I had ever seen; but what struck me most was, that there were more young lads in church than I had seen in the whole province I had lately quitted—an evident proof that in this happy spot vain ambition and the cruel love of conquest had not exercised their tyranny. I was convinced I must have entered another domain.”



CHAPTER V.

A HERMIT.

Sweet peace, where dost thou dwell? I humbly crave:
Let me once know.
I sought thee in a secret cave,
And asked if peace were there.
The hollow wind did seem to answer, "No;
Seek it elsewhere."

ROBERT SOUTHWELL, 1595.

THE Duchy of Lorraine, which Valentine had now entered, was, or was not, a part of the kingdom of France which he had just left, according to the fortune of war.

Lorraine, which once made part of the circle of the Upper Rhine, is separated from Burgundy and Alsace by the Vosges mountains, and has, or had, some wild, uncultivated forests. The rest of the country has a fruitful soil, producing plenty of corn, wine, and pasture. Its hills contain mines of silver, copper, lead, and

iron; and its salt-springs are so numerous that they used to yield the duke £200,000 per annum. Its chief rivers are the Maes, the Moselle, and the Sarre. It was divided into three parts—Lorraine proper, Bar-le-Duc, and French Lorraine, which latter comprised the bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun. Verdun was confirmed to the French by the treaty of Munster, 1648; but the rest of the duchy was restored by the French to the Duke of Lorraine, and confirmed to him by the Pyrenean treaty, 1660; the French reserving to themselves the liberty of marching through it when they pleased. But in 1670 Louis XIV. seized on all Lorraine again, and kept it till the peace of Rhyswick in 1698, when again the duke recovered it—not to keep it long, however; for the king regained possession of it in 1702, but was obliged to restore it in 1714. During the “terrible winter,” therefore, of 1709, Lorraine belonged to France. Still Duval might call it “another domain,” which, in a little time, it again became in name as well as reality.

Failing Duval’s own narrative, which here seems to have had a chapter destroyed, we must now resort to the biographical sketch given of him by his friend the Chevalier Koch, from which it appears that after looking about for work a little longer, Valentine at length found employment under a shepherd or farmer, near the village of Clézantaine, in Lorraine.

Here, then, his journeyings to the far east were stayed. He remained with his employer two years; but at the end of that time, becoming dissatisfied with his way of life, and having a curious, restless, inquiring sort of mind, that must always be asking why and how, which found no answer to his askings while keeping a few sheep and cows, chance led him to the hermitage of La Rochette, near Deneuvre, at the foot of the woody, mountainous Vosges.

Here he found a real, live hermit, *comme il y en a peu*, by the name of Brother Palemon, a pious, benevolent man, living in sanctity and seclusion, but not in idleness either of body or mind. His way of living had such a charm for Valentine's mind, that he eagerly took service with him; for it appears that the hermits of Lorraine thought nothing amiss of keeping a country boy to share their labours and pick up a little religious knowledge by the way.

Brother Palemon engaged him as a handy lad, and Valentine, who was now about sixteen, commenced hermit *con fuoco*. Brother Palemon gave him one or two easy books to read—" *La Bibliothèque Bleue*," a collection of popular tales, and certain "Lives of the Saints." Valentine conned these with avidity. We may suppose him filling up the rest of his time by looking after the hermit's one or two cows, his bees, his poultry, digging up his garden, going on his errands, and ringing the tinkling bell of the little

chapel. But those books made a great impression on him ; more, perhaps, than the good hermit either expected or intended.

“Of all the books I read,” says he (and this is how he resumes his narrative), “that which made the most impression on me was the terrible description given by St. John Climachus * of the torturing penances observed in a certain monastery in Egypt, justly named The Prison. It is unnecessary for me to give a summary of the fearful details, since they may be read in the third article of the fifth *degré* of the *Echelle Sainte*.

“It is astonishing that in the warm climates of the south, where the brain is generally very susceptible, there should be found instances of its being strong enough to resist the evil effects one would suppose such horrors must naturally occasion. I know not what opinion these penitents could have formed of a God full of mercy and lovingkindness ; but since, in order to appease Him, they resorted to punishments of the most fearful kinds, not mere ordinary austerities, it is to be presumed they imagined Him severe almost to implacability, and rigorously just rather than full of compassion. Probably their excited imaginations led them to picture to themselves hell already yawning beneath their feet, and

* Born A.D. 525, and author of “The Scale of Paradise.”

this same God, armed with vengeful thunderbolts, ready to crush them beneath their weight; for there must have been more than mere contrition and grief of heart to incite them to think and act as they did: they must have been absolutely terrified.

“Sweeter and more agreeable thoughts came at length to allure me from these fearful images. Having read by chance a book called ‘An Introduction to a Contemplative Life,’ and another called ‘Easy Devotion,’ I became disposed to love God with somewhat the same species of ecstatic affection that a lover would testify for the object of his fond idolatry. A thousand tender and fervent expressions proceeded from my lips, while the outpourings of my heart were sighs, groans, and ejaculations. I was, for the first time, under the influence of an emotion which might be almost classed among the passions, being eccentric in its effects, and not unfrequently producing extravagance, grief, harshness, and severity, instead of cheerfulness, joy, and contentment. This excitement is what the vulgar mistakenly deem devotion. *True* devotion has charity, love, and the fear of God for its foundation—the real and solid piety that sanctifies us; but that of which I speak leaves the heart as it finds it, being nowise incompatible with pride, hypocrisy, duplicity, and other odious vices.

“Until now the hardness of my fate had been a pretty effectual safeguard from vanity, except,

indeed, that which I experienced on account of the profound erudition I imagined myself to have acquired when I had accomplished the perusal of the *Bibliothèque Bleue*. However, what should have confirmed me in humility had precisely the contrary effect. Scarcely had I begun to exercise devotion when I believed that I had already wellnigh attained perfection! Like the Pharisee in the parable, I compared my merits with those of the world in general, and the result was, *not* such as humility would have suggested.

“These merits consisted, to tell truth, in reciting daily the fifteen prayers of St. Bridget, the Seven Joys of our Lady, the prayer beginning ‘*Obsecro te, Domina,*’ and another, five or six lines long, the title of which promised a thousand years’ indulgence for every repetition of it. My lips had never had so much exercise; but, from the too frequent repetition of the same thing, I became careless of what I said, just as I have since remarked sometimes in churches the hired singers suffer their thoughts to be diverted to far other matters than those connected with the words they are singing.

“I imagined it belonged to the dignity of a reflecting, contemplative man to be grave and composed in his manner; and, being ignorant that joy and serenity are almost always the inseparable companions of true piety, I falsely supposed that the uniform

proper to devotion was, so to speak, a mourning garb, and a melancholy, sour aspect. This is a pernicious error ; and I have known many honest persons who, but for it, might have become truly devout.

“When, to all the other frivolous observances of which the phantom of piety is made up, I had added some voluntary fasts, I thought I had indeed fulfilled the law and the prophets, and might certainly expect to be included among the elect.

“Meanwhile, my plain duties to good Brother Palemon were by no means well attended to. Often, when he sent me on an errand, I would go and fall on my knees at the foot of a tree, and begin reciting my prayers ; or, if he had ordered me to work in the garden and came to look after me, he would be surprised to find me absorbed in meditation in some nook of the rock. If he took upon him to reprove me for my conduct, and censure my negligence, I hardily turned the tables on him by accusing him of remissness and lukewarmness, reproaching him with wishing to oppose our Lord’s injunction that we should pray without ceasing, and take no thought for the morrow.

“One day, when he was endeavouring to explain to me the true meaning of the text which I thus misapplied, my zeal vented itself in such bitter and caustic expressions against him, that the poor hermit was quite dumbfounded. His truly Christian for-

bearance on the occasion touched me with quick shame and remorse. I resolved to correct myself, and thought that, in order to do so, I must increase the number of my prayers. However, this expedient did not prevent my evil dispositions from gaining ground; and before long I became haughty, vindictive, obstinate, and irritable, so that my temper was upset by even the slightest contradiction. Presently I persuaded myself that the vice of evil speaking and railing, which I had hitherto detested, might be excusable if one had but the *correction* of one's neighbour for one's object. In fact, since I had become *dévo*t, I had nearly ceased to be a Christian.

“Before I read the ‘Treatise on a Contemplative Life’ I had known but two modes of life—the *good* and the *bad*. But now I learnt that there were *many* other kinds, of which I should probably never have dreamed—the active, the contemplative, the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive. As the last appeared to be considered the very pinnacle of perfection, of course I boldly aspired to it.

“In like manner I had known but two kinds of prayer—vocal and mental—a piece of ignorance shared with me by seven-eighths of the Christian world. I found, however, that there are prayers classified by tender, loving souls as *ejaculatory*, *passive*, and *silent* prayers—prayers of *repose*, of *union*, of *resignation*, of *quietism*, &c. What a consolation

for me to learn that there were so many various ways of communicating with God! I inquired of Brother Palemon which of them was the most efficacious, and the good man pronounced in favour of passive prayer. But when he told me that this consisted in an act of faith, in a mere contemplation of God's majesty, not for the purpose of knowing, but simply of loving Him, I returned to my old opinion, which was, that knowledge must take precedence of love.

“ However, I manifested in myself proofs to the contrary; for, without having any more distinct acquaintance with God than formerly, I already loved Him much—so much, indeed, that for this very reason I begged Brother Palemon to give me some clearer ideas of His divine perfections, to the end that I might love Him more.

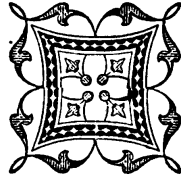
“ The hermit's comparison of God to a good king whom two-thirds of his subjects never see, but know only through the effects of his justice, clemency, and magnanimity, was most satisfactory to me. It disposed me to love Him more and more, though somewhat materially, for I began to picture Him to myself as a powerful monarch, surrounded by a superb and brilliant court. However, Brother Palemon rectified this notion by informing me that there is a vast difference between the King of kings and the sovereigns of the earth; for that, while the latter could be deceived, and be capable of injustice, He, the

Father of the universe, who is goodness, justice, and perfection itself, is absolutely infallible. By such dim and feeble lights as these I learnt that the Creator must be loved after another fashion from His creature.

“ However, I ceased not to endeavour to familiarise myself in thought with this Infinite Being. I invoked Him continually, often praying for things less concerning His glory than my own interests, which were beginning to be dear to me. They were, I must say, neither frivolous nor unreasonable. The bare conveniences of civilised life were scarcely known to me ; I was therefore, of course, ignorant of even the existence of those comforts and luxuries which ease and effeminacy cause to be regarded as indispensable necessities ; but, next to devotion, my ruling passion was liberty of body and mind. I had a decided love of independence, and a mortal hatred of anything that occasioned care and uneasiness ; therefore these appeared fit subjects for my prayers as well as my ambition. I thought, secondarily, of spiritual blessings ; but since, to the full enjoyment of them, I must give up all the others, and experience the pains of death, I did not like to contemplate them in too near prospective.

“ Sometimes I endeavoured to form some idea of the pleasures of a future life. I imagined them to be purely intellectual ; and I must confess that my notion of them was derived almost entirely from the

pleasures of this world. However, while endeavouring to spiritualise them, I met with a little adventure which I must not omit to relate. It may serve to help some worthy person, as inexperienced as I was, to distinguish between the sensations and emotions of this world and the impressions of Divine grace, which are very, very different.”





CHAPTER VI.

A FETE CHAMPETRE BESIDE A FOUNTAIN.

Thrice happy he who by some shady grove,
Far from the clamorous world, doth live his own;
Though solitary, yet is not alone,
But doth converse with the Eternal Love.

DRUMMOND'S *Flowers of Zion*.

“ONE lovely spring morning, when nature, decked in her gayest attire, seemed to be making a parade of her riches and her charms, I was seated on the rock which overhung our hermitage. On one side of me I beheld a vast champaign, enamelled with flowers of every hue, and watered by a rapid river, down whose current floated large rafts of timber, the export of which to foreign countries formed one of the staples of Lorraine. On the other hand the landscape was composed of hills and valleys, dotted with smiling villages and hamlets,

and undulating gently upwards from the margin of the plain to the summit of the woody and mountainous Vosges.

“The scene was worthy of an artist’s pencil; and the effect was heightened by the soft, melodious carolling of the nightingales, and the pure azure of the unclouded sky overhead, varied on the horizon by the delicate tints of Aurora.

“The dullest heart must have been moved: mine, at all times so open to impressions, was deeply affected. I was filled with lively gratitude as I reflected that all these beauties of nature, and others still more dazzling, had been solely created for the use and pleasure of man. Notwithstanding my self-sufficiency, I was not so prejudiced as to imagine that we mortals could be deserving of such benefactions. I inferred, therefore, that the goodness and mercy of Him who dispensed them must equal His omnipotence. This was a cheering thought to me, and I desired to have it always present to my mind; for, of all the Divine attributes, that which I best conceived, which attracted me most, and which, to my ideas, rendered Divinity most accessible to me, was the benevolence of God.

“Such were the sentiments excited by my reflections on the beauties of nature; but in contrast with them I must relate a scene ludicrously in opposition to that which I have just described.

A Fête Champêtre beside a Fountain. 43

“Towards the evening of the same day, four or five canons, belonging to the small rustic chapter of Deneuve, came to pay their respects to Brother Palemon, bringing with them a capital ham, and several flasks of—something a good deal stronger than holy water.

“The freshness and coolness of our grotto enticed them to prolong their stay with us while they satisfied their hunger and thirst. The bottles were placed in the basin of the little fountain that bubbled up at the foot of the rock, and the ham was daintily placed on a cloth of green turf. The clerical gentlemen then seated themselves sociably around, and commenced a vigorous attack on the ham, which was speedily curtailed of its fair proportions. The glasses flew round, and so swiftly were they drained, that in less than an hour the flasks were as empty as skeletons. They insisted on my taking a couple of glasses of wine, which, with Brother Palemon’s concurrence, I did.

“When the jolly canons had finished their repast, and, finding night coming on, had taken leave of us, I set to work to collect the remains of the feast, which, fortunately, was soon done. While thus occupied I began to experience sensations such as I had never felt before in my life. My blood seemed to course rapidly through my veins, and my face was as hot as fire. Though habitually taciturn, I felt a sudden impulse to talk, and fell to reciting psalms

with great volubility, but found I could not pronounce half my words, and that there seemed an unaccountable weight on my tongue. What was still more surprising, I staggered hither and thither, without being able to regulate my movements.

“Not having the slightest idea of the *cause* of these symptoms, I imagined them to be the premonitors of some illness, and hastened to my cell. Here I accidentally seated myself opposite an image of Christ as the Good Shepherd, and remained staring at it for a full quarter of an hour, while my thoughts were in the strangest commotion.

“Lively and pleasing pictures coursed through my mind in rapid succession, and, at the moment, I thought I must have fallen into one of those rapturous and ineffable trances, of which I had read exaggerated descriptions—the sure stumbling-blocks of devotion, when it has not genuine humility for its support and guide. I was assuredly not under the influence of that queen of virtues in my present paroxysm ; still I prostrated myself again and again on the ground, and, gradually approaching the image of the Saviour, addressed it, in a voice broken by tears and sobs, with the most tender and touching expressions. Inflections of the voice, movements of the head, and various other affectations of enthusiasts were not wanting. My tears flowed profusely, and I seemed as if I could weep for ever. Singularly

A Fête Champêtre beside a Fountain. 45

enough, as it seems now, I attributed them wholly to devotional feeling, and had not the smallest suspicion that the juice of the grape had contributed to excite them.

“The devil, who is always fond of meddling with other people’s affairs, especially when they are in ‘*desert places,*’ did not fail to do so on this occasion; and he knew he ran no risk of having his pains for nothing, for I was no St. Anthony. He turned my foolish self-conceit into actual pride, persuading me that I was walking with gigantic strides along the path leading to perfection, and that I had already far outstripped good Brother Palemon.

“If, according to the proverb, a grain of vanity outweighs a ton of merit, how terrible must be its ravages in a collective form upon virtues so refined and delicate as those which belong to speculative piety!

“Everything must have an end, and so my sublime transports gradually subsided. Tranquillity succeeded agitation, and I fell sound asleep, in the hope that when I awoke it would only be to the renewal of my delightful experiences.

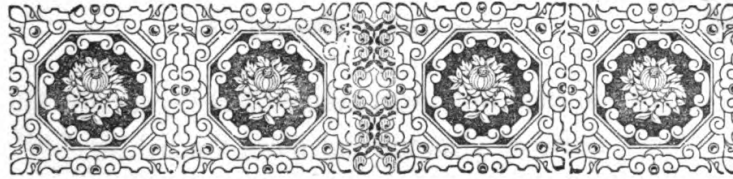
“What, then, was my astonishment, on awaking, to find myself without the slightest spark of that genial glow which, a few hours before, had so animated me! My ecstasies had departed with the treacherous fumes that occasioned them, and I was

reduced to that flat and unfruitful state of feeling which enthusiasts deem spiritual drought and darkness.

“Brother Palemon was now reinstated in my good opinion, and I felt with shame that, in point of Christianity, I was not worthy to unloose his shoe-latchet. On consideration of all that had passed, I was able to trace my emotions to their true source, and felt indescribably humiliated.

“My familiar approaches to the Divine Majesty ceased, and I began once more to fear and adore God with the reverential timidity with which it behoves us to do homage to Him. I was mortified when I remembered the unbecoming language of my prayers; and ever since, whenever I have felt at all inclined to give way to rapturous expressions, I have narrowly examined my state of mind, to be assured that it did not partake of offence more than of what deserved approbation.”





CHAPTER VII.

THE BRETHREN OF ST. ANNE.

Oh ! rather may I patient dwell
In th' injuries of an ill-covered cell,
'Gainst whose too weak defence the hail,
The angry winds, and frequent showers prevail,
Where the swift measures of the day
Shall be distinguished as I pray,
And some star's solitary light
Be the sole taper to the tedious night.
The neighbouring fountain, not accursed,
Like wine, with madness, shall allay my thirst,
And the wild fruits of nature give
Diet enough to make me feel I live.

HABINGTON, 1654.

“ **A** FEW months after this adventure, the happiness I was tranquilly and innocently enjoying was interrupted by the arrival of an anchorite, whom the superiors of his society had sent to take my place. There was no help for it ; I must make way for him, which I did with unfeigned reluctance ; and I should have been inconsolable had not the good hermit told

me that I needed but to exchange one hermitage for another, 'quite as pleasant and more flourishing.'

"Provided by the venerable Brother Palemon with a letter of introduction to my new masters, and another of instructions for myself, I bade him adieu, and took the road to Luneville, the seat of the brilliant little court of Lorraine.

"When, having traversed the forest of Madon, that magnificent ducal residence burst upon me in all its beauty and splendour, I was transfixed with wonder, admiration, and awe, such as grandeur of any kind generally excites in those who behold it for the first time.

"Full of care concerning the uncertainty of my fate, I scarcely dared raise my eyes to the vast and superb palace overlooking the city, which I concluded must be the centre of all the pleasure and felicity in the world. Experience, I need hardly say, afterwards modified this impression not a little, and in time I attained a juster view of things.

"Half a league to the west of Luneville, opposite the junction of the rivers Meurthe and Vézouze, is a hermitage called St. Anne, at the summit of a fertile acclivity, bounded by the forest of Vitrimont, the leafy foliage of which enhances its charms and protects it from the north wind.

"Thither I directed my steps, and, as it will be found in the sequel, Providence thus conducted me

to fortune by a road that seemed to lead directly away from it.

“On presenting myself at the door of the hermitage, Brother Martinien, the superior, received my letter of introduction, and, having read it to the end, informed me that he would receive me in the capacity of servant to his little community. It consisted but of four persons, whose ages, added together, would have formed no trifling amount of years.

“I have never seen rustic simplicity better expressed than in their countenances and manners. Their language answered perfectly to their exterior—nothing could be more uncultivated, more unaffected. As to their intellects, they were almost as unpolished as their persons; but Nature, who embarrasses herself very little with those delicacies of mind which often serve but to palliate our passions and varnish our defects, had granted them a large fund of benevolence and candour, added to robust health and wonderful adaptation to agricultural pursuits.

“I doubt whether what the world calls a polite education produces advantages either so solid or so useful. It is true these good brethren did not know how to *talk* about virtue. They left that to learned doctors and philosophers; but they knew how to *practise* it without noticing it in themselves, or exacting the approval of others.

“It was this placid indifference of theirs to the

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applause of the world without, that occasioned the austerity of their lives and the strictness of their devotion to be so little known beyond their hermitage. I myself should have been ignorant of it, had not my five years' sojourn among them given me an opportunity of close observation. I may say with sincerity that the penances and mortifications to which I saw them subject themselves convinced me of the possibility of the horrors I had read of in the lives of the monks in the Thebaid. To say nothing of their frequent fasts on bread and water, and their use of hair and sackcloth, whether in the hours of labour or during the hottest days in summer, I have seen them lie on the ground even in time of sickness, however severe might be the cold, with head and feet uncovered, and only a block of wood for their pillow. One of them, who lived entirely on fruits and vegetables, feared that their pleasant taste might be a device of Satan to incline him to creature comforts, to prevent which he mingled ashes with his food, or poured over it the water in which he steeped the osiers he used in basket-making—an infusion as bitter as wormwood.

“But the hermit whose conduct edified me most was a certain Brother Paul, who had pursued his vocation thirty-two years. His devotion did not express itself in words, but it influenced his every action; it had reformed his heart and dispositions,

and truly merited the name of piety. Religion had taught him the will of God, and his constant aim was to fulfil it. Unlike many who call themselves devout, his good actions kept pace with his prayers. Lying and slandering were an abomination to him, and fear lest their venom should infuse itself into his discourse made him very chary of his words. He was gentle, patient, charitable, of an even and happy temper, and so perfectly resigned to the decrees of Providence, that I do not think even the destruction of the world would have deprived him of equanimity. In fact, nothing seemed to disturb him. Violent passions, such as hatred, anger, jealousy, envy, and revenge, he certainly seemed to know nothing of by personal experience. One day, when I jokingly asked him if it were not, at any rate, permissible to hate the devil, he simply replied,—

“ ‘ We should hate none ! ’ ”

“ In conclusion to this testimony, due alike to truth and to the virtue of the good recluses themselves, I will add a word or two concerning their founder. He called himself Brother Michel, and was born near Eureux, an episcopal city in Normandy. While serving as a French cavalry officer he was dangerously wounded in an engagement in Alsace. As he lay in a most perilous position under the horse's feet, exposed to instant death, he made a vow to devote himself to Heaven should his life be spared.

“His life *was* spared, and he lost no time in seeking a place proper for the fulfilment of his design. Passing through the environs of Luneville, he perceived in the distance, among the trees that fringed the hill I have spoken of, a ruined edifice, called *La Maison Alba*, belonging to the family of that name, established at Mirecourt.

“Charles, Duke of Lorraine, and the Bishop of Toul, permitted him to take possession of it, and there embrace the life of a hermit. The sanctity of his course soon brought him disciples; and these tilled the hill-side, which had once, indeed, been a vineyard, but which, like two-thirds of the province, had been reduced, by the devastations of the Swedes and French, to a mere wilderness.

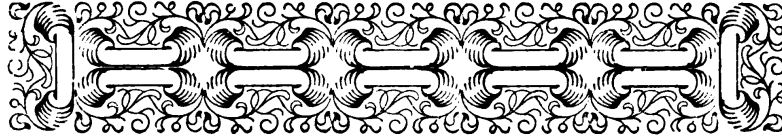
“On the site of the *Maison Alba* a hermitage was erected, and dedicated to St. Anne. Shortly afterwards Father Michel founded a second near Ludres, about two leagues from Nancy, on the side of the *Montagne d’Afrique*, remarkable for the vestiges of a Roman encampment, the intrenchments of which still exist. He subsequently undertook the reform of all the hermits in the diocese of Toul, prescribing them rules and regulations, and subjecting them to a severe novitiate, until, out of a set of vagabonds, he formed a society of recluses who, however ignorant they might be, at least merited respect for their humility and piety.

“To aid them in their spiritual course their well-

intentioned patron paraphrased, in miserable French verse, St. John Climaque's *Sainte Echelle*, and had it printed at Béziers, in Languedoc, whither he happened to go on business. On his return to Lorraine he published a second edition of it, and it is chiefly wonderful how he could find two printers willing to give to the world such a farrago of rhyme without reason. The pious author of this wretched work died in the year 1710, being then nearly a hundred years old.

“I soon perceived that I had lost nothing by my change of situation. My new masters, all of them disciples of the aforesaid venerable Father Michel, had nothing in common with those mendicant recluses whose idleness and vices have brought discredit on the hermit's life. By means of a team of six cows they tilled a plat of twelve acres of land, which, well cultivated and planted with fruit trees of various kinds, furnished them with abundant means of subsistence without being dependent on the public.

“The care of their little flock was committed to me, and part of my time was spent in driving it to and from the forest pastures. Thus I was once more engaged in pastoral life, which I thought I had renounced for ever.”



CHAPTER VIII.

AN OLD OAK IN THE FOREST.

Our lodging, hard and homely as our fare—
That chaste and cheap, as are the clothes we wear ;
A hasty portion of prescribed sleep,
Obedient slumbers that can wake and weep ;
Hands full of hearty labours ; pains that pay
And prize themselves—do much that more they may.

CRASHAW, *Description of a Religious House and Way of Life.*

“ I BEGAN my new career by learning to write. One of the aged brethren traced the elements of this ingenious art for me with a decrepit, trembling hand. So defective a model could not, of course, do otherwise than produce bad copies. That I might not trouble the old man, but manage to get on without his lessons, I had recourse to the following expedient :—

“ Having taken a pane of glass out of my window, I laid it upon the hermit’s writing so as to see it through, and then traced the letters on the surface,

till I became so familiar with them that, by diligent repetitions of the experiment, I shortly acquired considerable facility in writing badly.

“In an old worm-eaten volume of that invaluable *Bibliothèque Bleue* I found a compendium of arithmetic, from which I learnt the first four rules. This wonderful science, which, by the boldness of its calculations, carries the torch of discussion into the darkest regions of numeral infinity, was to me a perpetual source of amusement and pleasure.

“I chose out nooks in the woods where I could, undisturbed, devote myself to my new study, which frequently held me spell-bound through great part of the fine summer nights. If it be true that the aboriginal inhabitants of Germany paid divine honours to the majestic silence that reigned in their primeval forests, I should probably have joined cordially in their worship, had I had the misfortune to be their contemporary. Whenever I have been alone, whether in thick forests, among rocks, or in smiling valleys, I have always experienced an emotion of awe, not the effect of fear, but of an untutored kind of reverence.

“To me the calm, the profound tranquillity which night shed over spots whose silence was only broken by the cry of the osprey or the hooting of the owl, had something indescribably grand and majestic, elevating the soul, and inclining it to lofty thoughts. I delighted in this species of active melancholy, and, in

order to enjoy it, would frequently retreat to a little eminence in the forest, where there was an excavation in the form of a grotto, the remains of a deserted quarry.

“ One calm, clear evening, while sitting at the mouth of this grotto, I fell to contemplating the hosts of luminous bodies scattered through the immensity of space. As I gazed I recollected how almanacs announce the sun’s entrance, on certain days, into certain signs, distinguished by such names as the ‘ Bull,’ the ‘ Ram,’ &c. I thought I should like to know what these signs were, and, presuming that there were perhaps in the heavens assemblages of stars which represented the figures of these animals, I determined to look out for them.

“ For this purpose I chose one of the loftiest oaks in the forest, at the top of which I constructed a sort of platform, very much like a stork’s nest, of osiers interwoven with branches of the wild vine. To this observatory I adjourned every evening, and, seated upon an old basket bee-hive which I had carried up there, I directed my eager gaze to the several quarters of the firmament, hoping to discover the form of some celestial bull or ram.

“ As the miracles of optical science were as yet wholly unknown to me, my eyes were my only telescope. After repeatedly straining them in vain, I was on the point of giving up my undertaking, when

chance furnished me with a clue that encouraged me to renew my efforts.

“One fair-day, having been sent into Luneville on an errand, I saw a number of instruments exposed for sale along the side of a wall. Among them was a planisphere, on which the stars were marked, with their respective names and sizes. This planisphere, a map of the celestial globe, and others of the four quarters of the world, exhausted the whole of my earnings, amounting to five or six livres.

“The ambitious and avaricious would be almost excusable did their passions create in them as pure and vivid a pleasure as did these acquisitions to me. A few days sufficed me to learn on the map the respective positions of the greater number of the constellations; but, in order to make a just application of this knowledge, I must have a fixed point in the heavens themselves, to serve as the basis of my observations. I had learnt that the pole star was the only immovable one in our hemisphere, and that its position determined that of the Arctic Pole; but how to distinguish this star, and ascertain with my own eyes its immobility?

“After much inquiry I learnt that there was a steel needle, which possessed the wonderful property of always turning to the earth’s poles — a marvel which was almost incredible to me even when I beheld it. Happily for me, the eldest of our old Druids

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had a mariner's compass, which he good-naturedly lent me. By the aid of this wonderful needle I soon learnt to know the four points of the horizon, and also the thirty-two points of the compass. But, as I was ignorant of the latitude of the pole star, which it was necessary to know, I took the following measures to discover it.

“Having fixed on a star, which appeared to me of the third magnitude, towards the north, I took a gimlet and pierced a small hole in the branch of a tree exactly opposite it. This done, like a true disciple of Ptolemy, I reasoned thus with myself:—

“‘This star is either fixed or movable. If fixed, my point of observation being also fixed, I shall see it continually through the hole I have pierced, and in that case shall have discovered what I want. If, on the contrary, it is movable, I shall soon cease to see it, and shall then repeat my experiment with another,’ which, in fact, I did, without any result except that of breaking my gimlet.

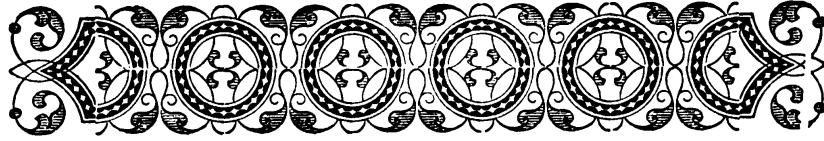
“This accident made me have recourse to another expedient. I took a fine shoot of elder, which I split lengthwise, joining the two parts together again after extracting the pith. This tube I affixed to the topmost branch of the great oak which served as my observatory; and by dint of shifting it, as I easily could, in the direction of various stars, I at length made out the pole star.

An Old Oak in the Forest. 59

“After this it was easy to find the positions of the principal constellations, by drawing imaginary lines from one star to another, according to the projection of my planisphere ; and thus I found out what sort of animals those are with which the poets have furnished the heavens, for want, maybe, of a sufficient number of men deserving this honour.

“I remember that, while observing the stars, I often reflected on the space that contains them. To form some idea of it, as I sat perched on the top of my tree, I drew a fictitious line towards a certain point of the horizon, prolonging it till my imagination could pursue it no longer. Then, supposing myself at the end of the line thus conceived, I fancied I might repeat the operation, perhaps a greater number of times than there are drops in the ocean, without even then reaching the limits of space. Alarmed at the mere existence of such immensity, I would suddenly collect my roving thoughts and quietly draw in my horns, lest on such excursions my brain should receive a shock that might deprive me of reason.”





CHAPTER IX.

SELF-HELP.

From needful sleep the precious hour he saves
To give his thirsty mind the stream it craves;
But oft he stops, bewildered and perplexed,
At some hard problem in the learned text,
Pressing his hand upon his puzzled brain,
At what the dullest schoolboy might explain.

JANE TAYLOR.

“HAVING made myself tolerably familiar with the celestial chart, I thought it time to learn something about the terrestrial, especially as Plutarch’s *Lives* and *Quintus Curtius*, which chance threw into my way about this time, recalled to my mind the exploits and passages of arms of the paladins and knights-errant, of whom I had read in that famous *Bibliothèque Bleue*.

“As I wished to know the cities, kingdoms, and empires in which these illustrious fools had signalled themselves, I resolved to trace them out; but, in so

doing, ran the risk of proving myself a greater fool than any of them. I possessed no other introduction to geography than the five maps I bought with the planisphere; and I nearly bewildered myself in my efforts to find out the use of the circles marked upon the map of the world, such as the meridians, the tropics, the zodiac, &c.

“I formed a thousand conjectures respecting the three hundred and sixty little black and white spaces that divide the equator, and at last took them for leagues, concluding, therefore, without hesitation, that the terrestrial globe was three hundred and sixty leagues in circumference. When I imparted this grand discovery to one of our recluses he said that surely could not be, for that he had himself, in a journey to Calabria, traversed three hundred and sixty leagues without seeing any signs of the world’s end. Here, then, I was at fault, and felt provoked, and should, perhaps, have given the thing up in despair but for the following little adventure:—

“I was accustomed to go on Sundays to hear mass at the Carmelites’ chapel in Luneville. One Sunday, as I reached the convent gate, I perceived Maître Renny, who had the direction of the community, seated at the end of a green alley with a book in his hand. It was Delaunay’s ‘Method of Learning Geography.’ I begged him to lend it me that I might copy it out, to which he kindly consented.

My impatience led me to run through it on my way home, and before I reached the hermitage I had learnt how the degrees of the equator are reduced to the several measures of distance in use among the various nations of the world.

“Then it was that I was first struck with the diminutiveness of our own globe in comparison with the vast extent of space which had so much alarmed me but a few months before. From that time the terms used to characterise human greatness appeared to me ridiculous enough, for I was not aware what really great things men may, after all, accomplish even on this little earth.

“In order the better to pursue my studies I made a globe with hazel wands bent into circles, upon which I notched the degrees of latitude and longitude with my knife. In the centre was a ball of clay; and a circle larger than the others, attached to three little sticks of equal size, served as a horizon, and also as a support to the whole concern. Had Archimedes’ sphere resembled this it certainly would not have excited the jealousy of Jove, who would hardly have thought it worth using his thunderbolts upon.

“I now always took my five maps with me into the forest. Here I spread them on the ground, and, having arranged them properly with the help of my compass, I imagined myself travelling through the various regions they represented in succession, whilst

I noted their relative positions in connection with one another.

“When I passed from the study of dry land to that of water, I was surprised to find that the kingdom of the fishes was vastly more extensive than that proper to man. I wondered what rank they held in the sight of the Almighty; for I could not bring myself to believe, notwithstanding the high ideas of the dignity of my own race with which Brother Palemon had sought to inspire me, that the myriads of fishes with which the sea swarms had only been created to satisfy the appetites of a comparatively small number of human creatures.

“I soon became well skilled in geography, so much so that I could name in succession, according to the order of their position, all the countries of the two great continents bathed by the different seas. By dint of following the same method with regard to the provinces and chief towns situated on the larger rivers, from their source to their mouth, I soon became as familiar with the surface of the globe as I was with the forest of St. Anne.

“Up to this point my wants and desires had been proportioned to the means of satisfying them; but now the happy equilibrium was disturbed. It would, indeed, have been easy to re-establish it, for I needed but to sink back, unregretfully, into my former ignorance; but, after a little reflection, I judged it

better to be somewhat less happy than profoundly ignorant. My passion for geography was such that even when asleep it haunted me ; and being without any appliances for pursuing my knowledge of it, I resolved on endeavouring to procure them.

“To this end I set up as a new Actæon, and waged war on the beasts of the forest, for the sole purpose of selling their skins that I might buy maps and books. Foxes, weasels, and pole-cats had to yield up to me their hairy coats, and these I sold to a furrier in Luneville. Several hares had the folly to let me ensnare them ; and, though there was a penal law against taking them, because the duke loved hunting, I made it, in this instance, subservient to that of Nature.

“The desire of gain, rectified by the use I intended to make of it, made me bold. I even carried my daring so far as to lay snares for stags and roebucks, and if I took none it was because they were scarce, and were not led by chance into that part of the forest.

“What a misfortune would it have been if I had lived in those countries where inhuman princes have been known to avenge the death of a stag with more severity than the murder of a human creature made after God’s own image ! My infractions of the game laws would no doubt have made me liable to condign punishment, and I am afraid my scientific motives would have had little weight in arrest of judgment.

“The feathered tribes contributed their quota to my instruction by the loss of their liberty, my diligence in their capture being such that in a few months I realised between thirty and forty crowns by them. I walked, or rather ran, to Nancy, with this sum in my pocket to purchase books. I greatly needed to be instructed in their value, for whatever might be the price affixed to them I could only compare it, not with their worth, but with my small means. The perjury, the beating down, the haggling, which cupidity and fraud have introduced into the trade, were unknown to me; and, as I believed booksellers incapable of overcharging, I was scrupulous about asking them to take less. I therefore placed my money on the counter, and piteously told them it was all I had, and I hoped they would not ask more for their books than they could. Vain hope! They belonged to an order of men who have deaf and dumb consciences, except, indeed, Monsieur Truain, a Breton bookseller, who had set up at Nancy, and who, noticing my earnestness and appearance of honesty, piqued himself on requiting it with fair dealing. In thus doing he unconsciously did himself an important service; for, when I was made superintendent of the Royal Library of Lorraine, I appointed this good man bookseller to it in consequence of the experience I had had of his probity.

“Pliny’s Natural History, translated by Du

Pinet, Titus Livius, with notes by Vigenère; the 'History of the Incas;' the 'Letters' of Bussy Rabutin; the 'Characters' of Theophrastus; the 'Political Testament of Louvain;' La Fontaine's 'Fables;' and a few other books, and some geographical charts, exhausted both my money and credit. I say credit, because, not having enough to pay for all these treasures, the good bookseller, who knew nothing of me, suffered me to become his debtor to the amount of twenty or thirty livres; and when I said to him, 'How can you trust me?' he answered smilingly, 'My trust is founded on your countenance and on your love of learning. I can read in your face that you will not deceive me.'

"Though his good opinion rested on rather equivocal foundations, I was much obliged to him for it, and assured him I would do my best not to forfeit it.

"Bending under the weight of my scientific load, I set forward on my five-league journey home; and, as may be supposed, was forced to pause many times to rest before I reached the hermitage, ready to drop with fatigue.

"From that time my cell was converted into a world in miniature. Its walls were covered with painted kingdoms and provinces, and, as it was very small, I fastened the celestial planisphere over my pallet, so that whenever I woke, my eyes beheld

images of stars that gave no light but to the mind.

“Hitherto I had been praised by the hermits for the diligence with which I took part in the offices they recited six times a day in the hermitage oratory ; but now, absorbed in the books I had obtained, my fervour intermitted. Brother Anthony, the eldest of the hermits, soon perceived this. He was from Barrois, the natives of which district are naturally restless and contentious. He passed for the most zealous and devout of all the recluses ; but he was also, unfortunately, the most alive to the faults of his neighbour, and the most prompt to censure them.

“I know not why these qualities should so often be found united. For the benefit of true piety, it were to be wished that they were altogether incompatible. The good old man was in despair when he found that I was extending my reading beyond the ‘Psalter,’ and the ‘Lives of the Hermits in the Desert.’ He could not forgive himself for having helped to mislead me by lending me his mariner’s compass (for it was he to whom it belonged), and as he confounded the path of ignorance with that of salvation, he strongly urged me to abandon the pursuit of secular knowledge.

“However, finding that instead of following his advice I became daily more studious, shutting myself

up more closely in my cell, he was curious to know what I did there; and one day, in spite of my carefully keeping my door locked, he took advantage of my absence and contrived to get in.

“On the table stood the sphere I had constructed of hazel wands, together with a sort of card-board planisphere, composed of several concentric and eccentric circles, both black and white, which were intended to aid me in comprehending the marvellous epicycles of Ptolemy’s system, with which I was greatly taken. Near at hand lay a graphometer, a square, a pair of wooden compasses, and several sheets of paper, on which I had traced some geometrical problems extracted from an old manuscript which had been lent me, describing the principal uses of the sector.

“Brother Anthony took this apparatus for a necromancer’s tools, and was confirmed in this alarming notion by seeing an elaborate chart of Tycho Brahe’s system, covered with figures and astronomical calculations, at the head of which were these fearful words in large letters :—

‘CALENDARIUM NATURALE MAGICUM PLE-
RAQUE ASTRONOMIÆ ARCANA COMPLEC-
TENS,’ &c.

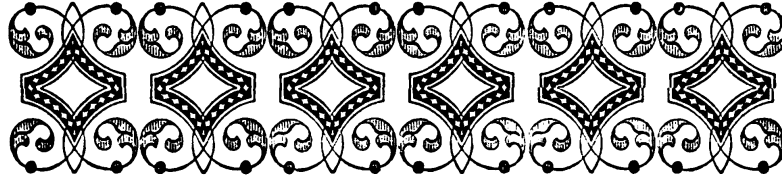
“The term *magicum* horrified the poor hermit. He took the chart for a formulary of enchantment, and was so overwhelmed with fear and suspicion that

he immediately posted off to Luneville to reveal his dreadful discovery to Father Barnabas, a bare-footed Carmelite, who was his confessor.

“ He gave him such an exaggerated description of my cell and its magic spells that Father Barnabas, without more ado, repaired to the hermitage of St. Anne to judge of the state of affairs for himself.

“ Meantime I had returned to head quarters, and when, at his request, I admitted him into my cell, he was indeed surprised at sight of the objects I have mentioned ; but, perceiving that they had nothing whatever to do with the black art, and that, moreover, I had not in the least the look of a conjuror, he could not help laughing at the simplicity of Brother Anthony. He begged him to reassure himself, and admonished me to continue my studies, saying they might one day prove useful to me. The event will show how far the worthy Carmelite’s conjectures were verified.”





CHAPTER X.

WAR IN THE HERMITAGE.

Though man a thinking being is defined,
Few use the great prerogative of mind.
How few think justly of the thinking few!
How many never think who think they do!

JANE TAYLOR.

“**T**HE fears of the credulous anchorite were thus allayed for the time, but not for long. Finding that I persisted in my pursuit of knowledge, and that I was seldom without a book or chart in my hand, he threatened to take away the latter and tear up the former.

“The trouble, the care, the money they had cost me, the pleasure I had derived from them, and the loss I should sustain if they were sacrificed to this old man’s fancies, flashed like lightning across my mind; and I impetuously told him that if he dared

to do anything of the sort he should live to repent it. Upon this he advanced towards me with uplifted hand, as if to give me a box on the ear.

“The mere idea of such an affront made me beside myself, and I seized hold of a fire-shovel that lay at hand, resolving to give him a hundred times more than I took. Servitude had bent my soul to submission; but I had that within me which would not brook an insult. Injustice and tyranny were repugnant to me, which must account, in some measure, for the strange wildness of my passion when Brother Anthony threatened the existence of my treasures. My blood boiled in my veins, and my heart throbbed as if it were in the midst of a furnace. My voice became hoarse, and my face inflamed with indignation.

“The hermit, as much frightened as if I had been one of the demons who tempted St. Anthony, began to shout ‘Help! help!’ with all his might. The brethren, who were working in the garden, flew to the rescue, greatly annoyed at the unwonted disturbance, but much more so when I just took the liberty of putting them all outside their own door, and shut myself up in state, sole master of the house.

“However, I showed moderation even in my madness, for I made no other use of the shovel, while they were in the hermitage, than to shovel them out of it. All this took place in less time than I have been telling it. Just as matters had reached their

crisis, up came the superior, to whom, through the window, I gave an energetic and fluent narrative of what had passed.

“The calmness with which he listened helped to restore me to myself. He blamed both Brother Anthony’s blind zeal and my unruly conduct, which he censured in very proper language.

“To his desire that I should immediately re-open the door, I, feeling the advantage of my position, replied by proposing a capitulation, declaring that if it were not granted I would proceed to terrible extremities.

“The first article required that what had just happened should be buried in complete oblivion. The second, that he and his brethren should allow me two hours a day to prosecute my studies, save during the harvest, the vintage, and seed-time. Lastly, I engaged on these terms to serve the community for ten years with all possible zeal and affection, without other remuneration than my food and clothing. When they had ratified this agreement I had the complaisance to open the door, and re-admit them to the possession of their own fireside.

“The day after this scene I told the hermits that, to prevent the infraction of our compact, it would be well to have it drawn up according to the forms of law. Accordingly, we all walked off to Luneville, and went to a notary of the name of Cognel, who

scribed a deed, furnished with all the proper formulæ, which we duly subscribed with our names.

“In virtue of this document, which sincerity and freedom from suspicion ought to have rendered superfluous, I secured an independence of two hours a day; and as I was now beginning to know the worth of time, I set myself to consider how I should best turn it to account.

“As we were leaving the notary’s office I perceived an old book, the title of which attracted me. It was Raymond Lully’s Encyclopædia, or *Enchaînement de toutes les Sciences*. I thought I had discovered what must be the philosopher’s stone of learning, and begged the notary to lend me the precious volume. He did more—he made me a present of it.

• “I read it all through without understanding one word of it; but I was not discouraged, for I concluded this work to be like those gold mines which are rich in proportion to their depth. I read it therefore, again, and yet a third time, but still without profit.

“I thought this must certainly be the fault of my narrow understanding, and with tears of vexation I prayed to God to enlighten me. I then reflected that though I comprehended well enough the meaning of each particular term, the periods in which they were involved were so confused and ambiguous, that

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the obscurity of the work might perhaps be as much the author's fault as mine.

"The real fact was, the work was nothing but an insipid assemblage of sophisms and metaphysical distinctions, divisions, and subdivisions, such as infected all the schools before Descartes, Leibnitz, Locke, and Newton introduced sound reasoning, and delivered good sense from the yoke of habit and opinion.

"Subsequently I thought it extraordinary that the public should ever have been so foolish as to pay sophists for teaching such twaddle; and still more so that such nonsensical stuff should have earned for some of them the proud appellations of '*the subtle*,' '*the enlightened*,' '*the irrefragable*,' and so on. What seemed worst to me was, that these old prigs had frequently had recourse to sovereign authority to compel all the world to think as they did. To judge from the pains they took to perplex and hamper the real lovers of truth and reason, one would think they had had a particular interest in perpetuating barbarism, and retaining the public within the trammels of ignorance and prejudice.

"The time and pains I had wasted in endeavouring to comprehend Raymond Lully's apocalypse made me set him down for an empiric who had trifled with posterity by bequeathing it a confused mass of enigmatical phrases. To revenge myself on this ill-conditioned fellow, I delivered his volume to the

flames, and would readily have done the same with the works of all his school, had I possessed them.

“ However, a few days afterwards curiosity led me to read a book quite as frivolous as Lully’s; for chance threw in my way a discourse on the language which will be spoken in heaven after the general resurrection, which the sapient author decided would most likely be the Hebrew. I own I could see no grounds for his belief, and thought it much more probable that the spiritualised inhabitants of that blessed kingdom would find a more suitable vehicle for expressing their sentiments. I had once heard a couple of Jews violently quarrelling in the streets of Nancy, and their discordant, deafening tones and spasmodic gestures had been very offensive to me.

“ I was often struck with the high-flown dedications prefixed to the books I read, and, as I never doubted that their authors confined themselves within the bounds of truth, or what they believed to be such, I formed an exalted idea of the merits of those personages to whom such dedications were addressed. How could I suppose that writers would dare to flatter them to their faces without exposing themselves to merited ridicule and contempt? The only thing I could not get over was, that these dedications were exclusively addressed to kings, princes, or potentates of one sort or another, whose protection of the work was implored as the instrument of its

success. 'Surely,' thought I, 'this is foolish and useless; for if the work be good it will need the protection of none; and if it be bad, neither king nor kaiser can make it go down with the public'—which only showed what a simpleton I was, and how little I knew of the matter.

" 'Again,' thought I, 'if he to whom this homage is paid really possesses the extraordinary knowledge and abilities ascribed to him, doubtless he knows it full well, and needs not that any should tell him;' for I had begun to doubt whether modesty and humility were always the portion of greatness.

"I was surprised that these dedications should be confined to the rich, the powerful, and the noble, since I had never been taught that wealth, power, and nobility ranked among the virtues; but still worse was it to discover that many of these grand people, far from being virtuous and learned, were vicious and ignorant. The flattery bestowed on them, therefore, resembled the absurd songs which the ancient Egyptians used to chant in honour of their sacred bulls, monkeys, and crocodiles.

"These reflections on dedications paved the way to certain others I presently had the opportunity of making on the envy, hatred, and malice unhappily found not altogether unknown in the literary republic.

"Having one day slipped into the Carmelites'

library at Luneville, I stumbled on a theological pamphlet, to which was attached an answer to, and refutation of, its contents. They seemed to me to form a perfect picture of all the vices of the heart and understanding. Irony, duplicity, imposture, hypocrisy, and malignity were there so monstrously revealed that I recoiled from them with disgust and amazement. And yet, mark you, the two antagonists made an equal parade of sincerity and good faith, and glossed their arguments with the utmost artifice; so that, being too simple to make out which of them had the best of it, I derived about as much benefit from their lucubrations as I had done from those of Raymond Lully.

“These were not the only occasions of my wasting time on what turned out to be worthless reading. I had attributed to science what are properly the characteristics of virtue; but my eyes gradually opened to the unpleasant discovery that even geniuses such as Scaliger, Scoppius, Jerome Cardan, and others, would wrangle about a hair—the choice of a word or turn of a sentence.

“These critical disputes had something rather amusing in them; but theological disputes greatly troubled me when I thought how they might open the door to heresies and schisms. These learned contentions did much to wean me from controversies in general, since I could not but note how subtle and

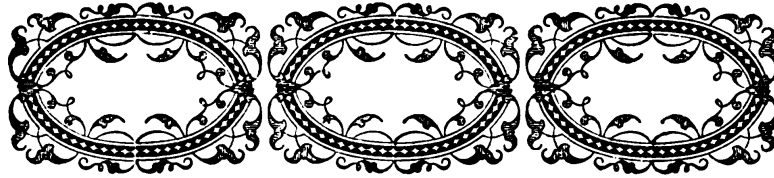
abstract were the subjects discussed with such heat, and how impossible it was for any but the Almighty to clear them up.

“ I must say the base partiality and time-serving of some writers made me ready to throw up study altogether, so sick was I of their nauseous flattery of the great, and still more of the miserable pretexts by which some of them endeavoured to extenuate deeds of cruelty and violence, such as the extirpation of the aborigines in the New World, the pillagings, profanations, and incendiarisms perpetrated during the thirty years' war, the sacking of the Palatinate, &c.—all frightful events which ignorance would have spared me the grievous knowledge of, and which no arguments—no, none—of cold-hearted politicians can ever prevent from sullyng the annals of Christendom !

“ The apologies that have been published to justify such excesses remind one of the infamous decree of the Athenian magistrates, ordaining that every action of King Demetrius should be held holy before the gods, and just before men. Such traits of fanaticism indicate the source of idolatry a hundred times better than all the volumes that have been written on its origin. If examples of this kind scandalised me, I at least managed to profit by them ; for they contributed more than anything else to abate in me that self-sufficiency which is more or less the inevitable result of knowing a little more than one's immediate neigh-

bours. I became convinced that since human knowledge is so liable to prejudice, and so often at variance with conscience and probity, it must be mere literary vanity which led men to prize it so far above its just worth. Now, I had made my own observations and reflections on vanity many times, and had always come to the same conclusion, namely, that those who are affected by it are disagreeable and contemptible. I decided, therefore, that those who aimed at public estimation, and yet suffered themselves to betray so paltry a weakness, were less wise than the beasts of the forest, which, as I had often observed, always took the most direct means to obtain their end. Thus, in taking pains to shun vanity, I only did by reason what the animals did by instinct. I must say that the general impressions I obtained of what passed in the world without, and the passions that actuated its movements, made me cherish the obscurity in which I lived, and prevented any eager desire to emerge from it."





CHAPTER XI.

A WILD CAT.

Truth is but one with Heaven in his esteem,
The sparkling spring of life's eternal stream ;
And hence, with equal singleness of heart,
He traces out each less essential part.

JANE TAYLOR.

HERE a break occurs in Duval's autobiography. The Chevalier Koch, however, fills up the gap.

“Duval's writings,” says he, “exhibit in a remarkable manner the indefatigable perseverance with which he overcame the obstacles that his own ignorance and the absence of every kind of aid placed in his way ; and also how, by the efforts of his genius, he succeeded in clearing a path for himself to the attainment of the most abstract sciences and every kind of knowledge. I refer my reader, for this, to his fragment of autobiography ;

but let me also here relate some anecdotes of another nature, which I had from his own lips, and which deserve to be repeated.

“One day, when he was in the forest, birds’-nesting and snaring game—his favourite mode of earning the means of supplying himself with books and maps—he perceived, in a tree at a little distance, an enormous wild cat, whose glittering eyes and velvet coat greatly excited his longing to possess her. Resolved to attempt the enterprise at whatever risk, he climbed the tree in which she was lodged, and finding she retreated to the extremities of the branches in order to avoid him, he cut himself a stout stick with which to bring her down. He aimed a blow at the creature’s head, but she dodged it, and springing nimbly to the ground, took to her heels with all her might. Our young hunter, exasperated at having missed his prey, leaped from his perch, and pursued it so closely that the cat, finding herself on the point of being taken, sought refuge in a hollow tree.

“Duval’s ardour redoubled. Laying himself all along on the ground, he inserted his stick into the mouth of the cavity, and, working it swiftly round, worried the cat so effectually that she, frightened and hurt, darted furiously out of the hole, and found herself in her enemy’s arms.

“The lad now endeavoured to strangle the beast, which, maddened with pain, and finding its head free,

fastened upon his hair, and bit him savagely. Duval, however, would not relinquish his hold, but dragging the cat down forcibly by the legs" (we know how cats stretch themselves out), "plucked it off his bleeding head, and put an end to its life by dashing it against a tree. He then attached the body to his stick, and returned, an exulting victor, to the hermitage. The hermits were alarmed when they saw him covered with blood; but he joyously cried,—

" 'It is nothing, my fathers. Wash my head with a little warmed wine, and I shall be all right.'

" Then, exhibiting his cat, he said with satisfaction, 'There is my reward.'

" His zeal in the chase had already been the means of supplying him with quite a little library of books, when an unforeseen occurrence enabled him to add to it considerably.

" One day, as he was walking in the forest, displacing at every step the crackling autumn leaves of varied colours, he perceived something sparkling on the ground. He picked it up, and found it to be a three-sided gold seal of costly workmanship. The following Sunday he went to Luneville as usual, to hear mass, and took that opportunity to request the curé to give notice of the matter at the *prone*, in order that whoever had lost the seal might know where to apply for it.

" Some weeks afterwards a man on horseback

knocked at the door of the hermitage, and asked to speak to the boy of St. Anne's. When Valentine appeared,—

“ ‘ You have found a seal, I understand,’ said the stranger to him.

“ ‘ Yes, sir.’

“ ‘ Very well ; you may give it to me, for I am the owner of it.’

“ ‘ Hold, sir : before I do what you ask, I must beg you to describe the coat of arms blazoned on the seal.’

“ ‘ Pshaw, boy ! what should *you* know of coats of arms ? A likely thing indeed !’

“ ‘ As you please, sir ; but if you don't you must excuse my giving up the seal.’

“ The cool determination with which this was said, without anything uncivil in it, made the horseman look attentively at Duval, who was not an incompetent judge of the test he demanded, having among his queer little collection of books the Père Menestrier's ‘ Elements of Heraldry,’ which chance had thrown in his way ; and he always availed himself of the opportunities afforded by what we call chance.

“ The gentleman was Mr. Forster, an Englishman of merit, who happened to be then visiting Luneville. He had dropped the seal, apparently, in his rambles through the forest. Struck with the singularity of the lad, he questioned him on various subjects, and

was surprised and even amazed at his answers. Finding he really knew something of heraldry, he described to him his arms, received the seal, and rewarded the finder with two pieces of gold.

“Desirous of improving his acquaintance with the lad, he made him promise to come and breakfast with him every holiday at Luneville. Duval kept his word, and at every visit was presented by his kind friend with a piece of money worth six livres.

“Mr. Forster’s generosity never relaxed during the whole of his sojourn in Luneville, nor did he fail to assist his *protégé* with good counsel concerning his studies. Duval was sure to make progress under such direction; and, with good guidance to second his indefatigable application, he rapidly advanced in knowledge.

“The number of his books had gradually increased to about four hundred, but his wardrobe remained the same, consisting of a coarse linen suit in summer, and another of rough woollen for winter, with *sabots*.

“His frequent visits to Luneville, the opulence and luxury he there witnessed, and the comparatively easy circumstances in which he began to find himself, had no effect whatever in making him swerve from his accustomed simplicity. He would have considered it a crime to bestow an obolus of what he earned or what was given him on anything unconnected with his studies. As long as economy in what concerned

his physical wants enabled him to be lavish in whatever tended to his mental improvement, privations cost him nothing."

However, a change was coming over him. In proportion as his mind enriched itself, and his ideas expanded, poor Valentine began to reflect on his remote, isolated condition, and to feel himself misplaced where he was. He sighed for a wider, freer sphere of action, and wished he had not bound himself for ten long years to the hermits of St. Anne.

"Ask not the boy who, when the breeze of morn
First shakes the glittering dew from every thorn,
Unfolds his flock, then, under bank or bush,
Sits linking cherry-stones or plaiting rush,
How fair is freedom. He was always free.
To carve his rustic name upon a tree,
To snare the mole, or, with ill-fashioned hook,
To draw the incautious minnow from the brook,
Are life's prime pleasures in his simple view,
His flock the chief concern he ever knew."

COWPER, *Retirement.*

But ask the boy to whom minnows, moles, and wild cats are worthless, except as they aid him in the pursuit of something far higher for which he thirsts, and he will give a different answer. And such a lad was Valentine Duval.

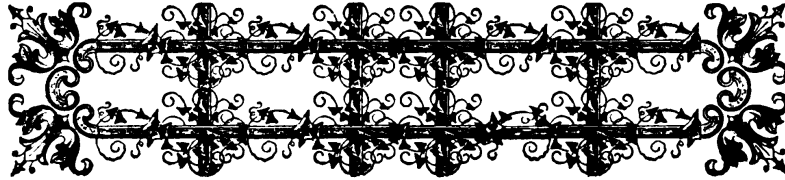
From this period he was pursued by a feeling of

disquiet, whether about his duties in the field and forest, or quietly shut up among his books.

But “Nè somma pace, nè somma inquietudine possono durare quaggiù.”*

* Silvio Pellico.





CHAPTER XII.

THE ILLUSTRIOUS STRANGER.

“ A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.”

ONE day, as he lay stretched at the foot of a tree, with his maps and charts scattered around him, a man of noble and distinguished exterior suddenly appeared before him, and, with a smile, asked what he was doing.

“ I am studying geography,” said Valentine.

“ Do you understand anything about it ? ” said the stranger.

“ Certainly I do not waste my time on things I don't understand,” said Valentine, rather injured.

“ And what, then, are you seeking on that map ? ”

“ The direct route to Quebec.”

“ And why ? ”

“Because I should like to go there,” said Valentine hastily, “and pursue my studies at the university.”

“Ay?—but why should you wish to go so far, when there are better universities than at Quebec near at hand? I could tell you of one myself if I liked.”

The next moment this mysterious visitant was surrounded by a group of others, two of them lads evidently of high birth, and followed at no great distance by a *cortège* of attendants, richly appavelled.

The two boys were the young princes of Lorraine, Leopold Clement and Francis, afterwards husband of the Empress Maria Theresa. They had been hunting in the forest, accompanied by their tutors, the Count de Vidampierre and Baron Pfutschner. The count, having wandered a little from his party, had come unexpectedly upon the peasant lad; and while satisfying his curiosity as to his unusual employment, had been joined by the princes and nobles, who had ridden up full of wonder at what was passing.

Now Valentine had two years before fallen in with the duke himself, who, after some talk, had ridden on, and afterwards sent him four gold pieces, only two of which reached him.

As soon as the present party found who Valentine was, they put to him a variety of questions, all of which he answered readily and with good sense. The count and the baron then joined in urging him

to carry on his studies in the Jesuit college of Pont-à-Mousson. Valentine, bewildered by the suddenness and importance of the proposition, said, "I must have time to think;" and, in distress, endeavoured to abstract and concentrate his thoughts, while the hunters, pitying him, awaited his answer in silence.

At length he assumed a resolute look, and exclaimed,—

"I will never—no, no, never!—consent to forfeit my liberty. Unless you assure me that I shall always have that, I prefer remaining as I am."

He was reassured on this head; and the kind Baron Pfutschner told him that every difficulty should be removed, and he would himself return shortly and fetch him away.

How Duval's head must have whirled as he saw them ride off, and then vacantly looked on his maps, gathered them up, and drove home his flock to St. Anne's! He was now in his twenty-second year. He had been four years with the hermits, and had pledged himself to remain with them ten years; but his new and powerful friends had promised to remove all obstacles. It is a thousand pities he has not left us his own account of his communicating his stirring news to the anchorites, and how it was received by Brother Martinien, Brother Paul, Brother Anthony, and Brother Michael. Doubtless Brother Anthony

shook his head, and said it was no more than might have been expected—he only hoped no harm would come of it; and Brother Martinien would congratulate his young servitor, and add a word or two of wholesome advice; and Brother Paul, “being such an one as Paul the aged,” would tell him that in all his long life he had known many an unexpected thing, but never a more unexpected one than this, and he hoped his head might not be turned by it.

The old men appear to have grown fond of the ardent, inquiring youth, who never exchanged his field and forest work but for head labour, of which they were themselves incapable. Doubtless they had a secret pride in him, which they took good care to keep among themselves, and not let him by any means find out; and when he was gone they would wag their heads, and sigh, and look thoughtfully into his deserted cell, and feel a blank, and have many a reminiscence, half pleasant, half sad, of “that singular lad, Valentine.”

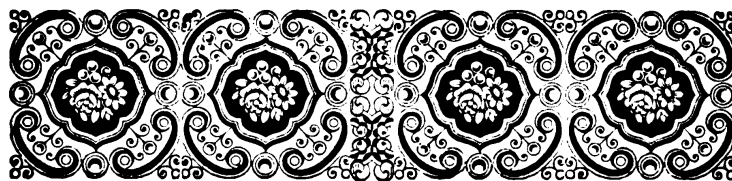
It was on the 13th of May, 1717, that Valentine had the momentous encounter in the forest; and, in the course of a few days, Baron Pfutschner arrived at the hermitage to tell him and his patrons that Duke Leopold of Lorraine accorded him his royal protection, and that he would himself supply him with the means of pursuing and completing his

The Illustrious Stranger. 91

studies. He ended by inviting him to accompany him to the court of Luneville.

Valentine's cell had become dear to him. He had passed in it most of his happiest hours, and amassed in it his most valued treasures. However, his decision had already been made; and the hermits making no attempt to enforce their claim on him in virtue of the bond he had been so forward to get made out, he quitted them with tears in his eyes, departing with the baron in a coach drawn by six horses.





CHAPTER XIII.

A SCENE AT COURT.

“There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the ebb, leads on to fortune.”

ON arriving at Luneville, he was presented to the duke, who received him in the midst of a crowded court, drawn together by the expectation of this singular introduction. To all the questions addressed to him the young man replied quietly and modestly, without the least hesitation or embarrassment, notwithstanding the novelty of his position and the importance of the part he had to play.

When released by the duke, he found himself accosted by various ladies of the court, who, making their remarks more freely than they would have done to one of their own rank, openly complimented him on the beauty of his teeth. He very dryly replied,—

“What of that, ladies? It is but a blessing I enjoy in common with the dogs.”

The duke, charmed with his *naïveté* and pleasing appearance, renewed to him his promise of protection, and commissioned Baron Pfutschner to see to his establishment in the college of Pont-à-Mousson, whither he was directed to convey his books and other effects. The baron had already undertaken to maintain him at his own expense, though he was but moderately rich; and Barons Sickengen and De Weix liberally offered to take a share of his charges; but the duke assigned him a sufficient allowance from his private purse. Duval's passion for study, coupled with his desire to answer the expectations of his illustrious patron, led him, from that moment, to redouble his zeal. He applied himself chiefly to history, geography, and antiquities, in which studies his new guides were well able to assist him.

The sedentary life he now led, however, unrelieved by his old labours in field and forest, soon began to tell upon his health. Worn with constant vigils and application, his imagination began to exert an undue influence over his mind; and chance throwing him about this time into the company of a very beautiful young lady, poor Valentine fell desperately in love.

There was no help for it but to fall out of it again; and, to conquer his own unmanageable thoughts, he, in imitation of some old saint, took a dose of hemlock

that very nearly ended his life, which was only saved at the cost of a severe illness. Weakened as he was, however, he would not relinquish his studies. The utmost he could be prevailed on to do was to breathe the pure air now and then in the woods and meadows. These delightful rambles recalled to him his former pastoral life, the remembrance of which was now so fondly cherished, that to the end of his days this mode of relaxation was the sweetest to him that he could enjoy.

He also continued to find pleasure in snaring birds, and in fishing. Having observed one day that there were eels in the brook that flowed beneath the walls of the convent, he invented the following means of taking them:—He passed a rod, nicely poised on a pivot, through one of the windows of his chamber; to one end he attached a line and hook, while the other communicated with a little bell at the side of his bed, so that if an eel should happen to bite the hook during the night; the inclination of the rod would cause the bell to ring and wake him.

Early one morning, hearing the bell tinkle, Valentine sprang out of bed, ran to the window, and, drawing in the line, had some difficulty in raising the weight attached to it. He found it to be an enormous eel, and was removing it from the hook, when it slipped through his hands, and buried itself in his bed.

After hunting for it some time in vain, Valentine heard a grand disturbance going on in the bakehouse below. The eel had found a hole in the floor, and, gliding through it, had fallen into the baker's trough, just as he was kneading the bread. The man, scared at the ugly wriggling creature that so unaccountably came flying through the air, took it, says the Chevalier Koch, for the old serpent of Holy Writ, and ran off, bawling for help, to the consternation of all the convent. The brethren hastened from various quarters to learn what was the matter, and would have been quite unable to explain the enigma, had not Valentine joined them and afforded its solution.

He remained two years in the Jesuit college, during which time he attained a competent knowledge of Latin; being chiefly incited thereto by the desire of reading Varro, *In Re Rusticá*. His advance in general studies so well pleased the Duke of Lorraine, that, to reward and stimulate him, he invited him to travel to Paris in his suite; and Baron Pfutschner seconded the proposal, telling him it would help to "rub off the clown."

This was towards the close of 1718, the year in which the famous quadruple alliance was formed between England, Holland, France, and Austria, to repress the ambition of Spain.

A dozen years or so before, the Emperor Leopold divided his vast dominions between his two sons,

Joseph and Charles, making the former king of Hungary and Rome, the latter king of Spain. He caused them to sign an agreement in his presence that in the event of Joseph, his successor, dying without sons, Charles should succeed his brother; but that if Charles also died without a male heir, Joseph's daughters, not those of Charles, should take precedence on the imperial throne.

However, Charles did not adhere to this when the time came. The old emperor died in 1706, and was succeeded by his son Joseph, who fell a victim to small-pox in 1711. Perhaps, had he been treated like Duval, he might have recovered; instead of which, or of any better course, not only was every breath of fresh air excluded from his bedroom, but the poor, unlucky man was swathed in twenty yards of stout scarlet broadcloth when his fever was at its height, and in this miserable condition very naturally expired. Many are the good words and deeds recorded of him.

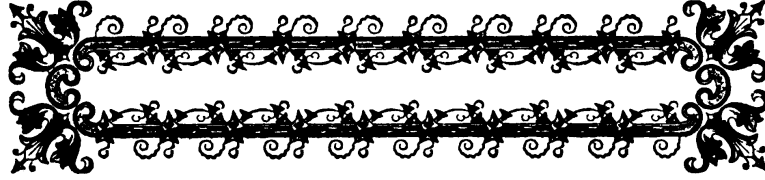
Charles was just then busy, contesting the throne of Spain with the Duke of Anjou, who had assumed the title he finally secured of Philip V. Charles, after getting our Lord Peterborough to make that famous defence of Barcelona, left his kingdom in order to look after his empire, and, hastening to Germany, received the imperial crown.

Then ensued a good deal of negotiating. Philip

had married the Princess of Parma, who laid claim to the duchy of Tuscany. Louis XIV. died, and his successor took part in the quadruple alliance, one condition of which was that Victor Amadeus, Duke of Savoy, should exchange Sicily for Sardinia, and thenceforth be styled its king.

Meanwhile, the Emperor Charles, setting at naught his promise that his brother's daughters should take precedence of his own, established a new law of succession, known as the Pragmatic Sanction, and obtained the consent of the European powers to his being succeeded by his daughter, the Archduchess Maria Theresa. He already designed to bestow this young princess in marriage on Francis, eldest son of the Duke of Lorraine, one of the little princes who had encountered Duval in the road. At that time he was only nine years old.

**F**



CHAPTER XIV.

AN OPERA.

Needs he the tragic fur, the smoke of lamps,
To thaw him into feeling? or the smart
And snappish dialogue, that flippant wits
Call comedy, to prompt him to a smile?

COWPER.

THE joy of Duval may easily be conceived at this invitation of the good-natured duke to visit the gayest capital in Europe under the royal auspices. The Jesuit fathers doubtless gave him many a wholesome caution to start with. Baron Pfutschner gave him the money to buy an opera ticket. Luckily for us, though he neither kept a journal nor wrote letters, he has left one sketch of his first impressions in Paris.

“As I stood,” says he, “on the Place des Victoires,

contemplating a trophy, in the erection of which humanity and moderation had certainly not been consulted, I perceived a great many carriages, filled with gaily-dressed persons, all rolling in one direction.

“ On asking whither they were bound, I was told, ‘ For the opera.’ This instantly reminded me that, before my departure from Lorraine, one of the duke’s gentlemen-in-waiting had given me the money for an opera ticket, in order that I might avail myself of it to witness so brilliant a spectacle. Resolving without hesitation to fulfil the good-natured donor’s intention, I repaired to the Palais Royal, where I fell in with the old Marquis de Trichâteaux, Master of the Horse to his Royal Highness of Lorraine. On acquainting this nobleman with my design, he had the kindness to say that if I wished to go to the opera, I might do so without putting my hand into my pocket; and, drawing my arm within his, he took me to his own box.

“ I may as well remark here that I had, as yet, never seen a theatrical performance of any kind whatever. Not but that there was a very good company at Luneville, salaried by the duke, who afforded the public, as well as the court, gratuitous admission to the theatre. My timidity and love of retirement had withheld me from taking advantage of it.

“ I may, therefore, compare my breathless amaze-

ment, on the present occasion, to that of a North American Indian, except that he would have been accustomed to conceal his emotions, and, very little comprehending what he saw, would not have had his sensations quickened by a cultivated understanding. The opera was 'Isis,' and by the time the prologue was finished, I entirely understood the subject about to be represented.

"I have already said* how diligently I had applied myself to the study of mythology at the hermitage of St. Anne. Indeed, I am ashamed to say that the heathen fables fastened themselves a good deal more easily on my mind than church history. Besides, I was so fond of classical geography, that I was acquainted with most of the scenes of the fabulous events of heathen mythology.

"No sooner, therefore, did I find that the scene of the opera about to be performed was upon the borders of the river Inachus, which watered the territories of the famous Agamemnon, than the topography of Argos and Mycenæ, appeared spread out before my inner sight almost as familiarly as that of the environs of Luneville.

"A shrill whistle announced the commencement of the piece, when, on the rolling up of a curtain, there

* Apparently Duval wrote a more complete autobiography than he left behind him.—ED.

appeared, as if by magic, a smiling landscape, studded with palaces and venerable ruins. I was astonished to see, at the remotest end of the stage, a number of vessels tossing about with so natural a motion, that I could have sworn they were at the mercy of a real tempest.

“But how shall I express my unbounded amazement when I beheld the divinities of air, water, earth, and the nether regions, assemble on every side to render homage to Jupiter, who appeared seated on a refulgent cloud, leaning on his eagle, and wielding his tremendous thunderbolts! For the moment it seemed the actual reality of what I had read in the forest, and as though the polytheism of the ancients had really a substantial shape. The lamentations of Hierax, Io’s lover, and the grief of Pan on beholding his dear Syrinx changed into a bed of reeds, made me shed tears, which were soon checked by a sweet concert of flutes, horns, and bagpipes, played by Mercury and a numerous group of gallant shepherds, for the purpose of lulling the vigilant Argus to sleep.

“Indeed, the harmony was so well calculated to induce slumber, that I could scarcely refrain from dropping off myself. However, I strenuously resisted the inclination, being eager to contemplate the lovely Io, wandering on the borders of the river which had given her birth. While I was compassionating her fate a dazzling cloud descended from the sky,

and, suddenly opening, displayed to view proud Juno, seated upon her throne with all the grandeur and majesty conceivable, crowned with a diadem, and holding a sceptre. The haughty goddess inspired me with so much veneration that I was ready to enrol myself among her adorers, but quickly changed my mind when, with an inclination of her sceptre, she summoned the implacable Erinnys from the depths of the infernal regions. The monster instantly appeared, amidst a whirlwind of flame, her head bristling with serpents, while in one hand she held a torch, in the other a knot of adders, which appeared to me actually to twist and writhe, as they darted out their forked tongues.

“The jealous goddess commanded this fiend to torment, and pursue from place to place, the gentle daughter of Inachus, whom the inconstancy of Jupiter had made her rival. So faithfully was she obeyed, that, the next instant, the beautiful nymph beheld herself transported into the frozen, ice-bound regions of Scythia, whither my imagination likewise carried me, as it were, bodily. When I saw the hyperborean people issue from their melancholy caverns and huts, and heard them sing the rigours of their climate with hoarse and quavering voices, I began sympathetically to creep with cold, and I remember blowing my fingers as if they were numbed.

“But when the scene changed, and represented

the unfortunate Io transported by the fury into the country of the Calybes, I feared lest, with her, I should be scorched by the fires that flamed forth from their furnaces. I was terrified at the reverberation of the Cyclops' hammers, as they fell with heavy blows upon the anvil. But no words can express my sensations when the three furies, in the forms ascribed to them in mythology, issued from a dark cave, accompanied by war and all its attendant horrors—sickness, conflagrations, inundations, and shipwrecks, all of which told us, in their gloomy chant, that they did not mean to remain idle. This formidable troop announced its benevolent intentions towards us poor mortals in the following cheerful words:—

‘ Que le fer, que la faim, que le feu, que les eaux,
Que tout serve à creuser mille et mille tombeaux !
Qu'on s'empresse d'entrer dans les royaumes sombres ! *

“They made me tremble all over ; and I protest I never felt more alarmed in my life. However, in the twinkling of an eye the scene changed again, and I beheld before me the banks of the Nile, and, in the distance, the steep rocks of lower Egypt, over which fell a cataract so naturally that it seemed as though a real river must have been turned upon the stage.

* It may be said that these lines almost prophetically expressed the days of the guillotines and noyades close at hand.—ED.

“While contemplating this marvel I perceived, near the seven mouths of the Nile, the wretched Io, who was being drawn by her tormentor from the waves, beneath which she would have taken refuge in her desperation. Her steps were feeble and unsteady, her face was pale, her look vacant; and I heard her, in the excess of her grief, conjure Jupiter, in a voice half stifled with sighs, to grant her the boon of death.

“‘Put an end to my miseries, powerful Lord of the World!’ she feebly uttered.

“At this I could hardly contain myself; all the passions akin to pity and tenderness besieged my soul. I was so indignant that I would willingly have strangled one and all of the divinities who had abetted the persecutions of the beautiful, unhappy heroine, not excepting great Jupiter himself, whom I secretly cursed a thousand times. It was fortunate I was not in the pit, or I verily believe I should have flown to the rescue, and chased that detestable fury to her proper home.

“However, I was presently appeased; for, upon the fickle son of Saturn promising his better-half to be insensible henceforth to the attractions of Io, Juno not only desisted from her persecutions, but consented that the injured nymph should, under the name of Isis, add one to the infinity of deities already adored in Egypt.

“However, as she knew by experience how little

dependence was to be placed on the mighty Jove, she required, and not without reason, that he should give her his promise in a way not to be broken. The Thunderer complied in the following impressive formula :—

‘ Dark river Styx ! witness the oath I make—
An oath thou know’st that gods can never break.’

“ What a pity that men should not have invented an oath for kings, lovers, &c., as impossible for them to break as fable represents this to have been for the gods !

“ I was so enchanted with Mrs. Juno’s complaisance, that I wished her whatever attractions might best fix the affections of her inconstant lord. As to the freshly-created goddess, whom I saw ascending to the sky, in company with several other divinities, all of them comfortably seated on a bright cloud, I hoped that the pleasures of immortality might make amends to her for the cruel sufferings that had so excited my compassion, and that the people of Egypt might not confound her claims to their adoration with those of their leeks and onions, their fishes and crocodiles. This apotheosis concluded the opera of ‘ Isis.’

“ Hitherto I had laughed at the courtiers when they declared that my excess of study would disorder my brain ; but I must confess that, on the

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occasion I have just described, their predictions were nearly verified. My strange emotions on beholding such a succession of unexpected and dazzling objects produced an effect on me which lasted several days. I could neither eat nor sleep, and was in such a listless, dreamy state, that it amounted to a species of mental intoxication. In imagination I was still at the opera, beholding and applauding the wonders which I had admired all the more because I knew nothing of their mechanism. I was like the man of Argos spoken of by Horace, who, seated alone upon the stage, neither actor nor spectator, imagined himself witnessing the most beautiful tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides.

‘ Fuit haud ignobilis Argus
Qui se credebat miros audire tragædos,
In vacuo lætus sessor plausorque theatro.’

HORAT., *Epist. Liv. 2, Ep. 2.*

“ This extreme excitement, added to the recollection of some antichristian maxims which had not escaped my ears, brought me to the conclusion that the opera was not the place where youth would learn to subdue its passions. And I was very much scandalised to learn that this alluring spectacle had been introduced into France by *an abbé*,* who brought it from a country which I had supposed the asylum of sound and stern morality.

* *Metastasio.*

“I have since learnt that we owe Italy no more thanks for her Machiavellian maxims and vile system of taxation than for her enervating operas.

“To shake off my melancholy I visited Versailles, where I arrived just as the fountains were about to play for the pleasure of his Royal Highness of Lorraine. The sight of the jets, the cascades, and a thousand other wonders of hydraulic art, tended to increase, rather than dissipate, the state of illusion in which I was living. I could scarcely believe that this multitude of marvels was the work of men’s hands, or that any power short of Neptune’s could force such a prodigious mass of water to so extraordinary a height.

“I was delighted with the gardens, on account of their extent and magnificence, the diversity, and at the same time regularity, with which they were laid out; but I ceased to wonder at this when I was told that Louis XIV. had given much of his personal attention to gardening and arboriculture, which Virgil and Varro have pronounced worthy of kings and consuls.

“A French author has remarked that the soil, far from being insensible to the attentions of its august master, has shown itself proud and grateful. As far as Versailles is concerned, I think the compliment deserved; but, on my observing to my companions that if Louis deserved his title of Great, it

was rather for his patronage of the useful arts than for his conquests, they were almost ready to stone me.

“At Versailles I saw, for the first time, the valuable shrub that produces the coffee-berry, together with various other rare plants, the sight of which gave me indescribable pleasure. I argued with myself that their importers could never have taken the trouble and care to bring them from such far-distant regions merely for the gratification of our curiosity; but that, actuated by far nobler motives, they had done so to ascertain whether they might not be naturalised and made useful to their country; for who can calculate the advantages that may result to a population from the attainment of some new farinaceous, medicinal, or aromatic plant, supposing it can be made to flourish in our soil as well as in that natural to it? Perhaps a solitary specimen may have sufficed to introduce a new branch of commerce into many provinces. The tobacco plant and orange tree, brought from Macao by a Portuguese sailor, are proofs of this. Ask the Cape settlers whether or not they are indebted to the Dutch for transporting the vine from the Canary Islands to the sunny hills of the Cape of Good Hope.

“To my mind Lucullus is less to be honoured for his victories over Mithridates than for having imported the first cherry tree into Italy, which he found, according to Pliny, in the neighbourhood of

Cerasus.* As there is, beyond doubt, more merit in enriching a territory than in enlarging it at our neighbours' expense, those who educate princes would do better to instil this fact into their minds than to direct so much of their attention to the vain exploits of Alexanders and Cæsars.

“As for me, had it been my bad luck to be born in heathen times, I should have worshipped Ceres, Triptolemus, and Bacchus, before all the other gods, because the theologians, which is to say the poets of those times, aver that they all owed their divine honours to having taught men to cultivate the fruits of the earth.

“Next to the fountains and exotics, my wondering admiration was demanded by the immense number of statues which decorate the gardens of Versailles. There, for the first time, I saw the group of three goddesses appealing to the Phrygian shepherd which of them, for her beauty, deserved the apple. For my part I thought it a very difficult question; and I was so charmed with this piece of sculpture, that if it had come within my means of acquisition I'm afraid I should have returned to Lorraine in very extraordinary company.

“I *must* say, however, I was somewhat surprised to find representatives, in this enchanted spot, of all

* Now Keresoum, a maritime city of Cappadocia: hence the derivation of *cerise*.—ED.

the absurdities to which a profane antiquity offered incense. I could not help thinking it would have been better had such marbles been removed to make way for the respectable busts of those few kings who, skilled in the art of virtuous government, had sought to conduct their people to happiness by the safest and most legitimate paths. I would gladly have seen there also busts of George d'Amboise, of Sully, of Colbert, and some other true patriots. Those of Alexander, Cæsar, and all their fellow-murderers, would have no interest for me, in comparison with men who, by their knowledge, their noble principles, and their purity of life, had contributed to ennoble humanity by freeing it from barbarism, servility, and prejudice. Such objects would have had a better effect than senseless figures of Cephalus, Endymion, Adonis, and all the rest of the mythological trash.

“I know that France might quote the examples of Greece and Rome, who, however, believed their own fables ; but, at any rate, the Greeks employed their Myro and their Phidias to perpetuate their gratitude to the great men who had served their country. If the Medes and Persians have transmitted no monuments of this kind to their country,* it is because Susa, Ecbatana, and Persepolis were peopled by slaves and courtiers, and because, wherever despotism has

* Which we now find, however, they have.—ED.

had sway, the sacred names of Country and of Liberty have had no signification.

“I have often heard the French speak of the Dutch, as they do of the Swiss, with the polite contempt of Greeks for Bœotians; nevertheless, I think there are few towns in France that have rendered such true and deserved homage to real merit as the Dutch evinced in erecting a bronze statue to Erasmus at Rotterdam. Moreover, I have been told that the motives of those who set it up were less equivocal than of those who have erected most of the colossal and equestrian monuments in Europe.

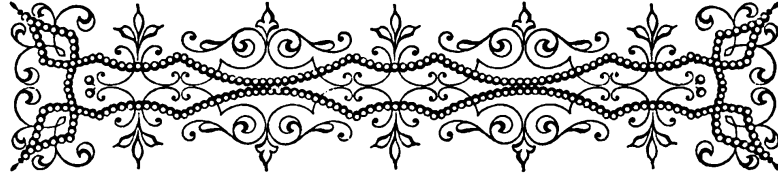
“Subsequently to my visit to Versailles, I found that the taste for frivolous and objectionable sculpture was far more widely spread than I had supposed; for as I happened one day to pass by the country-seat of the Bishop of Metz, at Frascati, I observed that the grounds were adorned with numerous statues, which, of course, I concluded could be no other than those of eminent divines and heavenly-minded missionaries. Naturally wishing to examine so improving a collection, I entered the gardens; but what was my surprise when, on approaching a basin of water, I perceived a Venus rising from the waves, extremely well executed, while, near at hand, were groups of Pluto and Proserpine, and other subjects equally undesirable!

“They told me the worthy bishop was so careful of

these works of art, that he clothed them during the winter, to preserve them from the inclemency of the season. It seemed rather an odd idea. However, my informant added, that he *also* clothed a great number of the poor at the same season.

“After traversing the parterres and shrubberies of Versailles in every direction, I visited the interior of the magnificent palace which they adorn. It appeared to me truly worthy of the monarch to whom, according to the device adopted *by himself* (a sun that gives light to many globes), power and ability to govern many kingdoms were imparted. If ever the splendour of riches could have inspired me with respect and reverence, it would have been in that dazzling temple of Plutus; but the recollections of the miseries of my childhood embittered me against such a lavish misapplication of wealth, and I regarded Versailles as the arsenal where those thunderbolts had been forged, which, under the name of *édits bursaux*, or money edicts, had desolated my unhappy country, and indirectly been the cause of my praying more than once that death might release me from cold and hunger.

“Thus, while most would have been loath to quit this luxurious spot, I turned away from it only too gladly.”



CHAPTER XV.

PROGRESS AND GRATITUDE.

There is nothing good in man but his young feelings and his old thoughts.

JOUBERT.

A character is a full-formed will.

NOVALIS.

HERE ends the last fragment of Duval's autobiography, which the chevalier must help us to continue.

"Imagine," says he, "a young man of four-and-twenty, with a lively imagination and observant mind, accustomed to read and reflect deeply, and new to the world, who suddenly finds himself in the midst of Paris.

"Nothing could equal Duval's astonishment. At first he longed to possess everything he saw, and re-

garded each object with as much wonder as a young savage, only with this difference—that Duval's discernment enabled him to derive instruction from whatever he saw.

“ At length, with a mind stored with new ideas and varied information, gleaned from the polished and communicative persons among whom he had so happily been cast, he proceeded to Holland and the Netherlands, and after a brief tour returned to Luneville at the close of 1719.

“ The duke then appointed him his librarian, with a salary of seven hundred livres, and professor of history at the Royal Academy of Luneville. Though lodged at court, he was entirely at liberty. The duke exempted him from all etiquettes, reserving to himself, however, the privilege of summoning him to his presence from time to time, especially when not quite well, and confined to his room.”

That is to say, the duke, a little gouty, or with a cold in his head, settled himself in his easy-chair, and set Valentine Duval talking about his illness in the sheepcote, his hermit life with Brother Palemon, the visit of the jolly canons, and the sayings and doings of the brothers of St. Anne; or he questioned him about his curious and miscellaneous course of reading, and enjoyed his keen and original remarks.

At all events, when the chat was ended, the good duke always put a piece of money into his hand, “to

recompense him," he said, "for the sacrifice of the time he employed so carefully."

Unfortunately, Duke Leopold's finances were in such a bad state that for three years Duval only received half his salary, and, moderate as he was in all things, found himself very much straitened. In consequence of this, the Prince de Craon gave him leave to board with the duke's confessor; and as for his lodging, it was the room next that of the young Princess of Lorraine, who afterwards became Queen of Sardinia. Within her precincts, however, he never set foot; but yet they were very good friends, and she used continually to borrow books of him, which he handed to her as they leant from their respective windows.

Duval shortly undertook to deliver a course of lectures on history and antiquities, which, he relates in one of his letters, caused him a good deal more trouble than they need have done, because, concluding his hearers to be much better instructed than they were, he overloaded his lectures with learned allusions, the result of painful research. Be that as it might, the lectures *took*; people afar off, as well as near at hand, flocked to hear them, including many English travellers, attracted by Duval's growing renown. Among these was William Pitt, afterwards Lord Chatham, whose appearance and manner made much impression on Duval, and caused him to predict great

things of him. Pitt was born in 1708: he must, therefore, have been very young when at Luneville. In fact, he was sent abroad for the benefit of his health directly he left college. He was only twenty-seven when he entered the House of Commons.

If anything were wanting to make Duval happy, it was a friend of his own humble origin, but likewise of his own genius, goodness, and peculiar tastes; and this friend he found. There was at the Academy a man as remarkable as himself, and only a few years his senior, who, from a very humble position, had risen, entirely by the force of his own mind, to be a distinguished mechanician, of good repute in almost every continental court. This man was Philip Vayringe. The duke had appointed him his mechanicist, and professor of experimental chemistry in the Academy. His story will shortly find place, related by himself, and taken down in writing by his friend Duval. Their attachment lasted to the death of Vayringe.

Professor Keysler, who saw Duval at Luneville during the course of his travels, of which he afterwards published an account, speaks of him as being of most engaging modesty and winning address, free from any false shame at his humble origin, and being always ready to relate to any one interested in the recital the successive steps which had led to his mental development.

“Often,” says Keysler, “he walks with one of his friends to the hermitage of St. Anne, where he still has his own little chamber, and he sometimes talks of building on the spot.”

Duval thought even more than he talked of it, and was saving up every penny he could spare for that purpose; but his object was not to build a country-house for himself, but a more commodious hermitage for his old benefactors. Steadily keeping this purpose in view, years passed over him in unmarked tranquillity, when his happiness was suddenly disturbed by the death of “that father of his country,” Duke Leopold of Lorraine.

This event occurred in 1728-9, and Prince Francis, then in his twenty-first year, became duke in his father's stead. Beloved for his amiable and attaching qualities, handsome and dignified in person, his character was pleasing rather than brilliant; but he had already served with reputation in the wars of Hungary and Bohemia, and he was destined to be the husband of Maria Theresa.

In 1730 Duke Francis placed the Luneville Academy on a new footing; and Duval, now in his thirty-fifth year, was re-appointed librarian, and professor of history, geography, and antiquities. He had now accumulated enough to commence the new hermitage, which was erected of brick, in a quadrangular form, with a little court in the centre. It

was roofed with tiles, and comprised a neat chapel surmounted by a little spire. An ample piece of ground surrounding it was portioned out into vineyards, arable land, kitchen garden, and orchard, together with a young nursery of fruit trees. First and last, Duval expended no less than thirty thousand silver livres on this erection—a noteworthy monument of self-denial and gratitude, which afforded his early protectors a commodious habitation, and a little revenue that enabled them to subsist without the support of others.

Duval often pruned the fruit trees himself, or industriously carted off the rubbish about their roots in a wheelbarrow. For the good of the neighbourhood, he enjoined the hermits to supply young fruit trees from their nursery, free of charge, to any who should require them, living within three leagues of the hermitage. Moreover, he begged the hermits to go and plant them themselves, without accepting any return, even of food, unless they should be too far off to be able to return to the hermitage in time for dinner. The utility of such a provision could not fail to procure the good anchorites increased consideration in the neighbourhood; but Duval was not content with having provided that things should work well, he watched diligently over the observance of his regulations.

Even his subsequent sojourn in Italy and Vienna

failed to make any abatement in his interest in the affairs of the hermitage.

“I remember,” says the chevalier, “seeing shortly before his death some letters to him from Brother Zozim^{us}, the oldest of all the brethren of St. Anne, who, in his simple rustic style, was in the habit of sending him all the chit-chat of the little community, and of receiving counsel from him in return, accompanied by solid proofs of his remembrance.”

His benevolence was perpetuated by the following inscription on marble, placed over the entrance to the hermitage :—

D. O. M.

SUB. NOM. B. ANNÆ. VIRG. DEIPARÆ. GENETRICIS.

HANC. ÆDEM. ADJUNCTAMQUE. CELLAM.

A. FUNDAMENTIS. INSTAMAVIT. VALENTINUS. DUVAL.

PRIUS. IN. HAC. EREMO. ARMENTARIUS.

POST. IN. AULA. LOTHAR. BIBLIOTHECARIUS.

ET. IN. ACAD. LUNEVIL. HISTOR. ET. ANTIQ.

PROFESSOR. PUBL. GRATI. DEVOTIQUE. ANIMI.

MONUMENTUM.

A.D. M.D.C.C.XXXVI.

In 1736-7 Francis of Lorraine married the Archduchess Maria Theresa of Austria, then a beautiful and high-minded girl of sixteen. This pleasing event was quickly followed by one which plunged the people of Lorraine into trouble—the cession of the duchy to Stanislaus, ex-King of Poland, and father-in-law to Louis XV., which occasioned the royal family to retire

to Brussels, there to await Francis's accession to the duchy of Tuscany, which was promised him as an indemnification for his own.

Great were the lamentations of the Luneburghers on finding themselves thus transferred, like so many sheep, from one master to another. The King of Poland, on arriving at the palace a few days after its being vacated, took pains to induce Duval and Vayringe to remain at their posts ; but they preferred following the fortunes of their beloved master.

The death of Giovan Gastone, Duke of Tuscany, occurring a few months afterwards, Francis's suite embarked at Ostend for Italy in October, 1737.

Giovan Gastone, the last of the Medici, had been a prince who, kept in childish tutelage during his father's reign, ended by being a child all his life. Even on his deathbed he collected about him all the jesters, buffoons, and low-bred flatterers in Florence, who, by keeping him constantly chuckling with silly laughter, obtained the grant of their most extravagant demands.

The succession of the amiable Francis of Lorraine to such a sovereign as this could only be supposed by others a blessing to the people, though they themselves, even then, had their objections ; and thus easily was the Austrian shoe slipped on, which was to pinch Tuscany so severely at last.

Francis, however, was summoned to Vienna, where

new dignities awaited him ; for Maria Theresa, now empress-queen, never rested till her husband was associated with her in the empire, which took place in 1745. He continued to consider himself, however, as no more than prince consort, and to leave all state affairs to his wife. Being once present at a levee, when Maria Theresa was engaged with her receptions, he retired from the circle and seated himself in a distant corner of the apartment, near two ladies of the court. On their rising, he said, "Do not disturb yourselves, for I shall remain here till the court is gone, and then amuse myself with looking at the crowd." "The court is wherever your Imperial Majesty is," said one of the ladies. "O no!" replied he lightly ; "the empress and her children are the court. I am only a private individual."

"Had Francis possessed more influence," says Coxe, "the system of Europe would probably not have been overturned ; for France was as odious to him as Prussia was to the empress-queen. Among his papers was found the following observation :—'The less connection with France the better. The god of the French is convenience : they have often been tried, and as often found faithless.'"

In the Tuscan capital, once graced by the great men who were fostered by the patronage of a Lorenzo, Duval and Vayringe soon found they were completely out of place. The Italian character had so degene-

G

rated that philosophy and science were no longer cared for; and, while hating the trouble of being instructed, the Italians loftily maintained that *their* province had ever been to *teach*, which was true enough in the palmy days of their old universities.

Duval never ceased to regret Lorraine, and gladly obeyed a summons to Vienna, in 1749, to visit his beloved prince. After remaining there nine months he returned to Florence.

Here he occasionally varied the monotony of his life by visits to Rome and Naples. The interesting remains of antiquity scattered about Rome kindled his enthusiasm for the relics of ancient history. Numismatography, a science which had formed the subject of some of his lectures at Luneville, now became one of his favourite occupations; and he resolved to form himself a cabinet of ancient coins and medals.

It so happened that the Emperor Francis had just made a similar resolution; and, hearing what Duval was about, he summoned him to Vienna to undertake the collection and arrangement of a series of coins and medals from all parts of the world. It will be seen hereafter how Duval persuaded even his female friends to help him in this.

The study of coins and medals is no contemptible one; for, with respect to their uses in history, they have well been called *portable monuments*. They

were not, indeed, originally *intended* to record events; for the earliest coins were merely pieces of stamped money. But the double purpose to which they might be applied seems soon to have struck various nations. Thus the Latins stamped a head of Saturn on one side of their coins, and a ship on the other, to commemorate his coming to Italy by sea; and at length almost every important event among them was recorded by a medal. Not only have coins filled many blanks in history, but they have preserved the features of illustrious people, the forms of ancient buildings and instruments, and afforded glimpses of manners, customs, and the state of the fine arts.* Still, to make Duval a mere medallist was like pouring boiling water on a growing plant!

The proposal, however, to repair to the court of an emperor to whom he was so affectionately attached, was well timed, for it reached Duval just as his heart was bleeding at the loss of his friend Vayringe, whose death occurred in 1748. Three years previously Vayringe had given an account of his singular life to his friend, who seems to have taken it down from his own lips, for the little manuscript was found in Duval's handwriting. It is fresh and simple, like the utterance of friend to friend, and throws some light on Duval's own history. This is, therefore, the best place for its introduction.

* Dr. Priestley's Lecture on Medals.



CHAPTER XVI.

STORY OF VAYRINGE.

Each man is his own fate, and spins his future.

JOUBERT.

To know a truth well, one must have fought it out.

NOVALIS.

“ I WAS born at Nouillonpont, in Lorraine, on the 20th of September, 1684. My father possessed a little land, which he cultivated to support himself and his family. My mother died when I was quite a little fellow, leaving behind her eleven children, seven boys and four girls. At six years old I was put to school.

“ While I was yet learning to read my father thought proper to marry again. His second wife well deserved the opprobrious name of ‘ a cruel step-mother,’ for badly indeed did she treat us. I at length determined to leave home, and, though only ten years old, actually proposed to find my way to

Rome! However, as I could not manage that, I started for Strasburg.

“ On reaching Nancy I met two schoolfellows, who persuaded me to return home. We took the way to Metz. This town pleased me so much, that I resolved to remain there, and therefore gave my companions the slip.

“ As I loitered about a locksmith’s shop, he asked me whence I came, and what I could do. On my saying I had now and then used a hammer, he offered to take me into his service, and give me twenty sous a month. I willingly consented, on condition he would teach me how to make a lock.

“ After remaining with him six months I engaged myself to another master, who gave me three livres a month. One day, as I was crossing the market-place, I fell in with two of my brothers, who begged me to return home with them. The extreme severity of the winter induced me to do so; and, on my return, I was placed with one of my brothers-in-law, who was a goldsmith and cutler. I set to work to make locks such as I had seen at Metz.

“ As good fortune would have it, a clock was sent to us to clean. At the sight of this wonderful machine everything I had yet made seemed too trifling to be worth speaking of. I spent an hour and a half in examining its construction, and so perfectly did I by that time understand the relation of

its several parts to one another, that I immediately set to work to make a similar piece of mechanism, which I completed within three months.

“As I still entertained the design of going to Strasburg, I asked leave of my father, who not only granted it, but gave me ten crowns for my expenses.

“Furnished with a passport and my certificate of baptism, I set off, and in two days reached Nancy. The French functionary at that town, having examined my passport, asked me whether I did not desire the honour of serving the king. I replied ‘No,’ and he let me pass on. However, as I found that Alsace was then the seat of war, I thought it best to remain at Nancy.

“There was but one clockmaker in the town, and he had three sons, so that he needed no more assistants. I was, therefore, once more obliged to engage myself to a locksmith: he gave me four livres a month. A locksmith’s boy from my own neighbourhood, whom I met by chance, got me a better master, who paid me seven livres a month. This boy took a fancy to me, and proved his friendship by his good offices.

“The Benedictines were then building a church, and a master blacksmith from Paris was working at the screen in front of the choir, which was to be entirely of iron, chased all over with ornamentation. One

day, this workman having shown me his designs, I begged him to teach me how to trace them with the pen, and afterwards execute them. He answered, that if I liked to come and work with him, he would teach me whatever I wished, and, moreover, give me twelve livres a month.

“The worthy man recommended me to the prior, and employed Sundays and holidays in fulfilling his promise to me. Observing that he looked at his watch from time to time to see what o’clock it was, I begged him to let me examine it, to try and find out the principle on which it worked. He said I might keep it for a week. I had the boldness to take it completely to pieces ; and, having laid open the barrel, I immediately comprehended the action of the spring upon the wheels. I made drawings of all the parts of the watch, and my greatest wish was to have time and opportunity to make a similar one.

“I had been working at the screen for about a year, when I was made locksmith to the Mint. There I was employed in various works, but I felt a distaste for them, because my prime object, just then, was to make clocks.

“However, I availed myself of intervals of leisure to make myself tools proper for the construction of a clock, which I had designed from the descriptions I had heard of the clock at Strasburg. I wrought the parts roughly in the workshop, and finished them off in my

own room on Sundays and holidays, with the parish curé's permission.

"This clock, which was nine inches high and six broad, marked the hours and the quarters, and played a carillon every hour, while the Saviour, followed by his twelve apostles, passed along a little gallery.

"It took me nearly a year to finish this work, which was much applauded by the directors of the Mint.*

"A short time after, Sieur François, jeweller to Leopold, Duke of Lorraine, proposed to me to marry a young girl between thirteen and fourteen years of age, who possessed about nine thousand francs (*barrois*). The betrothal took place at the house of the Sieur Launay, uncle to my bride, and father of the late coadjutor of the Abbey of Etival, on the 10th of February, 1711, in the twenty-eighth year of my age. Eighteen children were the fruit of this marriage, of whom eight girls are still alive.

* No wonder, if it at all came up to the Strasburg clock, which is one of the marvels of the city. Perched on the upper part of the works is a cock, which at noonday claps its wings and crows three times. The twelve apostles appear, with the Saviour, who blesses them all except Judas. Below this group is a figure of Death with his scythe. At the first quarter of an hour a child passes by; at the second, a youth; at the third, a man; at the fourth, old age, when Death strikes the clock. There are various other ingenious mechanical and symbolic contrivances.

“I remained yet another year at the Mint. While deliberating on my future course I was called on by an English clockmaker, who wished to see my musical clock. After examining it he advised me to devote myself wholly to clockmaking, and gave me two designs of spring clocks, one to go eight days, the other thirty. I gave him two crowns for them ; and that is all my profession as clockmaker ever cost me.

“Having set up a shop, I exhibited a sign, which was looked on as a curiosity. The *Sieur François* lent me his tools, and I made a watch like that I have already mentioned in eighteen days, which was a very short time for a man who had never made nor seen one made.

“Novelty always attracts, therefore the public did not let me want work. Those who came to me usually asked me whether I had ever been to Paris. I thought I might as well enable myself to say ‘yes’ instead of ‘no,’ and prepared to go thither. I travelled post, and reached Paris on the third day. A watchmaker turned soldier had given me a letter of introduction to his brother, who was of the same trade ; and on presenting this letter, I begged him to let me have one day’s work in his shop, to which he consented. As I worked I observed that his wife was cutting the teeth of the watch-wheels with an instrument that was unknown to me. I drew near, that I might observe the mechanism more closely,

and instantly comprehended it. I took leave of the watchmaker, and returned to my lodging.

“Next day I visited the workshops of all the principal watchmakers in Paris; and having bought of them several tools that I thought would be useful to me, and surveyed the wonders of Versailles, I took post again, and returned to Nancy, after a fortnight’s absence.

“My first care was to make the machine for cutting and notching the wheels. This is certainly the most useful invention in the whole clockmaking art, on account of its nicety and precision. The machine I had seen was only capable of cutting ordinary wheels; therefore I improved upon it, making one that could notch from fifteen teeth to a hundred and thirty thousand, and in which all the numbers, both odd and even, were to be found, for the construction of mathematical instruments.

“This labour completed, I once more began to work for the public, and I had the good fortune to be appointed clockmaker to the town, with a salary of four hundred and fifty francs (*barrois*). My love of mechanics induced me to make several models, and I conceived the chimerical idea of perpetual motion. I made several attempts to discover it, which of course proved vain; but they led to my inventing a number of very simple works, one of which was a repeater, which went eight days with three wheels, striking the

hours and half hours, and marking the different phases of the moon. I also made a watch which repeated the hours and the quarters with simple works. Afterwards I worked at all sorts of mathematical instruments, both for engineers and geographers.

“Seven years passed before I ventured to exhibit any of my works to his Royal Highness Duke Leopold. I then repaired to Luneville with an instrument for taking all sorts of plans, two compasses of my own invention, the watch and clock I have mentioned, and a little cannon which would fire sixteen times in succession.

“I had the honour to be admitted into my sovereign’s presence, and to explain to him the various specimens of my works. He commanded me to leave them in his cabinet, and return to him after dinner. According to his custom, he had invited several English noblemen and gentlemen, who were pursuing their studies at Luneville, to join him at this repast; and when the conversation turned upon mechanics, these gentlemen assured him that the finest mechanical inventions came from England.

“‘Well,’ said the duke, ‘I will show you some belonging to my own country.’

“And leading the way to his cabinet, he exhibited the instruments I had brought.

“When the Englishmen had attentively examined them they owned that they had seen none so good or

so simple. This avowal so much gratified his Royal Highness, that he appointed me his clockmaker and mechanician, with a pension of three hundred livres, a lodging found me, and all my work paid for separately.

“ I quitted Nancy for Luneville on the 2nd of May, 1720. Baron Pfutschner, a gentleman from Wurtzburg, in Franconia, was then sub-tutor to the young princes. It would seem as though Providence had sent him to Lorraine to aid in reviving those arts and sciences which the duke had recalled to a country whence they had been banished by the horrors of war.

“ This new Mecænas honoured me with his patronage, and set me to work on various instruments, the first of which, furnished with an astronomical quadrant, served to fix a telescope eighteen feet long. I then applied myself to construct models of various hydraulic machines, the simplicity and power of which were much applauded. Among others was one which was not executed till long afterwards, designed to force five jets of water to a height of sixty feet, for a fountain in the pleasure grounds at Luneville.

“ His Royal Highness deigned sometimes to visit my workshop and watch my proceedings. One day he remembered that he had given an English workman a hundred louis d’or for some machines, of which he had as yet heard nothing. He mentioned the circumstance to Baron Pfutschner, who, delighted

with this opportunity of doing me a service, persuaded the duke to send me to England to finish the said machines and learn their use. His Royal Highness consented; and I started for London on the 5th of September, 1721.

“On my arrival, the learned M. Desauguilliers received me into his house. He instructed me in geometry and the principles of algebra, and taught me methodically the uses of the various instruments he used in his annual course of lectures on experimental physics. But what benefited me most was, that this eminent professor ordered his workmen to construct, under my direction, a series of instruments corresponding with his own. As the greater part of these were very intricate, I managed to simplify them, rendering them at the same time more efficient.

“After thirteen months’ labour I was recalled to Lorraine. I returned by way of Paris, where I remained three weeks, examining what I had but half seen before. On my return to Luneville I made trial of my new instruments in the presence of the royal family; and the duke was so pleased with them, that he desired me to add to my collection whatever might be necessary for a complete series of experiments. I made a *pendule d’équation* and a number of other instruments, the most curious of which was a planisphere according to Copernicus’s system, in which the planets were seen above a

radiated plane, supported by wires, making their revolutions according to the calculations of the most famous astronomers.

“ The duke thought so highly of this that he considered it a fit present for the Emperor Charles,* and accordingly sent me with it to Vienna, where I had the honour of explaining its uses to their Imperial Majesties. The emperor rewarded me with a chain and gold medal weighing a hundred and fifty ducats, besides a purse containing two hundred.

“ After remaining four months at Vienna, I returned to Luneville, and, on my arrival, learned from the Prince de Craon that M. de Boifranc, architect to the King of France, was very anxious I should go thither to raise water by means of fire.

“ The duke commissioned me to buy some *chef-d'œuvre* for him while at Paris. I therefore purchased a clockwork picture, representing the fable of Orpheus, for five thousand livres. While it was being finished I completed the steam engine that was making for the Peruvian mines. This is one of the most useful machines that has ever been invented, since, by means of the steam arising from a little boiling water, and the weight of the atmosphere, water may be raised out of the mines from a depth of six hundred feet. This was completed in three

* Father of Maria Theresa.

months, and turned out so well upon trial, that M. de Boifranc paid me six hundred livres for my work.

“ I then employed myself about various mathematical instruments, wrought in gold and silver, for a couple of cases bespoken by the Hereditary Prince of Lorraine * when I was at Vienna.

“ On my return to Luneville I exhibited the clockwork picture to the duke in a hall of the palace, and it delighted him so much that he determined to make a present of it to the empress. This occasioned me a second journey to Vienna in August, 1725.

“ On returning home I worked at a machine which was to include the functions of almost every geometrical and astronomical instrument, and also to those appertaining to gnomony. Then I made a moving sphere like that which I had carried to Vienna. These two works were completed in eighteen months, and were placed in the Cabinet of Physics, where they now are.

“ A short time after this I undertook the construction of a magnificent planisphere upon the same system, in which the various phases of the seven planets and ten satellites, which form the complete system, were carefully marked, as also their several courses, their stations, and the retardation or acceleration of their revolutions, the inclination and

* Francis.

eccentricity of their orbits, &c. I intended to add Halley's and La Heire's theory of the comets; but when this instrument, which would at any hour have told the position of the heavenly bodies, was rather more than half finished, Lorraine sustained a loss, the consequences of which wellnigh plunged it once more into nonentity.

“Duke Leopold—the restorer, benefactor, and true father of his country—died on the 27th of March, 1729. He was succeeded by the Hereditary Prince Francis.

“One day our new sovereign informed me that the emperor possessed an instrument, by means of which almost all arithmetical propositions could be worked out, and that nobody had as yet made one like it. I undertook to do so, if I could but see the model, and I was therefore sent a third time to Vienna.

“On arriving there I was told the instrument was out of order, and the maker dead, so that I could not see it work. I said I would undertake to set it to rights if they would let me. Dr. Garelli, first physician to the emperor, was then ordered to show it me. Without quitting his room, I mended it in six hours, and made it work out the four rules of arithmetic in the presence of a nobleman, who went to report what I had accomplished to his Imperial Majesty. The emperor was so much pleased that he

again honoured me with a gold chain and a medal weighing one hundred and fifty ducats.

“As soon as I returned to Lorraine I made an instrument a great deal simpler than this, which produced the same results. I had the pleasure of finishing it and showing it to our august sovereign before his departure for his states.

“In 1730 it pleased him to establish his Academy on a new footing; and having nominated his librarian, the *Sieur Duval*, professor of history, ancient and modern geography, and antiquities, he was good enough to appoint me to give a course of lectures on experimental physics. This establishment lasted till the year 1737, and would have continued to attract the approbation of the nobility and gentry of foreign countries, but for the well-known event which put a stop to its success.*

“When the fate of my poor country was decided, I had the happiness of being among those of his old subjects whom Duke Francis chose to accompany him to Tuscany; and as this new patrimony had not yet become his by the decease of the reigning duke, I was ordered to pack up the contents of the Cabinet of Physics, of which I had the superintendance, and convey them to Flanders, there to remain till the sovereignty of Tuscany should be vacant.

* The cession of Lorraine to France.

“I witnessed the evacuation of Lorraine. I saw the duchess and the two august princesses, her daughters, tear themselves from the palace, bathed in tears, with hands clasped in sorrow, and voices expressing the deepest grief. It would be quite impossible to describe the consternation, the lamentations, the sobs of the people as they witnessed a removal which appeared to them the forerunner of their country’s downfall. It is wonderful how the hundreds of them who blindly threw themselves in front of the carriage horses to retard their departure, without the least regard for safety, escaped being hurt. While lamentation and woe reigned in Luneville, the inhabitants of the surrounding country rushed in crowds to the road the royal family would take, and, flinging themselves on their knees as they passed, stretched out their arms towards them, piteously imploring them not to go.

“A few days after this melancholy event King Stanislaus arrived to take possession of the palace; and, summoning me to his presence, he politely said that he wished me to enter his service, offering me a salary of four thousand livres, the possession of the house I then occupied, and the superintendence of the new water-works at Metz.

“I detailed to him, in few words, my motives for not abandoning my sovereign.

“‘At least,’ said the king, ‘make me an engine

of your own invention which shall carry a boat against the current of the river.'

"I did what he asked, making use of so simple a contrivance that his Majesty was perfectly satisfied. It was no sooner finished than he made trial of it himself; for, having gone to dine at the hermitage of St. Anne, he embarked on the Vézouze, and went up the river without the aid of horses, oars, or punting-poles, as far as the dike which held the waters of the great canal of Luneville in bounds.

"Next day the king summoned the Sieur Duval and me into his presence.

" 'It does not appear,' said he, 'that the Duke of Lorraine means to fix his residence either at Brussels or in Tuscany. *Why*, then, should you go thither? Remain here; and, believe me, you shall not have reason to repent it.'

"We thanked his Majesty, but replied that we should be unworthy of the honour he did us, were we to show ourselves wanting in gratitude and fidelity to our sovereign.

"While matters stood thus, M. Héraut, Lieutenant-general of Police at Paris, got M. de Montmartel to write to the Baron de Molitons, who was intrusted with the arrangements for our migration, and beg him to allow me to go to Paris. I immediately set off, furnished with a letter of recommendation from the king. On my arrival I was asked to construct an

engine that should raise two hundred square inches of water on the rising ground of St. G n v ve. I drew the design for this engine with all the precision and simplicity of a man who has no idea of enriching himself at the expense of the public. I was assured that, if I showed myself worthy of it, the undertaking should prove a lucrative one to me, by means of a little clandestine present of twenty-five or thirty thousand livres.

“ I must confess this offer seemed extravagant, and I declared that it would do far more than repay me for my time, work, and expenses.

“ ‘ Ah, you poor man ! ’ was the smiling reply ; ‘ it is really astonishing that so skilful a mechanician should not yet have learnt the use of the golden winch that turns the world. What hinders your making a fresh estimate, and distributing the sum mentioned among the various expenses of the whole concern ? ’

“ Honesty hindered. I frankly owned I was not accustomed to such expedients, and had never had even the temptation to use them in Luneville, because merit was there gratuitously rewarded ; besides which, I had my scruples about breaking the commandment which said, ‘ Thou shalt not steal.’

“ The mention of scruples and the ten commandments raised a laugh against me. I was overwhelmed with polite compliments, and the execution of the project was reserved for a less delicate conscience.

“Mons. Orry, Superintendent of the Royal Buildings, to whom I had sent King Stanislaus’ letter of recommendation, wrote to three gentlemen belonging to the Academy of Sciences, begging them to take me to Marly to examine the famous engine known by that name, which was not then supplying half the usual quantity of water. When I had seen it I mentioned the defects I had observed in it, adding that I was sure a simple apparatus with three wheels, such as I had constructed for the Luneville pleasure-grounds, would produce a greater effect than all the fourteen wheels of the great blustering contrivance at Marly. The superintendent found that what I said agreed with the account given of me by the King of Poland, and upon this it was again proposed to me to remain in France, a promise being added that if I would do so I should have the direction of the Marly water-works, and receive a handsome salary.

“On my return to Paris, the directors of the mines of Brittany begged me to pay them a visit, to remedy the inundations which had interrupted the working of the mines. I travelled to Nantz, and thence to the mines, which are about eight leagues from St. Malo. After making the necessary examinations I returned to Paris, where I made the plan of the required works. The directors were so well satisfied with it that they offered me a salary of four thousand livres, a gratuitous share in their company worth thirty thousand livres,

and several other emoluments, if I would remain with them. They undertook to obtain the duke's consent to my doing so, telling me on what grounds they would ask it.

“However, none of their offers moved me; so they gave me fifty louis d'or for my journey, and I departed. The death of Gioyan Gastone de Medici, Duke of Tuscany, the last of his line, hastened my departure. I hastened to Brussels, whither my numerous family had already preceded me. As two months passed before the general embarkation of our prince's suite for Italy, which took place on the 12th of October, 1737, at Ostend, I availed myself of the interval to visit several of the principal cities of Holland. At Leyden I saw the learned M. de Granesende, and at Utrecht M. Muschenbroek, whose works are well known in the scientific world.

“On my return to Brussels I started for Lorraine, and thence for Tuscany, where Count de Richecourt had the instruments belonging to the Cabinet of Physics placed in a hall adjoining the library of the Pitti palace. There they still are, after having been exposed to the fury of the winds and waves during a forty-three-days' sail round the western coast of Europe.

“I had supposed that as Tuscany had been the cradle of science in the days of Galileo, Torricelli, &c., some taste for scientific pursuits must still exist

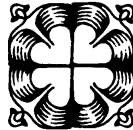
in it, and that consequently the lectures I had been accustomed to deliver at Luneville would be still more popular at Florence. Quite the reverse. That odious custom of *cicisbeo-ism*, attaching every man to the apron-string of his neighbour's wife, and making him waste his time in trifling attentions to her, had ruined the young nobility, who were totally indifferent and insensible to the learning, genius, science, and high and virtuous art which had immortalised their ancestors.

“These degenerate sons of illustrious fathers were too much immersed in their frivolous courses to care for the advertisements I published, mentioning what I had done in Lorraine. It is true that my being a foreigner was also against me. I was told that from time immemorial Italy had been accustomed to *teach* foreigners, and not to *learn* from them, which was true enough in the best days of their old republics.

“Possibly this prejudice, together with that narrow economy which made them stint themselves in everything not ministering to their mere pleasures, was the stumbling-block to the success of the Lorraine Academy, transferred by our good duke to his new capital with so much trouble and expense. Though still under the same professors who had made it so flourishing, it was now almost deserted. The Cabinet of Physics, one of the completest and most curious in Europe, shared the same fate, though the terms

of instruction there were less than half of what they had been at Luneville.

“Thus the talent for mechanics, with which Providence had endued me, and which, on the other side the Alps, would have made my fortune, was here completely thrown away, as far as the public were concerned, on account of their own indifference and torpor.”





CHAPTER XVII.

DOM CALMET.

“A good man was there of religion,
That was a *pauvre* parson of a town ;
But rich he was in holy thought and work ;
He also was a learned man—a clerk.”

DUVAL wrote of his friend Vayringe to the reverend father, Dom Calmet.

Most of us have heard of Calmet's Bible—that is to say, Dom Augustine Calmet's Commentary on all the books of the Old and New Testament, in twenty-six volumes—“the work of a lifetime,” one would say. Yet not so, for he wrote many long and thick books besides.

Calmet, then, was another worthy of Lorraine, which seems to have been singularly rich, in the golden days of Duke Leopold, in original geniuses. Calmet was a Benedictine. He was sub-prior to the abbey of Munster, in Alsace, where he presided

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over an academy of eight or ten monks wholly given to the study of the Scriptures.

This good man was afterwards made an abbot, but a bishop he would never be.

To him thus wrote Duval :—

“ 1746.

“This is what occasioned the death of my friend Vayringe. That part of Tuscany which adjoins the patrimony of St. Peter, and which is called the Maremma, because it extends between the sea and the Apennines, was formerly one of the most fertile districts of Italy. It was celebrated on account of several Etrurian leucumonies * and some Roman colonies, and for six or seven months in the year the climate there is charming; but during the summer the air is so unwholesome, that the inhabitants are obliged to retreat to the Apennines as soon as the heat sets in. It is observable that all kinds of cattle, and even birds, take the same route, without any other call than that of instinct. Those persons who cannot leave their homes are subject to malignant fevers and incurable dropsy.

“ In May, 1744, Vayringe went to inspect some works in the neighbourhood of Massa (formerly Massa

* Etruria anciently contained twelve different nations, each governed by its leucumon, or king.—ED.

Veterninus), noted as the birthplace of Constantius Gallus, and remained there longer than he ought to have done. As he was very much interested in his undertaking, and of a strong, robust constitution, he thought he might with impunity neglect the advice given him not to brave the climate. However, he was mistaken, for in a few days he was attacked by slow fever, which hung about him for eighteen months, at the end of which time he was carried off by dropsy, on the 24th of March this present year, 1746.

“Probity, candour, and an ingenuous artlessness were the prominent features of his character, and shone, so to say, in his countenance and actions. He was buried in the Barnabites’ church at Florence, where I had a little marble monument erected to him, with this inscription:—

D. O. M.

PHILIPPO VAYRINGO

NATIVI INDOLE

IN OMNI REI MACHINARII SCIENTIA

ARCHIMEDI LOTHARINGO

CHRISTIANA VIRTUTE

MIROQUE ANIMI CANDORE CONSPICUO

VIRIS PRINCIPIBUS ACCEPTESSIMO

HOC MONUMENTUM AMICUS ET CONCINIS

MÆRENO POSUIT

ANNO A CHRISTO NATO M.D.C.C.X.L.V.I.

SEXTO CALENDÆ MARTII.”

Professor Keysler, who saw Vayringe as well as Duval at Luneville, wrote thus of him in his travels :—

“Monsieur Vayringe is a very courteous and sensible man, and, like Duval, makes no secret of his humble origin.” Moreover, he says Vayringe followed the plough till he was twenty-eight, which we have seen, from his own account, he did not ; but it may have been one of the *on dits* about him. Keysler adds, “They seem to outvie one another in speaking warmly of Baron Pfutschner, their generous patron. At M. Vayringe’s I saw a very ingenious imitation (but without so many wheels) of the planetarium, representing the revolutions of the heavenly bodies according to the Copernican system, made for Prince Eugène by Mr. Rowley, an Englishman. The reigning duke was once speaking of the burning-glasses he had seen at the Jesuits’ College at Prague, which, by collecting the heat from burning coals only, could set anything on fire at the other end of the room. Vayringe, hearing of this, begged Baron Pfutschner to write to Prague for an account of the construction of these burning-glasses. The Jesuits, however, did not incline to part with their secret, and only answered in general terms that the speculum was prepared according to the *linea parabolica primigeneris*. This hint was enough for Vayringe, however, who immediately set to work and made two burning-glasses, the *foci* of which met when they were placed twenty

paces apart, and set fire to any combustible substance within their range.”

The dear friendship between Duval and Vayringe being interrupted by the death of the latter, Duval was glad to change his current of thought by obeying the Emperor Francis's summons.

On arriving at Vienna he was lodged in the palace, close to the emperor; his old friend Baron Pfutschner was ordered to receive him at his own table; and, in short, nothing was forgotten that could tend to his special comfort. His movements were perfectly unfettered; but he presented himself before the emperor three or four times a week, to assist him in sorting and arranging the rich collection of coins and medals which were to form the imperial cabinet.

In spite of his urgently remonstrating against anything so improper, the good-natured Francis insisted on his sitting beside him, and their mutual occupations were continually interspersed with snatches of familiar conversation. Sometimes the empress-queen took part in them, as she found particular pleasure in Duval's originality.

People dined early in those days, and these medal-sortings generally took place after dinner. One day Duval rose abruptly to go, without waiting to be dismissed.

“Whither away so fast?” said the emperor.

“To hear Gabrielli, sire.”

“Ah! she sings so badly!”

“Your Imperial Majesty ought to say that *sotto voce*.”

“And why not aloud?”

“Because your Imperial Majesty ought to be believed by every one, and nobody *could* believe *that!*”

The Abbé de Marcy, who was by, said aside to Duval as he went out,—

“Do you know you spoke the truth very undisguisedly just now?”

“All the better,” replied Duval, smiling—“I hope he will profit by it.”

This outspokenness and honest frankness ever distinguished Duval; it kept the courtiers aloof from him, but he was all the more valued for it by the emperor and empress, who continually took opportunities of marking their esteem for him. The most flattering of these was their wishing him, in 1749, to become sub-tutor to the little Archduke Joseph, afterwards emperor. Duval, however, declined it, and made the following statement of his reasons, in writing:—

“As I did not even know my letters till I was fourteen, nor a word of Latin till I was twenty-two, my studies have naturally been pursued rapidly and without method. My innate, unlimited curiosity impelled

me to try to comprehend whatever came before me. But, as I was destitute of helps in the wild woods amid which I passed the earlier part of my life, I followed, without distinction, *any* path that appeared to lead to knowledge, as chance directed.

“ When Divine Providence transferred me from the obscurity of the forest to the court of Luneville, and thence to the University of Pont-à-Mousson, the method of study there prescribed for me appeared tedious ; therefore, casting off the yoke, I invented one for myself, leading to the point I aimed at by such strange and eccentric paths, that I wonder I did not lose myself entirely. However, by dint of industry and perseverance, I terminated my course of classics in the space of a year. As the philosophy of the schools appeared to me to dull the mind rather than enlighten it, I took pleasure in neglecting it, resolving to adopt none but what should prove itself based on experience and utility, proper to direct the actions of a man’s life.

“ Some years later, when I was appointed librarian, and afterwards lecturer, at the Royal Academy of Luneville, it cost me immense labour to prepare my lectures ; for, as I heard that most of the academicians had already passed through some college, I thought my lectures would be useless to them unless they were a finely-spun web of chronology, mythology, ancient and modern geography, numismatics, castra-

metation, Greek and Roman tactics, and military engineering.

“These researches were, indeed, not thrown away on those who had imbibed a genuine taste for study ; but to others they made my lectures unintelligible. From what I have now said it may be inferred that, having myself jumped over all the first principles and rudiments of knowledge, I am not likely to impart them to the young with ease and clearness.

“ Besides, my articulation is not so good as it used to be. An over dose of medicine I once took in my youth, and studies pursued by night as well as by day, have impaired an originally good constitution ; so that, to my vexation, I cannot now speak for half an hour continuously without finding my voice die away, on account of my weak chest.

“ Certainly, for this year past, I have been busied three hours a day, in company with Professor Frœlich, helping him to arrange her Imperial Majesty’s cabinet of antiquities ; but this has not required continuous talking. Conversation and silence have alternated so pleasantly, that I have experienced no inconvenience. — *Vienna, October 25th, 1749.*”

It might have been well for the young archduke had Duval’s modesty not prevented his undertaking his education. At this time he was a boy of eight years old, endowed with a lively disposition, quick parts, and an ardent temper ; but his studies were

greatly neglected ; and those who ought to have directed them better gave him a thorough distaste for learning, so that he grew up without the smallest inclination for literature or science. At the age of sixteen, however, the stirring events of the seven years' war roused him from his apathy, and in his twenty-fourth year the death of his father called forth all the activity and energy of his character.

Duval found Metastasio established comfortably at the court of Vienna as poet laureate. The Italian abbé (who, by the way, had read a little civil law, but had nothing to do with the church) was about three years younger than Duval, and, like him, was of humble origin. He was ashamed, however, of his lowly birth, which Duval was not. Metastasio was handsome even when an old man, and beautiful as a boy. His gift of improvisation early attracted the notice of the learned Gravina, who adopted and educated him, and finally left him all his property. Metastasio ran through his fortune in two years, and then read a little more law ; but he soon felt that poetry was his vocation, and followed Tasso's example. His charming lyrics embellished and elevated the operatic plays which had superseded the genuine drama. He redeemed this stupid school of composition from the feebleness and bad taste of the day, and was invited to the court of Vienna, which thenceforth became his home.

There could not be a fitter laureate. He was always equal to the occasion, whether a court birthday, wedding-day, christening, or funeral. Versings for the occasion were sure to be ready, sufficiently sprinkled with "stirpe reale," "real pargoletto," "eroe nascente," "augusta donna," and the crabbed names of "gli Borboni" and "gli Austriaci" printed in capitals. One has but to open any of the nine little volumes of his works printed at Genoa, in 1767, to find opportune compliments to his imperial patrons tacked by way of epilogues to his plays. Some of these are laughable. "Cæsar," he gravely says to the emperor, "don't disturb yourself; I am *not* going to compare you to Trajan," or Titus, or whoever the hero of the play may be.

"Cesare, non turbarti! A te non osa
Somigliarsi Adrian."

What he delighted in was to reproduce old Greek and Roman story in lyric verse, converting classic heroes and heroines into the shepherds and shepherdesses on Dresden china. Even the villains, their foils, were in gold foil. And yet he made them the mouth-pieces of little touches of tenderness and pathos that went straight to the heart.

"*Rud.* O Dio, Zopiro! vorrei obbliarle, *ma come?*"

And

“ Se circa, se dice
‘ L’ amico, dov’ é ?
L’ amico infelice ? ’
Rispondi ‘ Mori.’
Ah no ! si gran duolo
Non darla per me—
Rispondila solo
‘ Piangendo parti.’ ”

Piangendo—yes, Metastasio’s heroes were always piangendo-ing. Signor Gallenga comments somewhat severely on this “lymphatic disposition” of the Italian, which he calls morbid and mawkish. They are always, says he, deploring their need of the relief and refreshment of a good flood of tears ! One wonders they are not drowned in them.

However, Signor Gallenga, since he wrote that, has seen these same Italians live through such a year of torturing, aggravating suspense with such unexampled self-control, that he himself is doing them full justice. But in Metastasio’s day they were almost at their worst and weakest, and he himself contributed to make them *molle*.

For the rest, he was a gentle, tender-hearted man, occasionally crying over his own love-stories, as he shames not to tell of himself in a sonnet beginning,—

“ Sogne e favole io fingo.”

He shared the apartments of M. Martinetz, the empress-queen’s librarian, and lived quietly and re-

spectably. He had a great horror of the small-pox, which, considering the ravages it committed in the imperial family, could not be much wondered at. He did not frighten himself into dying of it, however, like the poor young Archduchess Josepha, but lived to a green old age, continuing very handsome to the last, and exceedingly disliking to say how old he was.

Dante Alighieri would have found Maria Theresa's court even less endurable than La Scala's; he would have fancied himself stifled in attar of roses. Metastasio, therefore, was the right man in the right place, and it is very comfortable when men and places fit one another.

Maria Theresa herself was full of energy. Her hard battles, as Queen of Hungary, for the imperial inheritance her father had wrongfully bequeathed to her, had strengthened and annealed her character,

“As on the stithy glows the steel.”

Her beauty and gifted nature, like those of Mary Queen of Scots, had made the worse appear the better cause, for posterity has been unable to refuse sympathy with the unprotected woman, assailed on all sides by claimants of her inheritance.

When peace was at length restored she turned her whole attention to the reparation of the calamities occasioned by the war, and the promotion of com-

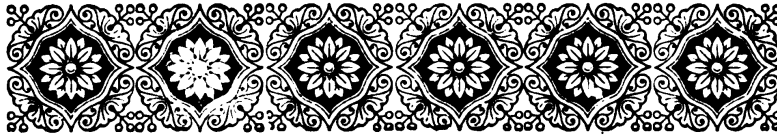
merce and the arts. "New ports opened, new sources of trade explored, canals dug, manufactories established, schools of the arts founded, public libraries formed, and a college for the sciences, instituted at Vienna, bearing the name of Maria Theresa, testified the zeal and intelligence with which the princess and her ministers pursued the great objects of public good. She herself displayed a benignity of soul which softened every trace of that haughtiness which had long been a characteristic of her house, and by continual acts of kindness and condescension she endeared herself to her subjects of every rank. It was impossible for love and veneration to be carried further than that which was inspired by a sovereign who, to feminine beauty and gentleness, added masculine dignity and intelligence. A warm attachment to the duties of her religion was a prominent feature in her character; her children were, indeed, rather repelled by her strictness in exacting the practices of a too often formal devotion. In some other instances, likewise, her zeal approached the borders of bigotry and intolerance; but it must be allowed that her general conduct displayed all the salutary influence of religious principle, and that, as a wife, a mother, and a sovereign, she has had few equals on the throne."

Francis and Maria Theresa were the parents of a numerous family—six sons and ten daughters. Their

sons were, Joseph, afterwards Emperor; Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany, afterwards Emperor; Ferdinand, Duke of Modena; and Maximilian, Elector of Cologne.

Of the daughters two became abbesses; one married Prince Albert of Saxony; another the Duke of Parma; another the King of Naples; the youngest was Marie Antoinette, the unfortunate Queen of France.

Three of the young archduchesses were successively betrothed to the King of Naples, who, as Duval observed, must have been held an especial *bonne-bouche* to be so run after. The first was the Archduchess Joanna, who died at the age of twelve. Josepha, in the bloom of youth and beauty, was destined to fill her place; but, being very reluctantly compelled to accompany her mother into the vault where the empress at stated times prayed and wept over the ashes of her husband and children, the young princess, who had a great horror of the small-pox, was seized by it, and carried off in a few days.



CHAPTER XVIII.

COURT AND COTTAGE.

When all is done and said,
In th' end this shall you find—
He most of all doth bathe in bliss
That hath a quiet mind,
And clear from worldly cares,
To deem, can be content,
The sweetest time in all his life
In thinking to be spent.

LORD VAUX.

THE nature of Duval's excuses, and the manner in which they were made, might perhaps have inclined his kind patrons to insist all the more on his acceptance of the appointment, had not the remembrance of the perfect independence they had promised him induced them to give way. This affair did not in the least disturb his good understanding with their Majesties, who continued to shower on him favours of every kind. Baskets of beautiful fruit from the

imperial gardens were among the continual little tokens of their affectionate remembrance of him.

One day a stranger, bearing a letter addressed to Duval, wandered a long time up and down the corridors of the palace without knowing where to seek him. At length he met some one, of whom he inquired,—

“Where shall I find Monsieur Duval’s room?”

“Come with me,” replied the other, who was a handsome, distinguished-looking man, “and I will show you.”

After threading several passages he threw a door open, and cried,—

“Duval, I bring you a visitor.”

Duval looked hastily up, and the stranger, to his no small embarrassment, found that his conductor was the emperor.

One carnival the empress laid the emperor a wager, that though he piqued himself on detecting the masks, she would bring some one with her to the masked ball whom he would not recognise.

Duval, who had never been to a ball in his life, was desired to go to the empress’s women, by whom, in spite of his remonstrances and entreaties to be let off, he was attired as a Turkish dervise, and conducted to the empress.

Maria Theresa was charmed with his appearance, and, putting her arm within his, said, as they went

along, "Well, Duval, the least you can do will be to dance a minuet with me."

"A minuet, your Majesty? I never made a nearer approach to one than cutting a somersault in the forest."

The empress laughed, and in a few minutes they were in the ball-room. The emperor, mindful of his wager, was there already. He tasked his ingenuity to the utmost to discover who the mask could be, but in vain; and after about two hours the empress permitted Duval to retire.

The warmth of his mask, and the embarrassment of feeling himself in such a strange assembly, had overheated him; and, as he left the raised temperature of the ball-room for the cold night air, he caught a violent cold, which he said effectually prevented his wanting to receive a similar mark of the empress's distinction.

He was greatly esteemed by the various branches of the imperial family; but, as his modesty held him aloof, there were many of its numerous members with whom he had no personal acquaintance.

One day the Archduchesses Mariana and Christina, passing by without his appearing to notice them, the King of the Romans, who was following them, said, smiling,—

"Duval, don't you know those ladies?"

"No, sire," replied Duval ingenuously.

“Ah, no wonder,” said the king, laughing, “since my sisters are not *antiques*.”

No one could be more completely in the world, and yet not of it. His simplicity and plainness never varied. The only one about the court whom he was fond of visiting was Mademoiselle de Guttenburg, first lady in waiting to the empress. She possessed a fine understanding, a cultivated mind, and a heart that made her ever ready to compassionate distress and sympathise with others—a disposition so accordant with his own that it could not fail to win his confidence. He not only paid her regular visits, but corresponded with her when she was absent from Vienna. Indeed, Duval had a singular and happy gift for letter-writing to women, as will presently be shown. Frank, unaffected, spirited, warm-hearted, he deserves better praise than that which has been accorded him of rivalling Madame de Sévigné.

His health becoming impaired by too studious a life, he followed the advice given him to travel, and in 1752 revisited Paris.

“As my chest,” he says, “was much affected, I left Vienna on the 24th of April; and, as I had seen the interior of the empire, directed my course through Passau, Nuremberg, Wurzburg, Frankfort, Mayence, and Cologne, to Brussels, where I passed three weeks with some members of that deplorable emigration from Lorraine which had taken place fifteen years previously.

What struck me most during this journey was, that instead of the living mummies in rags and *sabots* who people the huts and cabins of my own dear country, here were none but stout, robust-looking labourers and well-dressed artisans, fed, clothed, and housed as men ought to be. These tokens of national prosperity were too general to be doubtful; and they enabled me to form a pretty correct idea of the respective governments of the people.

“From Brussels I proceeded to Paris, where I had not been since 1718, when Baron Pfutschner sent me there in the duke’s suite, expressly to take a little polish. At that time I was so passionately fond of geography that I did not care to visit any one but Messieurs De L’Isle Sanson, Jaillot, Nolin, and old Monsieur Nicolas de Fer. But now I was not so timid as I had then been, and I hesitated not to converse with those learned and intelligent men, M. de Boze, the Abbé Barthélemy (both of them members of the Académie Royale des Inscriptions), M. Duclos, historiographer of France, member of the French Academy, and M. de Réaumur, the naturalist.

“I also renewed my acquaintance with the clever authoress of ‘Lettres d’une Péruvienne,’ Madame de Graffigny; and it was at her house that I first met the venerable Abbé Langlet de Fresne, and M.

de Fresne d'Aubigné, grand-nephew of the celebrated Ducange.

“The little taste I had for pomp and show prevented my revisiting Versailles, and after spending a month at Paris I quitted it; and, passing through Provins, the ancient capital of La Haute Brie, Nogent-au-Seine, and Troyes, the episcopal city of Champagne, I arrived at Artonay, the place of my birth.

“The air of misery that still pervaded it painfully recalled to my mind all I had suffered there during my childhood; and I hastened as soon as I could from a scene that was repulsive to me in the extreme.

“The best thing I did there was to notice what the district inspectors *never* notice, namely, the village school, which was a good deal more like a cow-shed than a place where human minds were to be trained. I determined to remedy this. One of my sisters, to whom I had given the paternal hut, had been reduced by her poverty to sell it; so I bought it again for eight hundred livres, had it totally razed to the ground, and caused a good solid house, with the only tiled roof in the village, to be erected on the spot. This I presented to the community, to be used as a humble lyceum, and gratuitous residence for the schoolmaster. Over the front door of the house I placed the following inscription :—

DEO. OPT. MAX.
VALENTINUS. JAMERAI. DUVAL.
FRANCISCO I. ROM. IMP. PIO. FEL. AUG.
A. BIBLIOTHECA. ET. RE. ANTIQUARIA.
GRATO. IN. PATRIAM. ANIMO. DUCTUS.
JUVENTUTE. PIE. INSTITUENDÆ.
HERE. NATALE. INGURIUM. IN. SCHOLAM. ERECTUM.
LIBENS. MERITO. DICAUIT. ANNO. M.D.C.C.L.V.I.I.I.

“Leaving Artonay, I passed the famous Abbey of Clairvaux, by Chaumont, in Bassigny, and the town of Neufchâteau, on the confines of Lorraine, and so arrived at St. Joseph de Messin, a hermitage about two leagues to the west of Nancy, built by Brother Michel, the founder of St. Anne.

“The poverty-stricken look of the hermitage seemed to me a sad contrast to the lovely scenery amid which it stood. As the old superior, therefore, had, in my early days, given me my first ideas of writing and arithmetic, I resolved to show my gratitude by rebuilding his present habitation, which I did last year, as may be seen by the following inscription over the door of the oratory of the new hermitage :—

DEO. OPT. MAX.
ÆDERN. HANC. DIVO. JOSEPHO. SACRAM.
ET. CONTINENTEM. SOLITARIORUM. DOMNUS.
A. FRATRE. MICHAELE. EJUSQ. SOCIIS.
OLIM. CONDITAS.
SED. VESTUSTATE. JAM. LABANTES.

VALENTINUS. JAM. DUVAL.
 EREMITARUM. QUONDAM. ALUMNUS.
 DEIN. FRANCISCO. I. ROM. IMP. P. F. AUG.
 A. BIBLIOTHECA. ET. RE. ANTIQUARIA.
 IN. AMPLORUM. FORMAM. A. FUNDAMENTIS.
 INSTAURARI. CURAVIT. AN. M.D.C.C.L.I.X.

“These erections will doubtless inspire people with a vast idea of my opulence. However, I have never either asked or received anything from the court, except the hundred livres mentioned in my letter to the Père Dom Calmet.

“Since the year 1730 my salary has been regularly paid; and as I have sunk all my earnings at the Luneville Academy in the Hôtel de Ville at Paris, and live as simply at court as I did in the hermitage of St. Anne, I am thus enabled to meet the expenses of my little proofs of gratitude to my earliest benefactors.”

The letter to Calmet, above alluded to, throws some light on what he says about his salary. In it he says,—

“I was twice found in the forest of St. Anne. The first time was in 1715, by Duke Leopold, who might have carried me to court, but for the dissuasions of an *anti-Mecænas*, who was perhaps afraid my love of knowledge might be catching. The good duke, therefore, contented himself with sending me four gold louis, only two of which ever reached me.

“The second time was on the 13th of May, 1717, when I was discovered anew by the late Prince Clement; his brother, Prince Francis, now emperor; the late Count de Vidampierre; and Baron Pfutschner. The two princes were then very young, and the questions their curiosity prompted them to ask had no influence whatever in occasioning the subsequent change in my condition. It was otherwise with Baron Pfutschner. The cool discernment which characterises him enabled him to discover in me a vocation for a very different kind of life from that which I was then leading. He proposed the bold measure of removing me to another sphere of action; but I refused to listen to him unless he promised that my liberty should not be infringed on, and that I should remain sole master of my own time and occupations. He not only consented to this, but generously promised to support me at his own expense, although he only possessed, strictly speaking, enough for his own moderate maintenance. The *anti-Mecenas* I have alluded to knew this, and was kind enough to hazard many remarks on him, and predictions of me, none of which, however, happily were verified by the event.

“On the other hand, Baron Sichengen, now Prince-bishop of Constance, and Baron de Weix, the duke’s chamberlain, desired to participate in Baron Pfutschner’s generosity towards me; and these

benevolent friends united in maintaining me during my early sojourn at court.

“The duke, however, learning what was my ardour for study, allowed me out of his privy purse a sufficient sum for my maintenance during the second and last year I passed at the College of Pont-à-Mousson.

“On my return from it he appointed me librarian, with a salary of seven hundred livres; but, on account of the bad state of the finances, I lost half of it on the bills that were issued, so that for three years my salary was in reality but three hundred and fifty livres.

“When the Prince de Craon heard of my sad situation he gave me leave to board at court, which saved me from a state of poverty I had never known in my dear hermitage of St. Anne. I might, indeed, have obtained redress of the duke; but I never could prevail on myself to increase the crowd of urgent petitioners by whom he was besieged. I can assure you that, with the exception of a hundred louis which he once gave me on the eve of St. Leopold, I never experienced any personal proofs of that liberality which made others so happy, and in the exercise of which he was in his true element. Duke Francis added two hundred livres to my salary as librarian on his accession, and nominated me Professor of History and Antiquities, with a salary of eight hundred livres more. *Then it was that me aureus irrigavit imber.* The

English and German visitors, not content with my public lectures, wished me to give them private ones; so that, without counting my salary, I received annually nearly four thousand livres. The present condition of the hermitage of St. Anne will vouch for the fact.”

Duval, however, continued to be mainly indebted to the baron for his support *up to the time* of his benefactor's death, as will hereafter be seen. Great sovereigns can promise munificent salaries, and bestow grand largesses; but if the salaries are irregularly paid, and the largesses few and uncertain, better is the unostentatious, self-denying friend who pays you a small sum punctually, and makes you always welcome at his table.





CHAPTER XIX.

THE FAIR CIRCASSIAN.

The idea of her life shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination.

Shakspeare

DUVAL'S simplicity and purity of life had not the least tinge of ascetic morosity; he loved the mirth and innocence of the young; he had a chivalrous respect and admiration for women; he prized the society and friendship of those ladies whose years had matured and mellowed their minds; he had yet a warmer and more tender place in his heart, that was to be filled by an engaging girl of nineteen.

Notwithstanding his numerous and engrossing engagements during his second visit to Paris, he managed to keep up a constant correspondence with Mademoiselle Guttenburg, who faithlessly showed his letters to the emperor and empress, and lent one of

them, at any rate, to Baron Pfutschner, who passed it on to others as a good joke. It was dated "from the Isle of Frivolity, June 17th, 1752, and ran thus :—

"I dare say you are familiar with Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; but I will wager anything that you know nothing of mine, which are much more wonderful. When I left you I had a head as big as a pumpkin; but, on my arrival at Paris, it shrank to the size of a linnet's, and, in the course of a few days more, diminished to the size of a pin's head, and now I doubt whether I have one at all. Formerly, when I spoke, my words followed one another in due order; now they stumble against each other in the most extraordinary confusion: I interrogate when I should reply, and answer when nothing has been said to me. Formerly I plodded steadily along with all the gravity of a philosopher; now I amble hither and thither, or skim along with the lightness of a butterfly. *Then* sad and sober colours formed my uniform; now my delight is in gay and lively tints. Judge by the inclosed pattern: 'tis intended for the *mourning* coat I am going to wear at the interment of my finances.

"I beg you will not for a moment hesitate to believe that I am writing to you with my blood.* If

* He wrote in rose-coloured ink, which, just then, was the fashion in Paris.

you are surprised at its hue, let me tell you that my *penchant* for rose colour has penetrated even into my veins. You will say that it is a very youthful colour; but I assure you that every one is young here—nobody allows himself to be old; and while, elsewhere, age speaks inarticulately from weakness, here it lisps out of affectation.

“Truly it is a land of prodigies, and what surprises me most is, that I am not sufficiently infected with the universal inconstancy to forget that I have the honour of being your humble slave, and that no fashion can ever dispense me from being yours,

“DUVAL.”

To him replied Mademoiselle Guttenturg :—

“Who would have thought that your reason, which formerly appeared so strong, would have given way so completely where you are? It must be a fatal spot. I should have concluded that your philosophy would preserve you from contagion, but I see that it does not stand you in stead on this occasion. What a pity! You had the best sense in the world. I shall always deplore its loss. Micou* and I have put on mourning for it. Were I a rhymester I would write its epitaph.

* Duval's cat, which he had left under her care.—Ed.

“However, were it to revive and return to you, I should never trust you any more, since I find the fashions have penetrated even into your veins. Pray return to us before the Frivolous Isle has spoilt you altogether. Meanwhile, let us have a little chat on such things as may amuse us. You have descended to my level, so I will ascend to yours. Your coat is charming, and gives me a high opinion of your taste. I already picture you to myself arriving here loaded with a thousand pretty toys. You will doubtless not forget to bring us some rouge and patches, head-dresses, tippets, and trinkets. You must do this without fail, if you mean the ladies to have anything to say to you. How about the card-playing? * Do you play principally at quadrille or faro? Do the theatres amuse you? Are there any pretty actresses? Pray tell me all about it, and rely on my showing your letters. That last one of yours was seen by about thirty persons. You may thank the baron for that: † he wanted to set you up in the opinion of all sensible people. Pray accept my gratitude for your remembering me in the midst of chaos. I make my duty to you, being, as I am, your very humble servant, &c.

“SCHÖNBRUN, *July 9th*, 1752.”

* He never touched a card. † Baron Pfutschner.

DUVAL'S REPLY, DATED FROM LUNEVILLE.

“How! you, who have been ten years at court, as compassionate still as if you had only arrived there yesterday? *You* yield so far to human weakness as to mourn the loss of a philosopher's reason? Now, if it had been the death of Miché, or Micou, or a green parroquet, that might be a loss worth regretting; but to issue letters of condolence on the eclipse of my common sense is what I call an extravagant waste of compassion.

“Yes, dear friend, I have followed the lead in each successive country. I have loved music in Italy, good cheer in Germany, beer in Flanders, rosy wine in Champagne, rural life in Lorraine, contrition in lonely solitudes, and at Paris all the pretty follies you mention — operas, plays, concerts, feasting, fine clothes and equipages, night brawls in the streets, swords drawn at a word—such are the exploits that have made me illustrious, eh? True, my purse has gone into a galloping consumption; but that is a small matter. Nothing like travel for polishing the manners! Oh, how many great people have nothing else to distinguish them! As each sheet of *papier papillonné* costs at Paris twenty-four sous, and the envelope only twelve sols, I thought that purchases of such trivial value would be unworthy of your attention. If I can make amends to you for the lack

of these inconsiderable trifles by converting myself into a trinket, harlequin, or hobgoblin, you have only to speak the word. I will commit a thousand follies to please you, without ever so much as asking you to commit one for me ; and shall be only too happy if, by so rare and singular a disinterestedness, I may merit to be for ever

“ Your very humble and respectful servant,

“ DUVAL.”

Returned to Vienna, Duval resumed his simple way of life, dividing his time between his books and his friends. Mademoiselle Guttenburg saw most of him, as they occupied the same box at the opera, where, according to the custom of the court, they went frequently.

One evening, on entering the box, Duval found there a young lady, beautiful, graceful, and dressed in half-mourning, who, not understanding German, and hearing him address Mademoiselle Guttenburg in French, ventured to speak to him in that language, and inquire of him the names of several of the imperial family who were in the house. Struck with her frank and unaffected manner, Duval not only complied with her request, but continued the conversation, which gradually led to serious subjects, deeply interesting to themselves, but sin-

gularly at variance with the scene around them, which they saw and heard no longer.

The following night he went again, and found her there before him.

“Ah, sir,” said she ingenuously, “do not be surprised to see me here again. The pleasure I received from your conversation yesterday evening impelled me to seek a repetition of the enjoyment.”

Duval afterwards said that the sweetness with which these few words were uttered would have found its way into the dullest heart. As his was not dulled, it was won at the instant, and the more readily from his remembering how serious had been the conversation of which she spoke. It was renewed with increased animation; and though the opera-glasses in the imperial box were continually levelled to make out what pretty girl Duval was talking to so earnestly, he did not mind it in the least.

They spoke of books; and on his hearing her mention some French work he did not approve, he said quickly,—

“Ah, I am sorry you have read that!”

“Is it, then, a dangerous book?” said she. “If I had known it, I assure you I would not have looked into it. I had no idea I was doing wrong.”

Duval was so convinced of the sincerity with which this was spoken, that he felt here was a character capable of inspiring him with a lasting friendship,

notwithstanding their difference of age ; nor was he mistaken, for it was only dissolved by death.

Her name was Anastasia Socoloff. She was born of Circassian parents in Astrachan, whence they shortly afterwards removed to St. Petersburg. Here Anastasia seems to have been orphaned, and to have been adopted by Princess Galitzin, who took her to Paris when her husband went thither as ambassador. The princess, dying there in 1762, left Anastasia under the guardianship of her brother, General Betzky ; and under his care, and that of Prince Galitzin, she travelled to Vienna on her way back to St. Petersburg. Duval called frequently at the hotel where she and the general were staying, and the intercourse of a month improved and ripened their good opinion of one another. At the end of that time she proceeded to St. Petersburg, where she was almost immediately appointed lady-in-waiting to the Empress Catherine. Duval then began a correspondence with her, which lasted to the end of his life. It is, of course, too lengthy to be given without abridgment, but samples of it will be found both interesting and amusing. The high terms in which he speaks of the Empress Catherine were doubtless sincere, as few sovereigns surpassed her in noble and useful institutions, and in the patronage of science, literature, and the arts ; added to which, she was a kind and beneficent mistress to his young friend.

As Catherine (then in her thirty-third year), who possessed a very cultivated understanding, corresponded with many eminent literary men, and was glad of their good word, it is not surprising that she approved of Anastasia's exchanging letters with Duval, and even honoured him with "*mille bontés et bienfaits.*"

His first note to Mademoiselle Socoloff was written before she left Vienna, where Prince Galitzin remained as ambassador.

"Wednesday Morning.

"DEAR YOUNG LADY,

"Yesterday afternoon I expected to have the pleasure of conducting General Betzky over the imperial cabinet of medals, and I thought you would perhaps accompany him, for you are well capable of deriving pleasure from this immense historical collection. It is curious that, had you and the general come when I expected you, you would have found the emperor with me, he having come to see what I was about.

"He immediately spied out the beautiful engraving you were so good as to give me, and examined both it and the medal, of which he already had one in silver. When I showed him your accompanying note he exclaimed, 'Really, Mr. Philosopher, this fair young lady's departure ought to cost you some tears!' 'If my eyes shed none, my heart will,' said I, adding that if Petersburg were nearer at hand, I

should be oftener there than at Vienna, which is the plain fact.

“Thus, dear young lady, you may judge whether my friendship and respectful devotion are sincere, since I make no secret of them in such high quarters.

“I hear you start next week. Were I the angel Raphael, you should not want a good guide. The only commission with which I charge you is to be happy, and to let me know you are so, and to acquaint me with the fate which Divine Providence shall assign you. As to the distance between us, pray be assured that it will have no effect in effacing you from the memory of

“Your devoted servant,
“VALENTINE J. DUVAL.”

Soon afterwards he received from her, probably on her leaving Vienna, a miniature portrait of a lovely old lady, Anastasia Ivanovna, mother of the late Princess Galitzin. He acknowledged it, saying:—

“I think all the goddesses of Olympus would seem as ugly as apes to me compared with the illustrious princess whose portrait you have sent me. Death has carried off a woman of perfect beauty, and left you to deplore two protectresses to whom you were fondly attached. Could you shun his darts as long as I wished, you would be immortal; but how

poor would be immortality in this vain and perverse world! Better die than be a perpetual witness of its crimes and calamities. Who knows but we shall one day meet in the vast realms of eternity? Meanwhile, let me thank you for your kind present, and beg your acceptance, in return, of some little vignettes illustrating certain incidents in my life, and also a likeness taken of me by one of my friends as he sat watching me one evening at the play. It is painted on fragile porcelain, a true symbol of the frail condition to which age has reduced me" (he was now sixty-seven); "but I do not complain, for I know that this earth and the heavens themselves shall one day pass away.

"Do not fail to let me know, after your return, whether fate makes you any amends for the losses you have sustained. The banks of the Neva, frozen though they may be, will be no less attractive to me than those of the Seine or the Danube, if I have but the pleasure of knowing that there you are happily and suitably settled.

"Such are the real feelings of an old savage who respects virtue in a lovely form no less than on the throne, and who is, dear young lady, with gratitude and respect, your very humble and devoted servant."

In September he writes again to her, to tell her he has heard of her appointment as lady-in-waiting, and

begging she will remember her promise of letting him hear from her. He asks her, likewise, for a picture of the Empress Catherine, but says he does not want one of herself, as he shall not forget her. But his letter did not reach her till the following February, when thus she answered it:—

“As I was passing through the antechamber to return to my own apartments, what was my surprise to see your dear letter lying there! I really was transported with joy; and, turning on my heel, ran back to her Imperial Majesty as if I were crazy. I held out the sheet to her, saying, ‘See, madam! here is a letter from the most estimable man in the world.’ She spoke very graciously about it, and herewith I send you her portrait.

“Yes, I do indeed serve a sovereign who delights to make others feel happy. I know what interest you take in whatever concerns me, and therefore cannot too warmly express to you my sense of her kindness.”

As Doyal had shown Anastasia’s letter to his emperor, he could hardly complain of her showing his to her empress. On the contrary, he was evidently gratified at it. He wrote to thank her warmly for her letter, and for the portrait, which was an engraving, and says:—

“It has passed through so many hands, both in the court and capital, that it is already half worn out. The emperor took it ill of me that I did not show it him first. Since he saw us together at the play he has not failed to ask me, whenever I see him, whether I am as fond as ever of the beautiful Russian, to which I reply that, if I could possibly be still more so, I would. I have said as much to the Archduke Joseph and the empress’s ladies, which gives them a high idea of a philosopher’s constancy. To persuade them, if possible, that the feeling is mutual, do send me another copy of the engraving, that I may have it framed, as it deserves.

“But now to something else. In my last letter I told you I was curious to know whether the little books we call ‘Heures,’ or books of prayer, are in use in Russia, as with us, and in Paris. If so, please let me have one in Russ, with your own name written therein.”

That his friendship for her was that of an indulgent and benevolent old man for one young enough to be his granddaughter is shown by his gaily hoping she may soon obtain “an estimable Adonis” for a husband.

Bibi, as he soon takes to calling her, then writes to tell him she has sent him the prayer-book she has been accustomed to have in daily use, and assures

him no estimable Adonis has yet made his appearance, nor seems likely to do so. In reply he says :—

“I beg your acceptance of a little picture painted on copper, nine inches by seven, by Frederigo Zuccari, who lived at Rome in the days of Sixtus the Fifth. It is an allegorical picture, and represents Time revealing Truth, preceded by a winged *Bibi*, bearing a trumpet; while Falsehood in a parti-coloured garment lies vanquished on the ground. If you ask why I part with this picture, I reply that, as I am fast approaching the gates of eternity, and as I noticed, in our conversation at the opera, that you had a taste for the productions of nature and art, I think I cannot do better than present this picture of Truth to the person I love most. In all probability, had I been born in the old Pagan days, Truth would have been the only goddess I should have worshipped, less from any superior virtue of mine than from taste and inclination. Judge of the strength of this inclination when I declare to you that it is in nowise weakened by forty-six years of court life. It may be that this constancy is owing to my early training in rural solitudes. However that may be, dear *Bibi*, you must positively accept the picture. Perhaps one of Prince Galitzin’s suite will take charge of it.

“I hear that your respected Mentor, General Betzky, is about to make a long journey. I am sorry

for it. Young and lively as you are, have you strength and firmness enough, left alone, to tread the paths of wisdom? The court is slippery ground; and I doubt if the ice of the Neva or the rocks of Ladoga are more perilous. I could give you many a painful warning. Meanwhile, aim to deserve the honourable praise bestowed by a clever man on one whom he loved,—

‘ Dans son cœur est l’innocence,
 Dans les yeux est la candeur,
 La parure est la décence,
 Et son fard est la pudeur ;’—

and then you will please God and your august mistress.

“ I am sorry I did not kiss you on the forehead when you went away, as I always take that liberty with the unmarried ladies whom I class among my friends. On my mentioning this regretted omission to a great prince, his reply was that I had been a great fool; and, in this instance, I think him as infallible as the Pope.”

“ DEAR YOUNG LADY,

“ On the 2nd of July I received your letter, dated May 1st, from Moscow, together with the book of prayers and the valued duplicate engraving. The whole was so well packed, that it might have gone round the world a hundred times without receiving

any harm. May the Adonis I so often wish you preserve you equally from all injury! Then I shall be satisfied of his not being at all like the ogres alluded to by the Baron de Barr, whom we talked about at the opera.

“Well, dear Bibi, thanks to you, I am acquainted now with a good deal of the doctrine which carries your countrymen to heaven. Your prayer-book teaches me that they are baptized as well as we; that they adore the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that they revere the holy apostles, the fathers of the Greek Church, and (perhaps by mistake) some of the Latin also. What surprised me most was to find among them the patron of my native place, St. Nicolas, Bishop of Myra, whose body they pretend to have at Bari, in the kingdom of Naples. Maybe it is believed to be also in Russia. I should not be surprised, since they boast, even in France, of having three heads of John the Baptist. I can't say I exactly see *how that can be*; but of course that's my own fault, because I am thick-headed and dull of understanding.

“I am truly mortified that the Russian Adonis is so long in coming forward; or what if he were to miss his way to you altogether? Surely you must meet, soon or late; or do you seriously think of dedicating yourself to Diana, and remaining single all your life? That would be a step worthy of a mag-

nanimous Bibi. You would then preserve your liberty, the most precious treasure in the world, and escape the yoke described by Molière, when he sings :

‘ Du côté de la barbe est la toute puissance,
Et le sexe n’est fait que pour la dépendance.
Quoiqu’on soit deux moitiés de la société,
Ces deux moitiés pourtant n’ont point d’égalité :
L’une est moitié suprême, et l’autre subalterne ;
L’une est soumise, en tout, à l’autre qui gouverne.’

“ Such are the laws which men make for themselves. It is a fine thing to be a legislator, as you see. For my part, I was born without any disposition to abuse power, and never wished to tyrannise over any one. I felt early that it would be I who should be the subjugated party, and therefore I abjured love for friendship. But man is man, whoever he may be, in love as in everything else. Love once played me a trick of which I should have been the victim, had I not repulsed him with indignation and despair. If you read the inclosed, it will give you an account of this affair. May you never experience what I have done !

“ As I am greatly interested in all that concerns you, permit me, my dear young lady, to ask you a few questions, to which you may reply whenever you are in the humour for it. Do you still dress as tastefully, are you still as lively and unconstrained, as when we met at the court theatre ? If so, think you that

these gay spirits will last you for ever? that your beauty will never fade? that the favour of the great is a secure inheritance? that the roses of a court are free from thorns? that all is gold which glitters? Ah, no! in all this you would assuredly find yourself mistaken. Does it seem to you that heart and mouth speak one language there? that envy and jealousy are as little known as in heaven? that compliments, embraces, offers of services, and fluent protestations are so many signs and utterances of truth? If a curled and powdered beau, embroidered, laced, and scented, pays you his exquisite devoirs, will his bright exterior captivate you? or will you rather consider the morals, principles, dispositions, and conduct of the gay wooer? Take care! there are snares for Bibis as well as birds.

“ If, by the wayside, you meet a decrepit old man, a soldier maimed in the service of his country, a poor, forsaken widow, a group of tearful, half-naked orphans, what impression do such objects make on your heart? Are you content with a mere sterile compassion? Have you nothing for them but empty words and useless wishes? Were I beside you, how anxiously should I watch your face!

“ When nature displays her glories to you in lovely stretches of scenery, a pastoral landscape, a brilliantly bright, sunny day, or a fine, starry night, are your thoughts instinctively lifted to Him who

produced all these beauties out of nothing? The humblest machine supposes a mechanist, and the heavens proclaim the existence of a God.

“Are you so taken up with the trifling affairs of the hour as to neglect your reading and your knowledge of French? What nice books have you been reading lately? Has Prince Fanfaradin disgusted you with romances? and have you not discovered that M. de la Bruyère can well portray men, and women too? May you profit by his portraits!

“How much time, altogether, do you devote to reading? What sort of books do you like best? When, seated at your toilette, you select the most becoming ribbons, the prettiest trinkets and jewelled pins to adorn your hair, do you also think how the soul should be most becomingly adorned? Did it ever occur to you that the soul wants dressing and adorning?

“Ah! could your fate be such as I would have it, you would be happy; and I should say to the foolish people who declare no happiness is to be found, ‘I know a pretty, amiable young Bibi, five hundred leagues off, who is as happy as heart can wish. Go and see!’

“In Paris, you know, all the ladies make their faces the same colour. I want to know whether this disgusting fashion prevails in Russia, and, if so, whether you have had strength of mind enough to re-

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sist it. I have seen some Russian ladies beautiful as angels, who would not have been so had they overlaid their faces with white-lead and vermilion, and then sprinkled them with patches.

“Yours, &c.,

“V. J. DUVAL.

“VIENNA, *July 15th*, 1763.

“P.S. Thank you for the little paper printed in Chinese characters inclosed in your last. I pass it off among the ladies here for a Chinese *billet-doux*. They pretend to be jealous, I to be enchanted!”

“I don't know whether you remarked that the little prayer-book you sent me was printed in a nunnery at Twer. By men, think you, or by the nuns themselves? I don't see how the former could print in a nunnery.

“Is it true you have Russian plays and operas? All the better if you have; it shows that your language is susceptible of harmony and elegance. Do the public pay for admission, or are they entertained gratuitously, as we used to be at Luneville? If the former, what do they pay?

“‘It will take a year,’ say you, ‘to answer so many questions.’ By no means. When you have fluttered about part of the morning, take a sheet of writing-paper, lay it on a table, seat yourself before it, write two lines, two more to-morrow, as many the

next day, and the next; in a fortnight the letter will be finished. You will just add that the courier is on the point of starting, that you have only time to wind up your letter, that you are quite well, and hope I am so, and that you are my very humble and very lively Bibi."

Anastasia's letter of August 10th was written before she received the preceding.

"At the risk of being tedious, sir, I feel disposed to converse with you longer than usual. Let me first tell you that I have received your letters of February 18th and May 10th, which reached me in very good condition, notwithstanding the immense distance they had to travel. Though not worn out, however, on the journey, as you predicted, they are nearly so through being so often read and admired. Her Majesty has too much right over my heart and actions for me to conceal from her a correspondence so interesting to me. Your letters, therefore, have been intrusted into the hands of this enlightened princess, who considers them full of thought and feeling. The courtiers, ever grasping, were eager to come in for their share of them. To a few of the most deserving I intrusted your letters, and they found as many panegyrists as readers, some even taking copies of them. I know your modesty will

dislike this; but you must hope it was for the public good. I have a conscience, and it would not let me keep good and wise words entirely to myself.

“As it makes me happy to give you pleasure, sir, I have hastened to send you the little trifles you asked for, and by this time you will have received the engraving and prayer-book. My name is written in the latter, but in French, not in Russ, as you wished. I accept with sincere pleasure the little painting on copper you kindly promised me. I am eager to receive it, both for the sake of the giver, and on account of the pretty description he has given of it. I must tell you, sir, that I have already assigned an office to each of the figures represented in it—an idea which has sprung less from my genius than from my heart. Father Time will preserve for me the memory of the day when I had the happiness to secure you for my friend, and I shall not cease to pray that a friendship so dear and so valuable to me may suffer no diminution from him. Truth will be cherished by me daily, and especially shall I invoke her when I wish to express to you my sincere esteem and friendship. As for Falsehood, as I consider him frightfully ugly, I shall leave him outside my door to carry off those who only approach me with false compliments, especially on New Year’s day. Thus you see each figure has its assigned post. If you will kindly send the picture to Prince Galitzin it will be sure to reach me safely.

I ought to thank you more at length ; but I know that my brevity will be a merit in your eyes.

“Continue, sir, to honour me with the esteem you express so pleasantly, and be assured I shall not willingly neglect anything that may insure its duration, &c.

“ANASTASIA SOCOLOFF.

“P.S. I have just received the plan of the city of Moscow, which I inclose. Pray explore it in every direction.”

“VIENNA, *October 25th*, 1763.

“DEAR YOUNG LADY,

“I received your charming letter with infinite pleasure, and on the 16th of September packed the picture myself, and confided it to the care of M. Mertens,* who promised to beg Prince Galitzin to forward it to you.

“The date and origin of the attachment with which you have inspired me are as follows :—

“The evening after our first interview you re-entered my box at the court theatre, dressed, as before, in half-mourning. ‘Sir,’ you said, ‘do not be surprised to see me here again. The pleasure I derived yesterday evening from your conversation has brought

* Court physician.

me hither to seek a repetition of the enjoyment.' You uttered these words in a tone that would have moved the dullest heart. Mine was not wanting in sensibility; but I instantly remembered that our conversation on the preceding evening had been on subjects as grave and serious as my outward appearance. I looked at you, and saw that your engaging countenance had all the impress of quick, impulsive youth. I was surprised that a young girl of your age, born on the uncivilised banks of the Tanais or the Volga, should speak the pure language of politeness and reason. But what completely secured my liking for you was the artless way in which, on my saying I hoped you had not read a certain French author, you exclaimed, 'Ah, sir, is he then dangerous? Had I known it, be assured I would not have looked into any of his works, for I do not wish to do anything that is wrong.' I was so enchanted with this ingenuousness, that I felt from that moment that to whatever climate fate might conduct you, it would be the delight of my heart to hover about your path.

“ . . . See how I am carried away by the pleasure of conversing with you, and how I forget to scold you for tempting me, like another Eve, to believe that any twaddle of mine could interest or amuse your august sovereign. . . . However, I must confess I have quite other grounds for admiring this mother of her country, which inspire me

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with heartfelt wishes for the prosperity of her reign. I understand that several provinces of the Russian empire are very capable of amelioration, and that there are, indeed, few in Europe in which as much might successfully be done. The immense marshes and vast forests with which they are partially covered are but the habitations of beasts, and yet it appears that their fertility might afford the means of feeding whole nations. Now, from the gazettes, &c., I find that your august empress has been impressed with this important truth, and has, in consequence, given orders, the execution of which will second the intentions of Him who, according to Holy Writ, gave the earth to the children of men, rather than to the beasts of the forest. I know, moreover, what her generosity has done for the unfortunate city of Tver, and that her humanity is at present engaged in the erection of a foundling hospital. These, dear Bibi, are the traits of benevolence and greatness of soul which have won my admiration and respect."

"VIENNA, *November 6th*, 1763.

"DEAR BIBI,

"Our tea-drinking Sybarites have a grand idea of some Muscovy tea, which, they say, comes from China by land. I am curious to taste it myself. As there is no one I wish to put myself under obligation to in your country but you, will you

send me a pound of this wonderful tea ; that is, if it really be such as Hebe might have served to the marmoset court of Parnassus? Perhaps you don't know of any such. Very well, then, dear Bibi, I don't want it, for I will have nothing but what you *do* know. What I really and truly want, however, is, that you should be a good little economist, whether now at court, or hereafter in a house of your own. In proof of this, you must send me nothing without letting me know the price."

"VIENNA, *November 10th*, 1763.

"DEAR YOUNG LADY,

"Finding that Prince Lobkovitz is about to start for Russia, I have intrusted to one of his suite a packet containing two long letters of mine, a little book called 'The Death of Abel,' which will please you by its innocence and simplicity, and also two prayers of my own, in exchange for your prayer-book ; one of them being a paraphrase of a passage in Milton's 'Paradise Lost,' the other being of my own making.

"When I asked you to write your name in Russ, it was both to make your little book more precious to me, and to enable me to see whether the written corresponded with the printed Russian characters. For no custom of your country is indifferent to me, my interest in it dating long before my acquaintance with

you, when I was still half a savage, and dwelt in the woods where I was discovered.”

“DEAR AND CHARMING ANASTASIA,

“I received the tea some time ago, which your good friend the Emperor of China sent you. This monarch must be a very intimate acquaintance of yours, to consent to give you a portion of the most precious commodity in his empire. However, I defy him to care as much for you as I do. I love you through friendship, equity, and because you are beautiful. Do you know that friendship and love are not one and the same thing? But no, you know nothing about it, you who laugh in the face of all your admirers. Remember, you unfeeling little thing, that despair may make them hang themselves one of these days. And then you will bedew their graves with tears; you will call on them, but it will be their turn to be deaf. However, I suspect that, soon or late, you will relent in favour of one or other of them; for my little finger tells me that you like to be beautiful, and that, to make yourself (as you think) more so, you dress now and then *en sultane*. Do not, I beg of you; it will spoil a Bibi's simplicity. You have ignored all those questions I asked you. The subtlest courtier could not more cunningly have eluded them. I see you are made expressly for court. I had flattered myself that, knowing how to

draw, you would have sent me a little sketch of yourself in winter and summer costume, without reflecting that perpetual motion knows no repose. Who can help thinking it must have been to prolong this constant flutter that you chose to write your last letter to me on a shaky table? 'I am jostled,' quoth you, 'on all sides—my table shakes like anything: judge for yourself whether I can write;' which reminds me of a song in which a perturbed husband sings,—

' Ah, j'entends mon lit qui tremble,
Et cependant je n'y suis pas.'

More goose he. Doubtless his good wife was in it, wondering what kept him up so late.

“ ‘A rolling stone gathers no moss,’ and a Bibi who is perpetually hopping, skipping, jumping, dancing, laughing, and caring for nothing, unless it be for virtue, ought to think seriously of the happy situation in which Providence has placed her, for this Bibi will not always be the same: in God alone there is no variableness nor shadow of turning. Pray read, in one of the books I send you, the fable of the girl and the heron, as, likewise, that of the grasshopper and the ant. The delightful author was a countryman of mine; that is to say, he was one of those of whom the Parisians have it that ‘ ninety-

nine sheep and a Champagnais make a hundred head of beasts.' Hum! these beasts have been able more than once to give the wits a lesson. Vide La Fontaine. You have read his Fables, you say. Never mind, read them again, and *profit* by the lion and the gnat, the animals ill of the plague, the obsequies of the lioness and the lion, the wolf and the fox.

"I think the 'Idyls' of M. Gessner will please you no less than 'The Death of Abel.' I would gladly know that there are in Russia spots as sweetly pastoral and picturesque as he describes. I very much doubt it; at least, I think there cannot be many along the Baltic, nor about the stormy Ladoga, still less on the sad shores of Onega. I wish with all my heart that those sheets of water were surrounded by peach, apricot, cherry, plum, apple, and pear trees, as heavily laden with fruit (all for your benefit) as mine are this year at the hermitage of St. Anne. They tell me the garden of the Hesperides was nothing to it.

"The coins I asked you for are not in the imperial cabinet; and as I am commissioned to augment it as much as I can, I venture to apply to you for them, and for any that may be supplied by Georgia and Circassia."

“VIENNA, *September 27th*, 1764.

“DEAR BIBI,

“After having mentally given you as tender and respectful a kiss as you ever received in your life, let me tell you I have just found that the letter, medal, and books which I intrusted to M. Elfriding for you upwards of two months ago, and subsequently transferred to the care of M. Mertens, are still in Vienna. This annoys me, because it has deprived me of the pleasure of chatting a little with a Bibi whom I should love, though half Europe divided us, and who is of a sex without which I should be as uncivilised as a beast of the forest. ‘Why, then,’ you will say, ‘have you never married?’ Oh, because I have never had time; because fortune has denied me the means of making a wife comfortable; because, not being able to have two at once, I should have died of grief had I lost one without having another on the spot to console me; because I have heard that at my time of life one is not quite so sure of being a successful wooer, &c., &c., &c. You see, dear Bibi, I don’t want reasons for being an old bachelor. Some of them, I own, are not very cogent, but others are sufficiently so to occasion my decision.

“The tea you sent me in a square box covered with green taffeta had been rather roughly handled, for at least a quarter of it was reduced to powder, either from being shaken on the journey or from the rude

treatment of the custom-house officers. Should you ever be kind enough to send me anything again, you had better forewarn me of it, and send it through M. Mertens, or some of the Russian ambassador's household, addressed to 'Duval, the Emperor's Librarian, Vienna.' ”





CHAPTER XX.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH ANASTASIA.

“Friendship is love deprived of its wings.”

AFFLICTIONS now befell Duval. The first was the loss of his honoured friend and protector, Baron Pfutschner.

“Early last May,” he writes to M. d’Aubigné, “Baron Pfutschner, then in his eighty-first year, had an apoplectic fit, which immediately brought on a bodily and mental torpor, from which, I think, he will never recover.”

The following spring he wrote again to M. d’Aubigné:—

“On the 27th of last January, 1764, a second attack of apoplexy carried off Baron Pfutschner, the man to whom I owe the whole happiness of my life.

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Had God fulfilled my heartfelt desire, when I saw him breathe his last, He would have taken me to Himself at the same time.

“The hospital at Teschen in Silesia, the poorest in all Europe, inherits his whole property; and this property, after the sale of his furniture and effects, does not amount to more than nineteen thousand florins. If you can find me another minister of state and privy counsellor in the world who, after fifty-six years of favour and service, leaves no more than that behind him, I shall laugh at the unity of the phoenix, and believe that there is more than one of the species.

“A few hours after my excellent friend had breathed his last, the Empress-queen sent one of her ladies to assure me that she should herself henceforth provide for my maintenance, which promise she has kept in a manner worthy of her munificence. The next day the Emperor gave orders that the same domestic who had hitherto waited on me at my patron's expense*—namely, for twelve florins a month—should henceforth receive his wages from the privy purse. Thus, without having occasion to break the resolution I had made never to ask anything of my august master and mistress, I find myself placed in the same easy circumstances I enjoyed in the lifetime of my adopted

* Frontin.

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father, and still in a condition to do some good to those who, in former times, were good to *me*."

To Anastasia he more briefly wrote :—

"DEAR YOUNG LADY,

"Since I last had the honour of writing to you, a stroke of apoplexy has carried off Baron Pfutschner, the man to whom I owe the whole happiness of my life, and who, ever since I was twenty years of age, has acted the part of a foster-father to me."

After an immense expenditure of life and treasure the seven years' war terminated in 1762, and the elevation of the Archduke Joseph to the dignity of King of the Romans took place in the spring of 1765. The Emperor Francis was then at Innsbruck, where he had assisted at the marriage of his second son, the Archduke Leopold, with the Infanta of Spain. He had for some time been unwell and apprehensive of apoplexy; and he fancied that the heavy air of the Tyrol, pent in between immense mountains, from which, the saying is, the wolves look down into the streets, was prejudicial to him. He often was heard to exclaim, "Oh, if I could but get away from these vile mountains!"

His sister, the Abbess of Remiremont, advised him to be bled. "I will," said he, "to-morrow; but I

have promised to sup with Joseph to-night, and I will not disappoint him."

At the opera in the afternoon he felt so unwell that he left the theatre, followed by his son, and, proceeding through the antechamber to his own apartment, was struck with apoplexy, and fell into Joseph's arms. His weight, and the suddenness of the fall, made the archduke unable to support him, and he sank to the ground and immediately expired.

The consternation and sorrow occasioned by this event cannot be described. The Empress-queen, of course, felt it the most poignantly; yet, though she mourned him to the day of her death, her naturally strong mind did not permit her to succumb under sorrow. In writing to one of her daughters she called him "her friend, her heart's joy, for two-and-forty years." "Brought up together," she continued, "our sentiments were always the same, and every misfortune of mine was softened by his support." She took a sad pleasure in making his shroud herself; but as she did not do it for the sake of being talked about, she desired her women not to mention it, which they did not till after her death. Thenceforth she always wore mourning. Her apartments were hung with black, and she frequently descended into the vault which contained his remains, and continued several hours praying beside his tomb.

As for Duval, his grief at the unexpected loss of

his beloved prince was so great that a report was spread, which exceedingly hurt him when it afterwards reached his ears, that his reason was disordered by it.

To Anastasia he sadly wrote :—

“It is said God chastens those He loves. If so, He loves me much ; for within a few months He has deprived me of my foster-father and my beloved sovereign. This double loss, especially the latter, overwhelms me with grief. I shall never forget your kind sympathy with me in this my so great affliction. The great are apt to imagine that selfish motives attach us to them. He whom I mourn died persuaded of the contrary, at any rate as regarded myself. He had proofs of my disinterestedness, while I never coveted proofs of his generosity, nor even of his love. When, on one occasion, he bade me step into his chariot that I might accompany him to his gardens, I refused to obey him, alleging that such a favour neither suited his dignity nor my humility. There were those who made their sarcastic remarks on this ; for, as Boileau says,—

‘ Tous les jours, à la cour, un sot de qualité
Peut juger de travers avec impunité.’

But my good emperor, knowing that God himself

is but ill obeyed, took no offence at a refusal which he well knew was dictated by respect. A few days after his death, tired of changes and of masters mortal like myself, I made up my mind to quit the court ; but the excellent lady whom you may remember seeing with me at the court theatre wrote to me from Innsbruck in the Empress's name, begging me to remain at my post, which I did.

“Before this letter reaches you the present year will be plunged in the abysses of eternity. May that which is about to spring forth out of nothing be as happy to you as the past one has been sorrowful to me !

“VIENNA, *December 12th*, 1765.”

Although Duval had conscientiously held aloof from seeking favours of the emperor, Francis, though fond of amassing money, did so chiefly for the purpose of spending it in deeds of liberality and benevolence. Abstaining, from principle, from interference in the affairs of the empire, he had employed the large revenue he derived from Tuscany in commerce, established manufactories, and undertook to supply the imperial troops with uniforms, arms, and horses. Nay, he even sold forage to the Prussians when they were at war with his own wife ; and though he lent her large sums, he took care it should always be on good security. Yet this man distributed a hundred thousand pounds

sterling annually among distressed persons; so let those blame him who do more.

He was more inclined to toleration than Maria Theresa, and always recommended, in matters of religion, the use of persuasion and argument in place of persecution and compulsion.

He spared himself as little as his money. Once, when a fire burst out at Vienna in a saltpetre magazine, Francis was one of the most active in endeavouring to have it extinguished. On being remonstrated with for exposing himself to danger, "Do not," said he, "be alarmed for me, but for those poor creatures whom it will be difficult to save." Another time the suburbs were inundated, and many persons who had taken refuge on the house-tops, and could not be reached on account of the rapidity of the torrent, which was incumbered with blocks of ice, were three days without being able to obtain any food. The most intrepid boatmen could not be persuaded to go to their assistance. In this extremity Francis threw himself into a boat; and exclaiming, "I trust my example will not be lost," rowed himself to the opposite shore. It need hardly be added that the boatmen no longer hesitated, and the people were saved.

The Archduke Joseph succeeded his father as Emperor, and his brother Leopold became Grand Duke of Tuscany. The Empress-queen no sooner recovered

from the first violence of her grief than she sought its best remedy in promoting the welfare of her subjects. To this end she founded an agricultural society, which gave premiums to the peasants who produced the best crops; reformed the public schools; limited the game laws; and introduced inoculation.

Duval was now in his seventieth year. He continued calmly, a little sadly, to occupy himself among his books and medals. Anastasia wrote to him in April, 1766, respecting a book he wanted:—

“SIR,

“I have found, though with difficulty, the book you asked for. I was delighted to procure it for you; and, notwithstanding its rarity, you shall have it by the first opportunity. I told her Majesty that my good philosopher had asked me for a book I could not find; and she replied, ‘I should think not, for it is only to be had in my library—take it.’

“I have the honour to be

“The most humble of Bibis,

“ANASTASIA SOCOLOFF.

“ST. PETERSBURG, *April 9th*, 1766.”

“DEAR BIBI,

“When I receive the book I shall think it has dropped from the skies, in consideration of the goddess

who deprives herself of it in favour of one who is animated with a lively interest in her glory.

“Thank you for sympathising with me in my grief at the loss of my august master. He was no ordinary sovereign ; for he was humane and just—the qualities which in a monarch most concern that useful section of humanity, the people.” •

Anastasia replies, in October :—

“I profit by this courier to send you the book.

“M. Falconet has just arrived, having received the empress’s commands to make a statue of Peter the Great. He has a young relative with him, a very amiable girl of eighteen. I never knew before of one of our sex being brought up as a sculptor.

“Plays and masquerades are taking their usual course. Your Bibi runs about in a domino and man’s hat, and says smart things to the ladies, but to little purpose. *Je reviens toujours à mes moutons.*”

The Empress Maria Theresa, with the benevolent intention of benefiting Duval’s health and spirits, sent him this summer to visit the mountains of Styria and Carinthia with an abbé of his acquaintance. That her kind object was answered may be gathered from his written account of this journey of three

hundred leagues in the following letter to Mademoiselle Guttenburg :—

Abridged account of a journey through Styria, Carinthia, and the Tyrol, begun June 21st, 1766, and ended July 13th of the same year. Dedicated to the Bibi through whose instigation it was made.*

“DEAR BIBI,

“That which I cannot give you as a whole you shall have in part. You shall at least know in a few words,—

“How, on our arrival in Styria, we found that Molière was wrong in declaring that *du côté de la barbe est la toute-puissance*; for here we saw a quantity of women, at least as bearded as Brother Zozime, who had no other power than that of frightening travellers by the immensity of their beards, and the size of the horrible *goîtres* which fell upon their bosoms.

“How one of the eight beatitudes, taken in a literal sense, is amply verified in Styria by the multitude of the poor in spirit whom we observed there.

“How, in traversing this province and those

* Mdlle. de Guttenburg.

adjoining it, we remarked that, instead of strong and durable living hedges, the inhabitants surround each portion of their territory with planks, without reflecting that when their forests are exhausted they will still stand in need of wood for carpentering and firing, which they cannot do without.

“How, in a pretty little town called Villach, a kingly morsel was served us for supper, namely, a *schné-henne*, which the poor abbé* was scarcely able to touch, and which, in spite of philosophical frugality, I enjoyed with as much sensuality as though I had been a king.

“How, at Lintz, ancient domain of the Counts of Goritz, I observed that most of the citizens went at sunrise to wash their hands and faces at the public fountain.

“How, by means of the abysses into which the Drave pours its waters so impetuously, and under favour of the torrents which dash down from the gorges and precipices along its banks, it would be easy for a thousand men to resist twenty thousand; and how pleased I was to find a numerous population in a country where the sun is necessarily tardy in showing itself, where, however, no inch of ground that is capable of cultivation is neglected.

“How we found that it would be almost impossible

* The Abbé Marcy.

to add another walnut, chestnut, apple, pear, or plum to the trees which were severally loaded with these fruits, and which shade the environs of the episcopal city of Brixen; and how we considered that the ancient rulers of the world were wrong in fetching marble blocks from about the Nile cataracts, since the territory around Brixen could furnish such as would have been equally beautiful, and in greater variety.

“How, on our arrival at Sterzingen, where vestiges of Roman antiquities are from time to time discovered, we saw, on the *façade* of a fine house opposite the post inn, a fresco portrait of the great alchemist, Andrew Flammel, the same who, about the year 1520, found the philosopher’s stone in the neighbourhood of the mines of the Tyrol; and how it appeared strange to us that the palace of this adept should now be inhabited by the families of a mercer or a tailor.

“How, upon that spot of this palace (at Innsbruck) which has been to me most fatal,* piety, magnificence, and conjugal tenderness have erected a monument sacred to the memory of the monarch who best represented Divine goodness; and how, at the first sight of this funeral monument, I was obliged to withdraw, lest the sudden anguish of my heart should

* The spot where the Emperor Francis I. died.

again be misinterpreted by infamous, black calumny as a symptom of insanity, as was the first deep grief with which I was overwhelmed at the death of my master.

“How, upon our admiring the vast and superb hall of the university, the two large globes which are its chief ornament, and the ample manuscript chart of the Tyrol,* together with the divers instruments which served to trace it, a venerable Jesuit professor informed us that the globes, the chart, and the instruments were the work of a simple peasant who wore a green pointed hat, a man without ancestors, without title, without classical knowledge, and of the most ordinary physiognomy; and how the Abbé Marcy, a good judge in point of talents, astonished by such a phenomenon, was ambitious to possess the portrait of this extraordinary man, which, in fact, has been sent him, but with the sad news that the worthy original was dead.

“How we were convinced that poverty, lowliness of birth, and incapacity are by no means synonymous, since the plebeian in question, although born in indigence, became in some respects the rival of Euclid and Archimedes, which certainly supposes a loftiness of spirit which nature does not necessarily grant even to those of most illustrious birth; and how, if they

* This chart, whose author was Peter Anich, has since been published in twenty-one nicely-engraved sheets.

had been less tardy in making known to the august empress, Maria Theresa, the merits of a subject really useful to her and her country, her greatest pleasure would have been in alleviating his lot, and consequently prolonging his life. For, as the celebrated Despréaux has very justly said, in speaking of his king,—

‘ On doit tout espérer d’un monarque si juste ;
Mais, sans un Mécénas, à quoi sert un Auguste ? ’

“ How the Archduke Maximilian’s hermitage, lined with rockwork, excited a feeling of sadness in me, by reminding me of the grotto in one of the solitudes that I formerly inhabited ; and how we were told that in many villages here it is the custom, on fêtes and Sundays, to act moral comedies, the money gained by which is employed in the decoration of the altars, and in the construction of the pretty oratories, with their fantastic, many-coloured steeples, which are to be seen scattered over the hills in the neighbourhood of Innsbruck. So true are those words of the poet,—

‘ Tout est sanctifié par des âmes pieuses.’

“ How we repaired to Hall, where we mistook the ladies of the chapter (*dames du chapitre*) for the wives of the reverend Jesuit fathers, both because they wear the dress, and have their house contiguous

to that of the fathers, and because of the wise precaution that they have taken to protect themselves against earthquakes by means of the vast and magnificent isolated hall which they have had constructed in solid woodwork, ornamented with carving and elegant paintings, so that the earth may quake as it likes, without giving cause for alarm to those (*ceux et celles*) who withdraw into this asylum ; and how, on taking leave of *Madame la Colonelle*,* she regaled us with a box of *bonnons*, and presented to each of us a beautiful bronze crucifix, gilt, notwithstanding the prudent custom adopted by these ladies never to give anything for which they are not asked.

“How, embarked on the Inn, we were told that the river, although very deep and impetuous, formerly stayed its course to give passage to the pair of oxen yoked to the chariot which transported the body of St. Notteburg from the place where they wished to inter it to that where it now reposes.

“How, on visiting the cemetery (at Kufstein), I remarked that a *bénitier* of copper was suspended to each of the little iron crosses with which the ground was, as it were, studded, whence I concluded that at Kufstein people die as elsewhere, that copper is very common there, and thieves very rare.

“How at Spitz we were surprised to see a whole

* Thus the superior of this chapter is termed.

hill-side covered with a species of dwarf vine, the props of which were scarcely higher than wax tapers or candles—a singularity that occupied my reflections till we reached the gates of Vienna, where we arrived, by the grace of God, safe and sound after twenty-three days' absence."

He returned home in a very lively humour; and finding, or pretending to find, a lady's slipper on his table, "accompanied by a voice, which assured him it was from the fair Anastasia, and intended to be the object of his serious contemplation," he sent her a tortoiseshell snuff-box, on the lid of which was painted an old hermit looking attentively at a little slipper on a table before him. "If you don't believe me," said he, "pray look at the box. It commemorates the event. Inside it you will find some gold and silver medals and coins, and a cameo of Pan. . . . It would be in vain to wish you a happy new year. It seems to me there will never be one again. The injustice and pride of men have dried up the source in spite of nature."

Anastasia did not think so, being younger, and not of a political turn.

"Your Bibi, sir, cannot give you a better proof of her attachment than by wishing you a good and happy year, which she does with all her heart.

“ Ah, sir, how delightful for your Bibi were those moments she had the privilege of passing with you ! They secured for her a rare friend and an exemplary guide, whom she feels it very hard to be apart from. I had hoped to tell you this in person ; but I find myself still restricted to wishing it. Christmas colds have been rife among us. I followed the fashion, which has been so prevalent as quite to put a stop to court gaieties. I can tell you that frosts of twenty-five degrees (Réaumur) are no trifle. . . . Adieu, my dear philosopher. It would delight me to see you ; but the journey I am about to make to Moscow renders it quite impossible. Such is the fate of the little who depend upon the great.”

“ MY DEAR AND CONSTANT BIBI,

“ . . . And was I really on the point of seeing you again ? of seeing once more, before my departure from this world, that Bibi whom I love most dearly, whose heart beats most in unison with mine ?

“ . . . But how could this have been ? Are you not attached to the most eminent sovereign that ever graced a throne ? Can you so easily leave such a service to run about the world ? After all, what would you have seen in Italy ? The inclosed verses will tell you. That beautiful country has for three years been desolated by famine, and pestilence will surely follow in its sad train if the Duke of

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Tuscany's humane example is not followed by other princes in the peninsula. To amuse you, I will add to M. de Voltaire's verses a droll *vaudeville* by a wit who did not think as honourably of travelling as Solon, Lycurgus, Pythagoras, and your Russian lords and ladies.

“The poet has conformed to the taste of his nation, which loves to pass lightly over the surface of things, leaving to the English and Germans the business of sounding their depths. Some years ago I saw here a smart young Russian nobleman, exactly answering to that description of creatures called *beaux*. I saw at a glance, by his easy manner, his polite address, the inflections and volubility of his utterance, that he was fresh from Paris. In a few minutes he had run through all the immense collection of the imperial cabinet of medals. He flew from case to case, while I had scarcely time to open and shut them, and I seemed to myself pursuing a butterfly hovering over a flower garden. It was amusing how he and I whirled about together. To make amends, I had the privilege of doing the honours to an illustrious Bibi of your acquaintance, who strained her beautiful eyes three long hours in examining the various contents of the cabinet. What surprised me greatly was, that the commanding and imposing-looking M. de Razumoffsky, formerly Hetman of the Cossacks, spent hours in examining objects of curiosity, such as are

seldom, I imagine, seen in the Ukraine, but which may one day become common enough there, if the high destiny to which wisdom is conducting Russia ever be accomplished. Do you know, my dear, the heroic presence of this gentleman struck me so much, that it occurred to me a Bibi would find him irresistible. If the beaux of your country are equal to him in good looks, I do not know how you manage to keep your heart to yourself. You owe a candle to your guardian angel for it, and a good thick taper to the patron saint of Russia, the glorious St. Nicholas. *Apropos* of him, could you not procure me the rouble which bears his image? It certainly exists; for I am assured it is to be found in the Duke of Saxe Gotha's cabinet.

“P.S. Here is my friend M. Mertens at last, at the end of his prodigious journey. Truly he has not had his trouble for nothing. He has kissed the hand of a goddess, and been honoured with a salute which, if I were him, I would not allow to be effaced even by a Bibi. This reminds me of what I thought of doing at Rome. The day after my arrival in that famous capital I had the happiness of attending a mass celebrated by the Pope. I assure you, the thought crossed my mind of attending no more masses, since no others could come up to that.

“I find that the author of the book you sent me, the venerable Demetrius, Bishop of Rostow, has been

canonised by acclamation of the Russian nation, which being the case, a portrait of him has probably been engraved, which I should like to have, to place at the beginning of his book.

“The holy season of Lent began a fortnight ago. I want to know whether its customary observance is not prejudicial to your health, and how many ounces you will weigh at Easter. I hear there are in Russia four fasts, observed with the utmost rigour, namely, the fasts of the Apostles, the Assumption, All Saints, and that before Easter. Here is a good deal of striving, and more than I believe needful, *to take heaven by famine*. But how are these fasts, now, actually kept? Do you mean to say they are really and truly such, and that you have no prelates, as we have, who are tender-hearted and compassionate towards courtiers, letting them off easily when the murmurs of their stomachs announce that they are too empty? Pray let me know your own mode of fasting. Do you make but one meal a day, after sunset, like the Mussulmen? or do you make two, like myself—one at noon, and another, somewhat less substantial, at eight o'clock in the evening? Are eggs, butter, cheese, and milk forbidden, as in Italy? and if so, pray can you tell me wherefore? Because it most certainly is not enjoined in the Gospels, and I can hardly admit the priests to have better authority.

“Do you know that about a fortnight ago I very

nearly ceased to love you. A violent attack of illness, followed by profuse nose-bleeding, laid me low. Every one cried out at it; and I said to every one (the five or six persons I know), 'Let Nature alone; she knows what she is about,' which the event proved. So here I am, as fresh and lively as a young man of seventy-two need wish to be! Adieu, my *silent* Bibi!"

"MY DEAR BIBI,

"Confess that the blue canopy of heaven must be very ample, since it covers Kazan. This city was formerly the capital of a kingdom in Tartary, to which Russia was actually tributary. See how things change—how what was once uppermost is now undermost! Do you know I am glad of it; for uniformity is the mother of *ennui*. Nature herself changes her aspect every minute. Ever since the earth was created a single day has never been uniform. This agreeable diversity extends to our souls; and Boileau knew it when he said,—

'La nature, féconde en bizarres portraits,
Dans chaque âme est marquée des différents traits.'

"Alas, alas! I have experienced it too truly. For some days I have been as dull as a nightcap, because the Empress-queen was apparently dying; and now I am cheerful as a lark because she is recovering.

“Our Empress-queen, at the age of fifty, caught the small-pox, from kissing the young Empress, her daughter-in-law, when she was covered with the disease which hurried her to the grave. I send you her wedding-medal. She was not beautiful, but she was good; and the goodness of the great is of far more importance than their beauty.

“Do you know it is neither the beauty nor the grandeur of your august mistress that has won for her the homage of the most enlightened men in Europe; but it is because, instead of indulging in slothful ease, and committing her state affairs into the hands of a vizier, she sees to them herself, and uses her power as the instrument of her people’s happiness, by giving them equitable laws, and introducing arts, manufactures, and commerce into every part of her immense empire. Perhaps all these purposes combined have led to her present journey to Kazan. Did the Occa and the Volga have the honour of bearing their sovereign lady to the confines of Tartary? If so, their fame is made. But did you, dear Bibi, accompany her? and if so, did you try to procure me any of the coins buried among the ruins that bear witness to the ravages of Tamerlane?

“My friend M. Mertens* has promised to give you a kiss for me, and to place in your hands a little

* Appointed physician to the Foundling Hospital at St. Petersburg.

case containing a medal commemorating the funeral of my beloved master, the late Emperor Francis, as well as that of the poor young Empress Josepha. As I have remarked your seal to be a little more than rather old-fashioned, I beg you to accept one bearing the head of Augustus, which I constantly used till I took a fancy to a little cornelian bearing the head of the conqueror of Asia.

“Supposing you to have time and patience for it, M. Mertens will read you a little account of a journey of mine, inscribed to my friend Mademoiselle Guttenburg, whom you may remember sitting near me at the court theatre. This lady is well worthy the esteem and confidence with which our empress has honoured her for nearly twenty years. Singular to relate, even at court her place in the sovereign’s good graces is universally applauded. From this you may judge of her worth and discretion. May you have as good a destiny!”

In 1767 the Empress Catherine delivered instructions for a new code of laws to deputies summoned from all parts of her immense dominions. These instructions were humane and enlightened; they abolished torture, and justly won for her the approbation of Europe. Her schemes for foreign aggrandisement, however, caused the Ottoman Porte to declare war against her; but it proved very disastrous to the Turks.

“I see by the papers,” writes Duval, “that the Turks menace Russia. I would sooner know that Russia menaced the Turks. Send me some news, if you dare; but they say that people are under such restrictions in your country that they dare not talk of anything more important than the weather.

“. . . I shall be curious to know whether you received my letter of the 14th of March, in which I treated your four fasts so disrespectfully. . . . I am a Christian, by the grace of God, as the catechism says, and, as such, ought to love a religion which consoles me in this life, and teaches me how to secure happiness in the life to come. I therefore detest everything which has assisted in overthrowing that blessed religion in countries where it once was most firmly established. Now, your four fasts have contributed to do this, and in the following manner:—When the barbarians overflowed Greece and Asia Minor they found everything to delight them. That species of heroic robbery, dignified by the name of conquest, soon made them masters of the country. You may believe that the rightful lords of the soil would very gladly have kept them out of it; but the Mussulmen, having observed that the Greeks more especially lacked courage when weakened by fasting, made a point of attacking them just at the very times when they were brought lowest by their four fasts. By this means they overthrew Constan-

tine the Great, and established the Koran on the ruins of the Gospel. Ever since I have been acquainted with this by reading the Byzantine history, fasts have been so odious to me that I can hardly even pardon the Russian policy which makes a virtue of necessity, by commanding its armies to observe a fast (I am told) whenever they traverse a desert.

“Adieu, my worthy little fasting Bibi! I shall consider you a saint if I find you have resisted the sturgeons of the Volga. M. Mertens and his charming wife start on Sunday.”

ANASTASIA'S ANSWER.

“Yes, sir, I had the pleasure of receiving your letter of March 14th. I have also the pleasure of telling you that you cannot treat our fasts too cavalierly. They really are insupportable. Your Bibi cannot endure them, and hopes to gain heaven otherwise than by famine.

“The empress has just arrived. Imagine my joy at seeing her, after a six weeks' absence. Her Majesty's suite was very small, and I was not strong enough for so fatiguing a journey. I was under medical treatment while she was away; but I will give you a little sketch of her progress from an account printed in Russ.

“She proceeded from Moscow to Tver, where she

embarked in a galley, and, accompanied by a fleet of other galleys, proceeded to Kazan. On the voyage she took notice of whatever was remarkable. The expedition was quite a triumph; crowds flocked to meet her; the banks of the river were decorated with flowers and branches. At the news of her approach the peasants forsook their work, and ran many versts to see her: when they came in sight of her they surrounded her, pressed upon her, wept for joy, brought linen rags to be touched by her clothes or person, to keep afterwards as precious relics. Nothing was to be heard but murmurs of admiration, cries of enthusiasm, transports of joy, prayers for the preservation of the mother of her country.*

“The coins you desired to have are from a place called Bolgar, formerly demolished by the Mongols. The Tartars come yearly to offer up prayers there. Her Majesty has been there, and assures me the country is full of curious remains.

“The Turkish menaces in the papers are fables invented at pleasure. We are not forbidden to talk unrestrainedly. You mistake my want of eloquence for discretion. If there were anything I could find worth telling you, there would be no hesitation in communicating it. The mental restraint you speak of

* A good deal of all this was got up. Even sham villages were erected on the river banks, to give her a false idea of the prosperity and populousness of the country.—ED.

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existed formerly in all its rigour, but now it is otherwise: people may say and do what they please.

“ANASTASIA SOCOLOFF.

“SELO KOLOMENSKY, *July 16th, 1767.*”

“MY DEAR BIBI,

“While I imagined you in the train of the ruling star of Russia, intent on feasting on the sturgeon and asparagus of Kazan, and the cherries, melons, and carp of Astrachan, or collecting for me choice coins of ancient Georgia and the regions once devastated by Tamerlane, an illustrious prince of your acquaintance tells me my young lady remained behind in the capital. Could it be, most noble Bibi, that the beaux so besieged you in Moscow that you could find no time to tell me what was passing on the Volga? Let me tell *you*, then, that your august mistress, on her arrival at Tver, remembered that a certain book called ‘Bélisaire,’ proscribed by the French, as were formerly ‘L’Esprit des Lois,’ ‘L’Ami des Hommes,’ ‘La Vie du Roi Jean Sobieski,’ the ‘Encyclopédie,’ and sundry other noteworthy works—remembered, I say, that this book, worthy of being a royal manual, deserved to be translated into a language, the dialects of which extend from Bohemia to the confines of China, and from Greece and Albania to the sombre shores of the White Sea. She therefore, instead of troubling herself with fêtes, banquets, games, concerts, and other

pastimes proper to beguile the tedium of a voyage, invented an amusement hitherto unknown to pompous frivolity, or, which is more to the purpose, to imperial greatness itself. Scarcely had she embarked with the select Areopagites whom she had permitted to accompany her on board, when she distributed among them by lot the sixteen chapters of 'Bélisaire,' each receiving one, proposing that the whole should thus be translated into Russ at once. It was singular (and makes me think that Fortune cannot be as blind in Russia as elsewhere) that the ninth chapter, which treats expressly of the errors and stumbling-blocks to which absolute power is exposed, should have fallen to the share of the Thetis of the Volga herself. I have seen a copy of her version of it, and was not surprised to hear, from those who had read it, that the beauty of the translation equalled that of the original; but I *was* surprised when they told me she was going to dedicate it to the venerable Archbishop of Tver, in memory of the translation having been commenced in his diocese. If vanity would be tolerable in any case, surely it might be in this. . . . What will M. Marmontel think—he who, like myself, first saw the light beneath the roof of a rustic hut—when he learns that the most powerful and enlightened sovereign of the times has so thoroughly adopted his sentiments, that she has even desired to interpret them to the vast nation which owes its happiness to her? Such,

dear Bibi, are the marvels of which you have not written me a word.

“P.S. Since your sovereign lady appreciates ‘Bélisaire’ so highly, I will tell you what has been its reception here. The lady whom you saw beside me at the opera, read the book to our august Empress during the terrible illness which nearly snatched her from us ; and this mother of her country declared that virtue could not be more fitly or eloquently expressed than in this admirable work. She therefore determined to sanction its publication in her capital, notwithstanding the remonstrances of those who, under the name of theologians, look upon themselves as the judges and mediators of the court of heaven. Whether they are in the right or wrong of it I will not determine ; but they certainly remind one of the ancient Scythians, who put out their slaves’ eyes in order to prevent them from looking about while churning or grinding at the mill.

“As for our young Emperor, already a widower for the second time, he has ordered a ‘Bélisaire’ to be placed in each of his apartments, both in town and country. If he studies it and profits by it, I shall think more of it than of the brilliants in his crown.”

Although the Emperor Joseph nominally shared his mother’s sovereignty, he took little more actual part in the government than his father had done. As

far, however, as she permitted him to act, he displayed very liberal ideas, and a benevolent desire to improve the condition of the people. He had also a great dislike of the formality and etiquette so prevalent in German courts, and was remarked for his affability and his unaffected desire of acquiring information. He rose early, spent his time in active employments, and paid rapid visits to various parts of his extensive dominions. In the spring of 1769, when he was just twenty-eight years of age, he set out with a small retinue, and under a feigned name, to visit Italy. An amusing anecdote of this tour will be found in one of Duval's letters.*

* We must just remind our readers, however, that he assisted in the dismemberment of Poland, and that his new code, which nearly abolished the punishment of death, enjoined several commutations which were almost worse.—ED.





CHAPTER XXI.

THE SUNSET HOUR.

How happy is he born or taught
That serveth not another's will,
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his only skill ;
Whose passions not his masters are,
Whose soul is still prepared for death,
Not tied unto the world with care,
Of prince's ear or vulgar breath.

SIR HENRY WOTTON, 1530.

AFTER Baron Pfutschner's death Duval had boarded with a widow, who also provided for his faithful man-servant, Frontin, and a little outcast child whom the compassionate philosopher had picked up in the street and adopted for his own. He and Frontin were scarcely like master and domestic. Duval could not be imperious or exacting to any one ; he instinctively gave his orders in the politest manner, and limited them as much as possible. He

loved to be self-dependent, and as little troublesome to others as he could. As he was generally alone in the evening, he regularly sent Frontin home to his wife, and prepared his supper himself in his own room, placing his little stewpan on a trivet over ignited spirits of wine. He greatly enjoyed a dish thus dressed after his own fashion, especially if the Chevalier Koch or some other friend unexpectedly dropped in and partook it with him. He often said, on such occasions, that nothing better reminded him of the poverty and loneliness of his youth than thus attending to his own little supper.

He went to bed early and rose early, in accordance with long-established habit. He employed the time thus husbanded in adding to his rich stock of information. Sacred and general history, natural history, moral philosophy, and antiquities were his favourite studies. His letters have already shown that he was neither sceptical and scoffing, like the pseudo-philosophers of the French school, nor blind to the absurdities and corruptions of his church; but that he took a common-sense view of subjects that addressed themselves to reason, and were of human imposition, while he humbly yielded his faith to the word of revelation. His private library was not very extensive, but composed of choice books, which were well read. Never was man fonder of knowledge, and its acquirement was rendered easy to him by a quick

perception and tenacious memory. The difficulties he had encountered in his early years had drawn out and quickened these happy faculties. Forced to grope his way in the dark, and to find substitutes of his own invention and construction for the simplest instruments, his understanding, by dint of continual exercise, had become more active, penetrating, and correct. He had contracted a habit of proceeding with order and method in his search after truth, of forming clear and distinct ideas upon every subject, of bringing them to bear upon one another, and of referring them to first principles. He was, nevertheless, frankly willing to yield his own opinions to those of others, unless his own appeared beyond dispute.

His singular coolness and impartiality in weighing the true and the false resulted from that vigour of character which always distinguishes the real philosopher, and which especially guided his religious inquiries. It is not difficult to imagine that a man who, from his tenderest years, had been accustomed to contemplate with awe and delight the immensity of the heavens, and to reflect on the stars of the firmament till his thoughts were raised to the God who made them, should profoundly adore as well as love Him. Taking natural theology and revelation as his starting-points, he could admit nothing that was not based on one or both. All trifling about

subtleties was distasteful to him. He made charity an unequivocal test of the Christian character, and often spoke with regret of the lost simplicity of the primitive church.

“In the days of the apostles,” he would say, “believers troubled themselves little about controversy; but they loved God above all things, and their neighbour as themselves.” He wished his own church to be more tolerant of diversities, whether within or out of it, and thought, as Rowland Hill has since said, that “schism is the devil’s own wedge, and a term that ought not hastily to be applied.” The pretended orthodoxy, which is only a cover for intolerance and persecution, had done more harm, he declared, to the human race than all other evils put together. Indeed, he believed that the latter would never have been so fatal or so widely spread, but for ill-advised attempts to root them out at the expense of freedom of conscience—a right of which no man is at liberty to deprive another.

He strongly condemned the scenes of violence and bloodshed with which the history of Europe abounds, and longed for that enlarged wisdom which should lead men to abjure mutual distinctions. These aspirations, more common now than they were in his days, indicate the kindliness of his heart and the breadth of his views.

Duval was above the middle height. In early life

he possessed fine eyes and teeth, combined with regular but rather massive features, and a frank, engaging countenance. Years of study, by slightly frowning his forehead between the eyebrows, gave a little severity to his look, which softened when he spoke; and the sweet and pleasing inflections of his fine voice added persuasion to what he said, and betrayed the susceptibility of his heart. He was negligent in his gait, and used his limbs like a man brought up in the country. He had certainly never learnt dancing, riding, or fencing, and in those exercises was the inferior of the courtiers, who perhaps were his inferiors in most other things. His attire was accordant with the simplicity of his habits: a round peruke, negligently curled, a coat of dark brown cloth, coarse lawn ruffles to his shirt, black worsted stockings, and a pair of thick-soled shoes with steel buckles, formed his ordinary costume all the year round.

His furniture was equally simple; it chiefly consisted of a bed hardly better than a pallet, some chairs with rush seats, two or three old presses, and several shelves on which his books were ranged, protected from the dust by curtains.

He was certainly not a little dazzled by the brilliant points in the character of the Empress Catherine; but the success which seemed to attend her labours for the happiness of a vast population excited a sincere

approval which was distinct from adulation. Such phrases as "your august Minerva," "the Urania of the north," &c., must be taken for the counters used at play in courts, rather than counterfeits of the current coin of the realm. Duval had an Empress nearer at hand who found him no sycophant.

"I hear," says he to Anastasia, "that your august sovereign is having medals struck to distribute among the legislative deputies. When they come out, pray try to get me one in silver."

The Empress sent him one in gold; also a valuable collection of Russian medals in silver, and, at his special request, a set of plans of the imperial residences, some of which were expressly executed for him at considerable expense. Rare books and costly furs were also among her gifts.

"I want to know," he continues, "how many young ladies are your companions in office—whether you are always on duty, or take it in turn? whether you are boarded and lodged at court, or have so many roubles per week for those expenses? Beautiful and attractive as such a bevy of young girls must needs be, are envy, jealousy, and malice unknown among them? and are their admirers kept quite at a distance? Here all the ladies-in-waiting are compelled to live unmarried. Sad and lonely lot! At Turin they are all married; and I can tell you their cheerful countenances bear witness to the fact, in

strong contrast to the pale faces here. When your young maids of honour grow old, what is their fate? Here they receive a good pension, and an appointment in the palace, where they live pretty much like recluses, and addict themselves either to piety or scandal."

Anastasia gaily replied, "Your letter has made me laugh immoderately. You ask how many there are of us. There were formerly twelve, but marriage has thinned our ranks, and only half of that number now remain. Some of these protest they mean to die unmarried; others say there is at least no hurry. We are lodged and boarded at court, have fire, candles, and washing allowed us, besides tea, coffee, sugar, and a coach-and-six whenever we like. Our duty consists in eating, sleeping, and doing whatever we please, though we are always ready to attend her Majesty's summons. Ah, sir, pray pity me! With such a life as this, is there not great fear of my growing too fat?"

She added that the Empress desired her to forward the medal and gold chain, and that his letters were in great request at court. Duval expressed himself penetrated with the Empress's kindness, but remonstrated against his letters being handed about. Probably he did not much care for it, however, as there were no secrets in them; and he had thus the opportunity of dropping a word of counsel here and

there, not only for the courtiers, but the Empress herself. Many of his compliments are neither more nor less than this.

“A poor turner,” he says, “lately brought me a toy of his own invention, which he was pleased to call a leech. It was nothing but a spiral of ox-horn, fit to frighten children with. When I showed it to one of our court ladies, ‘Really,’ cried she, ‘that is your own emblem. You ought to send it to your beautiful Russian ; for, considering how many presents you get from her, you are a downright leech.’

“I am just now reading a book I mean to send to my old friend, Brother Zozimus, superior of the hermitage which was the cradle of my fortunes, to see what he will make of it. It is called ‘Letters on Dancing and Ballets, by G. M. Noverre, Vienna, 1767,’ and is an octavo volume. Herein I learn, in very fine language, that a really good dancing-master is as rare as the phoenix, and that all the great men the world has produced are but pigmies in comparison with him. If you won’t believe me, get the book and let one of your beaux read it to you ; and if you don’t find what I say in it, shave me for a monk. The author is a live man in this place. I have seen him with my very own eyes : it was a blessed sight.”

“DEAR BIBI,

“Small causes sometimes produce great effects. After the fatal transfer of Lorraine, when I found myself transported to the banks of the Arno, like the Jews to the waters of Babylon, I diverted my sad thoughts one day by looking into the state of my finances, and found the sum total to consist of three hundred gold sequins or ducats, the purest in the world. What should I do with them? Look at them? That was soon done, for they were all alike, and I was neither Midas nor Harpagon. Passionately fond of diversity, except as regards Bibis, I resolved within myself to exchange all these coins for as many pieces of gold of the same value, bearing the impresses of the various sovereigns of Europe. ‘By this means,’ said I to myself, ‘I shall be able to study their faces, their legends, their heraldic devices; and, from the purity or baseness of their metal, the significance of their legends, the cutting of their letters, and the merit of their designs, I shall learn something of the probity, opulence, genius, and taste of those by whom they were issued.’ Full of this idea, I wrote on the subject to Baron Pfutschner, and begged him to effect the exchange. This he good-naturedly undertook. He did more; for he read my letter to the Emperor Francis, who, finding the project something more than amusing, formed a similar plan on a much larger scale, namely, of collecting coins and medals from

every corner of our hemisphere ; and this is what I have been engaged in during the last fifteen or sixteen years.

“ Such, dear Bibi, was the very slight origin of an historical treasury which is indisputably one of the most valuable in Europe. I still preserve my own little collection, the arrangement of which formed the outline and model of that immense cabinet. It consists of two hundred and fifty-six pieces of gold, in very good preservation, each of a different coinage, as is indicated in the inclosed list. The fear that this pretty collection should be dispersed at my death, which would really be a pity, inclines me to part with it for what it cost me, namely, some twenty or thirty ducats more than its intrinsic value, for I am no lover of hard bargains. But I would only do so on condition of its remaining entire, for the instruction, for instance, of some rich young lord sensible enough not to stake it at cards.

“ If you know any one likely to take it on this condition, pray let me know. I have another collection, consisting of ancient Roman coins, which is the most precious thing I possess. Being formerly passionately desirous to examine for myself the faces of the great men of antiquity, I formed a very pretty chronological series when at Luneville. It represents one hundred and sixty-eight different individuals, and consists of three hundred and thirty-three different

pieces, forty of which are in gold. My advanced age induces me to get rid of these likewise, in order to leave the price of them to some poor relatives, who have nothing else to hope from a man who never courted fortune. As to its worth, it does not, in my opinion, exceed that of the first-named collection, though there is a gold medal of Domitia, and another of the venerable Pertinax, which cost respectively nineteen and thirteen ducats, and two Gordians, eight ducats each. Adieu, my dear. My eyes are so tired that I can scarcely see what I write.

“DUVAL.

“VIENNA, *March 10th*, 1768.”

As the empress was a great curiosity fancier, she was a very likely person to buy the coins. Duval was now failing, and felt anxious, not to set his house in order (for he had not one), but to realise his little possessions for the sake of those who should come after him.

“Dear Bibi,” he says, “I once read in an academical dictionary that a sick man was a man who was not well. According to this definition, then, I must be ill; for I have not been well for some months. My entrance into my seventy-fourth year, the severity of the winter, and Bibi’s silence may have had something to do with it. In case anything should happen, I send you at once the wedding-medal struck in

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honour of the young archduchess,* who is going to Naples to replace her † whose numismatic apotheosis you have already seen. A king seems to be a very delicious *bonne-bouche*, since an imperial bride will go so far to seek him.

“For seven or eight months I have been ready to die. A compatriot of yours, the north wind, has shrivelled me up, and given me a series of colds, the effects of which I am still experiencing. Ah, the wretch! ’twas he that nearly caused me to perish in 1709; ’tis he who this present year destroyed the vine belonging to the hermits of St. Anne, and reduced my old masters to drink spring water. But patience! I shall send them something that will procure them wine in spite of him, for I know that involuntary penances are worth nothing.

“In consequence of your promise that the medals of which I sent you the list shall not fall a prey to chance, I have engaged Prince Dimitri to forward them to you.

“As to my other little set, I shall arrange them chronologically before I send them to you, that you may distinguish at a glance the flourishing periods of the Roman empire from those which immediately preceded its fall.

‘Ce que je vous dis là ne sont pas des chansons,
Et vous devez du cœur dévorer ces leçons.’ ‡

* Josepha. † Joanna. ‡ Molière.

“To prove it, show me a collection of Russian coins, from Igor down to your imperial mistress, and a series of Roman ones, from Julius Cæsar to Paleologus, and if, in the course of an hour, I do not make you feel acquainted with the state of each reign with regard to the arts and sciences, I will consent that, instead of greeting me with a kiss, you shall spring four steps backwards, as you did when you saw the leech.

“It was while in view of the books, the charts, the prints, the tea from China, the rhubarb, and especially the gold chain and medal with which you have enriched me, that the envious court ladies compared me to that greedy reptile. Were I a spruce young French officer, *à mince équipage*, and you a young dowager tired of widowhood, they would by no means have been surprised; but how could they have conceived that an old sylvan of the forest of St. Anne should have pushed his conquests right up into the neighbourhood of the polar circle, and have levied such contributions from a beautiful and lively Bibi? Nay, I can hardly believe it myself, so much more incredulous are we of fact than fiction. There is one fact, however, that needs not to be attested; it is the sincerity with which I remain your faithful and attached friend,

“THE INFIRM OLD CORYDON OF AUSTRASIA.

“*June 20th, 1768.*”

Then he asks her for a copy of the empress's code, and receives four; he is grieved that the small-pox, from which he suffered so severely in his youth, should prevail in St. Petersburg; and disgusted that war should break out between Russia and Turkey, and the rest of Europe rejoice at it. Rice and coffee are already selling at a premium, and people are devouring the sultan's manifesto. In reply, Bibi begs him not to frighten himself about the war; she thinks it will blow over. "The empress hears all, sees to all, and still is always working at her tapestry."

A visitor from Duval interrupts her at her toilette, and finds her apartment is up six flights of stairs.

"DEAR BIBI,

"I promised to tell you the subject of the design on the little enamelled snuff-box I sent you.

"Travelling for my health in 1753, and finding myself in that part of the country where ninety-nine sheep and a Champagnais make a hundred—that is to say, in my native place—my love for solitude led me one day into a forest which appeared so thick and vast as to be expressly formed for meditation. While rambling about in it I came upon a little hamlet of nine or ten dwellings, inhabited by sabot-makers. As the weather was warm I begged for a draught of

water. The poor people gave it me in a great wooden goblet. I found the water to be exceedingly bad, but was told the girls of the hamlet had to fetch it, such as it was, from a place a quarter of a league off, for that they had neither well nor spring on the spot. Moved with compassion for these poor lasses, I resolved to have a well dug there, which I did, at a cost of four hundred livres; so that the forest maids are now able to slake their thirst with better water, and at the price of less fatigue than before. Such is the little incident which one of my Florentine friends chose to commemorate in a landscape à l'Italienne.

“A few evenings ago, at the opera, when Roxalana exclaimed, ‘Appear on the horizon, O beautiful Circassian!’ the emperor and his sisters levelled their opera-glasses at me, and examined me as attentively as the empress-queen did the evening I first had the pleasure of meeting you.

“I am much obliged to you for having inquired of the good and amiable Madame B—— not only whether I were well, but whether, at my great age, I were still cheerful and good-humoured. I ought to be the latter (or both?), since, in order to reach the lofty regions where I dwell, I have a hundred and forty-nine stairs to climb two or three times a day, and another flight of a hundred and twenty-five stairs to mount to the place where I dine, by the empress’s

orders, since I refused to eat at court because they do not dine punctually at noon.

“A little while ago I sent you the emperor’s portrait, and now I have an anecdote to tell you of him. During his late visit to Italy his Majesty happened to be at Forli, in the Romagna, where, early in the morning, he entered a *café* incognito. Count Pappini, an Italian nobleman, who was already there, seeing a smart, handsome youth enter, with a dark complexion, bright eyes, a fine figure, and pleasant countenance, addressed him thus:—

“‘Monsieur is apparently travelling—he is probably going to Rome. Ah, monsieur! you are very young, and you are going to a place where the men are very sharp, and the women very ensnaring. Do, my dear young gentleman, be upon your guard! I always pity young people when I reflect on the dangers to which their inexperience is exposed.’

“Here the good count drew such a picture of the dangers and temptations before him as might well have frightened anybody, and for which our emperor was, of course, duly obliged to him. Pappini having proceeded to ask him who he was and where he came from, and been informed in general terms that he was a native of Germany, they presently parted.

“Imagine the count’s surprise when he heard, in the evening, to whom he had been addressing his admonitions! Horribly afraid he had got into a

scrape, he wrote a humble apology, to which the emperor sent the following reply, which I guarantee for authentic. It might have been penned by Titus or Marcus Aurelius :—

“‘TO COUNT PAPPINI.

“‘I shall always remember with pleasure, my dear Pappini, the conversation I had with you at Forli, and the good advice you there gave me. The sincerity you evinced on that occasion will not permit me to doubt the truth of the sentiments you express in your letter. They are all the more gratifying to me, since I was able to inspire you with them at a time when I was nothing more to you than a fellow-creature, owing nothing to the prestige of that position in which it has pleased Divine Providence to place me, and in which all that is ordinarily said to us is addressed rather to the title than the person. Preserve these kindly feelings for me, my dear Pappini. Be assured that I shall never be offended at being looked on simply as the man—a title which I esteem beyond any other that can be given me—and that Joseph seeks to be loved more than to be flattered as the emperor. Be assured I shall always retain the same feelings. I pray God to keep you under His holy protection.

“‘JOSEPH.

“‘VIENNA, *New Year's Day*, 1770.’”

“ DEAR BIBI,

‘ La nature, féconde en bizarres portraits,
Dans chaque âme est marquée à des différents traits.’

“She it is who, in her caprice, has inspired me with a strange, incomprehensible taste for elegant head-dresses. This odd fancy carried me several times last summer to the German theatre, where I do not understand one word of what is said or sung. There, seated in the pit amidst the honest *bourgeoises* and pretty *soubrettes*, I amused myself with sedately contemplating their astonishing variety of head-pieces, and marvelled how, by the aid of a few scraps of lace, blond, muslin, and shreds of ribbon of various colours, the whole formed into garlands, circular or pendent, but always artistically and gracefully arranged, they ensnared our simple souls. It is true that Bibis in general are encouraged to give the rein to their charming and fertile genius, because they well know the solidity and depth of ours. They are well aware what an all-powerful effect a well-dressed Bibi has on our imaginations, and fall quickly on our hearts ; and they likewise know that an ill-adjusted ornament, a trait of untidiness, a hook left unfastened, has occasionally blighted the fairest matrimonial prospects. . . . On one of these occasions last summer I was sitting amidst the pretty citizens, immersed in such profound cogitations as these, when the name of

'Duval !' called loudly, not only made me start, but drew the eyes of my neighbours upon me, and, moreover, those of the emperor and his two sisters, the archduchesses. It was Prince Dimitri, calling from his box to invite me to a seat beside him. I replied only by a profound bow, and remained where I was.

"Next day I went to him, and had the honour of telling him that having been born among that useful portion of the public called 'the people,' I by no means aspired to cut a figure among the great. I told him how that Duke Leopold of Lorraine, his eldest daughter, the Queen of Sardinia, and my beloved master, the late Emperor Francis, had often tried to tame me, but that a certain timidity and wildness, coupled with respect, had taught me to know my place. I added that, during the four years I was lodged in the room next to that of the late emperor's eldest sister, I had never seen any of the private apartments of the palace at Luneville except that of Duke Leopold, when he summoned me to converse with learned Englishmen, which often happened, much to his and my satisfaction; and that when, after the death of that true father of his country, his august son and successor nominated me his librarian and professor in his Academy, the fear lest I should forget that agriculture is the foster-mother of the human race led me to divide my time between study and rural labours; so that in fine weather I

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gave my lessons to the young cavaliers in the morning, and repaired in the afternoon to my old hermitage. I have been seen a hundred times there, sometimes perched in a tree lopping off the useless branches, sometimes grafting by slips, by budding, or *en couronne*, perhaps rolling a wheelbarrow, digging a ditch, or planting a hedge, in company with my old friend, the industrious Brother Zozimus, an ignorant old hermit, it must be owned, with regard to book-learning, but a profound scholar in practical husbandry. Such, my dear Bibi, is a summary of the reasons I gave Prince Dimitri why a faun of the forests was not quite courtly enough to appear by his side in a box at the theatre."

"DEAR BIBI,

"A French lady, being told that the parliament of Paris had condemned her to pay a certain debt, '*I, condemned?*' exclaimed she. 'These pettifoggers are intolerably impertinent. Condemn a woman of my quality, indeed! What unpoliteness!' '*Pardon, madame,*' interposed some one; 'the thing was wrongly expressed. The parliament merely *begs* you instantly to pay off the money for which you happen to be sued.' 'Oh! that alters the case,' said she, and immediately complied with the demand, thinking her judges more polite than they had been. Thus it is in that nation so attached to external

forms: what they refuse under one name, they yield under another. . . .

“In Wallachia the nut trees grow as high as your firs. I have seen fine long planks cut from them, more than a foot wide, and quite suitable for carpentry, which is remarkable, since in most places hazel nuts are mere bushes.

“They say that a chief named Salomon has driven General Totleben from Erivan across the Circassian mountains. I am sorry for it. I had hoped that Russian intrepidity, to extend its commerce, would draw old Sebastopolis from beneath its ruins, and that that city, once the commercial harbour of so many nations, would cease to be degraded by the name Sebastopol given it by the barbarians.

“Do you know we are over head and ears here in wedding preparations? The expenses are immense. The dauphin is going to marry our youngest and most charming archduchess.* Why did not your court forestall him? Such a grievous omission has made me as sad as a nightcap, and I refused a ticket for a grand festival given in honour of the occasion. It is true that, to obtain admission to it, I must have disguised myself; and never in my life have I worn a mask but once, and that was nearly twenty years ago, and by imperial command. I then vowed that I never would be so entrapped again.

* Marie Antoinette.

“A hundred times have I blessed Heaven for having made me a plebeian by birth, for having brought me to court, and for having enabled me to live half a century in it without ever asking a favour. Indeed, I should have been wrong in doing so. As librarian of the Grand Duke of Tuscany I received a salary of eight hundred florins, and here I have six hundred florins as superintendent of the imperial cabinet of medals, with an apartment at court, and a florin a day for my board. Dining and dressing as I do, I should be a Cræsus, had I not at Florence a half-brother by the mother’s side who has been paralytic these eight years, and were there no poor in the world, nor yet any indigent friends in Lorraine who have claims on me.

“I will tell you another thing that has strengthened my dislike of your long fasts.

“Brother John, a hermit of Lorraine, whom I once knew very well, having learnt that our Saviour fasted forty days and nights, had the folly to think he would do the same. To this end he ensconced himself in the hollow of an old oak which grew in the forest near his hermitage, and at the foot of which bubbled a spring. According to his report, he actually fasted in this situation forty days, only taking copious draughts of water from the spring, which distended his inside. At the end of the time, our hermit, fancying himself perfect in grace, quitted his

hole, went to the village, placed himself in the confessional of the parish church, and invited the parishioners to come and receive of him absolution from their sins. The curate, not knowing what to make of it, and never guessing the plain fact that the poor man had gone mad, sent the schoolmaster to expel him from the confessional. The hermit refused to leave it, and, to rid himself of the importunate schoolmaster, who was pulling at him by his gown, he killed him with one blow of a knife. He was instantly seized; and, as the penal laws are very expeditious in that country, he was condemned to death, and carried to Nancy to be executed. There, some judges, more experienced and enlightened than the first, perceived that the criminal was absolutely deranged, and, on that account, commuted his punishment to perpetual imprisonment. There it was that I saw him with my own eyes; and there it was, after having grovelled in his cell for ten or twelve years, that the demon of idleness and *ennui* tempted him to inflict such fearful injuries on himself with a piece of glass, procured nobody knew how, that the jailer, entering with his food, and perceiving his horrible condition, ran off crying aloud for help. A clever surgeon, hastening to the spot, sewed up Brother John's wounds so effectually, that the miserable old hermit lived five years afterwards.

“I must say this man's story first gave rise to my

inveterate objection to those outrageous fasts which, after all, are only of human institution. The circumstances of his case made so strong an impression on me, that a little more, and I should have never gone without a piece of bread in my pocket, to prevent my being reduced, by any accident, to the state of Brother John.

“To hear me declaim as I do against fasting, you will doubtless suppose me a regular *gourmand*. Nothing farther from it: I have always adhered to the simplest living. I refused to eat at court partly because the fare was too good there. Roots, herbs, and fruits have always been my favourite edibles, but especially cherries. What a pity that, with you, that excellent fruit can only be had for its weight in gold! That must be a terrible climate in which cherries will only grow by artificial means.”

“VIENNA, *March 18th*, 1771.

“MY DEAR BIBI,

“This winter has been fatal to me. I have been overwhelmed with ailments: cold, sciatica, and shaking hands, the true symptoms of old age, have quite broken me down. . . .

“Adieu, my pretty Bibi. If my health continues to decline, my sight to decay, and my right hand to shake, you will not be much longer troubled with your faithful old friend and servant.

“Do you know, my pretty, that, as the caviare you sent me is not rose-coloured, and does not smell of violets, no one here will taste it? In vain I extol it, assuring them that it is the greatest of dainties in the opinion of the Russian clergy, who, during their four awful fasts, consume enough of it to be estimated at the value of a million of money. They reply that a delicacy which could only have been invented by Pluto to grace his wedding breakfast when he married Proserpine may go down with monks, but that no civilised *bon vivant*, unless absolutely starving, could even look at it without disgust and nausea. That is going too far; for though I have had no appetite, and have felt dainty the last six months, I have eaten some with perfect impunity. True, I was obliged to encourage myself to the attempt by picturing my Bibi presenting it to me,

“THE INFIRM OLD SHEPHERD OF AUSTRASIA.”

ANASTASIA'S ANSWER.

“MY FRIEND,

“ . . . It was impossible to read three lines of your letter without emotion. Can my dear friend's health be indeed so feeble? The bare idea of hearing from you and being heard of by you no more affects me deeply. And *you* to talk of your letters *troubling* me! It is just such words and thoughts as those that do indeed trouble me terribly. If you

persist trying me thus, I have a punishment all ready for you. You shall have some caviare every post, with strict orders to take a certain quantity of it every morning instead of good coffee. I am delighted to find it is not quite to your taste, because I can thus make use of it as a means of bringing you to reason.

“P.S. The most important places in the Crimea are ours. If this continue, the Ottoman pride will soon be humbled, if it be not so already.

“My friend, here I am in the country, at Czarsko-zelo, where I amuse myself by wandering in the garden, sometimes crossing a pond on a little raft to a shrubbery, which represents a kind of wilderness, your Bibi’s favourite spot. There she gives free course to her thoughts, which travel faster than her feet. I fancy myself transported to the forest of St. Anne, where my friend began his studies. ‘These,’ I say to myself, ‘are the trees in which he perched himself to observe the celestial phenomena.’ One of these days I also will climb into a tree, and then I will tell you of my discoveries.”

“DEAR BIBI,

“It was M. de Sanbonin* who told me that the eldest of the little princesses, who is but four years and a half old, could already read fluently in Italian, French, German, and English.

* Private secretary to the Grand Duke of Tuscany.

“You must have thought me out of my mind when I asked you for reindeer tongues and some *nàliwyje yabloki*.” (Some transparent apples Anastasia had spoken of as growing in the general’s garden.) “Not at all. I delight in the singular productions of all countries, and your apples will give pleasure to my eyes, as your tongues to my taste; and I shall thus have proof that caviare is not the best eating known among my good and brave friends the Russians, and that their senses are somewhat more delicate than prejudice supposes.

“I repeat, I am passionately fond of making acquaintance with the natural productions of unknown countries, insomuch that, though no Cræsus, I would willingly give its weight in gold for a pinch of Chinese tobacco, for a small sample of the *gens-eny* of Tartary, for a scruple of the Japanese plant *ninzin*, for a strip of the fur of the blue, green, or rose-coloured Kamtschatkan fox, if, indeed, it be true that any such exist, which I can hardly believe. But what I do believe, and which very much surprises me, is, that there is in Moldavia a wine of a very exquisite emerald colour, and that a certain district in the Crimea produces a wine as red as Burgundy, and as sparkling as Champagne.

“They say, where you are, even the fire has frozen, this cold winter.

“*May, 1772.*”

ANASTASIA'S REPLY.

"In one of my recent letters I promised my friend one of the best blue fox-skins that could be procured, as soon as the caravan arrived from Siberia. Two have been caught for your honour and glory. Make a muff of them for next winter. You will look like a *fermier-général*. . . .

"It is May, and the trees are quite bare; it rains, blows, and snows. Ah, the fine climate! Adieu, my friend. Take care of your health. None loves you more than

"ANASTASIA SOCOLOFF.

"CZARSKO-ZELO, *May 17th, 1772.*"

"MY DEAR AND CONSTANT BIBI,

" . . . I am very much obliged to you for the two fox-skins. The present is magnificent; but I protest I never expected it in earnest. This is how I came to say what I did. On reading chapter six of the first volume on Kamtschatka, I found what follows:— 'There are likewise to be found in Kamtschatka all the different kinds of foxes that are to be seen elsewhere—red, flame-coloured, chestnut, black chestnut, and the blue-breasted or spotted fox . . . spotted, that is, with black crosses.'

"Your blue fox reminds me of that terrible fellow, Bluebeard, of whom I read in the forest of St. Anne,

till I cried like a calf, because the wicked wretch ate up his wives with a pinch of salt.

“I received your delightful letter yesterday, with the four *naliwyje yabloki*. Although packed with the utmost care, the journey has damaged their surface so much that their transparency is considerably impaired. Never mind; I know what they are like when perfectly ripe, and that suffices.”

Next, Bibi says :—

“My friend, I send you a little canister of *white tea*. Its only merit is its rarity, for the flavour is rather unpleasant.”

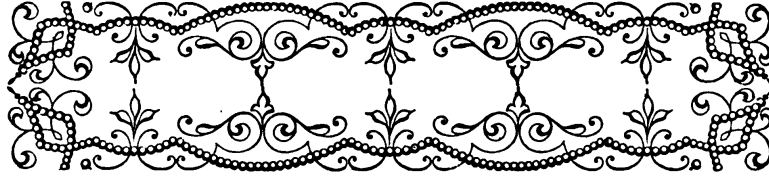
“*July, 1773.*

“MY DEAR BIBI,

“Though the trembling of my hand makes writing a painful effort to me, I cannot let M. Julinez return to your part of the world without sending you some signs of a life which is beginning to appear a little too long and wearisome to me.”

Indeed, the good old man was seventy-eight—descending low into the vale of years.

A pause ensued.



CHAPTER XXII.

THE CLOSING SCENE.

Merely for death to grieve and mourn,
Were to repine that man was born.
When weak old age doth fall asleep,
'Twere foul ingratitude to weep.
Threescore and ten is nature's date,
Our journey when we come in late;
Beyond that time the overplus
Was granted not to him, but us.

BISHOP CORBET.

WE must now introduce the Chevalier Koch. "Monsieur Duval," says he, "was in correspondence with Mademoiselle Anastasia Socoloff, lady-in-waiting to the Empress of Russia, whose acquaintance he had made at Vienna. Prince Galitzin, Russian ambassador at the court of Vienna, obligingly facilitated it to them both.

"At first M. Duval contented himself with testifying his gratitude by paying him visits of etiquette.

The kind reception, however, and the marks of esteem and good-will which he received from the prince, gradually drew him oftener to him, till at length he appeared at the ambassador's table—a compliment he paid very few, especially to those of high rank.

“It was on one of these occasions that I saw him for the first time. It was in the year 1767. His lively, *piquant* air, his instructive and animated conversation, and the unaffected simplicity of his manners irresistibly arrested my attention. I experienced a strong desire to become intimately acquainted with him. With this purpose in view, I approached him on leaving the table, to express to him my gratification at having been in the company of a man of his celebrity. This unfortunate word, which I used with the utmost sincerity, very nearly did for me.

“‘Fine celebrity, mine!’ he replied brusquely. ‘I have done many foolish things in my life, and nothing to any purpose. Pray tell me, then, what there is in that to obtain celebrity.’

“‘Well, sir,’ replied I, pretty firmly, ‘you may take offence at my frankness if you will; but you will not prevent my admiring in you the pupil of nature, who, in the midst of a great court, has preserved the simplicity of his manners.’

“‘That,’ said he, ‘is just because the forests I inhabited till my twenty-second year rendered me so savage that I became incapable of adapting myself to

forms and fashions; and having remarked, at an early period of my entrance into the world and the court, that under the varnish of politeness men often supplant one another, I would not form myself in such a deceitful mould, but decided to follow my own bent.'

"When I replied that, had not his mind been of a very strong and vigorous stamp, the torrent of example would have carried him away like others, he replied that he would not flatter himself so; but that, having followed out his system of independence, he had lived happy and content in the retreat which his august masters had provided for him.

"After this introduction we entered more deeply into conversation; and, at parting, Duval politely asked me to come and see him.

"I was enchanted with the proposal, and thenceforth neglected no opportunity of cultivating the acquaintance of a man in whose society I was sure of becoming better and more enlightened.

"Soon a species of sympathy sprang up between us; and, did I not fear to seem presumptuous, I should say that the old man became the friend of the young one. For he was seventy-three, and I but twenty-five. Independently of the frequent visits that I paid him, he came regularly twice a week to spend the morning with me. It was in the conversations which then took place that Duval permitted me, so to speak, to read the very depths of his soul, and

to interrogate him both on his principles and the particulars of his life. I thus learnt to know him intimately, and better, perhaps, than most of his contemporaries, who, though they might possess more penetration, never saw him so freely, nor enjoyed the precious privilege of familiar communion with him."

Who can fail to be here reminded of the affectionate intercourse between Johnson and Boswell, and of Miss Edgeworth's truthful remark that "the possibility of a friendship between youth and age is one of the rewards Heaven grants to the early and late-cultivation of the understanding and the affections?" She adds, "The conviction that our friend has seen deeply into our mind, beyond all praise and all demonstrations of fondness, increases affection, confidence, and gratitude in strong and generous minds." *

There was a pause, and then Anastasia received a letter in a hand new to her. It was from the Chevalier Koch.

"**MADemoiselle,**

"I grieve to say that bad news is the cause of my having the honour to write to you. Your friend, M. Duval, is dangerously ill. Of his recovery we entertain scarcely any hope.

* Patronage, vol. i., ch. 17.

“On the 28th of last month he had a most violent attack of the disease that has gradually been coming on him, and lost all consciousness. The sacraments were administered to him, and the physicians pronounced that he would not survive the night. However, thanks to the dear old man’s good constitution, he rallied, came to himself towards evening, slept five hours during the night, and next morning, I, to my immense surprise, found him lying in bed, looking as serene and comfortable as if he had nothing in the world the matter with him !

“‘ Ah ! my dear friend,’ said he, placidly smiling, ‘ they gave me my passport for the next world yesterday. What say you to that ? ’

“‘ It must not be, my dear M. Duval,’ replied I, ‘ for we cannot familiarise ourselves yet with the idea of losing you ; and I trust that our good God will grant you to our prayers.’

“‘ I should be a pretty fellow,’ returned he playfully, ‘ to resume my place in the world, overwhelmed as I am with infirmities. Were it not better I should go ? However,’ added he presently, ‘ there are two things which make me willing to live a little longer—the one is to enjoy yet awhile dear Bibi’s tender friendship, and the other to see the incomparable Empress Catherine bring her enemies, the Turks, to reason.’

“He showed signs of emotion, but presently went on.

“‘If I die,’ said he, ‘I pray you to convey the news of it to my young friend. You will tell her that the thought of her cheered me in extreme pain, and that my friendship endured to the last. Her portrait shall never leave me while I live; but I have given orders that, when I am no more, it shall be placed, together with our entire correspondence, in the hands of Prince Galitzin, who will know what to do with them.’

“Could you, mademoiselle, have been present at this scene, you could not have failed to be deeply affected by it; but, at the same time, you could not but have admired the control which the soul retained throughout over the body. The firm, decided tone in which he spoke clearly testified the ascendancy of his mental powers, and the composure with which he had prepared himself for the fatal event. This was still more apparent the following day, when, after a very restless night, he resolved to sign his will, written some time previously by himself. He begged me to witness it. I listened with the deepest attention while the deed was read. It is probably unique.

“After pathetically commending his soul to Almighty God, he declares M. Verst, his old friend and successor to the care of the imperial cabinet of medals, his executor and residuary legatee. He then proceeds immediately to make a foundation for the

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benefit of poor girls, three of whom he wishes to portion annually with the interest of eleven thousand florins, banked during his lifetime for this express purpose.

“While the notary was reading this article Duval looked fixedly at me, and, suddenly bursting out laughing, exclaimed,—

“‘Have I not often told you I should do something for the pretty girls? The honour of it belongs to my Bibi, for she it is who impressed me with this kindly feeling towards them.’

“The notary, who apparently had never seen any but ordinary men make their wills, looked perfectly astonished, and said aside to me as he went out,—

“‘No, I never saw anything like it.’

“Duval then got up, and, leaning on my arm, went to shut up the will himself in his bureau.

“‘I am very glad,’ said he, as he moved across the room, ‘to have set my affairs in order. Now I have nothing more on my mind.’

“He then ate his soup, and I left him in a very happy humour. Since then his malady has not grown worse; but, as the root of the evil is not removed, I cannot reassure you, mademoiselle, concerning a loss with which you are threatened from day to day.

“On this occasion the court of Vienna has shown M. Duval distinguished marks of esteem and affection,

proving thereby, as it seems to me, that it knows how to appreciate true merit.

“The emperor in person, accompanied by the Archduke Maximilian, the Archduchesses Mariana and Elizabeth, and a numerous suite, followed the holy sacrament into Duval’s sick room.

“The empress-dowager asked many questions concerning his state; ordered the court surgeons to attend him in turn, day and night; and directed that nothing should be left undone that might conduce to his comfort, and, if possible, his restoration.

“God grant that these cares may not be in vain ! For when I tell you, mademoiselle, that, during the six years I have been in this country, M. Duval has constantly honoured me with a visit twice a week, and that punctually at eight o’clock in the morning he came to breakfast with me, when he would impart to me, in delightful conversation, his knowledge upon thousands and thousands of subjects with the greatest frankness, you will not be at all surprised at my grief at seeing him so near the end of his career. I feel assured I do not deceive myself, mademoiselle, in judging of your feelings by my own. The attachment which has bound you much longer than myself to this interesting man cannot but render your regrets still more poignant, and it is with extreme repugnance that I have undertaken to convey to you this mournful intelligence. Permit me to assure you

of the distinguished consideration with which I have the honour to be, &c., &c.

“VIENNA, *January 18th, 1774.*”

Duval rallied, and Koch wrote more cheerfully to Anastasia :—

“I hasten to inform you, mademoiselle, that M. Duval is much better, knowing how you will rejoice at the news. The faculty had given him up, but now retract their sentence. M. de Hermsberg, one of the emperor’s physicians, has told me that, from the turn the disease has taken, M. Duval may yet live in tolerable health for some time; but he adds the unwelcome clause that the cure will only be temporary. I hope he may be as much mistaken as present appearances seem to imply. M. Duval is recovering his strength, and eats with good appetite. I am often with him at his dinner, and he complains that they stint him. He has desired me to tell you of his convalescence, and of his intention to write to you as soon as ever he can. ‘If these two hands,’ says he, ‘refuse to do their proper work, I will renounce them and employ others. Come, come, I know how to shake off my infirmities when they would hinder my telling dear Bibi I still have a loving heart.’

“You will perceive that the dear old man does not lose his cheerfulness; in fact, I believe he will retain

it as long as he lives. Everything amuses him, and he knows nothing of *ennui* but the name. I bring him newspapers, reviews, pamphlets—everything of the kind that comes in my way. He reads them all, and is grateful for every little attention. The day before yesterday I gave him great pleasure by reading him an extract from a letter I had received from London. An English gentleman, who last year became strongly attached to M. Duval, had frequently spoken of him, it appears, to Lady G——, a woman of superior mind, and a passionate admirer of true merit. He wrote to me in the following manner:—

“‘How is our dear, good, delightful philosopher? Do tell him of my esteem, my veneration. I envy you the happiness of being with him. Lady G—— said to me lately, with her characteristic liveliness, “Oh! don’t tell me any more of that charming old man! I am already quite in love with him! Do you want to drive me out of my mind?”’”

“Duval was greatly taken with this passage; and begged me to tell Mr. S——, when I wrote to him, that if it were possible for him to divide his heart, which was already bound by indissoluble bonds in the north, he would send a very handsome portion of it to my lady, but that he felt none the less grateful to her for her kind sentiments towards him.

“Excuse me, mademoiselle, if I make my letters

too long. I really cannot stop when once I begin about Duval.

“*February 5th, 1774.*”

As soon as this letter reached her, another from Anastasia to Duval sped on its way over Russian snows.

“MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,

“The sad and touching account given me by M. de Koch of your afflicting illness has pierced me with grief. I cannot express to you how sorrow and sadness oppress my heart. I have tried to cheer up, but in vain. Tears only burst forth the faster; nothing could console me. Thank God! a second letter from the polite and feeling M. de Koch tells me you are better. This good news delights me, and makes me shed tears of joy. Yes, my dear friend, I am happy; the physicians hope that you may yet be spared to us for some time.

“ . . . M. Julinez will bring you two silver medals, bearing the head of M. de Betzky. One is for yourself, the other for the imperial cabinet. Adieu, dear friend! Take great, great care of yourself. Have you a good nurse? How gladly, if I were her, would I watch over you! . . . ”

“MY DEAR AND CONSTANT BIBI,

“I-issue from the shades of death. They have darkened around me ever since December. . . . I have seen, near at hand, the solemn and awful gates of eternity. Seen them, say I? Ah, no! I have seen nothing. I was unable to see, speak, or think. The weakness to which I was reduced was such, that they had much ado to make me comprehend I was about to have the sacraments of our church administered to me.

“I learnt afterwards that the emperor, his brother the Archduke Maximilian, their sister the Archduchess Mariana, and a number of lords and ladies had assisted at this devout and impressive ceremony; while the Hungarian guard surrotunding them bent one knee to the earth, and lowered the points of their drawn swords. Such was the scene around the pallet of your faithful old friend—a solemn and edifying spectacle, which I should certainly never have had part in had Divine Providence not withdrawn me from my native woods.

“The humanity of our beloved empress and the skill of her physicians (one of them the brother-in-law of your M. de Mertens), saved me from as great peril as any poor mortal could be found in. It is five months since I left my room. Just now I am well enough to hope your intrepid legions will not again allow themselves to be deceived by deceitful

armistices. What I should enjoy beyond anything would be to contemplate at my ease the prostrate Turk at your empress's feet, humbly extending the olive branch, and begging her to accept the perpetual possession of Tauris.

“Of all the provinces of your vast empire I prefer that one, because they tell me the women are pretty and modest, the men active and courageous, and the people altogether less servile and fitter to form a *tiers-état* than those in the interior of Russia. They say, too, there is a fine breed of sheep and of cattle, the rivers are full of fish, and the country rich in corn, fruit, and flowers.

“Pray testify my warm gratitude to General Betzky for the four quarto volumes of the ‘Siberian Flora’ with which he has favoured me. His generosity has made me acquainted with the immense variety of plants to which nature gives birth in a region which I have heard spoken of with supreme contempt.

“. . . My trembling hands are growing very heavy with this continued scribbling. Adieu, my beloved Bibi! Pray the Almighty to grant your friend Duval a death somewhat less excruciating than that with which he was lately threatened.

“*April 1st, 1774.*”

HER ANSWER.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“Thank God, you are out of danger! Your letter of April 1st has put an end to the cruel anxiety I have suffered during your illness. I cannot express the joy that fills my soul; my heart leaps with delight, and I am all animation. To hasten your convalescence, I embrace you with all my heart.

“ANASTASIA SOCOLOFF.

“ST. PETERSBURG, *April 21st, 1774.*”

ANASTASIA AGAIN TO DUVAL.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“To what am I to attribute your silence? Is it the dear health? I was in the greatest uneasiness about it till the arrival of the Duke of Braganza removed it. He talked a great deal to me about you. I can tell you, my friend, I find the duke very amiable; he has a superior mind, his merit equals his birth, and nature intended him for something more than a mere traveller. Shame on those who will not let him be useful to his country! His personal appearance, too, is very engaging.

“The peace with Turkey is concluded agreeably to your wishes and ours. It is very advantageous for us, and does honour to Russia. They are a brave set, these soldiers of ours.

“Farewell, my dear friend! Take great care of

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your health. A line from your hand will give heart-felt pleasure to

“ANASTASIA SOCOLOFF.

“ST. PETERSBURG, *August 23rd*, 1774.”

Duval was not in a condition to answer her. He had been too much weakened by his late attack ever to enjoy health again, or to be otherwise than weak and ailing. However, for a time he had rallied a little; and his courage and naturally good spirits coming to his aid, he went out now and then, and sat with one or two of his old friends.

Towards the latter end of the autumn of the ensuing year, however, his digestion became utterly deranged. Fever supervened, and his strength diminished daily, so that it became apparent to himself and to others that his end was at hand. Without being in the least troubled by his extreme weakness, which did not even permit him to sit up in bed, he still received with pleasure, and at all hours, the visits of a few chosen friends, with whom he conversed in his ordinary manner.

We may picture the beloved old man duteously tended by Frontin, who had grown grey in his service, by the good widow with whom he boarded, and by Frontin's wife; while the little fellow he had picked up in the streets, now a lad, looked on a little awe-stricken at the new sight of a deathbed, and eagerly

and tenderly performed any little service he could. Koch was undoubtedly continually beside his pillow, which was probably smoothed not unfrequently by the thin hands of the elderly Mademoiselle Guttenburg, whose real worth came out agreeably in a sick room. Thus,—

“With all that should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends.”—

though without a single relative, his life peacefully declined from day to day as imperceptibly as the hues fade away of a gently-setting sun.

The Chevalier Koch, coming in to him a few days before his death, found him placidly reading, and inquired the name of his book. It was St. Lambert's poem on the seasons.

“You are surprised, I dare say,” said Duval calmly, “to find a dying man occupied with such light reading. I own that a book of devotion would be more suitable to my condition. The plain fact, however, is that I am in pain, and could not attend to anything serious. Besides, I have been carrying on a strict self-examination; and, on considering the several actions of my life, I can humbly say that my intentions, at least, have been just and upright; and, for my sins, I have perfect faith in the means of salvation that God has appointed, and fully believe, therefore, that He will pardon them.”

After witnessing this good confession he tranquilly

bore his pain and weakness a few more days and nights, and then breathed his last sigh. He died on the 3rd of November, 1775, aged eighty years. His will provided not only for the indigent girls, but for his faithful servant Frontin, the good widow with whom he boarded, and his adopted son.

His loss must needs have cost Anastasia some tears. *She* had sought him, not he her, though he had cordially responded to the offer of her friendship. In the absence of family endearments it had cheered and amused him; and she was neither insensible to the warmth of his affection, nor to the distinction of being the chosen correspondent of the man whom his sovereign delighted to honour. It is hardly worth while to count up all the crowned heads that sought out and cherished Duval.

Anastasia married. Some little while after the close of her thirteen years' correspondence with her dear old friend, she became the wife of M. de Ribas, a knight of Malta, and colonel in the Russian service.

As for Koch, he wrote his old friend's memoir, already before our readers, and published it, with a dedication to the Empress Catherine, in 1784. Duval's own empress, Maria Theresa, had died in 1780.

As Duval neither wrote any books nor made the world the better or wiser by any remarkable inventions or

discoveries, there may be some who will say, "To what end, then, write his life?" If there indeed be any who can ask that question after having read it, we do not think they deserve an answer. There is greatness in being as well as in doing; and there are things worth living for, besides inventing, discovering, or writing. Moreover, he said himself, "Fine celebrity, mine! I have done nothing worth telling." But yet there was that about him which one would not willingly let die.

It was the age of scepticism, of infidelity, of atheism, of Voltaire, of Rousseau—the age just before the Revolution. "Mr. Philosopher" was the playful but the current name of Duval with the Emperor Francis, and with Anastasia. He was not like the French philosophers. Philosopher means "a lover of truth." Duval really loved, sought, and found truth.

Where did he find it? In the bosom of his church? in the hermitages of La Rochette and St. Anne? in the Jesuit college?

Duval meekly bowed to the usages of his church; but he did not abuse his reason. He left an extraordinary prayer, or meditation, or address to God, among his papers, which will throw some light on the subject. In it we find him carrying even his astronomical and geometrical difficulties to his heavenly Father. If modern philosophers followed

the example, they might find themselves benefited either in the way of enlightenment or humility.

DUVAL'S PRAYER.

“Eternal Source of truth! all-powerful God! whose essence is concealed from us, but to whose existence the universe bears witness, pardon me if I have sometimes sought to fathom Thy divine attributes, and ascribe my presumption to the weakness of my understanding. I knew not that Thou in Thy wisdom hadst forbidden me to search into things that were too deep for me. Could it be that a thirsty pigmy attempted to exhaust the ocean, in order to assuage his longing to drink? Was the darkness made to comprehend the light? Should an animated atom undertake to measure the course of time, to scan the space and duration contained in the bosom of eternity? Great God! space and duration spring from Thee; in Thee they are comprised; in Thee are the instants of the one fulfilled, and where the other is, there Thou art. If my understanding cannot compass this, how shall it comprehend Him who is the author of both?”

“My mind loses its clearness, and my imagination becomes useless, at the mere idea of the space that surrounds me. Astronomy teaches me that the stars scattered beneath the vault of heaven are so many suns, of the same nature as that which warms and

enlightens me ; and that it is very probable that each one is the centre of a planetary system, perhaps still more vast and beautiful than that of which Thou hast made me a spectator. I imagine that, were I to draw an ideal line from the spot I occupy to one of those nebulous stars visible to me only by the aid of a telescope, this line might infinitely extend itself, and still no limit be found.

“ My reason trembles at the consideration of space. How, then, can I contemplate the eternity of Thy existence? A thousand years are in Thy sight as but a day. From the beginning of time Thou wast, and Thou wilt continue to be when time shall be no more. But who am I that Thou shouldest have deigned to make me a participator in this divine prerogative, by making my noblest part immortal? Yes, in virtue of this divine gift, I shall henceforth regard this life but as the aurora, the prelude of that which is to come. My soul will triumph over death and the horrors of non-existence ; eternity will pass in review before it ; and remote ages appear as distinct as the present moment. I shall watch their progression, and be the deeply-interested witness of their events.

“ But shall I pretend to comprehend eternity and infinity? Alas, O Lord! if, in the science of geometry, in which the human understanding piques itself on discerning more clearly than elsewhere, my

reason is forced, on evidence, to admit inconceivable truths, ought I not submissively to receive those *revealed* truths which Thou hast placed above my comprehension?

“If the mysteries of nature baffle the sagacity of man, and often plunge him into a wild sea of contradiction and doubt, how dare we expect fewer difficulties in revelation and the secrets of Thy divine providence?

“It is demonstrable that a straight line which has no breadth cannot pass between a circle and its tangent. The space between them is infinitely little, and yet this infinitely little space is itself divisible into an infinity of others still less, because, between this circle and this tangent, an infinity of circumferences may pass, all of which only touch at one given point. Here, then, is something infinitely small capable of infinite subdivisions.

“This, O Lord, is a geometrical truth of which I am perfectly convinced; but, nevertheless, it is a truth of which I can conceive neither the possibility nor the extent. But why is my understanding so limited respecting so common and palpable a subject? Is it not a lesson to me to accept truths of a higher order without dispute? or is it rather that Thou hast imparted to me a certain portion of light, which fades away when it ceases to concentrate itself in the narrow sphere which Thou hast assigned it? May

it not be also because Thy wisdom has not seen fit to *place me in the right point of view* necessary to discern what things are in themselves, and what is their relation to one another? True, Thou sufferest me to know some of their superficial properties, but Thou alone knowest their essence and their secret being.

“Hast Thou not Thyself declared, in order to convince me how little my feeble notions accord with Thy wisdom, that the heavens are not further removed from the earth than Thy thoughts from our thoughts, and Thy ways from our ways? Amid this chaos of uncertainty, grant me, I implore Thee, O Sovereign Scrutiniser and Judge of all the thoughts and designs of men, *faith* and *submission* to believe those truths which I apprehend not! But, O my God! suffer not that they who set themselves up for the ministers of Thy sacred mysteries should abuse my credulity by imposing upon me their own dogmas, as though they emanated from Thee. Far from having ever been the faithful interpreters of Thy will, there have been ages of dark ignorance when they wellnigh banished common sense by means of spiritual terrors—when they buried Thy holy law under a confused mass of creeds, ceremonies, and vain traditions, incapable of changing the heart or reforming the life.

“Did the multitude of priests and Levites

scattered throughout the land of Israel prevent Thy chosen people from falling again and again into the most senseless idolatry? Since, then, the number of the ministers about Thine altars does not always contribute either to the decency or the purity of Thy worship, deign, O Lord, to be *Thyself* my guide in the way of Thy commandments!

“Thou hast taught me that heavenly wisdom, the mistress of the universe, walks abroad openly, lifting up her voice at the corners of the streets, inviting all to listen to her, and upbraiding those who will not. Direct my feet towards her, O God! and incline my ear to her voice, my heart to her teachings. Let her show me how to distinguish the true from the false, to value the things of this world at their real worth, to see through the wiles of self-conceit, to shun the temptations of vanity, and to look on popular applause and the excitements of the age as so much smoke, which a breath of air will disperse far away.

“Kindle in me that real and living charity, that actual love of my neighbour, which indeed is the sum of the law and the prophets.

“Let me, as an upright man, respect each useful talent, as proceeding from Thyself, and a sensible token of thy loving-kindness to human society.

“Preserve me from loving money, and from the intoxication of an insolent prosperity; but yet, dear

Lord, let not poverty plunge me into misery and crime.

“Give me an honest and compassionate heart, a clear and faithful conscience, strength and patience to support adversity, perfect resignation to Thy decrees, and irreproachable purity of heart and life: to the end that when my earthly course shall be accomplished, my soul may be received into thy most blessed kingdom, there to love, praise, and exalt Thee for ever and ever!”

O Duval, man greatly beloved! may we and every one of our readers breathe the same wishes for ourselves, and add a hearty “Amen!”

Let us love the following lines all the more for knowing that he kept a translation of them suspended at the head of his bed, and sent a copy of them to Anastasia:—

“These are Thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty! Thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair: Thyself how wondrous then,
Unspeakable, who sitt'st above the heavens,
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these Thy lowest worlds! Yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.
Speak, ye who best can tell! ye sons of light,
Angels! for ye behold Him, and with songs
And choral symphonies, day without night,
Circle His throne rejoicing. Ye in heaven,

On earth, join, all ye creatures, to extol
 Him first, Him last, Him midst, and without end !
 Fairest of stars, last in the train of night,*
 If better thou belong not to the dawn,
 Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn
 With thy bright circlet, praise Him in thy sphere
 While day arises, that sweet hour of prime !
 Thou sun, of this great world both eye and soul,
 Acknowledge Him thy greater; sound His praise
 In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st
 And when high noon hast gained, and when thou fall'st.
 Moon, that now meet'st the orient sun, now fliest
 With the fixed stars (fixed in their orb that flies),
 And ye five other wandering stars, that move
 In mystic dance not without song, resound
 His praise, who out of darkness called up light.
 Ye mists and exhalations, that now rise
 From hill or steaming lake, dusky or grey,
 Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
 In honour to the world's great Author rise ;
 Whether to deck with clouds the uncoloured sky,
 Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers,
 Rising or falling, still advance his praise !
 His praise, ye winds that from four quarters blow,
 Breathe soft or loud ; and wave your tops, ye pines,
 With every plant—in sign of worship wave !
 Fountains, and ye that warble as ye flow,
 Melodious murmurs, warbling tune His praise ;
 Join voices, all ye living souls ; ye birds
 That singing up to heaven's gate ascend,

* Venus: Hesperus.

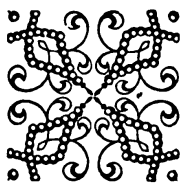
The Clofing Scene.

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Bear on your wings and in your notes His praise !
Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk
The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep,
Witness, if I be silent, morn or even,
To hill or valley, fountain or fresh shade,
Made vocal by my song, and taught His praise !
Hail, universal Lord ! be bounteous still
To give us only good ; and if the night
Have gathered aught of evil, or concealed,
Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark."

PARADISE LOST, *Book V.*

THE END.



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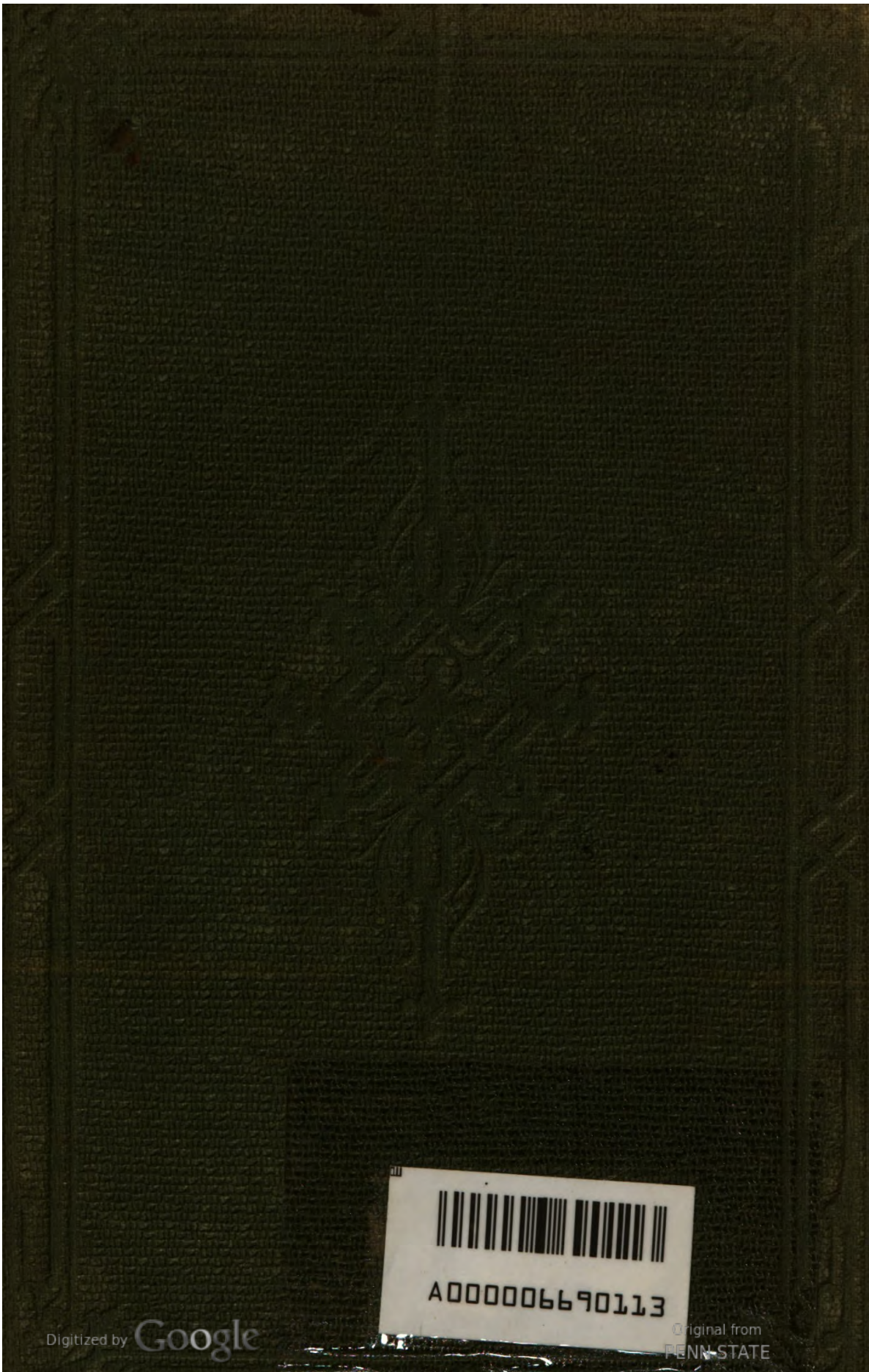
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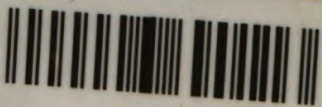
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