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"Shall I relate to you the history of that particular louis,—all the adventures it has met with, and to how many uses it has been applied?"—P. 3.

MORAL TALES

BY

MADAME GUIZOT

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

MRS. L. BURKE

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THE BROADWAY, LUDGATE

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PREFACE.

THE writings of Madame Guizot are highly celebrated in France, and though something of this celebrity may be due to her position as the wife of an illustrious statesman and historian, it must also be remembered, that this very position was calculated to draw forth a severer criticism than would usually be passed on one less favourably circumstanced. But the works themselves have merits of far too decided an order not to command attention in any case, and they especially deserve the notice of English parents, from their entire freedom from the exaggeration of sentiment and love of effect, so often justly complained of in a certain portion of the Literature of France.

In her Tales, it has been the aim of Madame Guizot to secure the attention of her youthful readers by an attractive narrative, in which the chief personages are children like themselves, and the events and situations such as might occur in their own experience, and then to lead their minds to important conclusions by the natural course of the story, and without the repulsive intervention of mere lecturing or argumentation; and we think it will be admitted, that in the present series, she has been eminently successful. These Tales are so simple and natural, that they may be understood by even younger children than they are actually intended for, while at the same time they are so full of good sense, and touch so vividly those springs of action which influence alike both the young and the old, that many of them will be read with as much interest, and sometimes even with as much advantage, by the parent as by the child. Though perfectly unpretending in structure and language, the most fastidious taste will acknowledge them to be the productions of a highly refined and cultivated mind, while they equally display all the charms of an affectionate and parental disposition, conjoined with a lofty, though a gentle and rational morality.

It is only necessary to observe, in conclusion, that the Translator has endeavoured to preserve throughout the simplicity of style which distinguishes the original, and to convey its meaning with all the fidelity which the difference of the two idioms would permit. A few unimportant expressions have been modified or omitted as unsuitable to English taste, or likely to convey, in translation, a different impression from that actually intended, but beyond this no liberty has been taken with the text.

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MORAL TALES.

THE HISTORY OF A LOUIS D'OR.

Ernestine was passing with her mother through the arcades of the Palais Royal, stopping at every shop, longing for all she saw, now and then sighing heavily, and at each moment making the happiness of life consist in the possession of some attractive object, the remembrance of which was effaced the moment after by some other, destined in like manner to be as speedily forgotten. She was, however, more especially interested by a toy-shop; not that Ernestine had any wish for dolls, little carts, or bureaus, in which she could not even have put her thimble, the drawers were so small: she was, indeed, too old for that, for she was already eleven; but the sight of a moving picture, in which were to be seen two men fighting, a dog turning a spit, a laundress, a paviour, and a stonecutter, inspired her with a fancy, which appeared to her much more reasonable. She stopped her mamma in order to examine
[Pg 2] it more leisurely, and her mother was kind enough to indulge her; but the picture was then motionless. Ernestine thought it would be delightful to see all those figures in action, especially the dog turning the spit, and asked if it would not be possible to beg of the shopkeeper to wind it up.

"Certainly not," replied Madame de Cideville, "he did not place it there for the amusement of the passers-by; he would think I wished to purchase it."

"It would surely be very dear?" said Ernestine.

"One louis," replied the shopkeeper, who had overheard her.

"Oh! mamma," whispered Ernestine, "how cheap!" for she had imagined that a thing so beautiful, and so ingenious, must have cost an enormous sum. "How delightful it would be," she continued, "to obtain that for one louis!"

"There are," said her mother, "many better ways of employing it;" and she passed on, to the great vexation of Ernestine, who wondered to herself how it could happen that her parents, who were so rich, did not think it proper to spend a louis on so charming a thing as a moving picture, in which a dog was to be seen turning a spit: for Ernestine, like all children, and upon this point she was more than usually inconsiderate even for her age, thought her parents much richer than they really were; besides, she was not aware that there is no fortune, however large, which justifies unnecessary expense. On reaching home, she spoke to her father about the picture.

"Only fancy, papa, it might have been had for one louis. Oh! how happy I should have been if I had had a louis of my own!"

[Pg 3] "You would not surely have spent it upon that?" replied her father.

"Oh! papa, how could I have spent it on anything more delightful?"

"Doubtless," replied M. de Cideville, "it would have been quite impossible to have found anything more delightful; but you might have found something more useful."

"For a louis, papa! What is there so very useful that can be bought for one louis?"

As she said these words, Ernestine tossed in her hands her mamma's purse, which Madame de Cideville, on entering, had laid upon the table. A louis d'or fell out of it. "See," said Ernestine, as she picked it up, "to what very important use can this little yellow thing be put?"

"To what use?" replied her father; "if I were to tell you all the important uses to which it might be applied, all the trouble that is sometimes required to gain it, all the danger there is in spending it badly, all the good it may do to those who are in want of it, all the evil it may make them commit in order to obtain it, you would wonder how any one could be even tempted to throw it away upon useless objects. Shall I relate to you the history of that particular louis, all the adventures it has met with, and to how many uses it has been applied?"

"Oh! yes, papa; but how came you to know all this?"

"That I will tell you afterwards. At present I want you to look at it merely; it is not very ancient, it belongs to the coinage of 1787, so that it is scarcely five-and-twenty years old. Now, listen to all that has happened to it."

[Pg 4] Ernestine drew a chair to her father's side, that she might listen more attentively, and M. de Cideville began thus:—

I will not tell you how much labour and time were required to extract from the earth the small quantity of gold of which this louis is composed, to separate it from the other substances which are generally found mixed with it, to melt it, to coin it, &c. It was in the year 1787, that it came for the first time into the Royal treasury, and that it was afterwards given out, in payment of a regiment, to which, I know not by what chance, several months' arrears were due. As the soldiers received five sous a day, this louis served to discharge what was owing for more than three months' pay to a poor fellow who, had there been war, might, during this time, have fought in a dozen battles, have been killed, or at least wounded, have died of hunger in a besieged city, perished at sea, or been eaten by savages, had he been sent to fight in America. But as it was a time of peace, he had only caught an inflammation on the chest, in consequence of having had to mount guard during one of the severest nights of winter, and afterwards a cutaneous disease, from having slept in the hospital in the same bed with a comrade who had it. At length he recovered, and as he was an industrious and well-conducted man, and had managed by his occupation of barber to the regiment, to make some little savings, he was able, notwithstanding what I have mentioned, to send this louis to his father, a poor peasant, at that very moment on the point of being imprisoned for a debt of one louis, which he could not
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pay. The creditor was on the spot, threatening him, and announcing his determination of sending for the sheriff's officer: the peasant's second son, the brother of the soldier, furious at seeing his father thus menaced, had taken up a hatchet with which he was going to kill the creditor, notwithstanding the interposition of his mother, who, uttering piercing cries, rushed forward to prevent him, and was thrown down by him, without his perceiving it, so violent was his passion. The person who had brought the louis from the soldier, arrived in the midst of this tumult. She had, at first, much difficulty in making herself heard; but when they did begin to understand what she was saying, peace was restored. The father paid his creditor, the son rejoiced that he had not killed him, and thus this louis d'or saved a man's life, probably the lives of two men; for the son would have been punished for his crime: perhaps, indeed, it saved a whole family, for the father and mother, who had only this son to assist them in their labours, would, in all probability, have died of misery and grief.

The creditor who had exacted this louis with so much severity, belonged to the same village, and was really in absolute want of the money, because, his harvest having failed, he had not the necessary provisions for his family during the winter. Had the soldier's louis not arrived, however, it would have been useless for him to have put the father in prison; he would have gained nothing, as the old man possessed nothing; but with this louis he bought twenty or five-and-twenty bushels of potatoes, which were then very cheap, and these served to support himself and his children.

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The woman, however, from whom he had purchased the potatoes, and who belonged to another village, having the imprudence to cross in the dark a wood, through which the road to her house lay, three villains of the neighbourhood in which she had sold her potatoes, who had seen her receive the louis, agreed to wait for her in the wood, and rob her of it. When, therefore, she had penetrated into the thicket, they burst upon her, threw her from her horse, took the louis, and were about to tear off her clothes, and perhaps kill her, when, fancying they heard a noise, they ran off in different directions. He who held the louis, endeavoured to escape from his companions, that he might not share it with them; but they met him that same evening at a tavern where he was spending it in drink. They demanded their share, quarrelled, fought, and discovered all their secrets. They were arrested and sent to the galleys. The tavern-keeper interposed in the lawsuit; he wished to have the louis, as it had been spent at his house; the woman who sold the potatoes, and who had recovered and again mounted her horse, also claimed it, as it had been stolen from her. I know not whether they were indemnified, but the louis, after having served as a proof of the theft, because it was the only one in the country, none of this particular coinage having been before introduced there, passed into the hands of an old lawyer, who quarrelled with an elderly lady, after a friendship of thirty years, because she had won it of him at piquet, during the course of six months, and had told him, besides, that he did not know how to play. This old lady sent it as a new-year's gift to
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one of her little granddaughters in Paris, who was saved by it from a very considerable annoyance. Her brother, who, though treated with a good deal of severity, was, nevertheless, very disobedient and ill-behaved, had taken from her father's library, notwithstanding his having been forbidden to touch it, a book which contained prints; while reading it, he had let an inkstand fall upon it, and in order that he might not be suspected, had carried it into the anteroom. All this he communicated to his sister, as a great secret, making her solemnly promise to say nothing about it, so that the servant might be suspected. As her father was very particular about his books, the young girl knew that the servant would be dismissed; still she could not denounce her brother. The book had been put in the anteroom, during the evening, and she wept all night at the thought of what was to happen next day; for she was extremely kind and just. In the morning, on awaking, the first thing she beheld was the louis, which had been put upon her bed as a present from her

grandmamma; her joy was extreme, and she immediately sent for a copy of the book, as her brother, who had also received a louis, finding himself screened, would not spend his in this manner. However, she consoled herself, by thinking of the terrible pain she would have experienced in seeing an innocent person punished, without daring to justify him. The book cost exactly one louis; this louis passed into the hands of a librarian, and had a great influence on the destiny of a little boy, whose history I am about to relate to you.

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LITTLE PETER.

Little Peter, when ten years old, had entered the service of M. Dubourg, a worthy man, who passed his life in the study of Greek and Latin, and was so much taken up with what happened three thousand years ago, that he did not even think of troubling himself with what was actually passing around him; for he was consoled for every inconvenience, provided he could apply to it an example or a maxim drawn from antiquity. If he cut his finger, or hurt his foot, his first movement was an exclamation of impatience, but immediately afterwards he checked himself and grew calm, saying, "The philosopher Epictetus suffered his leg to be broken by his master, who was beating him, without making any complaint beyond these words: '*I told you you would break my leg.*'" One day, while dining in town, he found himself in company with some very ill-bred military men, who could talk of nothing but the stories of their regiment, and the number of bottles of wine they had drunk at a mess dinner. The mistress of the house, in order to make him some kind of apology for a conversation which wearied him, said, laughing, "You must allow, M. Dubourg, that I have made you dine in very bad company."

"Madame," replied M. Dubourg, "Alcibiades knew how to accommodate himself to every grade of society, to every company, and even to the customs of every nation;"
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and in order to follow the example of Alcibiades, he commenced talking to them of the battle of Salamis, and the feasts of Bacchus. As to the rest, M. Dubourg only dined out six times a year; this was a rule which he had laid down for himself, however numerous might be the invitations which he received. The only irregularity he allowed himself was in the periods. Thus, for instance, he might one year dine out on the 6th of March, and the following year on the 7th or the 10th; it might even happen that he accepted two invitations in the same month, though as a general rule he placed them as nearly as possible at equal distances; but if by any extraordinary chance, the six dinners were expended by the month of July, no consideration would induce him to dine away from home during the rest of the year. His expenditure was regulated as strictly as his manner of life. With a very small income, M. Dubourg wished to live in such a manner as to be perfectly independent of every one, and especially so as never to be reduced to the necessity of borrowing, which he regarded as the greatest of all faults; "for," said he, "one can never be sufficiently sure of repaying." Thus, his dinners were furnished by a restaurateur, who, for the same sum, brought him every day the same thing. On one occasion the restaurateur wished to increase his charge. "It is all the same to me," said M. Dubourg, "I shall take less; Diogenes was able, by mere philosophy, to bring himself to drink out of his hand, although he had still a wooden cup of which he might have made use." It was probably less out of respect for philosophy, than from the fear of disobliging a
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customer, that the restaurateur, by the means of certain arrangements, agreed to furnish him, for the old price, a dinner of pretty nearly the same kind.

The other expenses of the day were calculated with the same precision, so that, without ever counting, M. Dubourg, had always a year's income in advance, and was consequently never inconvenienced by having to wait for his returns. He had, besides, a sum in reserve for extraordinary cases; such as an illness, an accident, or even a goblet broken, or a bottle of ink overturned, &c. It might also happen, on a rainy day, that he had to pay for crossing a stream upon a plank, or, in winter, to give a sous to the little sweeper who cleaned the crossing; all these expenses fell upon the extraordinary fund, for as to coaches, M. Dubourg had only hired two during the whole course of thirty years. One was to pay a visit to a rich man from whom he had accepted an invitation to dinner, and to whose house he was told he must not go splashed. This broke off their acquaintance, and he never would go again, however much he was pressed. The other he took when going to declare his sentiments to a young lady whom he had been persuaded to fancy himself desirous of marrying. He took it for fear that the wind should shake the powder out of his hair, and it gave him an opportunity of reflecting, as he proceeded, on the disorders into which the passions lead us. On arriving at the young lady's house, he paid the coachman, returned home on foot, and renounced for ever the idea of marrying. His reserved fund was always maintained in the same state, by means of a portion of his income
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regularly set apart for this purpose. When it did not happen to be all spent by the end of the year, M. Dubourg gave the remainder to the poor, otherwise, he neither gave nor lent; for he said that "it is not proper to give unless we are certain of not being obliged to ask, and that he who, in order to lend, exposes himself to the chance of being obliged to borrow, places his integrity at the mercy of a bad paymaster." It may

be seen then, that with some follies, M. Dubourg was a man highly to be esteemed for his integrity.

Little Peter passed with him the happiest of lives. Provided he was careful not to arrange the books that were scattered or heaped together upon the desk or floor, which M. Dubourg called disarranging them; provided he took care to sweep the room only once a fortnight, when M. Dubourg had taken away certain fine editions, which he did not wish to have exposed to the dust; provided he was careful never to remove the cobwebs, that he might not run the risk of upsetting the busts of Homer, of Plato, of Aristotle, of Cicero, of Virgil, &c., which adorned the top of the library, little Peter might do pretty nearly what he pleased. If he happened to be out at the hour at which the restaurateur brought, every day, M. Dubourg's dinner, so that it had to be left at the door, M. Dubourg having forbidden the man ever to ring, for fear of interrupting his studies, and if M. Dubourg found his dinner quite cold, or partly eaten by the cat, Peter merely excused himself by saying, that he had been detained by some business. Then M. Dubourg would say to him: "It is quite natural, Peter, that
[Pg 12] you should occupy yourself principally with your own affairs; you are not my slave; I have not purchased you with my money: but were you my slave, the case would be very different." Then, whilst taking his dinner, he would explain to him the duties and condition of slaves; and how it was that their masters possessed over them the power of life and death, which was indeed but just, since they had purchased them; "But as for me, Peter," he would add, "I am not permitted to do you the least harm, for you are not my slave." And, in fact, he would not give him a caning, even when he learned his Latin grammar badly; this was, nevertheless, the greatest annoyance Peter could cause M. Dubourg; who, on this point, sometimes got into violent passions, quite at variance with his general character; for he could not understand how it was possible for any one to dislike so excellent a thing as the Latin grammar. This dislike, however, was very sincere on the part of little Peter, who had no fancy for study, and who, though he had learned to read and to write, had done so much against his will. When M. Dubourg, who did not wish any one to live with him without understanding Latin, first put an *Accidence* into his hand, his parents were delighted at the idea of his making, as they thought, little Peter a learned man like himself; but Peter had not the slightest wish to resemble M. Dubourg, who passed the whole day in poring over books; who often only half dined, for fear of allowing a Greek passage to escape him, the meaning of which he was beginning to seize; who took water, scarcely coloured, because wine disturbed the judgment, and had, he said, caused Alexander the Great
[Pg 13] to commit many crimes; and who, finally, as his only pleasure, walked for two hours every day in the gardens of the Tuileries, with three other learned men, who, on their part, met there for the purpose of conversing together, after the manner of the Peripaticians.

Little Peter, fancying that Latin led to nothing better than this, could not perceive in it anything very attractive, and only learned his Accidence, ill or well as the case might be, for the sake of pleasing M. Dubourg, who wept with joy when he had repeated his lesson well. He read, however, with tolerable pleasure, some books of history which M. Dubourg had lent him, and he passed the remainder of his time with his parents, to whom M. Dubourg had promised to send him for several hours each day, and to whom Peter, according to custom, remitted a very considerable portion of the hundred francs which he annually received as his wages; for they said that, having consented to place him with M. Dubourg at an age in which his labour might have been useful to them in their trade of braziers, they ought to be indemnified, in some other manner, for the expenses he had occasioned them in his childhood. Little Peter, better fed and better clothed than he could have been at home, ought to have considered himself very well off; but he was discontented, because he could not run about like other boys of his age, and because he had not the free disposal of his money; in fact he regretted all the follies which he could not commit, and then the Rudiments greatly disgusted him. Besides, little Peter affected to be ambitious; he must make his fortune, and that was an impossibility so long as he remained with M.
[Pg 14] Dubourg. He related his troubles to a little groom with whom he became acquainted, from having seen him at the door of a house, situated between the residence of M. Dubourg and his father's shop. One day this groom, whose name was John, told him that if he wished he would procure him a good situation, with a young gentleman, a friend of his master, who was in want of a groom. He would have to take his meals with the other servants of the family, as long as the young gentleman resided with his parents, and receive a hundred francs a year, as with M. Dubourg, besides a louis d'or for his new-year's gift, not to mention the perquisites, which, according to John's account, would amount to three times as much as his wages. Peter felt himself greatly tempted by the louis d'or, which he hoped to keep for himself, and by the livery, which he thought much finer than his grey jacket, forgetting, that from his grey jacket he might pass to a better dress without the change being remarked, whereas livery is a costume which once seen upon a person is never forgotten. John had taught him to groom a horse, and this pleased him much more than the Rudiments; he thought it would be very delightful to have to groom one every day, and, besides, it seemed to him that he should have his own way much more. However, he told John that the thing was impossible; that he could not leave M.

Dubourg; but as he went along he could think of nothing else. His parents, seeing him thus preoccupied, said to him a dozen times, "Peter, are you ill?" He replied that he was not, and left them much earlier than usual, to go and find John; not that he
[Pg 15] knew what answer to give him, but simply that he might hear him talk of the situation, of the louis d'or, of the perquisites, and of the horse.

The desire he felt to obtain the situation increased at every moment. John told him that nothing was easier; that he had only to allow him to speak to M. and Madame Jerôme,—these were the parents of little Peter; and that he would make them listen to reason. Peter took him at his word, and told him to come with him. John went, and as he was a boy of great determination, he represented, in glowing colours, to M. and Madame Jerôme, all the advantages of the situation which he proposed, with the exception, however, of the louis d'or, to which Peter had begged him not to allude, as he wished to keep it for himself. "But see, Madame Jerôme," said John, "the master he will have, lays aside his clothes almost new, and I will wager that, every year, Peter will be able to bring a suit to M. Jerôme; but that is on condition that you let him have a little more of his wages."

"We shall see, we shall see," said Madame Jerôme, who was quite captivated with the idea of her husband's having a smart coat to walk out with her on a Sunday. M. Jerôme urged that Peter could not leave M. Dubourg, who bestowed so much pains on his education. "Excellent!" replied Madame Jerôme; "no doubt Peter will be very well off when he is as learned as M. Dubourg. They say in the neighbourhood, that that is not the way to get bread." And as Madame Jerôme always made her husband do just what she pleased, it was agreed that Peter should accept the situation. John
[Pg 16] went to his master to solicit it; the latter mentioned it to his friend, who sent for little Peter, and as he was without a servant, it was arranged, that if Peter brought him a good character from M. Dubourg, he should enter his service the following day.

Peter returned home to M. Dubourg, whose dinner had been waiting at the door a quarter of an hour. He was so bewildered, that in laying the cloth, he put the chair on the side of the window instead of on that of the door, a thing which had not been done for five-and-twenty years; and he forgot, when giving M. Dubourg something to drink, that it was an inviolable rule with him to put the wine into the glass before the water. His master looked at him with astonishment, saying, "Are you ill, Peter?" He again replied that he was not, and continued his duties; but he was completely embarrassed, and the more so as M. Dubourg spoke to him with even more than his usual kindness, calling him *my child*, his term of endearment for those whom he particularly liked. He said to him, "You will soon be thirteen years old; this is precisely the age at which the Romans took the *Prætexta*. I even think that I might find instances in which it was taken earlier, though, indeed, this may have been in corrupt times. But no matter: I think I can in conscience, allow you to leave off your grey jacket. Since you have been with me, I have made it a rule never to dust the covers of my books with my sleeve, as I was accustomed to do, and I have only failed once, and then through pure forgetfulness. Besides, although this coat has nearly
[Pg 17] served its time, for I buy one every three years, it is in a sufficiently good condition to be done up for you. And," added M. Dubourg, patting him on the head with an air of gaiety, "you will look like a little gentleman."

Little Peter felt extremely troubled; this kindness, and then this coat, which was to make him look like a gentleman, had completely upset all his ideas. He left the room as soon as he could, and did not enter it again that evening. The following morning, Madame Jerôme came to inform M. Dubourg that her son wished to leave him, and to ask him for a character. However great was his astonishment, he only uttered these words: "Little Peter is not my slave; I have no right to detain him against his will." He promised the character, and when Madame Jerôme was gone, he called Peter, who had not dared to show himself. "Peter," said he, "if you were my slave, you would deserve to be beaten with rods, or even worse, for wishing to leave your master; but you are not my slave, therefore you may go."

He said this in a tone of so much feeling, that little Peter, already much moved, began to cry. "Why do you wish to leave me, my child?" continued M. Dubourg; "you will forget all you know, with another master."

"Oh! Sir," said Peter, shaking his head, "it is not my lot to be a learned man."

"You are mistaken, Peter; you are mistaken, my child. If you could once get over the rule of *que retranché*, you would get on very well." And thereupon he began to cite to him, with great earnestness, the examples of many celebrated men, who had
[Pg 18] at first displayed but little talent, but who afterwards astonished the world by the extent of their learning. "You have the opportunity of becoming what they were, Peter," exclaimed M. Dubourg, "and yet you renounce it." He was so sure of his case, and spoke with so much enthusiasm, that little Peter, quite carried away, felt himself on the point of losing his fortune.

"Oh! Sir," he exclaimed, "only consent to give me one louis more a year, and I will remain with you all my life."

At these words, the enthusiasm of M. Dubourg was changed into consternation. "If that is what is required," said he, "it is impossible. You know yourself, that it is impossible." Peter remained silent and confounded, for he knew that his master, before engaging him, had refused a boy who asked him five louis, because this would have occasioned an irregularity of twenty francs in the expenses of the year. He retired in confusion. M. Dubourg, without uttering another word, gave him a favourable character, to which, however, he considered himself obliged, as a matter of conscience, to add, that Peter had always shown but little inclination for the Latin grammar.

Little Peter soon got over his vexation; he thought himself so fine in his livery, especially when John had taught him some of his grand airs, that he was as proud of it as if there had really been some merit or honour in wearing it, and when, by chance, he had to drive his master's cabriolet through the streets, he would not have exchanged conditions with any of those triumphant heroes whose history M. Dubourg had made him read. One day when he was behind this cabriolet, he saw M. Dubourg
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in danger of being knocked down by the horse, and cried out, "Take care, take care!" in a louder, though less imperious tone than usual. M. Dubourg recognised the voice, and looked up. Peter did not very well know whether to be pleased or ashamed, that he should thus be seen by him in all his glory. M. Dubourg gave a heavy sigh: "Is it possible," he said, "that a person who was beginning to understand the Latin grammar could mount behind a cabriolet!" And he continued his way home, in a thoughtful mood.

As for Peter, he did not think of the circumstance very long, he only thought of amusing himself. John had taught him, according to his own account, the best means of doing so; that is, he took him to the public-house, and to places where cards and billiards were played. There he lost his money, and when his master paid him his first quarter's wages, he owed the whole of it. For three days, he did not dare to go near his parents; for he knew very well that they would require their share. At length, John advised him to say, that he was to be paid only every six months, assuring him that by that time he would regain all that he had lost. On the contrary, he lost more, and only got deeper in debt. At the end of the six months, he said that he had been mistaken, and that his master paid only once a year. His parents began to disbelieve him, and, besides, the coat that John had promised to M. Jerôme was not forthcoming. If Peter had received perquisites, he had sold them to obtain money. Still his debts increased daily; he dared not pass down the street in which a certain tavern-keeper lived, because he had had drink in his house, for which he had not
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paid; in the neighbouring street a petty dealer in hardware, from whom he had obtained, on credit, a chain of false gold, in order to appear to wear a watch, insulted him every time he saw him. At every moment, he met comrades to whom he was still indebted, for money which they had won from him, while his parents, on the other hand, were very much displeased with him, and threatened to go and ask his master whether he told them the truth. Little Peter knew not where to hide his head.

One morning his master's mother, who was almost as precise a person as M. Dubourg, gave him eighteen francs to carry to a shopkeeper, to whom she owed the balance of an account, for some things purchased of him the previous evening. Peter went out, proceeding with great precaution and looking on every side, as he was accustomed to do, since he had become constantly fearful of meeting persons to whom he owed money. He was absolutely obliged to pass through the street in which the hardware-dealer lived; he looked out from a distance, saw him engaged in conversation, and hoped to pass by unperceived. But as he approached, the person with whom he was talking turned round. It was the tavern-keeper, who called to him, and demanded his money, in no very polite terms. The hardware-man joined him, and they placed themselves in the middle of the street, so as to prevent him from passing, telling him that he must pay them. Peter glided between the wall and a carriage, which was standing there, and ran on with all his might; he heard them cry after him, that it was well to have good legs when one had not a good conscience, but that he
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might spare himself the trouble of running away, as they would catch him again. As he continued his flight, and was rapidly turning a corner, he ran against a man who was coming towards him. This man turned out to be a groom of his acquaintance, to whom he owed some money, won at cards. He was half-intoxicated, and seizing little Peter by the collar, and swearing at him, said that he must have his money, for the publican demanded it of him, and that he would drag Peter before him and beat him until he had paid it. Peter defended himself with all his strength. A crowd gathered round, and allowed them to continue. At length he heard some one cry out, "Villain, leave off beating that child!" He recognised the voice of M. Dubourg, and saw him, with uplifted cane, approaching to his assistance. The fear of being recognised, gave him even more strength than the fear of being beaten; he tore himself out of the hands of the groom, who had likewise turned round, on hearing himself thus spoken to, and whom M. Dubourg, with his cane still upraised, prevented from following Peter.

Peter, who now continued his flight with even greater rapidity than before, came at last to a street where he no longer saw any one likely to recognise him, and sat

down trembling, upon a bench, not knowing what was to become of him. He had heard the groom also say that he would catch him, and he had no doubt that he was watching for his return. On raising his eyes, he perceived that he was before a tavern to which his comrades had taken him to play at cards, and where he had seen one of
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them win a hundred francs. His heart beat high at the idea of gaining as much, and a detestable thought took possession of his mind. Perhaps in hazarding thirty sous only of the eighteen francs with which he had been intrusted, he might regain all that he owed; but if he happened to lose! This reflection made him tremble. He went away; then returned, the temptation increasing every moment. At last, picking up a stone, he said to himself, "If in throwing this against the wall, I hit the mark that I see there, it will be a sign that I shall win!" He placed himself very near the wall, that he might not miss it, threw the stone, hit the spot, and went in. He was so excited, that he scarcely knew what he was about. Never before had he committed so bad an action, nor would he have committed it now, doubtless, had he been in his right mind. But it is one of the consequences of bad actions that they place us in circumstances which disturb the judgment, and deprive it of the strength necessary for directing our conduct. Had any one, at this moment, told Peter that he was committing the act of a thief, he would have trembled from head to foot; yet such was, nevertheless, the fact; but he did not think of it. At first he only hazarded thirty sous, and won: he won again, and fancied himself already rich. Had he stopped there, he would have had, if not sufficient to get out of difficulty, at least enough to satisfy, in some degree, one or two of his creditors; but by doing this, he would have been rewarded for his fault, and by a law of Providence, evil-doers never know how to stop at the point where their faults would be unattended with danger. He who, in doing wrong, relies upon
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his prudence to protect him from exposure, always finds himself deceived; the love of gain, or of pleasure, ends by dragging him on to the action which is to bring about his punishment. Peter was desirous of gaining more, and he lost not only what he had won, but his stake also. The hopes that he had at first formed, rendered him only the more ardent in the game, and, besides, how was he to replace the thirty sous? He hazarded thirty more, lost them, then more; at last the whole eighteen francs are gone. He left the house in despair, and wandered through the streets unconsciously, neither knowing where he was, nor what he was doing, still less what he intended to do. He heard it strike four o'clock, and remembered that at five he had to wait at table. He would be asked by his mistress's mother whether he had paid the eighteen francs, and though for some time past he had got into the habit of telling falsehoods, his conscience accused him so vehemently, that he felt he should not be able to reply. However, like a man who throws himself into a river without knowing whether he shall get out of it again, he took, mechanically, the way to the house; but as he approached it, he fancied he saw the shop girl belonging to the tradesman, to whom he had been ordered to carry the eighteen francs, coming out of it. He had no doubt that she had been to ask for the money, and feeling that it would be quite impossible for him to enter again his master's dwelling, he turned away, and recommenced running, without knowing whither he went. It was winter: night came on, and he at last stopped, and sat down upon a step, and felt that he was without a home. Nothing
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in the world would have induced him to return to his parents, and it would have been equally impossible for him to expose himself to the look of the honest M. Dubourg. The cold increased with the night, and it began to freeze rather severely. Peter had eaten nothing since the morning, and though his heart was oppressed, yet hunger began to make itself felt at last. All he could do, however, was to weep; for what resource was left to him in the world? At times this hunger, cold, suffering, and despair weighed so heavily upon him, that he would start up, and run away, whither he knew not, but determined to find some spot where he should suffer less. Then again, he would suddenly stop; for he felt that he had not the courage to show himself anywhere, or to endure the questions or the looks of any one; so he would slowly return, sit down again, and weep anew, while the cold wind, blowing upon his face, froze up the traces of his tears.

At last, overcome by fatigue and exhaustion, he fell asleep, or rather he became numbed; his state was a kind of half-sleep, which, although leaving him no distinct ideas, still left him the consciousness of the cold and hunger, and grief. In the middle of the night, he was awakened by some one who shook him violently. He opened his eyes, and saw around him several armed men. It was the watch, who finding a child asleep in the street, wanted to know why he was there, and to whom he belonged. Peter had at first some difficulty in collecting his ideas, and when he had succeeded in doing so, he only felt the more vividly the impossibility of replying. He dared not
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say to whom he belonged. He cried, and entreated them to leave him there, as he was doing no harm to any one. They would not listen to him, but told him that he must go to the guardhouse. One of them took him by the shoulders, and as he resisted, another gave him a blow across the legs to make him proceed. Peter walked on trembling. The snow began to fall so heavily, that they could scarcely see their way, and added to this, the wind was so strong, that it extinguished all the lamps, and drove the snow full into their faces. At length, the soldier who held little Peter had his cap blown off by a violent gust, and left him in order to run after it. The others, blinded by the snow, got dispersed; they sought each other; they called out. As to Peter, stupified by the wind, the snow, and all that had happened to him, he

knew not where he was, what he was doing, or what he ought to do. Motionless on the spot where he had been left, he heard the soldiers inquiring for him, and asking whether he had not escaped. This brought him to himself, and finding one of them approaching, he drew back softly, in order to get as near as possible to the wall. As he retired farther and farther, he was still unable to feel the wall, and at last perceived that he had entered a bye-street, which the thickness of the snow had prevented him from seeing. He then walked faster, and soon ceasing to hear the soldiers, he regained a little courage, and after many windings, he at last stopped, and crouched down at the corner of an old building.

After remaining there some time, he again fell asleep, and when he awoke day was breaking. He tried to get up, but the cold and the uneasy posture in which he
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had remained, had so benumbed his limbs, that he could not move a step, nor even stretch his legs; while the violent effort which he made in order to move forward, threw him to the ground. In falling, his head struck the curbstone so violently that he become unconscious. He did not, however, altogether faint, and after a short time he had a confused perception of persons speaking and acting around him. It also seemed to him that he was taken up and carried away; but all was so indistinct that he had no proper consciousness of anything. He had neither any fear of what was going to happen to him, nor any wish to be better, nor any recollection of what he had done. He came to himself, however, by degrees, and his first sensation was a violent oppression of the heart. Poor little fellow! this is a feeling which he will henceforth always experience, as often as he calls to mind what he has done. At present he does not call this to mind, he simply feels that he has committed a terrible fault. He also feels that he is suffering in every part of his body, but, at the same time, he perceives that he is in a bed, and in a room; at length he regained complete consciousness and saw that he was at M. Dubourg's, and that M. Dubourg and his mother Madame Jerôme were by his side.

His first impulse on perceiving them was to hide his head in the bedclothes and weep. As soon as his mother saw that he was conscious, she asked him what had happened to him, and why he had fled from his master. She told him that, finding he did not return during the day, they had sent at night to inquire for him at her house;
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that this had made her very uneasy, and that she had gone to his master's early in the morning, and learning that he had not slept there, she had run in great terror to M. Dubourg, who told her that he had not seen him; and finally, that on leaving his house, she had found him at the corner of the street stretched upon the ground, totally insensible, and surrounded by several women of the neighbourhood, who were exclaiming, "Oh! it is little Peter! What can have happened to him! What will Mother Jerôme say! He must have been drinking, and got intoxicated, and the cold has seized him." At the same time, the woman who attended to M. Dubourg's house had gone to tell him the news, and he in great uneasiness came out in his dressing-gown and nightcap, a thing which had never happened to him before in the whole course of his life.

She had found him at the corner of the street, totally insensible, and surrounded by several women of the neighbourhood—P. 27.

At the conclusion of this recital, intermingled with reproofs, Madame Jerôme renewed her questions; but little Peter wept without replying. The physician who had been sent for, now arrived, and told them that he must not be tormented, as a severe fever was coming on; and indeed a violent excitement soon succeeded to the weakness from which he had just recovered. His fault represented itself to him in the most frightful colours, and threw him into fits of despair, of which they were at a loss to conjecture the cause. At length, when Madame Jerôme had gone home to inform her husband of what had happened, and of the necessity there was of her remaining to nurse Peter, he raised himself in his bed, and throwing himself on his knees, with clasped hands called M. Dubourg, and said to him, "Oh! M. Dubourg, I have
[Pg 28] committed a great crime." M. Dubourg, thinking him delirious, told him to keep himself quiet, and lie down again. "No, M. Dubourg," he repeated, "I have committed a great crime." And then with the quickness and volubility which the fever gave him, he related all that had passed, but with so much minuteness of detail, that it was impossible to consider what he said as the effect of delirium. M. Dubourg made him he down again, and stood before him pale and shocked.

"Oh! Peter, Peter!" said he at last, with a deep sigh, "I had so earnestly hoped to have been able to keep you with me!"

Peter, without listening to him, uttered aloud all that the torments of his conscience dictated; he said that his master's mother would have him apprehended, and in moments when his reason wandered more than usual, he declared that the guard were in pursuit of him. M. Dubourg, after reflecting for some time, went to his secretary, counted his money, closed his desk again, and Madame Jerôme returning at the same moment, he related to her what he had just learned, adding, "Madame Jerôme, little Peter, according to his own account, has committed a great crime, which prevents my keeping him with me as I had hoped to do, for I had provided the necessary means. My mind has never been easy, from the day I saw him behind a cursed cabriolet. He had offered to remain with me for one louis more a year, and I thought of procuring it by my labour. You see, Madame Jerôme, how valuable and profitable a thing is learning. I had indeed made it a rule never to publish anything;
[Pg 29] but I considered that there were works which might be written, without compromising one's tranquillity. I have composed an almanac, in which I have recorded the feasts and epochs of the year among the ancients. It cannot but be very interesting to know, that on such a day began the Ides of March, or, as the case may be, the Feasts of Ceres. I demanded of the publisher one louis for it, that being all I stood in need of. He gave it immediately, and will give me the same every year, for a

similar almanac." M. Dubourg was going on to explain to Madame Jerôme how he would manage to insure accuracy, notwithstanding the irregularity of the ancient calendar; "but," said he, "it is not necessary for you to know all this:" and then added, "I had intended this louis for little Peter. I can dispose of it in his favour, and the more easily as we are now at the end of the year, and I have in my reserved fund more than sufficient to defray the expenses of his illness. I was afraid at first that I should be encouraging vice; but I have since considered that the evil is now done, and that it is the innocent who has suffered from it. Take, then, this louis, Madame Jerôme, and carry the eighteen francs to the shopkeeper." This, said M. de Cideville, was the precise louis d'or whose history I am relating to you.

Madame Jerôme, he continued, had been waiting anxiously for the end of this discourse, which she did not very well understand, but which she had not ventured to interrupt. As she was a very honest woman, the conduct of her son had so overwhelmed her with grief and shame, that she almost threw herself at the feet of M. Dubourg, to thank him for affording her the means of repairing it without being
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obliged to pay a sum very considerable for a poor woman burdened with a family. She hastened out, though not without addressing some reproaches to her son, who scarcely understood them, and ran to pay the shopkeeper. As it happened, no inquiries had been made of him, nor had he, on his part, sent for the money. Peter, therefore, had been mistaken, and as yet nothing was known about the affair. His mother, on her return, found him better; the fever had begun to abate, and he was also comforted by the intelligence she brought. But if he had escaped exposure, he could not escape from the remorse of his own conscience, or from the reproaches of his mother, who was inconsolable. Her lamentations, however, distressed him less than the cold and serious manner of M. Dubourg, who no longer approached his bed, or spoke to him, but took care that he should want for nothing, without ever directly asking him what he wished to have. Little Peter had, more than once, shed bitter tears on this account, and to this grief was added, when he began to recover, the fear of returning to his father, who had come to see him during his illness, and who, being a man of great integrity, had severely reprimanded, and even threatened him.

Peter entreated his mother to ask M. Dubourg to keep him. M. Dubourg at first refused; but Madame Jerôme having promised him that Peter should not go out, and that he should study the whole of the day, he went to consult his Xenophon, and saw that Socrates in his youth had been addicted to every vice; there was reason therefore, for hoping that labour would reform little Peter, as it had reformed Socrates.

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Peter was obliged to keep his word. His illness had left a debility which long continued, and he was further restrained from going out by the fear of meeting those to whom he owed money. Study being his only amusement, he ended by becoming fond of it: and as he possessed good abilities, his progress was such as to give his master much satisfaction. But the honest M. Dubourg was ill at ease with Peter, and no longer spoke to him with his accustomed familiarity. Peter felt this, and was unhappy: then he redoubled his efforts to improve. One day, having made a translation which gave M. Dubourg great satisfaction, the latter promised, that if he continued to improve, he would have the coat, which he still kept for him, arranged. Peter, after much hesitation, begged to be allowed to sell it instead, so that its price, together with the louis which he was to receive at the end of the year, might serve to pay a part, at least, of his debts. M. Dubourg consented, and was greatly pleased that this idea had occurred to him. While waiting, therefore, for two years, until the new coat had served its time, he continued to wear his old grey jacket, which he was obliged to mend almost every day, and the sleeves of which had become about four inches too short. But during this time he succeeded in completely gaining the friendship of M. Dubourg, who, having received a small legacy, employed it in increasing the salary of Peter, whom he elevated to the rank of his secretary. From this moment he treated him as a son; but Peter, who was now called M. Jerôme, could not perceive, without profound grief, that whenever any allusion was made in
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his presence to a defect of probity, M. Dubourg blushed, cast down his eyes, and did not dare to look at him. As for himself, whenever anything was mentioned that could have reference to his fault, he felt a severe pang shoot through his heart. When money was concerned, he was timid, always trembling, lest his honesty should be suspected. He did not dare, for several years, to propose to M. Dubourg that he should spare him the trouble of carrying the money to the restaurateur at the end of each month. The first time his master intrusted him with it, he was delighted, but still felt humiliated by the very pleasure he experienced. However, he became accustomed to it: a life of steady honesty has at last restored to him the confidence which every man of honour ought to possess; but he will not dare to relate this history to his children for their instruction, until he has become so old, and so respectable, that he is no longer the same person as little Peter, and he will always remember, that to M. Dubourg, and his louis d'or, he owes the preservation of his character.

CONTINUATION OF THE HISTORY OF A LOUIS D'OR.

One day after breakfast, M. de Cideville having a leisure hour, Ernestine begged him to continue the history of the louis d'or, and he began thus:—

The shopkeeper to whom Madame Jerôme had carried the louis, was just going out as she gave it to him. He took it, returned her in change a six-franc piece, which was lying on the counter, gave the louis to his wife to be locked up, and departed. As
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the woman was on the point of putting it by, she heard her little girl, a child of two years old, screaming so violently in the adjoining room, that she thought she must have fallen into the fire. She ran to her, and found that she had only caught her finger in a door. Having succeeded in pacifying her, she returned to lock up the louis, but it was not to be found. Her shopwoman, Louisa, searched for it also, with great uneasiness. No one had entered the shop; she had been alone, and she felt persuaded that her mistress, who did not much like her, and who often quarrelled with her without just cause, would accuse her of having taken it: nor was she mistaken. It was in vain that she asserted her innocence, that she emptied her pockets, and even undressed herself in the presence of her mistress, to prove to her that she had not concealed it. She was not to be convinced, and she was the more enraged from knowing that her husband would be angry with her for not having locked it up immediately. On his return, she related what had happened, and expressed her confidence that Louisa had taken the money. He was not so sure of that, however, for he knew her to be an honest girl; but he was out of temper, and Louisa suffered for it, and was dismissed.

She went away heart-broken, yet carrying with her, without being aware of it, the louis d'or in her shoe. At the moment that her mistress, hearing the cries of her little girl, ran to her aid, she laid the louis upon the counter, on which Louisa had mounted for the purpose of arranging a bandbox, placed very high. She wore thick shoes, to which, in order to render them still stronger, and better suited for keeping out the
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damp, she had had another sole put; but this sole, which was not very good, was worn out at the side, and Louisa, making a false step upon the counter with these heavy shoes, the louis was forced into the opening between the two soles. She felt, as she descended, something catch at her foot, but imagined it to be a nail coming out of her shoe, and as she was very active, and did not willingly interrupt anything upon which she was engaged, she merely struck her foot against the bottom of the counter, in order to drive in what inconvenienced her. This made the louis enter entirely into the opening, and as high heels were then worn, the action of the foot made it slip towards the toe, where it was no longer felt, and Louisa wandered through Paris in search of a new situation, carrying with her everywhere this louis which had driven her from her old one.

Not having a character from her master, she could not obtain an engagement. She was an orphan, and had no relations in Paris, so that to avoid perishing from want, she was obliged to station herself at the corner of a street, as a mender of old clothes. This occupation was a very painful one for Louisa, who had been well brought up, her parents having been respectable tradespeople, who had failed, and died in poverty. It had required all the gentleness of her disposition to enable her to live with the wife of the shopkeeper, by whom she was badly treated, but as she was a well-conducted girl, she endured everything in order to continue in a respectable situation. Now, she was compelled to hear the oaths of the street people, and the talk
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of drunkards, who often addressed her in a very disagreeable manner, to say nothing of the cold, the wind, and the rain, from which she suffered greatly; but as her occupation did not require much walking, she had not worn out her shoes, so that she always carried about with her the louis which had occasioned her so much harm.

One day, in spring, when the sun had been very warm, there came on suddenly a terrible storm, which, in a few minutes, swelled the kennels to such a degree, that in several places they touched the walls of the street. Louisa had left her station to take refuge under an opposite doorway, where she found herself by the side of a lady, dressed in a manner which indicated affluence. She was not young, appeared to be in bad health, and was much embarrassed about having to cross, in her thin shoes, the deep pools of water formed before her. She was not in the habit of going on foot; but this morning, the weather being very fine, and the church in which she usually heard mass, being near her residence, she had not ordered her carriage in going to it. Having found it, however, very full, she went to another at some distance, and while there, had sent her servant on an errand. She had returned alone, had been overtaken by the storm, and was much afraid that the damp would bring on a severe cold, from which she was but just recovered. "If I had only some other shoes!" she said. Louisa very timidly offered hers.

"But what will you do?" asked the lady.

"Oh, I can go barefoot," replied Louisa; "but you, madam, cannot possibly go in those shoes." And Louisa really believed what she said, for poor people, accustomed
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to see us surrounded with so many conveniences, which they manage to do without, sometimes imagine it would be impossible for us to support things which they endure as a matter of course. But although they entertain this opinion, we ought not to share it. We must not persuade ourselves that their skins are much less sensitive than our

own, nor that they are constituted in a different manner to ourselves; but, accustomed to pain, they do not exaggerate it, and thus endure, without much suffering, things which we should think it impossible for us even to attempt, and which, nevertheless, would not do us more harm than they do them.

However, continued M. de Cideville, in the present case, it was not so. Louisa was young, and in good health, the lady aged, and an invalid. It was quite reasonable, therefore, that she should accept Louisa's offer, and she did so. Louisa making many apologies for not being able to present her shoes in better condition, accompanied her barefoot, and supported her, as she could not walk very well in such large and heavy shoes. When they reached the lady's residence, she made Louisa go in, in order to dry herself, and at the same time to reward her for the service she had rendered her. She also ordered her shoes to be dried before they were returned to her. They were placed near the kitchen fire; Louisa likewise seated herself there, and while talking with the servants, the kitchen-maid took one of the shoes in order to clean it, and accidentally raised up the outer sole which the water had almost entirely detached. The louis d'or fell out. For a moment Louisa was as much
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astonished as the rest, but she suddenly uttered a cry of joy, for she remembered that something had entered her shoe on the day she had been accused of taking the louis. She related her story, and the servants, greatly astonished, went and told it to their mistress. Louisa entreated the lady to give her a certificate of what had happened, that she might get a character from her master, and thus be able to obtain a situation. The lady caused inquiries to be made, not only at the shopkeeper's, where she learned that Louisa's account was entirely true, but also in the neighbourhood, where she had always been regarded as a very honest girl, and where no one believed that she had stolen the louis. The lady also perceived by her manners and conversation, that she was much superior to the station in which she had found her; she therefore took her into her service, in order to assist her lady's maid, who was old and infirm. She sent to the shopkeeper the amount of his louis in silver, and gave to Louisa the louis d'or, which had occasioned her so much injury, and so much good.

As often happens with uneducated persons, Louisa was superstitious. She imagined that her good fortune was attached to this louis d'or, which she had so long carried about her, without being aware of it. She therefore would not think of spending it, but still continued to carry it about her. It happened that her mistress while going to her country seat, which lay at some considerable distance from Paris, turned aside, for a few leagues, in order to spend a day with a friend, whose house
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was nearly on her route. She left Louisa at the post-house, with her luggage, where she was to take her up the following morning. As Louisa had nothing to do, she seated herself upon a bench before the door which faced the high road. Presently she beheld a young man riding up to the house, at full speed. He rode so rapidly that the postilion, by whom he was accompanied, could not keep pace with him, and was obliged to follow at some considerable distance behind. He was pale, apparently much fatigued, and also greatly agitated. He alighted from his horse, and ordered another to be saddled immediately; the ostlers could not make sufficient haste. As he was preparing to remount, he sought for money to defray his expenses, but he had not his purse. He searched all his pockets, and then perceived that at the last stage but one, where he had been obliged to change everything, in consequence of his horse having thrown him into a ditch full of water, he had forgotten his portmanteau, his purse, and his watch. He was greatly distressed and agitated. "What!" he exclaimed, "not a louis upon me! A louis would save my life." He inquired for the master of the inn, and was told that he was in the fields, and that there was no one in the house except his son, a lad of fifteen, and some postilions. "Can you not," he said, "find one louis to lend me? I will give you a cheque for ten." The men looked at each other without replying. He told them he was the Count de Marville, and that he was going two leagues further on. His wife was lying there ill, very ill, without a physician, and surrounded by persons who did not understand her constitution, and who were giving her remedies quite unsuitable to her state. The news had reached
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him at Paris: he had consulted his physician, and in order not to lose time, had taken post horses and travelled night and day. His servant, too weak to follow him, had been obliged to stop by the way, and as for himself, he had just travelled a double post, so that he was four leagues from the place where he had left his luggage, and had not a single louis to continue his journey, and save, perhaps, the life of his wife. But to all this, the men made no reply; they merely dispersed; the very agitation of the count destroyed their confidence in what he said. Besides, the postilion who had accompanied him, and to whom he had promised a liberal reward, in order to induce him to ride a double stage, was extremely dissatisfied, at not being even paid his hire, and complained, swore, and threatened to appeal to the mayor of the place. M. de Marville thought of nothing but the delay, and in his anxiety it seemed to him that the loss of a single hour might be fatal to his wife. Louisa heard all this; she knew the name of de Marville, having heard it mentioned by her mistress. She thought of her louis; it was the only money she had about her, for in travelling she placed the little she possessed in the care of her mistress, except the louis, which she could not part with. She thought it very hard to give it up: still it had drawn her from a state of so

much misery, that she felt it would be a sin not to allow another to be benefited by it when it was in her power to do so. Taking it, therefore, out of the little pocket in which she always carried it, she offered it to M. de Marville, who, greatly delighted, asked her name, and promised that she should hear from him; then paying the postilion, and remounting his horse, he rode off; while Louisa, though she did not
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repent of what she had done, felt, nevertheless, a little uneasy, and the more so as the people of the inn assured her that she would never see her money again.

The following day, her mind was set at rest, by the return of her mistress, who was acquainted with M. de Marville, and had learned that his wife was in fact lying very ill, at the distance of two leagues from where they were. Louisa's sole anxiety now was to regain her louis, which was still at the post-house where M. de Marville had changed it, and it became henceforward more precious than ever in her estimation. M. de Marville did not forget what he owed her. He had found his wife extremely ill, and whether from the good effects of his treatment, or from some other cause, he had the delight of seeing her restored to health. He attributed her cure to Louisa, and as he was extremely attached to his wife, he considered himself under great obligations to one whom he regarded as her preserver. He went to see her at the seat of her mistress, repaid the louis, and also settled upon her a small annuity. On this occasion, his man-servant, who had some property, became acquainted with Louisa. He married her, and shortly after entered into the service of the same mistress. As he was a reasonable man, he wished her to spend the louis, for he knew that it was ridiculous to imagine that anything of this kind could bring good fortune; but Louisa would only consent to part with it, in payment of the first two months' nursing of her first child. The nurse of this child was a tenant of M. d'Auvray, the father of a little girl called *Aloïse*. To him she gave the louis, when paying the rent of her farm, and you shall presently see what use was made of it.

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THE RENT.

Aloïse had for some time been very uneasy. Janette, the woman who used to bring her every other day a bunch of fresh chickweed for her bird, had not been near her for a whole week, and each time she thought of it, she said to her nurse, "I am sure my poor little *Kiss* will be ill, for want of some chickweed, for there is no shade in his cage when he is at the window, and the sun is shining over his head." And Aloïse actually feared that her bird would receive a *coup de soleil*. This fear, indeed, did not often occupy her thoughts, only whenever she went to talk to Kiss, she would say, "This naughty Janette, will she never come?"

Janette arrived at last, and Aloïse, when she saw her, gave her a good scolding, and hastily seizing a bunch of chickweed, and without giving herself the time to unfasten it, she tore a handful, and carried it to her bird, saying, "Poor Kiss! the sun is dreadfully hot!"

"Oh yes! Miss," said Janette, "it is indeed very hot, especially when one has just recovered from a fever."

"Have you had a fever?" asked Aloïse, whose whole attention was now turned to Janette, and whom, indeed, she perceived to be very much altered. Janette told her that her illness had been caused by grief, for her rent was due, and she was unable to pay it, and her landlord had threatened to turn her and her three children out of doors, and take away her bed, which was all she possessed in the world.

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"What," said Aloïse, "have you no chairs?"

Janette replied that she had had two wooden stools and a table, but that during the winter before last, which was that of 1789, she had been forced to burn them, for the cold was so intense, that one morning she found one of her children almost dead. A short time previously, she had lost her husband, after a long illness, which had exhausted all their resources, so that this was the third quarter's rent which she had been unable to pay. Her landlord had given her some further indulgence, but now told her, that if she did not pay by the next quarter, both she and her children should be turned into the street. "And well will it be for us," continued Janette, "if we find there a little straw on which to lie down and die, for we are too miserable to be taken in by any one." Saying this, she began to cry, and Aloïse, who was extremely kind and compassionate, felt ready to cry also. She asked Janette if her rent was very high. It was six francs a quarter. Three quarters were due, a louis would, therefore, be owing in July; and this was a sum which she could not possibly hope to pay, for her only means of living was the sale of her chickweed, together with a few flowers in summer, and some baked apples in the winter, all which was scarcely sufficient to find food for her children. She added that during her illness, they must have died of hunger, had it not been for the charity of some neighbours, and that she was now hastening home in order to get them some bread, as they had eaten nothing all day. Aloïse took from her drawer forty sous, which was all that remained of her month's
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allowance, for as she was very careless, she was never rich. These she gave to Janette, and the nurse added twenty more, thus making in all half a crown. The nurse

also gave her, for the children, some old shoes which Aloïse had cast aside, and poor Janette went away delighted, forgetting for the time her unhappy condition, for the poor sometimes endure such pressing hardships, that when they find themselves for a moment freed from them, the happiness which they experience prevents them from thinking of the misery which awaits them.

After Janette's departure, Aloïse and her nurse continued talking of her for a long time. Aloïse would gladly have saved from her allowance eight francs a month, in order to make up the louis required by Janette, but this was impossible; she had lost her new gloves, and was obliged to buy others; a new pair of prunella shoes was to be brought home to her on the first of the month, to replace those she had spoiled by imprudently walking in the mud; besides, her thimble, her needles, her scissors, her thread, all of which she was constantly losing through her want of order, formed a source of considerable expense. Although she was eleven years of age, nothing had been able to cure her of this want of order, a defect which resulted from great vivacity, and from the fact, that when once an idea had taken possession of her mind, it so completely engrossed it that, for the moment, it was impossible for her to think of anything else. At present, it was Janette who occupied her thoughts. She would have been delighted to have had a louis to give her by the time her rent became due,
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but she did not dare to ask her parents for it, for she saw that, without being in any way embarrassed, they nevertheless lived with a certain degree of economy; besides, she knew them to be so kind, that if they could do anything, they would do it without being asked. When she went down to her mother's room, she spoke of Janette, of her grief for her, and of her desire to assist her. Twenty times she went over her calculations aloud, in order to let it be understood that she could not do so out of her allowance. Twenty times she repeated, "This poor Janette says that she must die upon straw, if she cannot pay her rent." Her mother, Madame d'Auvray, was writing, and her father was occupied in looking over some prints; neither of them appeared to hear her. Aloïse was in despair, for when she once wished for anything, she had no rest until she had either obtained it, or forgotten it. She was told that her drawing-master was waiting for her. Quite taken up with Janette and her grief, she left, as was almost invariably the case with her, her work upon the chair, her pincushion under it, her thimble on the table, and her scissors on the ground. Her mother called her back.

"Aloïse," said she, "will you never put away your work of your own accord, and without my being obliged to remind you of it?" Aloïse replied mournfully that she was thinking of something else.

"Of Janette, was it not?" said her father. "Well, then, since you are so anxious to get her out of trouble, let us make a bargain. Whenever you put away your work without being reminded of it by your mother, I will give you ten sous; in forty-eight
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days, therefore, you will be able to gain the louis, which will not be required by Janette for three months."

Oh! how delighted was Aloïse. She threw herself into her father's arms; her heart was freed from a heavy load.

"But," said M. d'Auvray, "in order that the agreement may be equal, it is necessary that you should pay something whenever you fail. It would be just to demand from you ten sous, but," added he, smiling, "I do not wish to make too hard a bargain for poor Janette; I will, therefore, only require of you five sous; but mind, I shall show no mercy, and you must not expect a fraction of the louis, unless you gain the whole. Here it is," said he, as he took it out of his pocket and placed it in a drawer of Madame d'Auvray's secretary; "now try to gain it."

Aloïse promised that it should be hers; her parents seemed to doubt it. It was, however, agreed, that Madame d'Auvray and Aloïse should each keep an account, in order to secure accuracy. And Aloïse was so pleased, and so eager to communicate the arrangement to her nurse, that she ran out of the room without putting away her work. Fortunately, she remembered it at the door; she ran back again, seized upon it, and beheld her father laughing heartily. "At all events," she exclaimed, "mamma did not remind me of it," and for once the excuse was admitted.

For some time Aloïse was very exact, and the more so as she had related the affair to Janette, who without daring to remind her of it, now and then dropped a word concerning her landlord, who was a very severe man. During a whole month the
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work had only been forgotten six times; thus, in twenty-four days, Aloïse had gained her ten sous, but as there were six days of negligence, during each of which she had lost five sous, there remained six times five, or three times ten sous, to be deducted from what she had gained; she had, therefore, secured but twenty-one, out of the forty-eight days.

But Aloïse did not reckon in this manner. As her carelessness extended to everything, she sometimes forgot that on the six days on which she had not put away her work, she had not gained her ten sous; at other times she forgot that on these days she had lost five also, so that she never considered that she had lost more than five or ten sous, on those days on which her negligence had really made her lose

fifteen. At the end of the month, her mother had the greatest difficulty in the world to make her understand this calculation, and when she did understand it, she forgot it again. She had begun to keep her account in writing, and then had neglected it; she begged her mother to let her examine hers; she did so, at the same time warning her that it was for the last time. Aloïse recommenced writing, but lost her paper; she then tried to reckon mentally, but got confused in her calculations. Unfortunately, also, the hour for her dancing lesson, which she took in her mother's apartment, was changed, and now fell at the time that Janette called; she therefore saw her less frequently, and began to forget her a little: nevertheless the orderly habits which she had begun to contract were tolerably well kept up. She often put her work away, but
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she also frequently neglected it: still it seemed to her that she had attended to it so many times, that she felt quite easy on the subject, and did not even think of examining the day of the month.

One morning she rose extremely happy; she was going to spend a day in the country. The party had been long arranged, and Aloïse had drawn a brilliant picture of the pleasure which she anticipated from it. The weather, too, was delightful. She had just finished dressing, when a man came to her room in the garb of a workman; he wore a leathern apron and a woollen cap, which he scarcely raised as he entered. He appeared very much out of humour, and said in a rough manner to the nurse, that he had come on account of the woman who had served her with chickweed for her birds; that he was her landlord; that she owed him four quarters' rent, which she was unable to pay, and had entreated him to go and see if any one there could assist her. "It is not my business," he added in a surly tone, "to go about begging for my rent. However, I was willing to see if anything was to be got. If not, let her be prepared; to-morrow, the eighth of July, she must quit. At all events, her moving will not be a very heavy one!"

Aloïse trembled in every limb, at finding herself in the same room with this terrible landlord, of whom she had so often heard Janette speak, and whose manner was not calculated to tranquillize her fears. Not daring to address him herself, she whispered to her nurse, that she would go and ask her mamma for the louis.

"But have you gained it?" said the nurse.

"Oh! certainly," said Aloïse, and yet she began to be very much afraid she had not.
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She drew herself in as much as possible, in order to pass between the door and the man who stood beside it, and who terrified her so much that she would not have dared to ask him to move. She ran quite flushed and breathless into her mother's room, and asked for the louis.

"But does it belong to you?" said her mother. "I do not think it does."

"Oh, mamma," replied Aloïse, turning pale, "I have put away my work more than forty-eight times."

"Yes, my child, but the days on which you have not put it away?"

"Mamma, I have put it away very often, I assure you."

"We shall see;" and Madame d'Auvray took the account from her secretary. "You have put it away sixty times," said she to her daughter.

"You see, mamma!" cried Aloïse, delighted.

"Yes, but you have neglected it thirty-one times, for the month of May has thirty-one days."

"Oh! mamma, that does not make...."

"My dear! thirty-one days, at five sous a day, make seven livres fifteen sous, which are to be deducted from the thirty francs that you have gained. Thus thirty-five sous are still wanting to complete the louis." Aloïse turned pale and clasped her hands.

"Is it possible," she said, "that for thirty-five sous...."

"My child," said her mother, "you remember your agreement with your father."

"Oh! mamma! for thirty-five sous! and this poor Janette!"

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"You knew very well what would be the consequence," said her mother; "I can do nothing in the matter."

Aloïse wept bitterly. Her father coming in, asked the reason. Madame d'Auvray told him, and Aloïse raised her hands towards him with supplicating looks.

"My child," said M. d'Auvray, "when I make a bargain I keep to it, and I require that others should act in the same manner towards me. You have not chosen to fulfil the conditions of this agreement, therefore let us say no more about it."

When M. d'Auvray had once said a thing, it was settled. Aloïse did not dare to reply, but she remained weeping. "The horses are ready," said M. d'Auvray, "we must

set off; come, go and fetch your bonnet."

Aloïse then knew that all hope was lost, and she could not restrain her sobs. "Go and get your bonnet," said her father in a firmer tone, and her mother led her gently to the door. She remained outside the room, leaning against the wall, unable to move a step, and crying most bitterly. Her nurse entered softly, and asked whether she had got the money, as the man was becoming impatient. Indeed Aloïse heard him in the hall speaking to the servant, in the same surly ill-tempered tone. He said he had not time to wait; that it was very disagreeable and inconvenient to be sent there for nothing; and that Janette might rest assured she would have to be off pretty quickly. The tears of Aloïse were redoubled; her nurse endeavoured to console her, and the
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old servant who was passing at the moment, not knowing the cause of her grief, told her that she was going to amuse herself in the country, and would soon forget her trouble.

"To amuse myself!" cried Aloïse, "to amuse myself!" And she remembered that during this time Janette would be in despair, and turned into the street with her three children.

"Oh! dear," she exclaimed, "could they not have punished me in some other manner?"

"Listen," said her nurse, "suppose you were to ask for some other punishment?"

Aloïse turned towards her a hesitating and frightened look. She saw very well that she was going to propose to her to give up her visit to the country; and although she promised herself very little pleasure from it, she had not the courage to renounce it. But the servant came to tell her that the man was tired of waiting, and was going away. And in fact she heard him open the door, saying in a loud voice, "She shall pay for having made me come here for nothing." Aloïse with clasped hands, entreated the servant to run after him and stop him for a moment, and told her nurse to go and beg of her parents to change her punishment, and instead of it to deprive her of the pleasure of going into the country. The nurse having done so, Madame d'Auvray came out immediately and said to her daughter,

"My child, our wish is not to punish you, but to fix in your mind something of consequence which we have not yet succeeded in impressing on it. Do you think the regret you will feel in not going into the country with us, will have sufficient effect upon you, to make you remember to be a little more orderly in what you do?"

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"Oh! mamma," said Aloïse, "I do assure you that the grief I have had, and that which I shall still have," she added, redoubling her tears, "in not going into the country, will make me well remember it."

"Very well, then," said Madame d'Auvray, and she gave her the louis, which Aloïse charged her nurse to carry to the man. As for herself, she remained leaning against the door, through which her mother had returned into her room. Her nurse, having ordered the kitchen-maid to follow the man, and carry the louis to Janette, found her there still crying; and told her that as she had taken her course, she ought to show more courage, and dry up her tears, and go and bid farewell to her parents, who would otherwise think she was sulking, which would not be proper. Aloïse dried her eyes, and endeavouring to restrain herself, entered the room. As she approached her father, in order to kiss him, he took her on his knee, and said, "My dear Aloïse, is there no way of engraving still more deeply on your memory, that which you ought not to forget?" Aloïse looked at him. "Would it not be," he continued, "by taking you with us into the country, relying upon the promise which you will give us never again to forget to put your work away?"

"Never!" said Aloïse, with an agitated look; "but if I should forget it on some occasion?"

"I am sure that you will not do so," replied her mother; "your promise, the recollection of our indulgence, all this will force you to remember it."

"But, oh dear! oh dear! if after all I were to forget it!"

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"Well," said her father, kissing her, "we wish to force you to remember it."

Aloïse was greatly affected by all this kindness; but she felt tormented by the fear of not keeping the promise on which her parents relied; and whilst her nurse, who had heard what was said, ran joyfully to fetch her bonnet, she remained pensive, leaning against the window. At length, turning eagerly to her mother, "Mamma," she said, "I will beg of God every day in my prayers to give me grace to keep my promise."

"That will be an excellent means," replied her mother, "make use of it at once;" and Aloïse raised her eyes to heaven and her heart to God, and felt encouraged. Nevertheless she preserved throughout the day, amidst the amusements of the country, something of the emotions which had agitated her in the morning. At night she did not forget to renew her prayer; the next morning she thought of it on waking,

and in order not to forget it, she imposed upon herself the rule of attending to it before she did anything else. She succeeded, by this means, in impressing upon her mind the duty prescribed to her. Once only, did she seem on the point of going away without arranging her work.

"Aloïse," said her mother, "have you said your prayers this morning?"

This question reminded her both of her prayer, which, indeed, for some time past, she had said with less attention, as she now thought herself secure, and also of her promise, which she had run the risk of forgetting; and she was so much terrified that she never again fell into the same danger. One day when her mother was speaking to
[Pg 53] her about the manner in which she had corrected herself, she said timidly, "But, mamma, in order to correct me, you surely would not have had the heart to allow poor Janette to be turned out of doors?"

Her mother smiled and said, "You must at all events allow that you are at present very happy for having been afraid of this." Aloïse assented. The louis d'or had enabled her to acquire a good habit, from which she derived more advantages than she had at first expected; for the money which she saved, by not having constantly to replace things lost through carelessness, gave her the means of doing something additional for Janette, for whom also work was found, as well as various little commissions, so that she and her children were no longer in danger of dying of hunger, or of being turned out of their miserable garret.

Here M. de Cideville, being obliged to go out, interrupted his narrative, deferring its continuation to another day.

CONTINUATION OF THE HISTORY OF A LOUIS D'OR

M. de Cideville having one day, of his own accord, continued the history of the louis d'or, said to his daughter, You have already seen, by the several adventures which I have related, of what importance may be, under certain circumstances, a sum apparently so trifling as a louis d'or. You will soon see all the advantages which may be derived from it; but I must first tell you in what manner it passed out of the
[Pg 54] hands of the landlord, to whom Janette had given it in payment of her rent.

This landlord was a shoemaker; his house was very small, very disagreeable, and very dirty, as may be imagined by the sum paid by Janette for rent, and he was himself the porter. He was very avaricious, and would not go to the expense of keeping it in a moderately decent condition, or even of repairing it, so that it was occupied only by very poor people, or by those who had been guilty of bad actions, for, provided his tenants paid him, he did not trouble himself about their honesty. There was one among them, named Roch, whom he knew to be a rogue, and who had several times concealed stolen goods. The shoemaker shut his eyes to this, because on these occasions he almost always received some little present. One day, as the shoemaker was looking in the narrow court, which separated his house from that of his neighbour, for old pieces of linen sometimes thrown there, and of which, after having washed them, he made use as linings for his shoes, he stooped down to pick up one of them, when his pipe, which he had in his mouth, caught in something, and slipping from him, fell through a grating into his neighbour's cellar. He would have been glad to have gone and asked for it, but he did not dare to do so, for misers are always ashamed of those actions which their avarice leads them to commit. Whilst leaning over the grating, in the hope that it might have lodged on the slope of the wall within, and that he should be able to regain it, there suddenly burst from the opening such a volume of smoke, that he was nearly stifled. The pipe had fallen upon
[Pg 55] some straw, recently unpacked, and which, not having yet imbibed the damp of the cellar, caught fire almost immediately. The shoemaker knew very well what was likely to follow, and ran away, in order that he might not be suspected as the cause of the mischief; but trembling for his own house, to which the fire might extend, he gave an alarm, saying that he perceived a strong smell of smoke; and in order that assistance might be promptly rendered, he guided the people so well in the direction of the fire, that the truth was immediately suspected.

The flames quickly spread to a heap of faggots, thence to a quantity of goods which were near, and before there was time to suppress them, they had injured the building. The landlord entered a process against the shoemaker, in order to make him pay the damages, saying that it was he who had set the place on fire, which, indeed, there was every reason for suspecting. It was known that he was in the habit of searching in the court for rags, and suchlike things, that happened to be thrown from the windows. There had also been found in the ashes underneath the grating and on the spot occupied by the heap of straw, the remains of a pipe which had not been consumed. It was observed that when the shoemaker gave the information, he was without his pipe, a thing quite extraordinary for him. He was also known to have bought a new one on the same day, and every one was aware that he was not a man to buy a new pipe if he had an old one in his possession. It was then more than probable that it was his pipe which had fallen into the cellar, and set it on fire.

[Pg 56] Besides, two persons believed that they had seen him, from a distance, going out of the court.

The shoemaker had nothing to oppose to these charges, but the assertion that he was not on the spot when the place took fire; but in order to have this assertion received, he must find witnesses who would consent to give a false testimony. He thought Roch might do him this service, and he reminded him of all the indulgence which he had granted to him. Roch made no objections; he was so great a knave, that he seemed to take a pleasure in doing what was wrong. He simply demanded, as the reward of this service, that the shoemaker should introduce and recommend him, as a servant, to M. de la Fère, a gentleman for whom the shoemaker worked, and who at that time was in want of a servant. Roch was very desirous of getting this place, but quite at a loss as to the means of doing so, as he could find no one willing to give him a character. The shoemaker consented; for we can never ask others to do what is wrong for us without being obliged to do at least as much for them in return. But two witnesses were requisite. Roch undertook to procure another, on condition that the shoemaker should give him a louis d'or.

The latter, at first, made many objections; for he valued his money more than his conscience, but there was no alternative in the case. He therefore gave him the very louis d'or that Janette had paid him, and Roch and his comrade both affirmed on oath, that the shoemaker was returning home in their company, at the time that he perceived from the street the smell of the smoke then issuing from the court. They [Pg 57] also affirmed, that during their walk, a porter had knocked against him so roughly, that his pipe was thrown out of his mouth, and that in stepping forward to gain his balance, he had trodden upon it, and crushed it. To give their assertions a greater appearance of truth, they repeated the remarks which they pretended to have made upon the occasion. The shoemaker gained his cause. Roch kept the louis, giving only twelve francs to his comrade, and entered the service of M. de la Fère, who was on the point of leaving France, where, like many others, he did not consider himself in safety; for it was the close of the year 1792. Neither his man-servant nor his wife's maid was willing to accompany them; so that being in a great hurry to leave, they were compelled to take Roch without inquiry, and upon the sole recommendation of the shoemaker, whom they believed to be an honest man. They were desirous of obtaining gold for their journey, as being more convenient than silver, and at that time the value of the louis d'or was high, for it was much in request, as many families were leaving France for the same cause as M. de la Fère. Roch therefore sold to his master the louis which he had received from the shoemaker. It thus came into the possession of M. de la Fère, and you shall see presently all that it produced. As for Roch, before his departure with M. de la Fère, he defrauded the shoemaker out of the amount of a rather heavy bill which his master had ordered him to pay. He produced a false receipt, and kept the money. The shoemaker did not become aware [Pg 58] of his departure till several days afterwards, and thus found himself punished for recommending a rogue. We must now see what the louis produced in the hands of its new possessor.

THE WEEK.

It was at the commencement of the year 1793, that M. de la Fère, accompanied by his wife, his son Raymond, a lad of fifteen, and his daughter Juliette, who was thirteen, his servant Roch, and his wife's new maid, left France, to establish themselves in a small town in Germany. They had brought with them sufficient money to enable them, if necessary, to remain away for several years, and the more easily, as having chosen a town in which no French had as yet arrived, and where they were not acquainted with any Germans, they hoped to lead the kind of life which suited them, without being obliged to incur greater expenses than they wished. Thus they hoped, by means of a reasonable, but not inconvenient economy, to pass the period of trouble in comfort and tranquillity, attending to the education of their children, who, delighted with the change of scene, thought only of enjoying the various new objects which their journey presented to them.

Although much afflicted at leaving their country, and deeply grieved for the misfortunes which were daily occurring there, M. and Madame de la Fère would not depress the spirits of their children, by recurring to events over which they had no control; but on the contrary, they procured for them such pleasures as were [Pg 59] compatible with their situation. They had somewhat prolonged their journey, in order to show them various interesting objects situated at a short distance from their route, and had been settled in the town in which they intended to reside only a few days, when their host, M. Fiddler, spoke of a rather curious kind of fair which was then being held at some distance from that place. They hired one of the carriages of the country, and wishing to take advantage of the opportunity which the occasion afforded of enjoying the scenery of the neighbourhood, which was very beautiful, they set out early, carrying with them sufficient provisions to enable them to pass the whole day in the fields. It was in the month of June; they prolonged their walks so much, that it was ten o'clock in the evening when they reached town. They were

surprised, on arriving, to find that the servant, whom they had left in the house, did not come to assist them. They supposed that he must have gone to the fair on his own account, together with the maid, whom they also called for in vain. They were at a loss to get in, as the door of the house was locked, M. Fiddler having also gone to the fair. At last, a little boy who had been left in charge of it, and who likewise had been amusing himself, came back, opened the door, and procured a light from a neighbour, who presented to M. de la Fère a letter which had arrived during his absence. M. de la Fère stopped to read it, and then entered the house, so completely absorbed, that he did not notice the exclamations of distress which were uttered by
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his wife and children. At last they ran to him, spoke to him, roused him from his abstraction, and showed him all their cupboards open and emptied, the secretary forced, and their money and jewels carried off: there was nothing left. Roch and the maid, who had also been taken without sufficient inquiry, and who was an equally ill-disposed person, had several times, during their journey, given them cause for distrusting them, and it was their intention to send them back to France. They had apparently suspected this intention, and profited by their absence to rob them. This they could very easily do, as the pavilion, which was the part of the residence occupied by M. and Madame de la Fère, was separated from the rest of the house, and on one side opened upon the fields. On this side, the open doors and windows showed traces of their flight; but there was no possibility of following them at that hour, nor any hope of otherwise arresting them. The town was situated on the frontiers of two small German states, and there was no doubt that they had entered the neighbouring one, as, from several circumstances which were then recollected, it might be presumed that they had taken their precautions beforehand. However, M. de la Fère went to the magistrate of the town to lodge his complaints, and to take the necessary proceedings.

When he returned, his family had not yet had time to recover from their consternation. Juliette was crying, and her mother, though herself overwhelmed with grief, was endeavouring to soothe her; Raymond, who understood German, was talking to M. Fiddler, who hearing of their misfortune on his return from the fair, had
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hastened with great kindness to offer them his assistance. All this Raymond communicated to his mother and sister. M. de la Fère also thanked him in German, for M. Fiddler did not understand French, and told him that though they had indeed experienced a most serious misfortune, he hoped, nevertheless, that they would be able to extricate themselves from it; and M. Fiddler, who was very considerate, fearing to be importunate, immediately retired.

When they were alone, assembled round a candle which M. Fiddler had lent them, M. de la Fère, after tenderly embracing his wife and children, made them sit down by him, and remained for some time silent, as if he knew not what to say to them.

At length Raymond, who had heard his father's reply to M. Fiddler, broke the silence.

"Papa," he said, "you told M. Fiddler that we should be able to extricate ourselves from our difficulties; does the letter, which you have just received, say that money will be sent to us from France?"

"On the contrary, my child."

"What! on the contrary?" exclaimed Madame de la Fère, with a movement of alarm. Her husband pressed her hand, and she restrained herself. He had accustomed her to preserve her self-command in the presence of their children, in order not to give them exaggerated ideas of what might happen to them.

"My beloved friends," continued M. de la Fère, taking his daughter on his knees, and retaining the hand of his wife within his own, "we must not rely, at least for a
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very long time to come, on any assistance from France; for all our property is seized, and God only knows when we shall regain possession of it."

Madame de la Fère turned pale, but said nothing. Juliette wept and trembled, and Raymond, leaning on the back of a chair, listened attentively to his father, whose calm and firm manner completely reassured him. M. de la Fère continued—

"Of all our effects there remains absolutely nothing, but what we have upon us, and a small trunk of linen, which I see in the corner there, and which they seem to have forgotten. Of all our money, there remains but this louis d'or," said he, holding it up, "which I had in my pocket."

"Good heavens," exclaimed Juliette, in a tone of despair, "what will become of us?"

Her father pressed her in his arms. "Have a little patience, sister," said Raymond, quickly. He saw that his father had something to propose, and whatever it might be, he was eager to execute it. M. de la Fère continued—

"A louis, my dears, may still become a resource, provided one knows how to turn it to account. We cannot live without work: we must, therefore, find the means of working."

Madame de la Fère replied, that she and her daughter could embroider, and that M. Fiddler would be able to recommend them in the town. "Yes," replied M. de la Fère, "but that is not sufficient. Before these recommendations have produced their effect, before we receive work, and before that work is finished, our louis d'or may very easily be spent; and my watch, which is the only thing left us that we can sell, [Pg 63] for they have taken Raymond's, will not afford us a very considerable resource: we must, therefore, devise some plan for not exhausting too rapidly our means of existence."

Juliette said that M. Fiddler, who had so kindly offered his aid, would be able to assist them until their work afforded them the means of living.

"We must only accept assistance from others," said M. de la Fère, "when we can do absolutely nothing for ourselves. Do you feel the courage to impose upon yourselves, for one week only, the most severe privations?"

All answered "Yes!" "Even if it be to live on bread and water," said Raymond. M. de la Fère pressed his son's hand with an air of satisfaction. But Juliette turned towards her father with a somewhat terrified expression, and Madame de la Fère looked first upon her husband, and then upon her children, and could not restrain a few tears. M. de la Fère, making a great effort to preserve his firmness, said to them:

"Listen, my dears, and I hope you will agree with me, that a week's courage is a very trifling matter, if it can insure our preservation. This is my calculation. Our rent is paid three months in advance. We have in the trunk as much linen as we shall want for three weeks, without requiring anything washed; as it is summer, we shall not need any fire; the days being long, if we get up and go to bed with the sun, there will be no necessity for candles; thus, without expending anything, we are secured on all these points, from all suffering, and indeed from every real inconvenience, for more [Pg 64] than a week. We have only our food to pay for. In limiting ourselves for a week only to what is absolutely necessary,—to bread, my dear Juliette," said he, tenderly embracing his daughter, whom he still held upon his knee, "it will be possible for us to employ a part of this louis on the purchase of materials to enable you to embroider, and myself and Raymond to paint boxes and screens, and various other things which M. Fiddler doubtless will enable us to sell. In a week we shall probably have gained something by our labour. If we are compelled to wait longer, I have still my watch, and I will answer for it, that before its price is expended, we shall be free from anxiety."

Raymond, animated by the manner in which his father pronounced these words, embraced his mother, and then his sister, who was still weeping a little. "Consider, Juliette," he said, "a week is so soon over!"

Hitherto, indeed, Raymond had always been much more of an epicure than his sister, and much more eager in the pursuit of what pleased him; but at the same time, he had more determination, and was better able to make a sacrifice, where any great object was to be attained. Besides, the present moment had inspired him with what a great misfortune ought always to inspire a man—an increased amount of sense and courage; whilst Juliette, on the contrary, somewhat overcome by the fatigues of the day, had not been able to recover from the surprise and terror of the first moment. Their ill-lighted room gave her melancholy impressions, everything seemed dark around her, and she felt excessively unhappy, without being exactly [Pg 65] able to tell why. The caresses of her parents calmed her a little; her mother made her go to bed, and she soon sunk into that sound sleep which grief usually produces at her age; and on awakening the following morning, she felt entirely reanimated. Her mother had already made the purchases necessary for commencing work. It had been the fashion in France, for some time before their departure, to wear lawn handkerchiefs, embroidered in coloured silks; and this custom, though now rather antiquated, had not yet reached the town in which they were residing, although its inhabitants affected to follow the French fashions. She bought sufficient lawn for a handkerchief, silks to embroider it, and some card-board and colours for her husband and son. These cost rather less than fourteen francs; the remaining ten were carefully reserved for the maintenance of the family. Madame de la Fère felt her heart a little oppressed when she beheld this trifling sum, but the recollection of the watch gave her confidence that her children would not want for bread; and besides, accustomed to rely upon her husband, of whose courage and firmness she was well aware, so long as she saw him tranquil, she could not feel very uneasy. As M. de la Fère was returning with the bread he had purchased for the family, he met M. Fiddler, who expressed his grief for the inconveniences which he suffered, and once more offered his services. M. de la Fère again thanked him, promising that if he really stood in need of assistance, it would be to him that he would apply; and M. Fiddler, being a man of the greatest discretion, did not press the matter further.

When Juliette entered the room in which the family was assembled, she found her [Pg 66] mother and Raymond already occupied in arranging an old embroidery-frame, which they had found in a corner of the apartment, while M. de la Fère was drawing upon the piece of lawn, the wreath with which it was to be embroidered. The sun shone

brilliantly into the apartment, which looked out upon a magnificent landscape, and Juliette, forgetting the troubles of the previous evening, set herself gaily to assist her mother and brother. The wreath was soon drawn, the frame soon mounted; the tasks were distributed, and each commenced his labour. During this time, M. de la Fère began to design the ornaments for a work-box, whilst Raymond, who was tolerably adroit, cut and gummed the card-board, and even assisted his father in the less difficult ornaments. After working for some time, Juliette began to feel hungry. She was afraid to say anything as yet; Raymond, however, having asked his father if it was not time for breakfast, opened a cupboard in which the bread had been placed, and exclaimed, laughing, "Behold our week's provisions!" then he cut for his mother and sister some slices of bread, which he assured them had been selected with great care. As to himself, he separated his own into five or six pieces, calling one a cutlet, another a leg of mutton, and so on. This made them laugh, and thenceforth they constantly amused themselves, while eating their bread, with bestowing upon it the names of the most refined dishes.

Although Madame de la Fère often made Juliette leave her work and walk with her brother in the road that passed beneath their windows, yet in three days the
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handkerchief was embroidered, and M. de la Fère, on his part, had completed a box, the top of which, painted in bistre, represented one of the points of view to be seen from his window, while the sides were ornamented with arabesques, also in bistre. M. Fiddler, to whom M. and Madame de la Fère had communicated their determination of living by their labour, recommended them to a lady in the town, the only one who understood French. Madame de la Fère called upon her, accompanied by Juliette, who although somewhat ashamed at being presented under such circumstances, nevertheless felt a certain degree of pride, in thinking that her work should be of some consequence. The German lady, to whom M. Fiddler had related their misfortunes, received them with great kindness. She purchased the handkerchief, at the price of a louis, in the money of the country, and also the work-box for twelve francs, and told Madame de la Fère that she would enable her to sell others. They returned delighted. "Mamma," said Juliette, on their way home, "since we have been so successful, I think for to-day at least, we might have something to eat with our bread."

Madame de la Fère replied that that must depend upon her father; but when, after relating their success, Juliette renewed her proposition; "My dears," said M. de la Fère, looking at his children, for Raymond had listened to his sister's proposition with great attention, "if we break our fast to-day, it will be more difficult to keep it to-morrow, and if we do not maintain it until the end of the week, the fruit of our courage will be lost, for we shall still be inconvenienced to purchase the materials
[Pg 68]
necessary for continuing our labours; whereas our having a little in advance will make us quite comfortable."

"Come," said Raymond, running to the cupboard, and cutting a large slice of bread, "here is my sturgeon pasty for this day."

"My dear Juliette," said M. de la Fère to his daughter, who seemed a little sad, "it is merely an advice which I have given you. The money which we possess is in part gained by your labour, and it would be unjust to prevent you from spending it according to your fancy; if you wish; we will give you your share, and you can do what you please with it." Juliette threw her arms round her father's neck, and told him that she always wished to do as he did, and whatever he pleased; and the money was immediately employed in purchasing new materials.

If Juliette had rather more difficulty, on this day, and the following ones, in eating her bread, to which her brother in vain gave the most tempting names, she consoled herself by calculating with her mother, the number of hours, of minutes even, which must intervene before the close of the last day; and then how many minutes were required to work a flower. This shortened the time; for when Juliette had not finished her task in the period which she had allotted to it, she found the time pass much too quickly. She was greatly delighted that the watch had not been sold, and felt a certain pride in thinking that they might be able to preserve it by their industry.

As constant work suggests methods of abridging labour, they this time finished, in
[Pg 69]
five days, two handkerchiefs and three boxes, and to complete their happiness, on the evening of the eighth day, the German lady sent to inquire if any more were ready. She had given a party on the previous evening; her handkerchief had been admired; she had shown her box also, and several of her friends expressed a wish to purchase similar articles of both kinds. When Madame de la Fère and her daughter called upon her the following morning, she not only took all that were finished, but gave orders for a fresh supply. Juliette could not contain her joy. She had eaten her dry bread very cheerfully before starting, thinking that, according to all appearances, they would have a better dinner; and now on their return, she assisted her mother in preparing it; she could never have believed it possible for her to have experienced so much pleasure as she now felt, in peeling onions, touching greasy spoons, or broiling herself in skimming saucepans, on a hot summer's day. Her mother wished that, for this day, she should entirely lay aside all other work. Raymond and she, therefore,

passed the morning in laughing till tears came into their eyes, at the thousand absurdities which their joy prompted them to utter; and M. and Madame de la Fère, delighted at seeing them so happy, forgot for a time that they had ever experienced sorrow.

With what delight Juliette helped her brother to set the table, to lay the cloth, to place the covers and plates lent them by M. Fiddler. Just at the moment that she was about to serve up the dinner, she heard exclamations of joy from Raymond, who came running to tell her that the Chevalier de Villon, an old friend of his father,
[Pg 70] whom they had not seen for several years, as he had left France a long time before them, had just arrived in the town, and was coming to dine with them. "How fortunate!" said Raymond, "that he did not come yesterday;" and he ran out to rejoin the chevalier.

"He comes to diminish our dinner," said Juliette, in a tone of ill temper, which she was not able to control; for it seemed to her that the least alteration must interfere with the happiness she anticipated.

"Juliette," said her mother, "if during the past week you had found a friend, who was willing to share his dinner with you, you would have been very glad, even though you thought that he would thereby deprive himself of something."

"It is because I think M. de Villon does not stand in need of it," said Juliette, completely ashamed of what she had said. At this moment the chevalier entered, his clothes in rags, and himself so pale and so thin, that Madame de la Fère, on beholding him, could not suppress a cry of grief; as for him, with his Gascon vivacity, he ran to embrace her.

"You see," said he, "to what I am reduced. This is *now* the uniform of a French gentleman, my dear Madame. Why I am not sure that I have eaten anything these two days."

Madame de la Fère turned to Juliette, who with a supplicating look seemed to entreat her to forget what she had said. The chevalier sat down, for he could scarcely stand; nevertheless his gaiety never forsook him, as long as his strength remained; but they felt that it was sinking with every sentence. Juliette laid a cover for him, and
[Pg 71] placed a chair at the table, for he was so much fatigued that he seemed scarcely able to move. When the soup was served, and the chevalier, with his accustomed politeness, wished to pass to her the first plate, she entreated him to keep it with so much earnestness, that he could not refuse. She then raised her eyes to her mother as if to ask forgiveness: Madame de la Fère smiled, and joy returned to Juliette's heart. She was at length helped in her turn, and thought she had never enjoyed anything so much; while Raymond, who, until then, fancied he disliked carrots and turnips, did not leave a single bit of them upon his plate. A piece of beef, and a dish of vegetables, appeared to all this family a magnificent repast. How happy the poor chevalier felt, at finding himself once more seated, and at table, and in the midst of his friends! How he amused Raymond and Juliette, by relating his campaigns and adventures! M. Fiddler, knowing that M. de la Fère had a friend to dinner, had requested permission to send in a couple of bottles of good wine, and M. de la Fère, who was no longer afraid of being obliged to have recourse to compassion, considered that he ought not to refuse a friendly present. The wine completely restored to the chevalier his strength, his originality, and even his hopes. By the time the dinner was over, he had completely forgotten that he had not a sou, that he had not a shirt, that his shoes were without soles, and his coat almost without sleeves; his friends had equally forgotten it, for on this day no one thought of the future, and it passed away in the enjoyment of a degree of happiness of which those who have
[Pg 72] never suffered can form no conception. At night, M. Fiddler lent them a bed, and the chevalier slept in the room occupied by M. de la Fère and Raymond, who could hardly sleep from the joy he felt at having a new companion.

The following morning, M. de la Fère said to the chevalier: "Well! you remain with us; but every one in this house works,—what can you do?"

"Faith, not much," said the chevalier. "I can attend to the house, go of errands, and see to the cooking, when there is any," for they had related to him the history of the eight days' fast. "Oh, I forgot," he continued, "I have a marvellous talent for mending old clothes. Look!" and he showed them his coat, which was hanging in tatters at all points. Every one laughed; but on a closer examination, they found, that if indeed the chevalier's coat was thus torn, it had been previously well mended. "This," said he, "is the only talent I have as yet needed; set me to work, and perhaps some other will spring up." It was agreed that, for the present, he should confine himself to the exercise of his talents as a tailor, upon the remains of his coat, in order to make it look somewhat more respectable, while he was waiting for a better; and that he should undertake the rough work, while the family was occupied in executing the orders, which were now numerous and pressing. A few days after, M. Fiddler consented to let them have, instead of the pavilion which they occupied, and which was unsuited to their present circumstances, a much smaller dwelling, to which was attached a little garden; this the chevalier undertook to cultivate, and it supplied

[Pg 73] them with some fruit and vegetables. He also prepared the card-board for the boxes and screens, and even chimney ornaments, and pendule cases, which were made by M. de la Fère and his son. These productions, as well as those of Madame de la Fère, became quite the fashion in the country. The chevalier took them to the neighbouring fairs, where, at the same time, he found opportunities of making more advantageous purchases than in the town. M. de la Fère gave him a per-centage on all he bought and sold for him, so that in a short time he was able to carry on a small trade on his own account, in which he displayed considerable ability. Raymond often accompanied him in these excursions, and thus began to acquire a knowledge of business. As for Madame de la Fère, who added to her skill in embroidery, a talent for millinery, she had soon so much to do that she was obliged to take work-women, and she opened a shop, to which people came from all parts, to get the French fashions, of which the chevalier, by his activity, contrived to obtain for her the patterns. When their circumstances had so much improved, that there was no longer any danger of another fast, M. de la Fère said to Raymond and Juliette, "My children, you have hitherto worked for the benefit of the community, it is but just that you should also work for yourselves; I give you each a louis d'or, you now know what it is capable of producing, turn it to profit on your own account."

They did turn it to so good a use, that it served for their maintenance during the remainder of the time they continued abroad. M. and Madame de la Fère, when they returned to France, had acquired by their industry, a sufficient sum to repurchase a
[Pg 74] portion of their property which had been sold, and the Chevalier de Villon, who remained with them, was in a condition to pay them a small sum annually. As to Raymond, he had acquired habits of business and industry, and Juliette those of activity and economy. She had also learned never to close her heart to the miseries of others, as sometimes happens with those who are very much engrossed by their own trials; but it was in the midst of the anxieties of a most painful position, that Juliette had seen how little it sometimes costs to alleviate a great misfortune, and it was the louis d'or which had taught her all this.

CONTINUATION OF THE HISTORY OF A LOUIS D'OR.

THE louis d'or paid by Madame de la Fère to the merchant from whom she had bought the lawn for her first handkerchiefs, was passed by him to a fellow-tradesman, who was going to another town of Germany, where he was established as a dealer in lace. Among the workpeople who supplied him, was a young girl named *Victorine*, a refugee like M. and Madame de la Fère. Victorine worked for the support of her godmother, Madame d'Alin, an elderly person who had formerly been well off; but the dread of the revolution had seized upon her to such a degree, that almost at the very outbreak she precipitately quitted France, without taking any precautions to preserve her property, and without any money but what she happened to have at the moment for her current expenses. Thinking only of flight, she took no one with her
[Pg 75] but her godchild Victorine, the daughter of one of her old servants, whom she had brought up. She had had her instructed in every kind of female employment; and when they fell into misfortune, Victorine, who, though scarcely seventeen years of age, possessed both sense and courage, set herself vigorously to work for her godmother, whom age, delicate health, and weakness of character, rendered incapable of overcoming the difficulties of such a situation.

The first thought of Victorine, when they found themselves without means, had been to sell a piece of lace, which she had just finished for herself. Having succeeded in disposing of it, she continued this kind of work. She could not devote to it as much time as she wished, having to attend to the domestic arrangements, and to wait upon Madame d'Alin, who was not accustomed to do anything for herself. Occasionally also she had to read aloud to Madame d'Alin, who was sometimes a little vexed that she could not do so more frequently. Victorine often felt annoyed at being disturbed from her work, but she did not display this feeling; for she knew that her godmother was so kind, that had she perceived it, she would have deprived herself of many pleasures and dispensed with many services, which habit had rendered necessary to her.

Notwithstanding these interruptions, Victorine's labour was sufficient to provide for their ordinary wants; but it was only just sufficient. The least additional expense would have deranged everything, and since they had been in Germany, their wardrobes had not been renewed. Madame d'Alin suffered no inconvenience on this
[Pg 76] account, because she went out so rarely that her dresses were but little used, so that the clothes she had brought with her were sufficient for a long time; but Victorine's stock, never very considerable, was soon exhausted, and the poor girl, notwithstanding her good sense, was not insensible to the annoyance of going out in a dress the different parts of which did not well match the pattern, and the sleeves of which only reached half way down her arm; for she had grown. Madame d'Alin, who was kindness itself, and who was extremely fond of Victorine, endeavoured to improve matters by giving her some of her own dresses; but the dresses of Madame d'Alin, who was small and thin, while Victorine was very tall and rather stout, suited her still worse than those which had, at least, been made for her; and although her

godmother's bonnet and old mantle preserved her from the cold and rain, they gave her so strange an appearance, that she could not help being a little uncomfortable when she had to go into the streets thus muffled up, and especially when she entered the shop where she sold her lace. She longed for the time when she should be able to buy a dress and bonnet in the fashion of the country, and as everything was very cheap there, and Victorine had no desire to dress expensively, she hoped to be able to accomplish her wish for a sum of about a louis.

The possession of this louis, then, was the object of her ambition: she thought of it night and day, and pictured to herself the delight she should feel the first time she went out dressed like other people: but she must first be able to spare a louis, and to accomplish this was no easy matter; for Victorine, from the situation in which she [Pg 77] was placed, and the whole responsibility of which devolved upon her, had acquired such habits of economy, that she would never have run the risk of spending so considerable a sum, without having in advance sufficient money and work for several months. She had then put a louis aside, but determined not to purchase her dress and bonnet until she had collected a certain sum. At first she was very far from the point, then some weeks of cheapness and the talent which she had acquired for economy enabled her to increase her store. Sometimes it augmented so rapidly that she hoped to see it soon complete; but all at once the price of vegetables was raised, or the bushel of charcoal had gone more quickly: then the treasure ceased to increase: Victorine no longer knew when it would be complete, and the slightest accident which happened to diminish it made her lose all hope. Then would she add another patch to her dress, which, in the anticipation of a new one, she had a little neglected, and for several days her heart would be sad, and she would feel some difficulty in working with her usual diligence and pleasure.

One day when she happened to be in a happier mood, she carried her work to the dealer, who, in paying her, said, "See! here is some of the money of your own country." And he showed her the louis. Victorine, on beholding it, was greatly moved; it was so long since she had seen a French coin. Oh! how she longed to possess it! But it was in vain that she calculated; the sum owing to her in the currency of the country did not amount to a louis. At last she begged the shopkeeper to save it for [Pg 78] her, promising in a short time to bring sufficient work to make up the amount. In fact, the desire of possessing this louis redoubled her energies. Shortly afterwards she went to obtain it, brought it away with great delight, and as everything was referred to her favourite idea, she determined to purchase with it her dress and bonnet, as soon as she was able. This was the louis d'or which she had put by, and which she kept so carefully.

The increased quantity of work which she had for some time executed, in order to obtain it the sooner, together with a few weeks favourable to her economy, brought her near the accomplishment of her wishes. At length the day arrived when the work she was to take home would complete the necessary amount, provided the provisions she had to purchase did not exceed a certain price. The provisions happened to be cheap, and Victorine, overjoyed, stopped on her way back at the shop of a linendraper with whom she was acquainted, and selected a pattern, in order to increase the pleasure she would have in buying it; and perhaps, also, that she might the sooner have the gratification of telling some one that she was going to purchase a dress. She had not yet communicated her intention to Madame d'Alin, but she felt quite sure of her approbation. After having made her choice, she returned home, almost running, to leave her provisions, and to fetch her louis. On entering, she opened the door so hastily, that Madame d'Alin, who did not expect her, started, and her spectacles, which were lying on her knee, fell, and both the glasses were broken. "Good heavens!" exclaimed Madame d'Alin, partly from fright, and partly from the [Pg 79] vexation she felt at having broken her glasses. As for Victorine, she remained motionless. The pleasure which she had promised herself was so great, that her vexation was proportionally extreme. At length, taking the spectacles from the hands of Madame d'Alin, with a movement of impatience, which she could not control, she said, "Now, then, there are some glasses to be bought!"

"No, my child," replied Madame d'Alin, mildly, "I will do without them." Victorine felt that she had done wrong; and telling her godmother, in a tone of greater gentleness, that she could not do without glasses, she went out to replace them. However, in calling on the linendraper to tell him that she should not buy the dress, she had to turn away her head, that he might not see the tears which started to her eyes.

She purchased the glasses, returned home, and was greatly astonished at finding with Madame d'Alin a man, whom she did not at first recognize, so little did she think it possible for him to be there. It was the steward of the little estate on which Madame d'Alin usually resided. He had come from France for the purpose of informing his mistress that there was no longer the slightest danger in returning; that she had not been put upon the list of emigrants; that her tenant, who was an honest man, had punctually paid his rent; and that he himself, having been unable to transmit to her the money, had allowed it to accumulate, and had now come to seek

her, in order that she might return home. Madame d'Alin, while listening to him, was agitated between hope and fear; and as for Victorine, she was so troubled, that she [Pg 80] knew not what she felt. Though she had longed to revisit France, yet this had appeared to her a thing so impossible, that she had never dwelt upon the idea; but from this moment it took such possession of her mind, that she could think of nothing else, and her entreaties and arguments, added to those of the steward, as well as the representations of several of the friends of Madame d'Alin, from whom he had brought letters, which her spectacles now enabled her to read, made her resolve on returning. The day was fixed for their departure; and Victorine, for whom her godmother immediately bought a dress and bonnet, having no need of her louis for this purpose, reserved it, in order to buy, when she got back to France, something which might afford her very great pleasure.

On her return, she was for a long time unable to decide on the manner in which she should employ it. Madame d'Alin, who regarded her as her own child, supplied her abundantly with everything she required, and as she was too much accustomed to economy to have any very strong fancies, she always kept it for some better opportunity than had as yet presented itself. Besides, when after some stay in Paris, they returned to the little estate of Madame d'Alin, Victorine was placed at the head of her household, and as she found many things which required to be put in order, she was too much occupied to think about spending her louis. At length, one of her relatives, a servant, in a town a few leagues distant, having occasion to visit her, spoke of the difficulty she felt in managing with her low wages, having her mother to [Pg 81] support, whose strength no longer permitted her to do much. Victorine thought that the best use she could make of her louis, was to give it to her friend; the latter promised to send it as soon as possible to her mother, who was called *Old Mathurine*, and who resided two leagues distant from her. As to Victorine, she shortly after married the son of the honest steward, who had so well preserved the fortune of his mistress. While Madame d'Alin lived, they took care of her, as if they had been her own children, and at her death, she left them a considerable part of her property.

You see, continued M. de Cideville, how much time and trouble are sometimes required in order to obtain a louis d'or. The following story will show you how many vexations might sometimes be avoided by the possession of a sum much less considerable.

THE TEMPTATIONS.

Madame de Livonne, after having been in affluent circumstances, had fallen into a state of great poverty. Being left a widow, with her daughter Euphemia, who was about twelve years of age, and having only distant relations, who were far from wealthy, and to whom she did not wish to be a burden, she took the reasonable and courageous resolution of providing, by her own exertions, for herself and daughter. She therefore established herself in a small town where she was unknown, that she might be able to live as she pleased, without being obliged to go into company, or [Pg 82] receive visits. She applied herself to plain work, with Euphemia, who was gentle and reasonable, and who loved her mother, whom she had seen very unhappy, so tenderly, that provided she saw her tranquil, nothing troubled her. It was not because Euphemia did not, at first, experience much difficulty in accustoming herself to certain privations which daily increased, or to duties somewhat repugnant to her feelings; but she found her mother so ready to neglect herself on her account, and so anxious to spare her as much as possible everything that was disagreeable, that she felt eager to anticipate her, and made a pleasure of what would otherwise have been a pain. Thus, for instance, she had no fancy for counting the linen, or washing the dishes, but if she could manage to be the first to see the laundress, she hastened to give her the clothes, delighted with the thought that her mother would not have to do it; and after dinner she generally contrived to surprise her, by washing and arranging the things before Madame de Livonne rose from table, who, upon seeing what was done, would embrace her child with the greatest tenderness.

With the happiness which these attentions caused, would sometimes mingle a feeling of melancholy and uneasiness, relative to the future prospects of Euphemia; but Madame de Livonne possessed so much fortitude, that she was enabled to overcome her fears, and to place her trust in Providence. Besides, there could not well be any sadness where Euphemia was, for she laughed and sung over all she did, and her mother, who was still young, and had a pleasing voice, often joined in her [Pg 83] songs. In the evening, when the weather was fine, they walked into the country, and Euphemia, after having been shut up all day, enjoyed with transport the beauty of the weather and the freshness of the air; and, satisfied with having worked with diligence, she thought with pleasure of the duties of the succeeding day. To see and hear her, one would have imagined that she was the happiest creature in the world; and in truth she was happy, for she did nothing wrong, she had no fancies that tormented her, she was never wearied, and always spent her time in useful occupations.

Madame de Livonne was so economical, and proportioned so well her expenses to her means, that since they had been compelled to work for their living, they had never been embarrassed. But she was taken ill, even dangerously so. However, Euphemia's joy, when she beheld her convalescent, was so great, that she could scarcely think of the situation in which they were soon to be placed. Almost all their money had been spent during the time that Madame de Livonne had been unable to work, and when Euphemia, occupied in nursing her, her heart always heavy, and her eyes full of tears, was scarcely able to work either. It was not what the poor child had eaten during this time that cost much, but medicines and nourishing food had been required for her mother. Several persons of the town who esteemed Madame de Livonne, on account of her fortitude and her virtues, had, indeed, sent her various things, of which she stood in need, but this assistance ceased as soon as she was better, and she herself even, in order not to encroach upon their kindness, had
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assured them that such things were no longer necessary for her. They therefore found themselves in such a state of destitution, that as soon as Madame de Livonne had, in some degree, regained her strength, she determined to go to a town, about two leagues distant from where they lived, in order to collect some money for work sent home before her illness.

They set out very early one morning, and when just on the point of starting, the daughter of Mathurine called upon them. It was in this town that she was in service, and her mother lived in the one to which they were going. She was acquainted with them, as they worked for her mistress, and being aware of their intended journey, she begged them to carry to her mother the louis d'or that Victorine had given her. They willingly took charge of it, and set off full of spirits. Euphemia was so delighted to breathe the morning air, that, although repeatedly reminded by her mother that they had four leagues to walk during the day, she could not refrain from jumping about, and running on before, and into the fields, on each side of the road; so that when the heat increased, she became very thirsty, and the more so as she had eaten, while skipping about, a large piece of bread. Her mother exhorted her to bear the inconvenience with patience, as there was no means of procuring anything to drink. Euphemia said no more about it, as she did not wish to grieve her mother needlessly; but presently she uttered a cry of joy.

"Oh, mamma, there is a man selling gooseberries; we can buy a pound to refresh ourselves."

"My poor child," said her mother, "you know we have no money."

"I thought," replied Euphemia, timidly, "that they would not be very dear."

[Pg 85]
"But I have no money at all, my dear Euphemia; none whatever."

"I thought, mamma, that this man might change for us old Mathurine's louis d'or, and when we arrived, we could give her her money, together with what we had borrowed from it."

"But we have neither the permission of Mathurine, nor of her daughter, to borrow from this money; it was not given us for that purpose."

"Oh! I am quite sure," continued Euphemia, in a sorrowful tone, "that if they knew how thirsty I am, they would gladly lend us sufficient to buy a pound of gooseberries."

"My poor child," replied her mother, still more sorrowfully, "we can be sure only of our own will, and dispose only of that which belongs to us. As this money does not belong to us, is it not the same as if we had not got it at all?"

As she spoke, she put her arms round her daughter's neck, and embraced her tenderly, regarding her with a look of distress, as if to entreat her not to persist in a request which she could not grant. Euphemia kissed her mother's hand, and turned away her head, that she might not see the basket of gooseberries which was passing by them at the moment; and hearing her mother sigh heavily, she determined not to give her any more uneasiness.

"Are you still very thirsty?" said Madame de Livonne to her, some time afterwards.

"Yes, mamma;" and she added, "this is like the child of Hagar in the desert." But seeing that her comparison brought tears to her mother's eyes, she continued gaily, "But I shall not die of it," and she began to skip about, in order to show that she was
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not overcome by the heat and thirst. Nevertheless, she was very much flushed, and her mother, looking at her with great anxiety, saw that she was really suffering. She stopped, and looked around her. "Listen, Euphemia," said she to her daughter; "it is possible that behind this rising ground, which overhangs the road, we may find a hollow, and perhaps some water. Get up and see."

Euphemia ascended, and at first saw nothing but a vast plain covered with corn, without a tree, without the least verdure indicative of water. For the moment, she felt ready to cry; she stood on tiptoe, and notwithstanding the heat of the sun, which

was shining full upon her head, she could not make up her mind to come down and resign the hope of quenching her thirst. At length she heard a dog bark not far from the spot where she stood. After hearing it several times, she remarked that the sound always proceeded from the same place, and that it was, moreover, the voice of a large dog, and not that of a shepherd's dog. She judged that the animal must be at the door of some dwelling, and running in the direction of the sound, she discovered, to her extreme joy, a house which had been hidden by the elevation on which she stood. She announced the news to her mother, who telling her to go on, followed after her. Before Madame de Livonne arrived, Euphemia had drunk off a large glass of water, with a little wine in it, which a good-natured woman had given her, although Euphemia at first refused the wine, as she had no money to pay for it. She also asked for a glass for her mother, and ran to meet her; and Madame de Livonne, [Pg 87] delighted at seeing the poor child refreshed and comforted, forgot half her own fatigues.

Having fully rested and refreshed themselves, and warmly thanked their kind entertainer, they again set out on their journey, by a path which she had pointed out to them, as shorter and pleasanter than the high road. Euphemia, quite reanimated, could not refrain from congratulating herself on her good fortune, and a little also on her cleverness, in having inferred that there was a house there.

"You must allow," said her mother, "that you would not have shown so much discrimination, had you not been so thirsty. Necessity is the parent of invention."

"Oh, most certainly," replied Euphemia, "if I had eaten the gooseberries, we should not have sought for something to drink, and I should not have had that good glass of wine and water, which has done me so much more good."

Whilst thus conversing, a poor woman approached them, carrying an infant, which was very pale, and so weak, that it could not hold up its head; she herself was frightfully emaciated, and her eyes were red and hollow from weeping; she asked them for alms.

"Good Heavens! we have nothing," said Euphemia, in a most sorrowful tone.

"Only enough to buy something for my poor child, who has had no milk for two days! only enough to save it from dying!"

"I have nothing in the world," said Madame de Livonne, with inexpressible anguish. The poor woman sat down on the ground and burst into tears. Euphemia, [Pg 88] her heart torn with grief, clasped her hands and exclaimed, "Mamma, mamma, shall we leave this poor child and its mother to die of hunger? Would not that be worse than borrowing from Mathurine's money? We are still near the house; let me go and change the louis." Madame de Livonne cast down her eyes, and for a moment appeared to reflect.

"Euphemia," said she, "have you forgotten that as this money does not belong to us, it is the same as if it were not in our possession?"

Euphemia began to cry bitterly, hiding her face in her hands. The poor woman, seeing them stop, got up and again approached Madame de Livonne.

"For the love of God," she exclaimed, "and that he may preserve your young lady, take pity on my poor child!"

"Tell me," said Madame de Livonne, "have you sufficient strength to reach the town?" The poor woman replied that she had, and Madame de Livonne, drawing from her pocket the cover of a letter, on the back of which she wrote a few lines in pencil, told her to take it to the Curé of the town in which she resided, promising her that he would give her assistance. Euphemia, hearing the poor woman thank her mother, felt courage at last to turn to her her tearful face. The expression of her pity seemed to shed a gleam of comfort over the heart of this unhappy creature. She looked alternately at Euphemia and at her child, as if to tell him also to thank her. Euphemia just then remembering that she had in her bag a piece of bread, left from her breakfast, gave it to the poor woman, who went away loading them with blessings, [Pg 89] for she plainly saw that they had done for her all that was in their power. They continued their journey: their minds were relieved, but they were serious. Euphemia could talk of nothing but the poor woman. "You see, my child," said her mother, "that there are sometimes terrible temptations in life."

"Oh, mamma! so terrible that I do not know how it is possible to resist them."

"By fully persuading ourselves that there is nothing truly impossible but a breach of duty."

"But, mamma, if you had not been able to write to the Curé, could you have made up your mind to allow this poor woman to die, rather than change Mathurine's louis?"

"I would rather have begged for her."

This reply, in proving to Euphemia that resources are never wanting to him who has the courage to employ all those which are allowable, calmed a little the alarm inspired by the severity of certain duties.

At length they reached the town. One of the two persons with whom Madame de Livonne had business, lived at its entrance, and she felt a little uneasy at seeing the shutters of the house closed. Nevertheless she made inquiries. A servant, the only one remaining in the house, informed her that her mistress was gone to see her sister, who was ill, and living at a distance of thirty leagues. Euphemia looked at her mother with dismay; however, she thought it very fortunate that they had not touched Mathurine's louis. They then went to the other customer; but she no longer resided in the town. A neighbour told them that she had only stayed there a short
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time, and that no one knew where she was gone to. On receiving this reply, Madame de Livonne sat down on a step. Her daughter saw her turn pale, and lean for support, as if she was going to faint; and indeed it was only her courage which had until then supported her against the debility left by her malady, the fatigues of the journey, and the vexation occasioned by her first disappointment. Now her strength entirely gave way, and she fainted outright. Euphemia, trembling, and in despair, embraced her as long as she was able, and called her, and shook her, in order to make her revive. She was afraid to leave her for the purpose of seeking assistance; brought up in habits of self-restraint, she dared not cry out, and no one happened to be passing by; every one was in the fields. At length, the neighbour who had spoken to them again coming out, Euphemia called her, and pointed to her mother. Two other old women also come up and gave their aid in restoring her to consciousness. Madame de Livonne opened her eyes, and turned them upon her daughter, who kneeling by her side, kissed her hands, and exclaimed in a transport of joy, "Mamma, here I am;" for at this moment she thought of nothing but the happiness of being once more restored to each other.

However, she soon become very anxious about their return home; but her mother told her not to torment herself, as she would soon recover her strength; and yet at every moment she seemed on the point of fainting again. Every time she closed her eyes, Euphemia turned pale and was ready to burst into tears, but restrained herself, in order not to grieve her mother, and clasping her hands, she murmured in a
[Pg 91]
suppressed voice, "My God! what shall we do? how are we to get home?" One of the women told her that a coach would be passing in two hours which would take them back, but Euphemia knew very well that they had no money to pay for their places, and besides she thought that it would be impossible for her mother, weak as she was, to continue her journey without taking some refreshment. However, she had not once thought of making use of Mathurine's money; but at last it occurred to her that if she were to carry it to her, she might perhaps lend them a part of it. Delighted with this idea, she forgot her timidity, and hastily searching for the louis in her mother's pocket, and begging one of the women to accompany her to Mathurine's house, she looked at her mother for permission. Madame de Livonne by a sign gave her consent, and Euphemia set off, walking so quickly that the woman who accompanied her had some difficulty in following her. Her heart beat violently as she reached the house; the door was locked; Mathurine had gone four leagues off to assist in the harvest, and was not to return until the following day. Euphemia looked at the person who gave her this information without uttering a word. She was unable to speak, for her heart was bursting, and her ideas were confused to such a degree, on receiving an intelligence which destroyed her last hope, that, happily for her, she no longer felt all the misery of her situation. She returned slowly, looking mechanically around her, as if seeking some one who might give her aid; but all she saw seemed poorer than herself, though she felt that at that moment there were none of them so wretched.
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Presently the air resounded with the cracking of postilions' whips; a travelling carriage drove up, and stopped at the inn: it occupied the whole of the narrow street, and obliged Euphemia and her companion to stop. A lady, her husband and daughter, and a lady's-maid, descended from it, and were quickly surrounded by poor asking for alms. This sight made Euphemia weep, without very well knowing why. She watched them, and listened to the lady's soft voice; she looked at her husband, whose countenance was good and amiable, and at the young girl, who was nearly of her own age; she could not make up her mind to pass on. At last she heard the husband, in a tone of kindness, say to the poor who were begging, "My children, I can give you nothing here; but come to Béville, ask for the château, and you shall have work."

A thought suddenly struck Euphemia: they might perchance give her work too. She rushed into the yard, regardless of the horses that were crossing it, and stood before the lady, who was just entering the house; but once in her presence, she stopped, cast down her eyes, and was afraid to speak. Madame de Béville, such was the lady's name, seeing before her a young girl neatly dressed and in tears, asked her kindly what she wanted. Euphemia hesitated, stammered, but at length the thought that her mother was waiting for her, and perhaps uneasy, forced her to make an effort, and with clasped hands, and downcast eyes, for she dared not look at Madame de Béville, she said in a low voice, "Let me have some work too."

"Some work, my child? certainly I will, but how—what sort of work?"

Madame de Béville, seeing before her a young girl neatly dressed, and in tears, asked her kindly what she wanted.—P. 92.

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Euphemia could not reply; the little girl then approached her, and said in the most encouraging tone, "Come, speak to mamma."

Euphemia took courage, and addressing Madame de Béville in her former manner, said, "But I want to be paid in advance, immediately; and then," she added, raising her head, and in a tone of great earnestness, "then, I will work for you as long and as much as you please."

She stopped, trembling. Madame de Béville questioned her with great kindness, and Euphemia related her troubles; but while speaking, the louis d'or, which she held in her hand, fell to the ground. The little girl picked it up, and returned it to her, blushing, grieved at the thought that Euphemia had been trying to deceive them.

"My child," said Madame de Béville, in a reproachful tone, "why did you tell me that you had no money?"

"It is not ours," replied Euphemia with simplicity, "it has been intrusted to us for another, and therefore we cannot touch it."

The young girl, much moved, looked at Madame de Béville, who kissed Euphemia, and asked to be conducted to the place where she had left her mother. At this moment, Madame de Livonne entered the yard, supported by M. de Béville, who had recognised her from having often seen her in Paris, and who begged his wife to join him in persuading her to pass a few days with them, in order to regain her strength. Madame de Béville, deeply affected by Euphemia's narrative, pressed the hand of Madame de Livonne, entreating her, in the kindest manner, to accompany them.

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Madame de Livonne turned to Euphemia, who smiled at her with a look of entreaty; the little girl had already taken her by the arm to lead her away. Madame de Livonne could no longer hesitate, and they entered the carriage of Madame de Béville, whose horses had arrived to conduct them to the château, which was only a few leagues distant. Euphemia could not contain her joy when she saw her mother seated in that comfortable carriage, and surrounded by persons who took care of her; and her pleasure was enhanced by the thought of the delightful time they should pass at Béville. The following day the louis was sent to Mathurine by a confidential person.

Madame de Livonne only required rest, and was soon perfectly restored. M. and Madame de Béville, greatly pleased with the principles she had impressed upon the mind of her daughter, and knowing besides that she was well educated, and very talented, told her that, as they could not obtain in the country, where they lived the

greater part of the year, such masters as they wished for their daughter, they would be delighted if she would remain with them, and assist them in her education. Madame de Livonne, although for herself she would have preferred her independence, nevertheless accepted a proposition, which insured to Euphemia a happier existence, and probably, also, a valuable protection.

As to Euphemia, she was delighted beyond measure at the thought of having to live with Mademoiselle de Béville, with whom she had already formed a most intimate friendship; and while rejoicing with her mother at this good fortune, she
[Pg 95] remarked that it would not have happened to them, if they had been so weak as to change Mathurine's louis d'or.

"We have done our duty," she added, "and God has rewarded us."

"My child," said her mother, "our present situation is a blessing bestowed on us by God, but not a reward."

"And why so, mamma?"

"Because this is not the kind of recompense he assigns to the fulfilment of duty. Do you remember the lines I made you read to me the other day from an English book?—

'What! then is the reward of virtue bread?'[A]

[A] Pope. "Essay on Man."

"It is not by giving to the virtuous the means of living, that God rewards them, but by giving them the satisfaction of having done their duty, and obeyed his will. This, sometimes, is their only reward in the present world; sometimes, even, they are unhappy during the whole of their lives: do you suppose from this that God is unjust to them?"

"No, mamma."

"And do you not think that among these virtuous yet afflicted people, there must have been many who have had much more difficult duties to fulfil than ours, and who have fulfilled them without obtaining those things which you look upon as a reward?"

"Oh, certainly, mamma."

"It is not, then, probable, that God has wished to reward us, in preference to others, who have better merited a recompense."

"But, mamma, nevertheless, it is because we have done our duty, that we are now so happy."

[Pg 96] "Yes, my child; and things like this should often happen, for a very simple reason. God, who has willed that the accomplishment of our duties should be rewarded by peace of mind, has also permitted that happiness should usually be the portion of those who take the most pains to attain it. Now, it is certain, that he who feels no hesitation in neglecting his duty, will not, in a case of emergency, trouble himself with the search of any more difficult resource than this."

"That is quite clear."

"Whereas, he who is anxious not to fail in his duty, will exert all the energies of his mind, in order to discover some other means of success; and as the Gospel says, '*Seek, and ye shall find*.' Thus it may often happen, that the efforts we make to avoid a breach of duty, enable us to discover many important resources, which would not otherwise have occurred to us."

"Yes, mamma, just as with the pound of gooseberries. And if, also, when I saw you so ill, I had considered myself justified in making use of Mathurine's louis, I should not have thought of addressing myself to Madame de Béville, which has been so much more advantageous to us."

At this moment, the poor woman whom they had met upon the road presented herself. Her child was quite restored, and she herself, though still very thin, appeared happy. The Curé had at first relieved her, and afterwards sent her to a manufactory, where she obtained employment. Assured of a subsistence, she had come to announce her happiness to those who had been the means of procuring it, and to bring her child for Mademoiselle Euphemia to kiss, *now that he had become handsome again*.

[Pg 97] "Mamma! mamma," said Euphemia, overwhelming it with caresses, "it is still because you would not change Mathurine's louis, that you sent them to the Curé. Oh! how much good this louis has done us!"

Here M. de Cideville paused.

"Is that all?" asked Ernestine.

"Yes," replied her father, "I think that is the whole history of the louis d'or; and that from old Mathurine it has come to me, without any adventures."

"And now, papa," said Ernestine, "you forbade me to question you until the end of the story; but is it not true, that you do not know whether all the adventures you have related, have really happened to the louis d'or you showed me?"

M. de Cideville smiled, and said, "It is true that I do not exactly know whether these adventures have really happened; but you must allow that they are possible." Ernestine assented.

"You must also allow, that if some of them are rather romantic, some at least are probable, and may have occurred without any very extraordinary combination of accidents." She again assented.

"Well, then, my child," replied M. de Cideville, "it is partly for want of knowing the truth, and partly for want of sufficient imagination to supply its place, that I have not related many other histories, all more simple and more interesting than my own, in which you might have seen a louis d'or, or even a much smaller sum, prevent the
[Pg 98] greatest misfortunes. Picture to yourself a family which had eaten nothing for three days: can you imagine the delight with which they would receive a louis d'or, which would afford them time to await, without dying, such other assistance as might save them entirely? And again, the unhappy wretch whose reason has been so far disturbed by excess of misery, that he is led to attempt his own life, can you doubt that a louis d'or, by delaying the moment, would often give him time to return to calmer feelings, and seek some better resource than an act of crime? I give you only two examples, but I repeat, that there are thousands remaining, of which it would be impossible to think, without losing every wish to spend such a sum in a frivolous manner."

"But, papa," said Ernestine, "is it then never allowable to spend a louis on pleasure?"

"My child," said M. de Cideville, "if we impose upon ourselves restrictions too severe, on one point, we run the risk of failing in others. There are duties proportioned to every situation in life. It is proper that those who enjoy a certain degree of affluence, should occupy in the world a position suitable to their means, and also that they should mix in society, which they cannot do without some expense; for it is highly important that society should be kept up, since it binds men together, and gives them opportunities of mutually instructing each other. It is also good for the poor, because the expenses of the rich give them the means of exerting their industry, and maintaining their families. It is necessary, too, that those employed in important labours, as I am every morning in my study, should be able sometimes to
[Pg 99] repose the mind by occupations of a less serious nature, as otherwise they would end by losing the means of fulfilling the duties of their station. It is for reasons of this kind that many expenses which do not appear directly useful, are nevertheless proper and necessary. But a mind accustomed to judge of the real value of things, will easily draw a distinction between money spent in this manner, and that which is *thrown into the sea*, as the saying is; and while such a person will never feel tempted to indulge in expenses of the latter kind, he will permit himself to enjoy the others without remorse. I know very well, my dear Ernestine, that you may easily deceive yourself in regard to your pleasures: at your age, every pleasure appears of great importance; but I am anxious that you should at least understand the value of what you bestow upon it; therefore, I promise to give you this louis as soon as you have found a really useful means of employing it."

Ernestine, quite enchanted, promised to seek one; we shall see whether she succeeded in her search.

CONCLUSION OF THE HISTORY OF A LOUIS D'OR.

For a whole week, Ernestine could think of nothing but her louis, and the use she was to make of it, but she found none that suited her. The stories which her father had related, made her reflect on what might really be useful, and as her parents supplied her abundantly with everything necessary, and even interested themselves
[Pg 100] in her pleasures, whenever they were reasonable, she saw nothing that could justify her in spending it on herself; besides, she had determined to apply it to some benevolent purpose. But, at her age, she was ignorant of the best means of doing good. She often met poor people, and delighted in relieving them; but as her little monthly allowance was almost sufficient for these acts of charity, she would have been very sorry to have expended her louis upon them. Besides, she did not know whether one of these poor people was in greater need than another, nor could she tell how to ascertain this; she therefore experienced great anxiety on this head; but

the arrival of the season of gaiety dissipated her cares. She went to five or six balls; she had never danced so much in her life, and her head was so completely turned with joy, that she forgot her louis; for, of course, she would never have thought of spending it upon her toilette. At length the time arrived for their departure into the country; and seeing her father paying some money at the inn, she recollected her louis d'or, and mentioned it to him. M. de Cideville told her that it was in the country she would find the best means of employing it to advantage, as it was there that the greatest amount of good might be done, with the smallest amount of money.

They had only been a few days at Saulaye, the estate of M. de Cideville, when Ernestine came running to her father, quite out of breath, to tell him that she required her louis, for that one of the villagers, named Marianne, whom he knew very well, as she had assisted at his haymaking the previous year, had just had her leg broken in the fields, by a kick from a horse. The surgeon of the neighbouring
[Pg 101] town, who was also the medical attendant at the château, happened fortunately to pass by while she lay upon the ground, screaming dreadfully. He set the leg immediately, and had her taken home. But this was not all; Marianne would require remedies, and she was very poor; her husband was in the army, and she had only a very small garden and her labour to depend upon, for the maintenance of herself and a little girl, eight years of age. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary to assist her.

M. de Cideville agreed to this. "But," said he to his daughter, "have you well considered the manner of employing your louis, so as to render it as beneficial to her as possible?"

"If I give it to her, papa, she will be able to buy what is necessary with it."

"Do you think she will be able to buy much?"

"Oh! dear, no; but that is always the way."

"But if you could so employ it as to make it yield a considerable profit to her? Do you remember the advantages which the family of M. de la Fère derived from a louis d'or?"

"Yes, papa, but their history is not true," said Ernestine, quickly.

"It is quite sufficient that it is possible."

"Yes; but if it be necessary," said Ernestine, with a sorrowful and embarrassed look, "to bring oneself, as they did, to bread and water...."

"You are not reduced to this extremity: this is one of those resolutions which we ought to have the courage to take, when necessity demands them, but which would be ridiculous when unnecessary?"

These words restored Ernestine's cheerfulness. "Whilst we are talking," said she
[Pg 102] to her father, caressing him, "poor Marianne does not know that we are coming to her aid."

Her father reassured her. M. de Cideville had been informed of the accident before Ernestine came to tell him, and had given orders to the housekeeper, who was a confidential person, to attend for the moment Marianne's wants. "But henceforward," said M. de Cideville, "it is to you we look for her being taken care of, and for seeing that she wants for nothing: do you think your louis will be sufficient for this?"

"Good gracious, no! What is to be done?"

"What do you think she will stand in need of?"

"Why, first of all, she must be nursed, for she can do nothing for herself, and Suzette, her daughter, is too young to attend upon her."

"She has many neighbours about her, and I am sure they will relieve each other in nursing, and taking care of her, as long as it is necessary. You already see how much these poor women can do without the aid of money."

"Yes, but I cannot do what they do."

"Therefore you ought to do something else. Will she not require medicines?"

"We must buy some for her."

"The greater part of the herbs, of which her draughts and poultices will probably be composed, grow wild in the fields: we know them, and will teach you to distinguish them also. If you like to employ your walks in seeking for them, you may, I think, easily gather a good provision of such of them as are most required, and we will show them to the surgeon, in order to be quite sure that we are not mistaken."

[Pg 103] "There, again, is the surgeon! I never thought of him; he, too, must be paid."

"He attends the château, and receives a certain sum annually; we treat him well,

and he is satisfied with us; besides, he is a very worthy man, and attends gratuitously to the poor of the village, as much from humanity as from the wish to oblige us; while some presents from our produce, as a cask of our wine, for instance, enable us, from time to time, to testify our gratitude to him."

"But, papa, it is you and other people who do all this; it is not I."

"You can do but little of yourself, my child, since you have neither strength, nor wealth; but it is precisely because you are dependent on us for all your wants, that you ought to count among your resources the pleasure we feel in obliging you, in everything that is reasonable, and the predisposition which people feel to comply with your requests, when you ask for what is proper."

"Oh papa, to ask! but that is so difficult. I should never have the courage to do that."

"It is in this, my child, that the greatest merit of charity often consists. I could relate to you many admirable stories on this subject. In order to do good, we must often be able to conquer our pride, which makes us dislike to have recourse to others; our idleness, which makes us dislike exertion; our indolence or thoughtlessness, which makes us lose a thousand things which would be useful. We must learn to do much, with little means; otherwise, we shall never manage to accomplish anything of importance. Those who only give money soon exhaust all they
[Pg 104] have to give, whereas the contrivances of charity, in aid of the unfortunate, are inexhaustible."

"Dear papa, I shall beg you to teach me to find the herbs; but I assure you I am very much afraid I shall not be able to discover anything else."

"You will see: meanwhile, here is your louis; if you take my advice, you will not spend it, except in the purchase of such things as you cannot otherwise obtain. As for the others, seek the means of procuring them. In a house of any consideration there are always many things which may be given away without any positive expense, as they would be otherwise lost, or nearly so. You can ask us for these, and in this way, we will aid you, with the greatest pleasure, in succouring poor Marianne, whom from this moment I place under your care."

Ernestine, though a little frightened at a duty, which she was afraid of not fulfilling in a proper manner, still felt proud and happy in having some one under her protection. Madame de Cideville entering at this moment, her husband informed her of the important charge he had committed to her daughter; and as a servant came to say that Marguerite, one of the women who took care of Marianne, wanted some old linen for her, Madame de Cideville said, "It is to Ernestine you must apply."

Ernestine looked at her mother, with an air of utter astonishment. "But, mamma," she said, "I have no old linen."

"And you cannot think of any means of procuring some?"

[Pg 105] "Madame Bastien" (this was the housekeeper's name) "has plenty; the old sheets and napkins belonging to the house serve her for making bandages; but she is always angry when any one applies for them. Last year, when my nurse hurt her foot, she hardly even dared to ask her for any."

"Nevertheless, you must endeavour to obtain some between this and to-morrow, for to-morrow they will be needed for Marianne."

"Mamma, if you were to tell Madame Bastien to give me some?"

"She would give them to you, most assuredly; but do you think she would do so with less ill-humour? She is well aware that I wish her to give to all who require it, but as she has sometimes to supply a great many persons, she is afraid that each will take too much; perhaps too she likes to show her authority a little; therefore, you may be quite sure that whatever she does, she will do it with a much better grace for the sake of obliging you, than she would if I were to order it."

As Ernestine was going out, she met Marguerite, and told her that she would endeavour to have some linen to send her, for the following day. Marguerite replied that it was absolutely necessary, for without it she could not change Marianne's poultices. Ernestine was very much embarrassed; she was afraid of Madame Bastien, who had been in the family thirty years, and possessed great authority. The servants feared her, because she was exact and economical, and Ernestine, without knowing why, did the same. At that moment, she would have been very glad if her papa and
[Pg 106] mamma had themselves undertaken to provide for Marianne's wants. She saw in this charge a host of embarrassments, from which she knew not how to extricate herself, but she did not dare to say so. While standing, thoughtfully, on the spot where Marguerite had left her, she saw Madame Bastien approaching. She blushed, for she thought of what she had to ask her, and stooped down as if to look at her *Hortensia*, which was placed upon the step, at the side of the yard. Madame Bastien stopped to look at it, and remarked that it was very beautiful. Ernestine, who was anxious to

prolong the conversation, showed her two slips from it which she had planted the preceding year; they each bore two buds which were beginning to swell. Madame Bastien admired these also.

"Will you accept of them?" asked Ernestine, with eagerness. Madame Bastien refused, saying she did not like to deprive her of them.

"Oh yes! yes!" said Ernestine, and taking the two pots under her arm she lightly descended the steps and ran to place them on the window of the lower room, where Madame Bastien usually worked. Madame Bastien followed her, thanking her very much for this present, with which she seemed to be greatly pleased, and at the same time admiring the hortensias. Ernestine went and got some water for them, wiped the leaves, and changed the sticks intended for their support, but which were beginning to be too short for them. Madame Bastien hardly knew how to thank her sufficiently for so much attention.

"Madame Bastien," said Ernestine, as she tied the last prop, "could you not give me some old linen for poor Marianne? Mamma has given me permission to ask you for some."

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"Very willingly," said Madame Bastien, in the best-humoured manner in the world; "the poor woman shall have as much as she requires; she is laid up for a long time;" and she took Ernestine to the linen closet, where she made up a large parcel, which Ernestine, her heart bounding with joy, carried off, and hastened to show it triumphantly to her mother, who allowed her to take it herself to Marianne. Whilst waiting on the step for her nurse, she saw Suzette, Marianne's little girl, enter the yard, walking slowly by the side of the wall, looking first on one side, and then on the other, as if fearful, yet anxious to be seen. Ernestine descended a few steps and called to her.

"How is your mother?" she asked. "Pretty well," replied Suzette, with a heavy sigh.

"What are you looking for?"

"Nothing;" and this *nothing* was followed by a sigh still heavier than the former. She began to look at Ernestine's flowers, and said, "What beautiful flowers!" then, as if continuing the conversation, she added:

"I have had no dinner to-day."

"You have had no dinner?"

"No, and I don't think I shall get any."

"Why not?"

"Because mother cannot give me any."

"Stay, then," said Ernestine, and running to her mother, she exclaimed, "Mamma, here is Suzette, and she has had no dinner."

"Very well, my child, something must be done for her."

"Yes, mamma; do you think," and she hesitated—"do you think it would be a
[Pg 108] positive expense if Suzette were to be fed here? It seems to me that there is sufficient in the pantry...."

"I think, my dear, there is; there would only be the bread...."

"Oh, yes; but, mamma, they bake at home for the servants; would it be necessary to bake more on account of Suzette?"

"I think not, provided at least that you will not waste it as you are in the habit of doing, by cutting large slices to give to Turc, who ought to have only the fragments."

Ernestine promised, and Madame de Cideville consented to Suzette's being fed at the château, during her mother's illness. While now waiting for her dinner, Ernestine got her a piece of bread, to which she added, as it was the first time, a little gingerbread cake which she brought from her own room, as it belonged to her. In passing by Turc, who as soon as he saw her, came out of his kennel, and got as near to her as the length of his chain would permit, all the time wagging his tail and lowering his ears: "My poor Turc," said she, "you will have nothing now but the pieces." Nevertheless she begged Suzette to give him a bit of her bread, as a mark of friendship, and promised herself to go and look for some in the piece-basket, in order not to forfeit Turc's good graces.

She would carry the bundle of linen herself, although it was rather heavy. Fortunately, Marianne lived quite close to the château. On reaching her house, all flushed with pleasure as well as embarrassment, she said, "Here, Marianne, here is some old linen I have got for you."

"I assure you," said the nurse, "she was very anxious to bring it to you."

[Pg 109] "It is very kind, Mademoiselle Ernestine," said one of the women who was there, "to come and comfort poor people."

This speech gratified Ernestine, but embarrassed her still more. Children, and especially girls, are timid with the poor, because they have seen little of them, are unaccustomed to their manners and language, and do not know how to talk to them. This timidity, which they do not sufficiently endeavour to overcome, often causes them to be accused of haughtiness. Fortunately for Ernestine, Suzette, who had followed her, came forward eating, with good appetite, a piece of bread. She was asked where she got it, and replied that Mademoiselle Ernestine had given it to her.

"I have asked mamma," said Ernestine, addressing Marianne, "to let her be fed at the château, all the time you are ill."

"This is just what was wanted to cure her," said the woman who had before spoken, "for she has done nothing for a long time but cry, and say, '*Who will take care of my poor child?*' I told her that if she tormented herself in that manner her blood would be curdled."

"Suzette shall want for nothing, my poor Marianne," said Ernestine, with great earnestness, "nor you either, I hope."

Joy and gratitude were painted on the suffering countenance of Marianne; she clasped her hands under the bedclothes, for she had been forbidden to move. An old woman who was seated near her bed, let fall her crutch, and taking the hand of Ernestine within her own, said to her, "You are a good young lady, and God will bless you." Ernestine was so moved, that tears almost came to her eyes. She now felt more
[Pg 110] at her ease and her nurse having questioned the women who were there as to what had been done, and what ordered by the surgeon, she joined in the conversation, and in a short time her embarrassment quite vanished. When she left, Marianne raised her feeble voice to bless her; and the old woman again said, "You are a good young lady." The other woman followed her to the door and looked after her. She felt that they would talk about her in that poor cottage, and say that she was good, and this thought made her experience a pleasure which had hitherto been unknown to her. Suzette, who followed her like her shadow, she considered as under her especial protection, and she seemed to herself to be older and more reasonable, now that she was able to protect some one. At this moment, she would not have exchanged the pleasure of having Marianne under her charge for all the enjoyments in the world. She hastened to communicate to her parents all the joy she experienced, and they shared it with her. She told her mother that there was still one thing which she had to beg of her, but she hoped that it would be the last. It was some broth for Marianne; "I could easily," she said, "boil her some meat, but then I should require wood, and besides meat would not be good for her. If the broth were made for two days, it would turn at the first storm; and, besides, it would give more trouble to her neighbours. Perhaps some could be sent to her from here without increasing the expense."

"I see," said her mother, smiling, "that you begin to understand what you are about." This was the result of her conversation with the women who took care of
[Pg 111] Marianne. Madame de Cideville permitted her to ask M. François the cook for some broth, and M. François promised to give her some with great pleasure, provided Mademoiselle Ernestine did not incessantly say to him, "M. François, do not so often give us melted butter with asparagus in it;" "M. François, the spinach had no taste to-day;" or else, "I do not like pease soup!"

Ernestine promised to be satisfied with everything, and she was, at all events, perfectly satisfied with her day's work.

In the afternoon, she gathered in the fields several of the herbs which she had been told might be required for Marianne. She also learned to distinguish a few which grew in the uncultivated parts of the park, and even in the crevices of the walls. They were shown to the surgeon, who thought many of them very good; some others were necessary, and these he promised to supply himself; Ernestine asked him the price. "Nothing to you, my dear young lady," he replied, "I do not wish to ruin so pretty a sister of charity." Ernestine blushed and thanked him, and from that moment treated him with a degree of respect and politeness, which charmed the good doctor so much, that he redoubled his attentions to Marianne. He gave Ernestine an account of her condition, and told her what was necessary to be done, and Ernestine thanked him in a manner which completely won his heart. He joked with her, she laughed with him; they became the best friends imaginable. One day a rather expensive drug was wanted: Ernestine insisted on paying for it; he would not allow it; "I am also an apothecary," he said; "I prepare that myself."

[Pg 112] "Yes, but you would sell it."

"That is not certain. There are drugs which must be prepared in advance, in order that they may always be ready in case of need, and which, nevertheless, if kept too long, run the risk of being spoiled. This risk we are obliged to charge against those

who have money, by making them pay a higher price, which is but just; but it is also just that the poor should profit by it in receiving for nothing what might otherwise be spoiled."

Ernestine was satisfied with the surgeon's arguments, but she told her mother that as she wished to make him a present which would not be very expensive to her, she had determined to embroider a waistcoat for him, which would suit his portly person wonderfully well. Her mother approved of her idea, and even assisted her, and when the waistcoat was completed, the surgeon was invited to dinner. Ernestine placed it under his napkin, and it gave him so much pleasure, that there was certainly nothing in the world which he would not have done to oblige his little sister of charity, as he always called her.

From the moment that Marianne began to improve, she had required soup, and the surgeon wished it to be made of lighter bread than that which was baked for the servants, that it might not injure a stomach weakened as much by want as by illness. Ernestine, at first, bought some, but she afterwards remarked that large pieces were frequently left from that served at their own table, which no one made use of, and which were only thrown into the refuse-basket. She had, at first, some scruples as to the propriety of making use of these.

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"Mamma," said she to Madame de Cideville, "is it not wrong to collect pieces for Marianne as we do for Turc?"

"It is not at all the same thing, my child; for they ought only to be given to Turc, on the supposition that they cannot be put to any other use. If you gave them to Marianne only because they were refused by every one else, that would undoubtedly be wrong, for you know that God punished the wicked rich man, because he did nothing for Lazarus, except permitting him to eat the crumbs that fell from his table. Instead of performing an act of charity, you would show a cruel and odious contempt of the poor; but so far from its being a contempt of Marianne, that you collect this bread, you do it, on the contrary, for the sake of having additional means of benefiting her."

Ernestine, though thus encouraged by her mother, nevertheless felt rather embarrassed when she carried these pieces to Marianne, after having cut them as neatly as possible. She wished to take them herself, although Suzette was her usual messenger in these cases, and she blushed, as she showed them to the neighbour who was to prepare the soup. The latter showed them to Marianne, who seemed much pleased at the prospect of having such pieces every day, and Ernestine saw plainly that where there is real kindness, there is never any danger of hurting the feelings of those whom we oblige; it is only intentional slight, or inattention, which can really wound. From this time Ernestine carefully made the round of the table

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each day, after breakfast, and after dinner, and sometimes, in order that she might carry to Marianne a little loaf quite whole, she said at breakfast that she preferred the household bread with her milk and butter.

Under all this care, the health of Marianne improved daily, but Ernestine looked with anxiety to the moment when her patient would again have to provide for herself and daughter, more especially as during her illness she had been obliged to neglect her little garden, which supplied her with vegetables. One day Ernestine saw Geneviève, the daughter of Jacques, the gardener, returning from catechism, crying. She was to make her first communion this year, and went to catechism to be instructed; but as she had no mother, and as her father had not time to hear her repeat her lesson, Geneviève, who was naturally indolent, always learned it badly, and was reprimanded. Ernestine, who was much more advanced, although younger than Geneviève, offered to go over her lessons with her, and by dint of pains at last succeeded in fixing them in her mind. Her only object, at first, had been to be useful to Geneviève, but the same day, the gardener having asked her how Marianne was getting on, she replied, "Pretty well, but I am afraid her garden is doing very badly, for no one takes care of it."

"We must see to that," said Jacques, and Ernestine smiled graciously as he went away. The next day, while in the garden hearing Geneviève her lesson, she saw Jacques returning from Marianne's, in whose garden he had been planting a few cabbages. He ordered Geneviève to go in the afternoon, and pull up the weeds, and promised Ernestine, who thanked him warmly, to take care of it as long as it might

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be necessary. She put Geneviève in a condition to receive her first communion, and when on leaving the church, Geneviève came to thank her, Ernestine experienced great delight, and a very pardonable pride, in seeing herself already useful to several people.

She was rewarded for her benevolence to Marianne in more ways than one; for as she had often favours to ask for, she became obliging to every one, and displayed a degree of attention and kindness which she had never previously manifested, so that every one became eager to gratify her. Her nurse, especially, had never before been so pleased with her, and hardly knew how to express her satisfaction. She took her to Marianne as often as she wished, and offered to teach Suzette to work; they also

taught her to take care of her mother, as soon as she became convalescent, in order that her neighbours might return to their own affairs. They showed her, besides, how to weed and water the garden. Ernestine made her do this under her own superintendence, while one of the servants of the château, whom she politely begged to assist them, drew the buckets of water from the well. Ernestine often watered it herself; it was her chief recreation, for she no longer took pleasure in childish sports.

The serious and useful occupations in which she was engaged, inspired her with rational tastes, and she could no longer amuse herself with childish frivolities. At the same time, she had never felt so happy or less disposed to *ennui*; for when she had nothing else to do, she would take her knitting, and make a petticoat for Marianne,
[Pg 116] or she would arrange an old dress for Suzette, or work for herself; for her mother had promised her that the money she saved by making her own dresses, should be spent in wine for Marianne.

At length the time arrived when Marianne was allowed to get up. "I cannot yet walk," said she to Ernestine, "but I am able to work. If I had some hemp, I could spin." Ernestine bought her some, and Marianne, who was very industrious, and terribly wearied from having so long remained idle, spun from morning till night. She sent the thread to a weaver, who, in exchange, gave her a certain quantity of coarse linen cloth, which Madame de Cideville purchased of her for the use of the kitchen. She procured some fresh hemp, and began to spin again. A short time after Marianne's accident, Ernestine had bought for her a little pig, which she had obtained very cheap. A sty had been made for it in the yard of the château, out of some old planks, and it was fed from the refuse of the kitchen. Ernestine had taught Suzette to collect for it everything that could serve as food, and as it was now grown large, she gave it to Marianne. The garden had afforded a good crop of potatoes, and Ernestine was able to return to Paris, at the beginning of the winter, without any anxiety about the subsistence of her protegée, whose health was now quite re-established.

"Well, are you satisfied with the use you have made of your louis?" said M. de Cideville, when they were in the carriage. Ernestine threw her arms round her father's neck. This louis had made her so happy! It is true she had spent something additional, and had besides been well assisted.

[Pg 117] "You have laid us under contribution for Marianne," said M. de Cideville, smiling. "When you are older, you will know that we ought not to concentrate the whole of our benevolence on a single object, but endeavour to make all the unfortunate who are within our reach, partakers of our bounty."

"But, papa, I was only able to take care of Marianne."

"Undoubtedly, and I am not blaming you; but as you will hereafter have greater means, you will, I hope, know how to combine your resources in such a manner that many may be benefited by them. Meanwhile, you have made so good a use of your louis, that I promise to give you one every three months, to be disposed of in a similar manner."

Ernestine clapped her hands with an exclamation of surprise and joy, and again threw herself into her father's arms.

"But remember," he said, "that this sum ought to form the smallest portion of the means you employ in doing good, and that you ought only to have recourse to it when you cannot manage otherwise."

Ernestine assured him that this was her intention, and that she would be very careful to spare her money.

"We ought to spare expense," replied her father, "whenever we can supply its place by care, industry, and order. The true use of money is to give us those things which we could not otherwise obtain; for instance, we cannot make our own shoes or clothes; therefore, we pay for having them made; and according to the usages of
[Pg 118] society, we cannot enjoy a certain position, and still wait upon ourselves; we therefore pay, in order to have servants. But a lady who, instead of taking care of her own household, and superintending her servants, pays another to do it in her place, makes but a bad use of her money; for it is absurd to employ it in purchasing from others what we can do ourselves. The same may be said of those who, instead of employing their activity and care in doing good, only make use of their money. They spend a great deal, and accomplish very little; for he who does everything with money, has never sufficient."

"It seems to me," said Ernestine, "that we also lose the pleasure of doing good; for if I had had ten louis to give to Marianne, they would not have afforded me so much happiness as the care which you have allowed me to take of her all the summer."

M. de Cideville informed his daughter, that there were many persons who believed they could render themselves happy by getting rid of everything which occasioned them the slightest trouble, but who, on the contrary, gave themselves up

to the most frightful *ennui*. He told her that this happened to all those who shrank from struggling with the first difficulties and annoyances of a project: and, in fact, Ernestine remembered that, at the first moment, she would gladly have transferred to her parents, had she dared to do so, the care of providing for Marianne's wants, and thus have lost all the happiness she had since enjoyed.

Ernestine has grown up. It is usually on her father's estate that she employs, every year, the four louis, and especially the astonishing talent she has acquired of doing a great deal of good with very little money. She is adored by every one in the village, and as she has rendered services to many among them, she readily obtains from them assistance for those who stand in need of it. Thus her resources multiply. She has sown, in a corner of her father's park, those medicinal plants which are most generally required, and has also learned to dry them. She hopes that Suzette, who is becoming a pretty good workwoman, will soon, under her direction, be able to instruct the other girls of the village. She and her nurse have also taught her to read. As for herself, she endeavours to learn everything which can aid her in doing good, without spending too much money, and she laughs very heartily when she calls to mind the regret she once felt at not being able to spend a louis on a moving picture.

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FRANÇOU.

As Madame d'Inville was one day walking along the Boulevard, accompanied by her grandson Eugène, and her granddaughter Mélanie, they saw a concourse of people collected, in the form of a circle, around one of those men who perform difficult and perilous feats. He had with him a little girl, dressed partly as a boy and partly as a girl. Her hair was arranged in female fashion, as was the upper part of her dress, but the lower part terminated in trousers. This little girl was walking upon her hands, with her head downwards, and her feet in the air, and performing a variety of tricks, which amused the children very much, so that Madame d'Inville was kind enough to stop and look at them for some time. At length, after giving them some money, she went away. It was not that Madame d'Inville felt much pleasure in giving to persons who follow useless occupations; but as her grandchildren had been much amused, she thought it but right to pay for the pleasure they had received.

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As they were walking along, Mélanie expressed her admiration of the dress of the little girl, all covered with spangles and chains of different colours. Eugène remarked that it was all dirty and torn, and that most of the things she saw glittering were nothing more than strips of gilt paper. Nevertheless, Mélanie appeared to be so dazzled with this costume, that her grandmamma jestingly proposed that she should go and take the little girl's place. Mélanie exclaimed against this, and Eugène said, "Probably Mélanie would not mind being beaten, as perhaps that poor little thing is every morning, before putting on her beautiful dress."

"And why beaten?" asked Mélanie.

"To make her work. You saw the other day that man who was making the dogs dance, and you remember how sorry you were when he beat one of them, because he would not make a bow in the minuet. Well, it must be pretty nearly the same thing in the present case."

"It is quite bad enough to beat a dog," said Mélanie. "I hope people don't beat their children in the same way."

"Perhaps the little girl," continued Madame d'Inville, "does not belong to this mountebank. Sometimes poor people, not being able to maintain their children, confide them to the first person who will take charge of them, and who hopes to gain something by making them work. These poor children, removed from their parents, learn nothing good, and are often unhappy. I knew one...."

"You knew one, dear grandmamma!" cried both the children at once.

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"It was a little girl," said Madame d'Inville, "who was taken away from her native province by a fortune-teller; she was in danger of perishing of hunger, and of being crippled, and what is much worse, she ran the risk of becoming a thief."

"Oh! dear! how much I should like to know her history!" said Mélanie. As they had reached the Champs-Elysées, Madame d'Inville sat down, the two children seated themselves on the stool which she put under her feet, and, holding each other round the neck, to avoid falling, they listened to the history of Françou.

Françou, whose real name was Françoise, had lost her parents before she was five years old. They were so poor, that they had left nothing whatever for the maintenance of their child, and Françoise was placed with her uncle, her father's brother, who being himself very poor and having lost his wife, found it quite difficult enough to provide for the two little boys which she had left him, without the additional charge of a little girl. While he was grieving over this matter, there came into the village in which he lived a man named Jacques, whom he knew from having worked with him at the harvest, during the previous year.

Jacques was a native of *Auvergne*, and a long way from his own province, for what was formerly called Auvergne, is, as you remember, Eugène, that part of the country where the departments of the Puy-de-Dôme, du Cantal, &c., are now situated, and he was then in Maine, which is at present the department of the Sarthe. The natives of Auvergne are much in the habit of travelling beyond the limits of their own province. They leave it, while very young, to make what they call their *Tour of France*. As long as they are little, they sweep chimneys, like the Savoyards, and more than half of those children we meet with in the streets and call Savoyards, are really natives of Auvergne: they also go of errands in the town, and work in the country when they can get any to do. Many are travelling blacksmiths, and you may often meet them, carrying on their shoulders old shovels, old tongs, or old pots, which they buy, mend, and sell again. When they have gained a little money, they return to their own country, and marry. They are generally very honest and industrious people, but Jacques did not resemble them.

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He thought himself possessed of more wit than others, because, instead of working, he invented a thousand deceptions to get a living. Sometimes he told fortunes, that is to say, he foretold what would happen to people, on the next day, or the following days, as if he really knew, and he found many foolish enough to believe him and to pay for his predictions. At other times, he would make up little bundles of herbs, which he gathered in the fields, and sell them to the country people, as certain remedies for the tooth-ache, or the bite of a mad dog. He would then go and spend in drink, the money obtained by this knavery. At other times, he would beg; but he never worked, while it was possible for him to do anything else.

The uncle of Françoise told him of his embarrassments. Françoise was very pretty, and very quick and intelligent for her age. "Give her to me," said Jacques, "I will teach her to tell fortunes." The truth was, that at that time Jacques was forced to
[Pg 124] beg, as he had squandered all his money, and he thought also that it would be much more interesting to have with him a little girl whom he could pass off as his daughter, and to whom more would be given than to him. It was not, in truth, very convenient for a man without money, and who was constantly wandering from place to place, to burden himself with a little girl only five years old; but persons like Jacques never think of the future; and besides, if ever she happened to stand in the way of his interests, he was not one who would feel much scruple in leaving her on the first road he came to, whenever it happened to suit his convenience.

Her uncle made no inquiries about all this; he was so rejoiced to get rid of Françoise that he did not even trouble himself to consider that fortune-telling is a very disreputable trade, since it is a system of deceptions. However, as he was rather ashamed of thus abandoning his brother's child, he told in the village that Jacques was going to take her to her mother's native place, which was a long way off, and leave her with a relation who would take care of her; so that no one thought any more of Françoise, and she remained entirely in the power of Jacques, who could do what he pleased with her.

The first few days, she found it pleasant enough to run about the country. Jacques did not travel very rapidly, for as soon as he obtained any money, on account of the pretty face of Françoise, he stopped at a public-house, in order to spend it in drink. Françoise liked this well enough, for on these occasions she always got something to
[Pg 125] eat; nevertheless, if Jacques remained too long, she become weary, cried, and ended by falling asleep.

At last the fatigue of this sort of life made her ill. Then Jacques taught her to remain on his back with her arms round his neck, and seated in a kind of sack, the strings of which he held in front of him. Thus equipped, he begged for his sick child, and by this means obtained much more than before.

One evening when he was intoxicated, he lost his hold of the sack, and poor Françoise fell down, hurt her head very much, and almost dislocated her arm. As she screamed a good deal, Jacques was annoyed, and threatened to throw her into a ditch. She was dreadfully afraid of him, for he had already beaten her several times, especially when he was intoxicated; she therefore ceased, and after having wept in silence for a long time, she fell asleep by his side in a ditch where he passed the night.

The following day she was in a violent state of fever. It is difficult to say what Jacques would have done with her, had not a carrier, who fortunately happened to be passing by, given him for charity, a place in his cart, for himself and his *sick child*, and in this manner they arrived at Cavignat, which was Jacques's native village. Poor little Françoise was almost dying. She was stretched on the straw of the cart, her head leaning down, and her little face, all pale, and bruised from the fall, was covered with tears, which flowed abundantly from her closed eyes.

The vehicle was quickly surrounded by the women of the village, who questioned
[Pg 126] one another as to who this child could be, for they had always understood that Jacques was unmarried, and they were therefore greatly astonished at seeing a little girl with him.

Whilst he was fabricating a story on this subject, Madame Pallois, the Curé's sister, happened to pass. She was a very virtuous and benevolent woman, and although not affluent, did a great deal of good in the village, where she visited and took care of the poor, worked for them, and frequently even served them for a doctor. She saw immediately that Françoise especially required food and rest. She had her carried at once into Jacques's house, as she believed her to be his daughter. She herself brought her some soup and a little wine, as well as some sheets to sleep in: she examined and dressed her arm, which was very much swollen, and desired that great care should be taken of her; and as Madame Pallois was highly respected in the village, her orders were always obeyed.

Jacques's house was inhabited by his mother. This house, which was nothing more than a poor hut, half-destroyed, was her only property, for her son had compelled her to sell some small patches of land which she possessed, in order to give him the price

of them. He now came back to see whether there was anything else he could take from her; but she could not give him anything more, unless she consented to sell her house and sleep in the street, and this she refused to do. Then this detestable son became angry, he abused her, and even appeared on the point of beating her, so much so that the inhabitants of the village, filled with indignation at his conduct,
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forced him to leave it, threatening if he again entered it during his mother's lifetime, to denounce him to the authorities of the place. Françoise was not sufficiently restored to be able to accompany him, but this did not disturb him, as his head was now filled with other projects. He therefore left her, and she, on her part, was perfectly satisfied never to see him again.

She remained with his mother, who was called in the village old *Catichou*, which in the *patois* of Limousin, and of a part of Auvergne, is equivalent to *Catherine*, just as *Françoise* was called *Françou*. She soon recovered, and old Catichou, who believed her to be her grandchild, was very fond of her. Catichou was, on the whole, a tolerably good sort of woman, though she had so worthless a son, whom she had brought up very badly, not having very correct principles herself. Madame Pallois also was kind to Françou, and always gave her something when she went to see her, such as fruit, nuts, a little bacon, butter, or cheese. Françou, who was generous always gave at least half of everything to Catichou, to whom she was much attached, especially when she compared her with Jacques. Catichou was fond of good living, and at the same time very poor; on these occasions, therefore, she received Françou with such kindness, that the child was so delighted at being able to carry her something, that she went every day to seek for food in the village, where she was considered very pretty, and much liked. If nothing was given to her, she asked for anything that took her fancy; and it sometimes happened that when not observed, she took without asking whatever came within her reach, scarcely knowing that she
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did wrong; and when she brought home a few carrots or eggs that she had found the means of secreting, or some hemp or beans which she had taken from the fields, or from the places where they had been laid to dry, old Catichou troubled herself but little how they were obtained, quite satisfied with profiting by them. Madame Pallois, indeed, endeavoured to instil correct principles into the mind of Françou, and often exhorted her to conduct herself properly; but as she was not aware of her propensity to theft, she had not thought of alluding to that subject.

Old Catichou died, and Jacques returned to the village, to the great annoyance of every one, for he was a worthless fellow. Madame Pallois especially was grieved to think that he would set a bad example to Françou, and teach her many evil habits; but there was no means of preventing him from coming to his own house, or from having with him one who was believed to be his daughter, for he had forbidden her to say he was not her father, as he did not wish it to be known that he had been into Maine, where he had been guilty of many fraudulent practices, which he feared might be discovered. Françou said nothing about the matter at first, or if she did, what she said had not been understood, as she could not speak the *patois* of the country, and after a time she ceased to think of it. She cried very much when Catichou died; but she was indifferent about seeing Jacques again, for she no longer felt afraid of him. Three years had passed since his departure, and she had forgotten his ill treatment. She was now eight years of age, clever, active, and determined: she
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was, besides, kind-hearted in the highest degree, always ready to oblige, going of errands for one, and assisting another in driving his donkey, or weeding his garden. In fine, every one loved her, and, indeed she would have well merited this love, had it not been for that one bad propensity, of which all were as yet ignorant.

Perhaps she might have overcome this fault, for loving Jacques much less than Catichou, she had no wish to carry anything to him, and she never thought of stealing for herself. Besides, she saw little of him, for he had connected himself with a band of smugglers—people who fraudulently import merchandise without paying the duty. He frequently passed whole days and nights away from home; and had it not been for the inhabitants of the village, Françou would often have run the risk of perishing of hunger.

One day when she complained of his not giving her anything to eat, he told her, in a brutal tone, that he had nothing to give her, and that she must go and earn her living by asking for alms on the high road, where just then many persons were expected to pass on their way to a neighbouring fair. Françou at first refused; Jacques told her that he would beat her, and not allow her to enter the house, if she did not bring something back with her in the evening. She went, therefore.

The first person who passed by, refused to give her anything; the second called her a lazy thing, and a little boy made game of her. Françou had often heard it said that she was pretty, and such compliments had rendered her proud, neither was she accustomed to insults; she therefore returned home, her heart burning with shame,
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and her eyes filled with tears, and declared that she would never beg again. Jacques beat her, and the following day led her by force upon the high road; but the moment he was out of sight she went away. In the evening, he asked her how much she had received.

"Nothing," she replied, "I did not remain upon the road." He beat her again: she began to scream, and in the midst of her tears protested a thousand times, that no one should force her to be called a little lazy thing. Jacques turned her out of the house, and she passed the whole night out of doors. In the morning he found her half-dead with cold: "Do you mean to go upon the road to-day?" he asked.

"Yes," she replied, "but it will be to go away altogether."

In a transport of fury Jacques raised his hand.

"I am going," she said, running away.

"I will lock you up," exclaimed Jacques.

"So much the better; then I shall not have to go upon the road."

Jacques saw plainly that he should gain nothing by these proceedings; besides, he had business to attend to; his comrades were waiting for him at the public-house.

Françou, seeing him take his bag, as he was accustomed to do when he went on long excursions, concluded that he would not return that evening, and felt somewhat more tranquil. That day, and the following one, she lived on the food given her by the good people of the village, who heaped maledictions upon Jacques for having thus left her to die of hunger: but, on the evening of the second day, she saw him
[Pg 131] returning in the distance, and was greatly frightened, for she remembered the terrible beating she had received on the night before the last.

It was then too late for her to go away, and besides she had not the courage to do so; neither could she apply to Madame Pallois, as that lady had accompanied her brother to a neighbouring village. At length she thought of the plan which had so often procured her a good reception from Catichou. She entered the kitchen of Madame Pallois, saw there a fowl which had just been killed for the next day's dinner, and took it away unperceived. The servant, who returned a short time after, thought that the cat must have stolen it. Françou made her escape trembling; besides she felt grieved to take anything from Madame Pallois, who was so good to her, and whom she had always heard called throughout the whole of the village the mother of the poor. But children always imagine that those who are a little better off than themselves, cannot want for anything, and she did not think she was doing her much harm; besides, she was so terribly afraid of being beaten. As it happened, she was not beaten on this occasion; on the contrary, Jacques received her tolerably well, and Françou perceiving that this was the means of securing her peace, became confirmed in this shocking habit. But as it was not so easy to satisfy Jacques as Catichou, she began to take things of more importance.

At length suspicions were excited in the village, although Françou was not exactly accused as yet; but she would soon have been discovered, expelled with Jacques, and thus ruined for life, had it not been for an occurrence which took place at this time.

[Pg 132] Madame Pallois, wishing to keep her as much as possible out of Jacques's company, made her come to her to learn to read; and Françou, delighted at the prospect of knowing something of which others were ignorant, felt very grateful: therefore it rarely happened that she took anything from Madame Pallois. Besides, she was very fond of Babet, the servant, who told her that she had been scolded for having let the cat eat the fowl; so that she would have been sorry to have got her again into disgrace.

One day, when she was nine years old, she entered the house without being observed. It was not her intention to steal in, but still she had not been seen. In this manner she went as far as Madame Pallois's room. No one was there. She saw half a crown lying on the mantelpiece; she looked at it: Jacques on the previous evening had brought home a shilling, which had dropped from the pocket of a person who was walking before him, and he had greatly exulted in his good fortune. The present coin was much larger than the one Jacques had picked up. How pleased he would be to have it! As he no longer beat her, she began to like him rather more than formerly.

She no longer thought either of Babet or of Madame Pallois, but solely of the pleasure which Jacques would feel. She turned the piece over and over: she blushed: she had never as yet taken money, and she thought that it was much worse to take it than anything else. Besides, the evening before, she had seen a woman led to prison for having committed a theft, and her dreadfully dejected appearance had very much
[Pg 133] excited her compassion. She thought of the circumstance at this moment, and was on the point of replacing the money; but while still holding it, she fancied she heard a noise, and grasping it tightly in her hand, she ran out. No sooner was she outside, than, regretting more than ever what she had done, she was on the point of returning to try to replace the money on the mantelpiece without being seen; but at this moment she beheld Madame Pallois enter the house, and she hid herself, in great trepidation. There was no longer any chance of replacing it.

When Madame Pallois had disappeared, Françou came out of her hiding-place,

and walked slowly away. She no longer thought of giving the money to Jacques, her only concern was to find the means of returning to the house when Madame Pallois was out, and replacing the money unperceived. While still retaining it tightly in her hand, she met Jacques, who gave her a faggot to carry home. In taking hold of it she dropped the money; Jacques picked it up. "Ah! ah!" said he, "where did you get this?" and without waiting for a reply he carried it off. Françou did not dare to run after him, she did not dare to cry out, for she would be asked how the money came into her possession. She only sat down on her faggot and wept bitterly. At that moment she would have given the world not to have committed so disgraceful an action. Just then the Curé passed by; she quickly wiped away her tears, and without perceiving that she had been crying he told her to go and fetch his cane, which he had left at home.

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The idea of seeing Madame Pallois, whom she knew to be at the time in the house, made her tremble from head to foot. Nevertheless, she must obey, for the Curé was waiting. At first she walked very slowly; he called to her to make more haste: she took her resolution and rushed into the house. There she found Madame Pallois greatly excited, and the servant in tears. "You may say what you please, Babet," said Madame Pallois, in a tone of severity, "you are the only person who can have entered this room during my absence, and I am quite certain that this half-crown was on the mantelpiece when I went out."

The servant again protested her innocence. "Be silent," continued Madame Pallois; "for some time past I have perceived several things missing; I give you till to-morrow to leave the house; but until then I shall so carefully watch your proceedings, that you need not hope to profit by the time you still remain."

The unfortunate girl sobbed violently; and struck her head with both her hands. Françou wept also, but she had not the courage to declare what she had done. At length she threw herself on her knees, and entreated pardon for Babet. Madame Pallois herself, softened by the despair of the poor girl, turned towards her.

"Babet," she said, in an agitated voice, "perhaps want has led you to commit this crime; if so, I will forgive you, provided you confess all."

Babet again loudly protested her innocence.

"Leave the house," said her mistress angrily. Babet fell on her knees in the middle of the room. "See, Françou," continued Madame Pallois, "to what a condition crime reduces us." Françou hid her face in her apron; she was on the point of avowing her fault; but she looked at Madame Pallois, and her tongue seemed frozen in her mouth.

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"See what mischief you have done," continued Madame Pallois, addressing Babet with an air of deep concern, while her eyes filled with tears. "This was the last half-crown which I had at my disposal at the present moment, and I had promised it to poor Bernard, in order that he might call a doctor to his dying wife."

"It is not I," cried Babet once more; but Madame Pallois would not listen to her. Babet wrung her hands, and Françou rushed out of the house in search of Jacques. He was not at home; she ran to the tavern, and reached it half-suffocated with grief and the rapidity of her course.

"Oh," cried she, clasping her hands, "give me back the half-crown that you took away from me!" Jacques, already intoxicated, got up in a fury, and gave her a kick that threw her on the ground.

"Give it me back! give it me back!" she exclaimed, with outstretched arms, and without rising from the ground.

Jacques was again on the point of striking her, but she was taken away from him, put out of the house, and the door closed against her. She threw herself on her knees before the door, and entreated them to open it: but no one attended to her. At last, she sat down on a bench to wait until Jacques came out; but her eyes were heavy with weeping, and she fell asleep. Hearing no one in the tavern, she returned home. Jacques had come back, but he was plunged into the heavy sleep of intoxication, and it was impossible to rouse him. Françou then went to the Curé's house; everything was quiet there. "Oh," she said, "perhaps they have pardoned Babet." She returned,

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lay down on her bed, and passed the night in alternate hopes and fears. The day dawned, and Jacques awoke. Françou again asked for the money, sometimes angrily, sometimes in tones of supplication.

"The money!" said Jacques, with a stupified look, for he was not yet sober; "Ah!" he continued with an oath, "it is all gone: not a sous left!"

Françou arose; she had formed a project during the night. She gathered together the few rags which still remained to her from what old Catichou had left, made a bundle of them, and taking also a little silver cross given to her by Madame Pallois, she bent her steps towards the Curé's house. Babet was in the yard leaning against the wall; she approached her. "Babet," said she, "has Madame Pallois forgiven you?"

"No," replied Babet gloomily.

"Well," continued Françou timidly, at the same time offering her bundle, and taking from her neck the little silver cross; "give her these, perhaps they will be worth as much."

"Oh! they are not worth half as much," said Babet sighing; "and besides, what good would it do me? My character is lost, and Bernard will think that I have caused the death of his wife."

Françou sat down in dismay.

"Go and see Madame Pallois," said Babet: "go," she continued impatiently, as if eager to get rid of her, and as the child arose to depart she added with much emotion —

"Good bye, Françou, will you kiss me?"

Françou seemed afraid to approach.

"Oh!" said Babet sorrowfully, "I see that you too will not kiss me." She turned her
[Pg 137] head and wept, for she believed that Françou also took her for a thief, and did not wish to kiss her.

"Oh! yes, yes," said Françou, as she threw herself into Babet's arms, who embraced her tenderly, and then said in a stifled voice:

"Go, Françou, go to Madame Pallois, she is waiting for you."

Françou walked slowly away, uncertain what to do. On reaching the door of Madame Pallois's room, her courage failed her, and instead of entering she ran out towards the yard. There she beheld Babet standing on the brink of the well, looking down as if intending to throw herself into it. She rushed forward, uttering a piercing shriek; Babet turned her head, and Françou had just time to seize hold of her.

"Oh! it is I!" she cried, falling on her knees and holding Babet by the skirts with all her strength. While Babet tried to disengage herself, Madame Pallois came up.

"Oh!" exclaimed Françou, sinking on the ground, "don't let her throw herself into the well! It was I took the money."

Babet and Madame Pallois stood motionless with astonishment. Françou still continued prostrate on the ground, sobbing violently. Babet raised her up, though she herself could scarcely stand.

Madame Pallois made her sit down; then, turning to Françou, "Are you quite sure that what you say is true, Françou?" she asked, somewhat sternly.

"Ask my father," said Françou, hiding her face against the wall.

"And what have you done with it?"

[Pg 138] "My father took it from me," she replied, sobbing. "I begged him to give it back to me, but he has spent it. I brought all this to give you instead, but Babet says it is worth nothing." At these words her sobs were redoubled.

"Babet," continued Madame Pallois, turning towards the poor girl, who, unable to support her joy, was leaning against the wall, breathing with difficulty: "can you forgive me, for accusing you of so disgraceful an act? Will you permit me to kiss you?"

Babet seized the hand of her mistress, then ran to Françou, who had again fallen on the ground, and presented her to Madame Pallois, begging her to forgive her.

"No! no!" exclaimed Françoise; "poor Bernard!"

"Françou," said Madame Pallois, "I am going to Bernard's cottage. You must come with me."

"Oh! no, no," cried Françou, "I would rather die first."

"I insist upon it, Françou; come, dry your eyes, and follow me."

Françou dared not resist. Madame Pallois took her by the hand, and was compelled to support her at every instant. At last they arrived. Bernard came to the door.

"Madame," said he in a tone of the deepest affliction, "you must permit me to fetch the doctor in the course of the morning; my wife is in despair, and thinks that he alone can save her."

"Let us go in," said Madame Pallois. At this moment she dropped the hand of Françou, who immediately made her escape, and ran off with all her might. By the
[Pg 139] time she reached the gate of the village, her mind was made up. The physician's

house was situated only a short distance from Cavignat. Françou knew it; she ran there as fast as her strength would permit, and soon reached it.

"Oh," she cried to the physician, sobbing, "come and relieve poor Bernard's wife; Madame Pallois had only one half-crown to pay for your visit, and I took it. If you do not come, she will die. Do, pray, come;" she continued, clasping her hands, and dragging him by his dressing-gown. Greatly astonished, and affected by the condition in which he saw her, the physician interrogated her, and she related what had occurred, with every sign of the deepest despair. He consoled her, and promised to go and see the wife of poor Bernard without making any charge for his visit. Transported with joy, Françou wanted him to set off in his dressing-gown and nightcap, but he represented to her that he should be able to go much quicker in his gig, and that he could dress himself while the horse was harnessed. He had great difficulty in making her listen to reason, but at last the horse was put to, and the gig drove off.

They arrived, and entered the house. Françou kept behind the physician, not daring to come forward, and as the attention of every one was fixed on the patient, who was in a state of great suffering, Françou remained for a time unnoticed. When the invalid was a little more tranquil, and the physician had given his advice, Madame Pallois asked him how it happened that he had arrived so quickly, and why Bernard had not returned with him.

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"I have not seen Bernard," said the doctor. "I was called by this little angel," he added, turning to Françou, on whom Madame Pallois had just cast a stern look. He then related what had taken place. Madame Pallois reflected for a moment; then, calling Françou, "Promise me," she said, "that this shall be the last time, and I will forgive you." Françou promised, and she kept her word. Besides, she was no longer subjected to the same temptations. The knaveries of Jacques were discovered, and he was obliged to fly from the village for fear of being arrested as a smuggler. It was also ascertained that Françou was not his daughter; he had said so while intoxicated, and Françou, on being questioned, confirmed the statement.

The physician asked to take her into his service, to milk the cow and attend to the fowls. As he was a very excellent and strictly honest man, and treated her well, she had nothing but good examples before her. His wife instructed her in her religious duties, and she regularly attended the catechism of M. le Curé, at Cavignat, and when she had reflected more on what she had done, she could not look Babet in the face without blushing; especially as Babet had told her that she had bitterly repented of her wish to throw herself into the well, which was a thing so strictly forbidden, and for which M. le Curé had great difficulty in giving her absolution.

"Poor Babet!" said Mélanie, with a heavy sigh, for she had scarcely breathed during the termination of the story.

"Poor Françou!" said Eugène, "she would certainly have died of grief if Babet had thrown herself into the well."

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"My children," said Madame d'Inville, "thank God for having given you good parents, and remember, Mélanie, when they take so much pains to give you good habits, how unreasonable it is not to pay attention to them, or to say when you are told to do anything, '*I don't want to do this*,' or '*I won't do that*.'"

At this moment, Mélanie saw a poor man passing with a little girl. "Oh! dear grandmamma," said she, "that is just like the story of Jacques. I am sure that little girl is not his daughter."

"And why not, my child?"

"Oh! see, he has such a bad look."

"Because you fancy so, because he is in rags, and appears to be ill. Look at me, Mélanie; just imagine, if I were covered with rags, and had been laid up with fever for a week, do you think I should look very well?"

"Oh! dear grandmamma!"

"He is old; I too am old; and whereas I take my granddaughter out to walk for her pleasure, he, on the contrary, takes his out to beg for her bread."

"Do you think so, grandmamma?"

"It is at least possible, my dear; and as we know nothing to the contrary, we have no right to regard as dishonest a man who may be quite the reverse, and who has so much need of our good opinion."

Mélanie carried to the poor man a sou which Madame d'Inville had given her, and, touched by her grandmamma's words, she added another from her own store.

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M. LE CHEVALIER.

"STOP them! Stop them!" was re-echoed through the Rue St. Honoré. "Madame la Marquise is running down the street! This way! Madame la Vicomtesse is dragging her dress through the mud! Oh! M. le Baron has lost his wig! and M. le Chevalier?... William, where is M. le Chevalier?"

And William ran right and left, endeavouring to bring back a number of dressed-up dogs, such as are seen parading the streets, in little carriages. They had just escaped from their kennel, while their owners were occupied with their morning toilet. This toilet was a tedious and difficult affair, for whilst they were washing one, the one which had just gone through the operation, never failed to go and put his paws into the gutter. While M. le Baron was made to stand on his hind feet, in order to have his fore paws put through the sleeves of his coat, Madame la Marquise, seizing the first opportunity to make use of her legs, set off running all round the yard, in her petticoat, which being then much too long, and getting entangled
[Pg 143] between her legs, threw her down; and whilst they ran after her, all the others would make their escape, half-dressed in their finery. On the present occasion, the gate of the yard happened accidentally to be opened, while one of these scenes was enacted, and all the dogs made their escape into the street, troubling themselves very little as to the state in which they appeared before the eyes of the public.

However, William, the owner's son, had succeeded in catching almost all of them, and, saving the loss of M. le Baron's wig, and the unfortunate accident which had happened to the hat and feathers of Madame la Vicomtesse, when she rolled in a heap of rubbish, and the rent which Madame la Marquise had made in her blue petticoat, all would have been set to rights, if M. le Chevalier could have been found. M. le Chevalier was a very important personage. He was the only one who was able to waltz with Madame la Présidente. Everybody was delighted to see them take each other by the neck, with their fore paws, and dance in time on their hind feet. Now, Madame la Présidente could not waltz all alone; thus two talents were lost at the same time. The owner was in despair; he was to go that day to Clichi, to the fair of St. Médard, and he built his chief hopes of success upon the waltz. But it was in vain that William went to every house in the neighbourhood, asking whether any one had seen M. le Chevalier. "And who is M. le Chevalier?" he was everywhere asked; and William replied, "He has a yellow waistcoat, no trousers, pointed ears, a sword at his side, and his tail is bald at the end." Notwithstanding this luminous description, no
[Pg 144] one could give him any information respecting M. le Chevalier. At length, as it was growing late, the master decided on setting off with the rest of his troop, telling William to follow him with M. le Chevalier, if he succeeded in finding him.

William had a second time searched all the streets in the vicinity, and was returning home sorrowfully, when he met one of his neighbours coming from market. He asked her, as he had done every one else, whether she could give him any information about M. le Chevalier.

"Bah!" said she, "has he not returned? This morning, when your dogs ran away, I was just going to market, and I saw him enter the alley opposite, and go into M. Bucquet's, the linendraper. Has he really not come back, then? Oh, I'll wager that it is little Roussel who has kept him."

George Roussel lived with his father and mother in the house of M. Bucquet; he was a good boy, and very fond of his parents, and he also gave great satisfaction at school, where he regularly attended, as day-scholar: in other respects, however, he was the most mischief-loving urchin imaginable. As his father, who was employed at a banker's, and his mother, who gave lessons in writing, passed much of their time away from home, George was quite his own master out of school hours, and this time he employed in playing tricks on the neighbours; nor was it sufficient for him to spend in this manner the hours of daylight, the night also was often employed in similar practices. He slept at the back of the house, in a small room, the windows of which looked upon the roofs and leads. Through this window he passed to go and
[Pg 145] hunt the cats, and when he succeeded in catching two or three, he tied them together by their tails. Then when every one was asleep, he would throw them into the house, through a staircase window opening upon the same leads, and run with all speed to his own room as soon as he perceived that the neighbours were awakened by the frightful uproar which they made in their unavailing efforts to get loose. Immediately all the doors would open, every one rushing out to know what could be the matter. Then they would run after the cats, which, of course, did not suffer themselves to be easily caught, but kept crying and mewing, as if they had been burned, and scratching every one who attempted to separate them. Another time, a neighbour's dog would return to his mistress, covered with oil, from the ears to the tail, so that no one could touch him without being greased, nor could he approach anything without leaving on it a stain. On a cold winter's day, George would contrive

to attach a piece of ice to the handle of a door-bell, and the first person who wanted to ring would snatch his hand away, struck with cold and surprise; or else he would cut the wire attached to the bell, so that people would pull for a quarter of an hour without producing any effect. He also hampered the locks, and hid the keys, if they happened to be left in the doors; and, in fact, every day brought fresh complaints; but they were of little use. George was an only child, born when his parents were already advanced in life, and after they had been married many years without having any children. M. and Madame Roussel loved him, therefore, with such a foolish
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fondness, that they overlooked all his faults. When complaints were made of him to M. Roussel, he would shrug his shoulders, and say, "Well, youth must have its day." Nevertheless, he scolded George a little, for the gratification of the neighbours, but afterwards he had the weakness to laugh at his tricks. Madame Roussel was still more unreasonable, for she became so angry when complaints were made of her son, that no one dared to speak to her on the subject. Had they not been very good tenants, and very punctual in their payments, though their rent was high, M. Bucquet would have given them notice to leave twenty times over, so disagreeable had George become to the whole house.

Besides, everything that happened was laid to his charge; if any one slipped on the stairs by treading on a cherrystone, it was always George who had scattered them through malice: not a pane of glass was broken in the hall or passages, but it was always George who had done it; in fact, his reputation was spread throughout the entire neighbourhood. William had heard him spoken of, and could not doubt that the conjecture of his acquaintance was well founded, and the more so as another neighbour asserted that he had heard George a few days before saying to little Bucquet, "Wouldn't it be nice, Joseph, to have a dog like that? We should get a famous price for it!"

In consequence of this information, William went to M. Bucquet's, and asked him in what part of the house M. Roussel lived, as he wanted to inquire for his dog, which had been taken by little Roussel.

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"He would be likely enough to do so," said M. Bucquet; "but I think he went out with his father before your dogs took the liberty of walking off. Is it not so, Joseph?"

Joseph, who was occupied in arranging a box of gloves over the counter, answered "Yes," without raising his head, and William did not perceive that he blushed very much. As it was known that M. le Chevalier had really entered the house, William begged permission to go and inquire of all the lodgers. No one had seen him; but on passing by a door that was locked, and which he supposed to be that belonging to M. Roussel, he knocked very loudly, and then listened attentively. At the second knock, he thought he heard a bark, and fancied he recognised the voice of M. le Chevalier. Transported with joy, he hastened down again, and was astonished at seeing Joseph, who had softly followed him at some distance, endeavouring to make his escape the moment he was observed. William returned to the shop, exclaiming, "He is there; M. le Chevalier is there. I have heard him bark;" and seeing Joseph re-enter the shop, he added, "Yes, and I'll wager that M. Joseph knows very well that he is in M. Roussel's apartments."

"Indeed!" said M. Bucquet, "I should like to see him interfering with the tricks of that little rascal George. You may rest assured that he has not meddled with your dog. If he had, I should very soon settle him."

William inquired whether M. Roussel would be long away, and was informed that he was gone to Clichi for the fête, to pass the day with his brother, who was steward
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of the château, and that he would not return till the evening. William wanted to have the door forced; but M. Bucquet would not consent to such a thing. William therefore determined to carry the intelligence he had received to his father, purposing to return immediately, and place himself as sentinel at M. Roussel's door, in order to prevent anything being removed without his permission. Meanwhile he begged the neighbours to watch, in case M. Roussel returned during his absence; and they promised to do so.

His departure relieved Joseph from a heavy burden, for it was he who had taken the dog. He had long shared in George's mischievous tricks without any one being aware of it. As he stood in great awe of his father, who sometimes treated him very severely, he had been for a long time extremely quiet and orderly, but at length the example and the solicitations of George, who was dying to have a companion in his sports, had led him away, without rendering him any the more courageous. Younger and weaker than George, he preferred such tricks as were of a secret and underhand character, while George delighted in more daring exploits. If a falsehood was to be told, it was Joseph always who undertook to tell it, and George, who had never spoken anything but the truth to his own parents, did not consider how wrong it was to be continually leading Joseph to deceive his. He had shown him the way by the leads, in order that he might enter the room in which he slept without passing by the apartments occupied by M. and Madame Roussel. The morning that M. le Chevalier
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had entered the alley, Joseph met him at the foot of the stairs, and thinking it a

capital opportunity, he took him up, and carried him by way of the leads into George's room, never doubting that the latter, like himself, would be enchanted at the prospect of having him to sell. He had felt very much alarmed while William was knocking; but George's room being separated from the outside door by three other rooms, all the doors of which were closed, William had heard but faintly the barking of M. le Chevalier. It had been his first intention to watch for George on his return from Clichi, and tell him what he had done, in order that he might prevent any one from entering his room until the dog had been disposed of; for he generally left George to extricate himself, as well as he could, out of the scrapes in which he not unfrequently placed him. However, after William's departure, thinking that the dog would most certainly be reclaimed, and that it would be impossible to conceal him, he determined to repass the leads, fetch him, and turn him out of the house. As soon, therefore, as he saw his father occupied, he ran up the stairs, and passing through the window, he reached M. Roussel's rooms, and thinking that perhaps he might only have taken the key without locking the door outside, he hoped to be able to open it from within and turn out the dog, without being suspected. But he found the door locked, so that it was necessary to return by the usual way. At this moment, he heard his father's voice, calling him at the foot of the stairs. M. le Chevalier had concealed himself under a bed, from which it was impossible for Joseph to make him move.
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Besides, how was he to return through the staircase window with the dog? His father might be coming up, and see him; it was quite hazardous enough to get back alone. Joseph decided, therefore, on taking this latter course, leaving M. le Chevalier in quiet possession of the post to which he had retreated. He found his father and mother waiting for him at the bottom of the stairs, and told them that he had been to listen at M. Roussel's door in order to ascertain whether the dog was there. As it was Sunday, they closed the shop, and went out to dine. Joseph accompanied them, somewhat uneasy as to what might be the result of this affair, but still hoping to return sufficiently early to tell George, and determined, at all events, to deny having the least share in the theft.

Meanwhile, George, who knew nothing of the matter, was amusing himself at Clichi to his heart's content. In the morning, he had rowed upon the Seine, in a boat belonging to the château. Afterwards, he had witnessed the target-shooting, had run at the ring, and balanced himself in the swing. After dinner, he returned to see the various exhibitions in the square. In one corner were the puppets; in another, William's dogs, notwithstanding the absence of M. le Chevalier, attracted round them a large concourse of spectators. George saw them from a distance and recognised them; he hastened immediately to the spot, called his father, mother, uncle, and all the company, to whom he was delighted to introduce his friends the dogs. He mingled with the spectators, explained everything, in fact did the honours. "I know them," he said, "they live opposite to us." He enumerated their various talents and
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expatiated upon their acquirements, calling each by his own name, as people do in speaking of persons with whom they are very anxious to appear particularly connected. "This is M. le Baron," said he, "do you see Madame la Vicomtesse? it is she who executes the lady's-chain with Madame la Présidente; and M. le Chevalier? Oh! where is M. le Chevalier?"

At this exclamation, which reawakened all William's regrets, he turned his head, recognised George, and pointed him out to his father. The latter approached George in a very rough manner. "Ah! ah!" said he, "it is you then who have stolen my dog?" "Ladies and gentlemen," he continued, "you would have been still more gratified if this thief had not stolen from me a new dog which I hoped to have had the honour of presenting to you. A most admirable dog! Ladies and gentlemen, had you beheld him, you would have said his equal was nowhere to be found."

At this epithet of *thief*, George, though he could not understand how it was applicable to himself, became red with anger. M. Roussel and the uncle looked at each other, and with great warmth commanded the owner of the dogs to explain himself. He recommenced his grievances and invectives, and swore that they should pay the value of what he had lost by M. le Chevalier, who assuredly would have tripled the receipts. George, his father, and his uncle replied, became warm, and at length got into a rage, whilst poor Madame Roussel, greatly agitated, wanted to get away. The master of the dogs, on his side, vociferated louder and louder, and began to gesticulate. In the heat of the dispute, William, who had finished his collection,
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came to his father's aid. "It is he," he exclaimed, pointing to George; "he stole him in order to sell him; I heard M. le Chevalier bark in his room."

"That's false," said George, accompanying his reply with a blow, which upset all the money that William had collected in his hat. The latter wanted both to pick up the money and return the blow at the same time, but George did not give him the opportunity, for he fell upon him with redoubled violence. William then seriously thought of defending himself.

> D'Aumale est plus ardent, plus fort, plus furieux;
> Turenne est plus adroit, et moins impétueux.
> *La Henriade.*

D'Aumale is more ardent, stronger, more furious;
Turenne, less impetuous, displays more skill.

George gave most blows, but William was more skilful in parrying, and while his hands were employed against George, he endeavoured with his feet to keep off the little boys, who had rushed to pick up the money. One of these, in order to escape a kick which he perceived was likely to fall to his share, took hold of William by the leg, and thus threw him on the ground, while George, who was holding him by the hair, fell with him. They were picked up, and separated. The owner of the dogs now swore that they should not only pay for the loss of M. le Chevalier's day's work, but the amount of the collection also. M. Roussel insisted on knowing positively what it was they complained of. Madame Roussel, more dead than alive, wished to have the man paid, in order to get away; and her husband consented, provided the dog was found
[Pg 153] in their apartments, of which he showed the key, and which he also promised should not be opened, except in the presence of the owner of the dogs, whom he invited to return with him to Paris. "And we shall see," said George, doubling his fist at William, whom he promised himself to pay off in a very different manner.

They all returned, William dragging the dogs in their carriage; M. Roussel giving his arm to his wife, who could not support herself: the master of the dogs and M. Roussel at one moment talking angrily, at another more reasonably, and William and George, who were carefully kept apart, gesticulating at a distance, and often accompanying their gestures with words, for want of better means of annoyance. With them came many persons returning to Paris after the fête, who were curious to see the termination of this affair, while all the little boys of the village ran after them, trotting with their bare feet in the dust.

The troop reached Paris very much diminished, but sufficiently considerable to attract the attention of the passers by, and to be followed by a crowd of idle people. M. Bucquet, who beheld all this assemblage collected at his house, asked what it was all about; and while they were giving him an explanation, Joseph found an opportunity of taking George on one side, and relating to him the whole affair. George was furious, and commanded him to go at once and take the dog away, which Joseph refused to do for fear of being seen.

"I will say that it was you," exclaimed George.

"I will say that you tell a falsehood," replied Joseph.

[Pg 154] George took him by the ears in order to force him up stairs.

"I'll scream," said Joseph.

George, notwithstanding his anger, saw that there was but one course to be pursued. He left Joseph, ran up stairs, attained the leads, entered his room and sought for the dog, determined, if requisite, to pass the night with him upon the roof; but he sought in vain. As Joseph had left the doors open, M. le Chevalier had had all the apartments at his disposal. Where could he be hidden? It was getting dusk, and the dog was small, George could not perceive him anywhere, and he was persuading himself that Joseph had been making game of him, and was about returning by the way that he had entered, when the animal scenting his master at the door, rushed from under a bed, howling most lamentably.

"Do you hear?" exclaimed the owner.

"It is impossible," exclaimed M. Roussel, precipitately opening the door. He stood perfectly stupified when he beheld his son and the dog in the middle of the room, without being able to understand in the least by what means they had got there.

"I knew it would be so," said William triumphantly.

George, stifled with shame and anger, and rendered furious by the invectives with which he was overwhelmed from all sides, protested that it was not he, but Joseph who did it. The neighbours, delighted at finding him in fault, were indignant that he should throw the blame upon another. M. Bucquet, who knew that if Joseph were the
[Pg 155] culprit, he should have to pay the damages, flew into a violent passion with George; and Madame Bucquet, terrified lest her husband should beat Joseph, became still louder and more violent in her invectives: M. Roussel thought that, right or wrong, he ought to take his son's part; William and his father were clamouring to be paid, and M. le Chevalier howled like a dog who had had no dinner.

In the midst of this fearful uproar, a venerable clergyman who lived in the house came up. Every one respected him, and he was the only person on whom George had not dared to play his tricks. He made every effort to restore peace, but when he had stilled the tumult for a moment, some voice was raised, every one replied, and the whole thing was renewed. At length he succeeded in persuading the people to disperse, with the exception of the owner of the dogs, who wanted to take M. Roussel before the magistrate to make him pay. M. Roussel did not desire anything better, and George was anxious to accompany them, in order to justify himself, but Madame

Roussel wept and entreated her husband to pay: and the clergyman reminded him that he had promised to do so if the dog was discovered on his premises: he was therefore obliged to submit; and then the master of the dogs, perfectly satisfied, went away, holding M. le Chevalier under his arm, and saying, "Monsieur, Madame, very sorry to have troubled you."

M. and Madame Roussel retired to their own rooms, together with the clergyman, whom they had invited to accompany them. George sat in a corner, tearing his hair in
[Pg 156] despair. They asked him the truth of the story, which he explained, and M. Roussel and his wife were terribly enraged against Joseph.

"But," said the clergyman, "who taught him to pass by the leads?"

George agreed that it was he.

"And who accustomed him to do these mischievous tricks?"

George was compelled again to own that he had done so.

"Behold the effect of bad example!" continued the clergyman; "evil is done without very bad intentions, but he whom we instruct in committing it, learns the evil without heeding the intentions. Joseph has seen you keep dogs in your possession, in order to set their masters hunting for them, and he thought it quite as reasonable to conceal one in order to sell it: therefore, it is you who are answerable for all that he has done."

George had nothing to say. The clergyman lectured him for some time longer, and left him completely ashamed of himself, and determined to correct his faults: but his parents were obliged to leave the house and the neighbourhood, for George could never go into the streets, without hearing himself called a *dog-stealer*. For a time it was the same at school also, where some of the other boys had related the story; but as he was very much liked, and besides one of the strongest, his explanation and a few blows soon re-established him in the esteem of his companions.

In the end, the truth was discovered in the neighbourhood also, but it was long
[Pg 157] before the prejudices against him were quite overcome. As for Joseph, it is asserted that he was well beaten by his father, but this only corrected him of the desire of playing tricks on his neighbours. He continued all his life a coward from disposition, and a liar from the instructions of George; therefore, whenever George heard any evil of him, he felt pained, because he knew that he had increased the number of his bad habits.

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EUDOXIA;

OR LEGITIMATE PRIDE.

MADAME D'AUBONNE beheld her daughter Eudoxia, who had attained the age of thirteen, increase every day in judgment, talent, and good dispositions of all kinds. It was with a feeling of intense happiness, that she discovered in her the germ and hope of every virtue. Nothing was wanting to Eudoxia, but the consciousness that virtues were given to us for our own practice, and not for the purpose of judging the conduct of others. Her own earnest love of all that was good, and her constant endeavour to do what she considered best, disposed her to blame others with severity, and to exact from them a rectitude, equal to that which she herself displayed in all her actions.

Though Eudoxia was too reserved, and even too timid to express her opinions to any one but her mother, to whom she confided everything, and who, on her part, had the most entire confidence in her daughter, nevertheless Madame d'Aubonne carefully opposed this tendency; for she knew that it was not sufficient to watch over
[Pg 159] words only, but that we must also regulate our thoughts; and those of Eudoxia appeared to her, in this respect, neither just nor reasonable. However, she had rarely occasion to reprimand her on this account, for with the exception of her cousin Constance, who was much younger than herself, and to whom, as she was very fond of her, she was, consequently, more indulgent, she saw scarcely any but older persons, and such as she would never have presumed to censure.

Madame d'Aubonne had resided many years in the country, attending to her invalid father; having had the misfortune to lose him, she returned, to Paris, which she again left, for the purpose of passing a couple of months at Romecourt, with Madame de Rivry, an old friend, who resided there with her daughter Julia, whom Eudoxia scarcely knew, not having seen her for six years.

Madame d'Aubonne found at Romecourt her aunt, Madame de Croissy, who was to spend there the same time as herself. Madame de Croissy was educating her two granddaughters, Adèle and Honorine, with whom Eudoxia was as little acquainted as with Julia, although they were her cousins. Her timidity, therefore, made her look with much terror on this new society, especially as the other three girls, though much about her own age, were very far from being as reasonable as herself.

Julia, though at heart a very good-dispositioned child, was very much spoiled by her mother, and sometimes answered her with a degree of impertinence which made every one present shrug their shoulders. Adèle regarded an untruth as the simplest
[Pg 160] thing in the world; she told falsehoods in sport; she told them in earnest; she even told them at the very moment in which she might have been convicted of the fallacy of her assertions.

As to Honorine, she was a perfect wild colt, without discipline, without reflection; never for a moment dreaming that her fancies could meet with the slightest opposition, nor that those things which gave her pleasure could be attended with any inconvenience. Madame de Croissy troubled herself very little about their education; provided they made no noise, and did not attempt to join in conversation, she always considered girls to be quite sufficiently well brought up; therefore she habitually left them with the servants, and felt annoyed, that at Romecourt they were almost always kept in the drawing-room, because Eudoxia and Julia were very little away from their mothers.

This plan was equally disagreeable to the two girls, but little accustomed to the society of their grandmamma, who, when at home, never concerned herself about them, any further than to tell them to hold themselves upright whenever she thought of it, or to be silent whenever their voices were heard above a whisper. They would have been much better pleased if left with their grandmother's servants, with whom they were accustomed to associate, provided, however, that they could have had Julia with them; for as to Eudoxia, they cared very little for her.

It is true that she had not been very amiable towards them, for she was quite horrified at their giddy manners, their want of obedience, and their tone of mockery,
[Pg 161] to which she was not accustomed. Astonished beyond measure, at their ignorance of almost every principle which, from her childhood, she had been taught to respect, she blushed to the eyes when she beheld Honorine reading without scruple a letter which she found open, playing tricks with the gardener's son, or standing at the park railing, in front of the high road, chatting with all the little boys and girls of the village. She trembled when she saw Adèle, even at her grandmamma's side, and under her very spectacles, cut the needleful with which she was embroidering, in order to shorten it, and be able to say that her task was finished. Nor, in fine, could she recover from her surprise, when she saw that the very moment in which Julia

received an order from her mother to do anything, was precisely that which she selected for doing the opposite. At these times she imagined herself transported into a new world, where all was strange and incomprehensible to her: she avoided conversing with her companions, as she had nothing to say which would be agreeable to their tastes; and, besides, she would scarcely have known how to reply to them, had they spoken to her. She therefore left them as soon as she was able, and took refuge with her mother.

The others easily perceived, that though Eudoxia said nothing to them, she did not approve of their conduct; they were, therefore, very ill at ease in her society, and in no way pleased when Madame d'Aubonne, who was anxious that Eudoxia should accustom herself to live with others, adapt herself to their habits, and tolerate their defects, sent her to share in their amusements and conversation.

[Pg 162] Neither was Eudoxia at all agreeable to Madame de Croissy, whose principles of education had so little affinity with those of Madame d'Aubonne, and whose grandchildren bore no resemblance to her daughter. As Madame de Croissy was the sister of Madame d'Aubonne's father, she had paid him a visit a short time before his death, but unaccompanied by her grandchildren. On that occasion she had seen Eudoxia, whose good qualities and happy dispositions were extolled by every one in the neighbourhood in which the family resided. As Madame de Croissy had never heard her grandchildren so praised, she felt annoyed; and, besides, she considered that Madame d'Aubonne conversed a great deal too much with her daughter, reasoned with her too much, and altogether occupied herself too much about her, though this was never at the expense of others. She therefore told every one, and was herself firmly persuaded that Madame d'Aubonne "would never make anything of this little prodigy but a little pedant."

Her annoyance had been redoubled since she had been in the country, by the striking contrast which the conduct of Eudoxia presented to that of her cousins; therefore, in her quality of grand-aunt, she perpetually contradicted her, either directly or by indirect allusions. Her looks were turned to her at every moment, as if she were watching her, and ready to seize instantly upon the slightest fault which might escape her. Nor did she ever call her anything but *Mademoiselle* Eudoxia. Eudoxia would, therefore, have found but very little enjoyment in the country, had it not been for the happiness she felt in conversing with her mother, who spoke to her
[Pg 163] as a reasonable person, and who, even when reprimanding her, concealed nothing of her affection, nor even, we may add, of her respect; for with the exception of this want of toleration, which marred a little her good qualities, Eudoxia merited all the respect that a child of her years could merit.

One morning the four girls were at work in the drawing-room. Eudoxia, at her mother's side, occupied herself diligently with what she was engaged upon; the other three, collected in a corner, talked, laughed in an under tone, dropped their work, forgot to pick it up, and never did three stitches successively; and even when told to go on, they did so for a moment only, and with every indication of languor and *ennui*. Eudoxia, from time to time, looked at them, and then at her mother, with an expression which sufficiently explained her sentiments. Madame de Croissy caught one of these glances, and was led to notice her granddaughters.

"Have the kindness to continue your work, young ladies," she said to them, very harshly. "Do you not see how much you shock Mademoiselle Eudoxia?"

Adèle and Honorine pretended to go on with their work, and Eudoxia, greatly confused, cast down her eyes, and did not dare to raise them again during the time they remained in the drawing-room. When they had retired to their own apartment, Madame d'Aubonne observed,

"You were very much occupied with those young ladies."

"Oh! mamma, they were so foolish."

"And do you derive pleasure from foolish things or persons?"

[Pg 164] "Quite the reverse, mamma, I assure you."

"Think again, my child; it cannot be *quite the reverse*; for they made you raise your eyes from your work more than twenty times, and yet I know that your work interested you."

"Nevertheless, I assure you, mamma, it was not pleasure that I felt."

"It was at least a great interest; and did not this interest arise from the satisfaction you experienced at seeing them more unreasonable than yourself?"

"Oh, mamma!"

"Come, my dear Eudoxia, it is in the examination of our evil emotions that courage is required, the good ones are easily discovered. Ask your conscience what it thinks of the matter."

"Mamma," said Eudoxia, somewhat confused, "I assure you that I did not at first think it was that."

"I believe you, my child; it is a feeling which steals upon us unperceived. Many persons experience it as well as you, and imagine that the bad actions of others increase the merit of their own. But tell me, my dear Eudoxia, would there not be still greater pleasure in being superior to such persons, than in merely being superior to your companions in industry and attention?"

Eudoxia assented to this, and promised to attend to it. She was always happy when any duty was pointed out to her, so great was the pleasure she felt in endeavouring to accomplish it. Having gone down to fetch something from an apartment adjoining the drawing-room, the door of which was open, she heard Madame de Croissy observe to Madame de Rivry,—

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"I have always said that Mademoiselle Eudoxia would never be anything but a little pedant."

Madame de Rivry, although she liked Eudoxia, agreed that she busied herself much more in finding fault with her companions, than in making herself agreeable to them.

"That would be compromising her dignity," replied Madame de Croissy.

From that moment Eudoxia endeavoured to overcome her dislike and timidity. She mingled more frequently in the amusements of her companions, and at last took pleasure in them. But being now more at her ease with her playfellows, she told them more freely what she thought, and when she could not make them listen to reason, she would leave them with emotions of impatience, which she was unable to control.

"But why do you get impatient?" said her mother to her one day; "do they fail in their duty towards you, by not being as reasonable as you are?"

"No, mamma, but they fail in their duty to themselves, when they are so unreasonable, and it is that which irritates me."

"Listen, Eudoxia," continued her mother, "do you remember how irritable you used to be with your cousin Constance, because she paid so little attention to what she did, and broke everything that came in her way? One day you happened, by a carelessness of the same kind, to upset the table on which my writing-desk was placed; and I remember that from that time you have never been impatient with her."

"Oh! no, mamma, I assure you."

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"Did you consider the fault of less importance because you happened to commit it yourself?"

"Quite the reverse, mamma, but that showed me that it was more difficult to avoid it than I had at first imagined."

"This is what experience teaches us every day, my child, with regard to faults which we have not as yet committed. Thus," she added, laughing, "I do not despair of seeing you indulgent towards these young ladies, if one day you discover by the same means, that it is difficult not to be an arguer, like Julia; a story-teller, like Adèle; and a lover of mischief, like Honorine."

"As to that mamma," replied Eudoxia, warmly, "that is what I shall never learn."

"Are you quite sure, my child?"—"Oh! quite sure."

"Are you then so differently constituted, as to be able to persuade yourself, that what appears to them so easy, would be impossible to you?"

"It must be so," said Eudoxia, really piqued.

"How then, in that case," said her mother, smiling, "can you expect them to do the same things as yourself? You do not expect Julia, who is much smaller than you are, to reach as high as you do; you only expect this from Honorine, who is as tall as yourself."

"But, mamma," replied Eudoxia, after reflecting for a moment, "perhaps, then, as they are less reasonable, they are not obliged to do as much as other people."

"It would be very wrong for them to think so, my child, for every one ought to do as much good as lies in his power; but every one is likewise enjoined to inquire into

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his own duties, and not into those of others; therefore attend only to your own. Do you consider it just and reasonable to enjoy the pleasure of feeling that you are better than they are, and at the same time to get impatient with them, because they are not as good as yourself?"

"Mamma, are we then permitted to consider ourselves better than other people?"

"Yes, my child; for to think ourselves better than others is simply to feel that we

possess more strength, more reason, more means of doing good, and consequently to consider ourselves bound to do more than them."

This conversation gave Eudoxia a feeling of satisfaction which rendered her more indulgent, and more patient with her companions; but in this indulgence there might perhaps be discovered a slight degree of pride; it had something of the kindness of a superior being always thinking of keeping herself sufficiently above others to avoid being hurt by their not acting with as much propriety as herself.

Eudoxia insensibly acquired the habit of considering her companions as children, and almost of treating them as such. One day when the four girls were working together, they compared their various performances, and Honorine's, which was like Eudoxia's, happened to be much worse done.

"That is a very difficult stitch," said she, with the same air as if she were making an excuse for a child of six years old.

It did not occur to her that the remark was equally applicable to herself. The others burst out laughing.

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"Be quiet," said Honorine, "do you not see that Eudoxia has the kindness to protect me?"

Eudoxia felt so much hurt that the tears started to her eyes. She was satisfied with herself, and believed she had a right to be so, and yet she met with nothing but injustice and mockery. She again began to withdraw herself from her companions.

Her mother perceived this, and inquired the reason. Eudoxia felt some difficulty in confessing it, though she considered herself in the right. The ridicule that had been cast upon her had given rise to a species of shame. At last, however, she stated the cause.

"You were, then, very much hurt, were you not?" asked Madame d'Aubonne, "because Honorine appeared to think that you affected to protect her? It seems that you would have considered such a thing very ridiculous."

"Oh! mamma, it is not necessary that a thing should be ridiculous for them to laugh at it."

"But tell me, Eudoxia, if by chance they had ridiculed you because you love me, because you listen to me, because you do all that I desire, would that have given you pain?"

"No, indeed, mamma, I should have laughed at them then, in my turn."

"And why did you not pursue the same course when they laughed at the manner you assumed towards Honorine? If you thought that this patronizing manner was the most suitable, what did it matter to you that they should think otherwise? Are you not more reasonable than they are, consequently better able to judge of what is right?"

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"Mamma," said Eudoxia, after a moment's silence, "I now think I was wrong in manifesting towards Honorine a manner which displeased her, but I only wished to show indulgence for the faults she had made in her work."

"My dear child, we ought to be indulgent towards the faults of every one, but we ought not to let this indulgence be manifest to those whose conduct does not concern us, unless they wish us to do so; for otherwise, as it is not our business to reprimand them, so neither is it to pardon them. This is an office which we have no right to assume without their permission."

"But what then is to be done, mamma, when they commit faults?"

"Try not to see them, if possible, and instead of pardoning, try to diminish them; endeavour to discover in Honorine's work all that is good, so that what is bad may be forgotten; but to do this you must not be very glad that your work has been found better than hers; your whole pride should consist in being superior to these trifling advantages."

Eudoxia profited by her mother's advice, and became every day more gentle and sociable. Madame de Croissy had scarcely anything to say against her, and her companions began to take pleasure in her society. She was completely in their confidence, at least as much as she desired to be; and when she saw the fears and vexations to which their inconsiderate conduct often exposed them, when she saw them blush at the least word that could have any reference to a fault which they had concealed, and even found them manifest towards herself a species of deference

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which they no longer refused to her good sense, when it was not exercised at their expense, she felt daily more and more, how great is the pleasure of self-respect.

"And yet," said her mother, "you are still very far from knowing its full value; this you will not ascertain until you have paid its price, until you have purchased it by painful sacrifices."

Eudoxia could not conceive that any sacrifices could be difficult which conferred such an advantage.

Madame de Rivry, who was extremely kind, and who took great interest in the amusements of young people, proposed to visit a very beautiful park, situated about four leagues from Romecourt; they were to spend the day there, and return home in the evening.

Eudoxia and her companions were delighted at the thought of this party; but on the evening before it was to take place, when they were thinking of the arrangement of the carriages, they found that Madame de Rivry's calèche would only hold four persons, therefore as it was necessary that she herself should be one of the four, the whole of the girls could not be with her; one of them must necessarily go in Madame de Croissy's carriage, with that lady and Madame d'Aubonne. This made a great difference in the pleasure of the journey.

Madame de Rivry, obliged to do the honours of her house, decided that it must be Julia who was to go in the carriage. Julia exclaimed loudly against this, and declared she would much prefer not going at all. She answered her mother in the disrespectful
[Pg 171] manner which she always assumed when anything displeased her, and said that it was very convenient for her mother, who was going in the calèche, to put her to be wearied to death in the carriage.

Madame de Rivry endeavoured in vain to induce her daughter to listen to reason; but as her indulgence did not extend so far as to make her forget what she owed to others, she resisted all her complaints.

Madame de Croissy offered to take one of her grandchildren with her, but this offer was not made with any emphasis, as she was desirous of seeing justice done, and would have been very sorry if, on this occasion, Madame de Rivry had yielded to her daughter. Madame d'Aubonne said nothing, for she saw that it would have been quite useless.

Julia sulked, and even cried, the whole afternoon. She was so much accustomed to have her own way, that the slightest contradiction was a violent grief to her. During their walk she was constantly wiping her eyes, while Madame de Rivry tried to console her, but to no purpose. This distressed Eudoxia so much, that she whispered to her mother, "If I dared, I would beg Madame de Rivry to give my place to Julia."

"It would do no good," said her mother; "but if you like, as you have a slight cold, I will say to-morrow that I should prefer your not going in the calèche, I think that will be better."

"Oh no, mamma," said Eudoxia quickly, "I assure you the calèche will not do my cold any harm."

"I agree with you, my child, that the inconvenience is not of sufficient importance
[Pg 172] to deprive you of this pleasure, neither should I have proposed it to you, had I not thought that you wished to give up your place to Julia."

"And I do wish to do so, mamma, but...."

"You would like perhaps to propose it in such a way that her mother would refuse it?"

"Oh! no, mamma, I do assure you."

"Or else you wish it to be known that it is you who give it up to her?"

"But, mamma, is it not natural to wish Julia to know that it is I who would give her this pleasure, and not any one else?"

"And even if that were possible, do you think that this mode of affording Julia pleasure would be agreeable to her? Suppose, for instance, that you had behaved in as childish a manner as she has done, and that any one of your age had offered to yield her place to you, and thus shown how very good she was, and how much the reverse you were, would you not have felt greatly humiliated by this kindness?"

"Oh! yes, mamma, that is very true."

"Nevertheless this is the humiliation you wish to impose on Julia, as the price of the pleasure you would afford her."

"I assure you, mamma, I have no wish whatever to humble her."

"No, but you wish to prove to her, as well as to every one else, that you are better than she is; for it does not seem to be sufficient for you to know this yourself."

"But, mamma, is it only allowable to be a little satisfied with ourselves, when we conceal from others what we do for them?"

[Pg 173] "When the result of what we do for them is to cause ourselves to be esteemed

much more than them, and at their expense, we only barter one advantage for another, and we have no reason to be very proud of ourselves, for we have made no great sacrifices for them."

"Mamma," said Eudoxia, after a moment's reflection, "if you like, you can tell Madame de Rivry that I have a cold."

"Just as you please, my child," and they said no more about the matter.

The following day the weather was superb, and Eudoxia beheld the calèche waiting in the yard, the horses pawing the ground, impatient to be off.

"My cold is almost gone," she said.

"I think, indeed," said Madame d'Aubonne, "that the calèche will do you no great harm."

"You know, mamma," said Eudoxia, with a sigh, "that it is not I who am going in it."

"You can still do as you like, my child, for I have not spoken on the subject to Madame de Rivry; you are not obliged, therefore, to make this sacrifice, if it be painful to you."

"But, mamma, I think it would be right to make it," said Eudoxia, with sadness.

"My dear child, when once the idea of performing a generous action has occurred to us, if we do not perform it we run the risk of having to reproach ourselves afterwards. It is possible that when you are in the calèche, the thought that Julia is moping in the carriage may greatly interfere with your pleasure: that is all; for I again repeat, that there is no duty which obliges you to yield your place to her."

"Unless it be, mamma, that I think I have more courage than she has to bear this contradiction."

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"I agree with you, as we have before observed, that there are particular duties imposed upon those who feel themselves possessed of more strength and reason than others."

"Mamma, I will go in the carriage."

"Are you quite sure that you really wish to do so, my child?"

"I am quite sure, mamma, that I wish Julia to go in the calèche."

Madame d'Aubonne tenderly embraced her daughter, for she was extremely pleased with her conduct. They entered the drawing-room, and she expressed her desire of keeping Eudoxia in the carriage; the request was granted without difficulty.

The good-natured Madame de Rivry was very glad to be able to spare her daughter any annoyance, without being wanting in attention to her friends. Eudoxia said nothing, but this occasioned no surprise, as all were accustomed to her obedience. Julia, though delighted, nevertheless blushed a little, for it is very humiliating to find that one has had the weakness to grieve over a misfortune, which after all does not happen; but no one, however, was discontented with the arrangement except Madame de Croissy, who lost the pleasure of seeing a spoiled child contradicted at least once in her life.

"I should have imagined," said she, ironically, "that the education of Mademoiselle Eudoxia would have made her less afraid of catching cold."

Madame d'Aubonne looked at her daughter with a smile, and this smile prevented Eudoxia from being irritated by the remark.

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When in the carriage, Madame de Croissy, feeling too warm, wished to put down one of the windows, "provided," she again said, "that it will not give Mademoiselle Eudoxia cold." Madame d'Aubonne and her daughter again glanced at each other, with a scarcely perceptible smile, and Eudoxia found that there is a great pleasure in feeling, in our own conscience, that we are better than others take us to be.

She enjoyed herself very much in the park. In the evening, she felt some regret at losing the drive home in the calèche, on a beautiful moonlight night; but at last she retired to rest, pleased with the day's amusement, pleased with herself, and pleased with the satisfaction she had given her mother, who, during the whole day, was more than usually attentive to her, calling her whenever she saw anything pretty, and experiencing no pleasure unless shared by her.

The following morning, a painter, with whom Madame de Rivry was acquainted, called *en passant* at Romecourt; he was on his way back to Paris, and had only half an hour to spend at the château.

Whilst the breakfast was preparing, he expressed a wish to see the drawings of the young ladies, and Adèle was ordered to show them. Eudoxia and herself had

undertaken to copy from the antique a beautiful head of a vestal, and Adèle, though according to custom, she had scarcely worked at all, yet, according to custom also, she had told her grandmamma that her drawing was finished, and Madame de Croissy, who never looked at her work, made no further inquiries about it. However, [Pg 176] as she could not exhibit this drawing, she determined to show as her own the one which Eudoxia had done. The artist was delighted with it, and it was, indeed, the best thing Eudoxia had ever done. While he was still examining it, Madame de Croissy called Adèle into the garden, and with her usual thoughtlessness she ran off without putting away the drawing; during this time Madame d'Aubonne and Eudoxia entered by another door.

"Here is a beautiful head drawn by Mademoiselle Adèle!" said the painter.

"By Adèle?" said Eudoxia, blushing, and looking at her mother.

"I do not think it can be Adèle's," said Madame d'Aubonne.

"Oh! I beg your pardon," said the painter, "she told me so herself;" and going to the door which led into the garden, where Adèle was standing on the step, talking to her grandmamma, he said to her, "Is not the drawing you have just shown me your work, mademoiselle?"

"Yes, sir," said Adèle, scarcely turning her head, for fear her grandmamma should notice it, and ask to see the drawing.

The painter then resumed his praise of it. Eudoxia waited for her mamma to speak, but she said nothing, and Eudoxia finding her silent, did not dare to speak herself.

The artist wished to see some of her drawings; she said that she had nothing to show; but perceiving a portfolio, inscribed with her name, he drew from it an old study, with which Eudoxia was not at all satisfied, and which she had brought into the country to correct. He pointed out its defects, coldly praised the talent it indicated, and again reverted to the head of the vestal.

"I do not think it can be Adèle's," said Madame d'Aubonne.—P. 176.

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Eudoxia's heart was bursting, and she looked at her mother as if to entreat her to speak; but the breakfast was announced. The painter being asked what he thought of the drawings, spoke courteously relative to the talents of the other three young ladies, but asserted that Adèle would be very successful.

"Ah! not so much so as Mademoiselle Eudoxia," said Madame de Croissy, casting upon Eudoxia a look of ironical satisfaction.

"I assure you, madame," said the painter, "that the head of the vestal which Mademoiselle Adèle showed me, displays the very highest promise."

Adèle's face became alternately pale and crimson, and she did not dare to raise her head.

"I assure you, nevertheless," said Madame de Croissy, in the same tone, "that if you had heard Mademoiselle Eudoxia, and the advice she gives, you could not doubt that she was the most skilful young lady of her age."

The painter looked at Eudoxia with astonishment. She felt indignant, but her mother, who was seated near her, pressed her hand beneath the table, in order to calm her. She could not eat, and immediately after breakfast, she went into the garden, where her mother followed her, and found her crying with vexation and impatience.

"What is the matter, my dearest Eudoxia?" said she, pressing her tenderly in her arms.

"Really, mamma," said Eudoxia, much agitated, "this is very hard, and Madame de Croissy again...."

"What does the injustice of Madame de Croissy matter to you? Which of us believes a word of what she says?"

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"But the painter will believe it. Indeed I should have said nothing before her; but why must he think that my drawing was done by Adèle? Mamma, you have encouraged Adèle's falsehood," she added, in a tone of reproach.

"I have nothing to do with the education of Adèle," replied Madame d'Aubonne, "whereas I am responsible for yours; it is my duty to foster your virtues as I would my own, and to point out to you your duty, without thinking of that of other people."

"It was not my duty," replied Eudoxia, more mildly, "to allow it to be thought that

my drawing was Adèle's."

"It was certainly not the duty of one who aspires to nothing more than to be able to draw well, but it was the duty of one who wishes to possess more strength and virtue than another, not to sacrifice the reputation of a companion to her own self-love. Tell me, my child, if in order to save yourself the slight vexation of being considered less clever than Adèle, you had in the presence of this artist covered her with the disgrace of having told a falsehood, would you not now feel very much embarrassed in her presence?"

"I think, indeed, I should, mamma."

"And it would be natural for you to feel so, for you would not have had the courage to make a trifling sacrifice, in order to save her from a great humiliation."

"That is true, mamma; but it is sometimes necessary to do very difficult things, in order to be always satisfied with one's self."

"And if this pleasure could be attained without difficulty, do you not suppose, my
[Pg 179] child, that every one would be as anxious as yourself to secure it?"

Although softened by this conversation with her mother, Eudoxia, nevertheless, could not help feeling some degree of bitterness against Adèle, and during a part of the day she avoided speaking to her. But she saw Adèle so ashamed when in her company, so occupied in endeavouring to give her pleasure without daring to approach her, or address her directly, that her anger was changed into compassion. She felt that the severest trial we can experience, is the having a serious fault to reproach ourselves with; and also that it is impossible to preserve any resentment against one who was suffering under so great an evil. She therefore spoke to Adèle as usual, and as soon as her irritation vanished, her grief also ceased.

But she had still to pass through a severe ordeal. Honorine, whom nothing ever restrained when once she took a fancy into her head, having one day found the park-gate open, thought it would be very pleasant to go and walk upon the high road. Eudoxia was alone with her at the time, and feeling how improper it was to act in this manner, she entreated her to return. Perceiving some one approaching, and trembling lest Honorine should be noticed, she ventured, in order to call her back, to pass the threshold of the gate herself, and standing quite close to the railing, she exclaimed,

"Honorine, my dear Honorine, come back! I entreat you to come back."

Just at this moment she fancied she heard the voice of Madame de Croissy, and
[Pg 180] rushed forward to hasten Honorine, who was not returning fast enough: her dress caught in the gate, she was thrown down, while the door was drawn forward and closed, and thus they were both outside, without any means of getting back. Eudoxia tried to open the gate, by passing her hand through the bars, but in vain; the lock was stiff; perhaps even it had a secret spring; she could not succeed. Greatly distressed, she wanted to call out for some one to open it for them, determined, without throwing any blame upon Honorine, to explain what had happened to herself: but Honorine, who had as little courage to encounter a slight reprimand, as she had sense to avoid meriting a great one, entreated her not to do so. She knew that her grandmamma was walking in the garden, and might hear them, and therefore thought it would be better to return to the château by the back entrance. To reach this, however, it was necessary to make a considerable circuit, and Eudoxia did not wish to leave the gate; but at last Honorine having taken her own course, she was obliged to follow her, as by calling after her, she would have led to a discovery of her imprudent conduct.

She followed her with trembling steps, keeping close to the park walls, and walking as quickly as possible, fearful of being seen, and constantly calling to Honorine, who, on the contrary, was much amused at her alarm, and kept running from side to side, and even into the fields. While still at a considerable distance from the yard of the château, they saw coming along the road, which crossed in front of them, a carriage filled with company, going to dine at Romecourt.

[Pg 181] Eudoxia was now more than ever in despair, as she imagined that she had been recognised; she therefore redoubled her speed, while Honorine, who was beginning to be afraid, on the contrary slackened hers, in order to defer, as long as possible, the moment of danger.

Their fears were not groundless; they had been perceived. As soon as the carriage arrived at Romecourt, they were sought for, together with Adèle and Julia, in order to entertain a young lady, who had accompanied her mother and two other ladies; but they were not to be found.

"I think," said a gentleman, who had accompanied the carriage on horseback, "that I saw them on the road."

"On the road alone!" exclaimed Madame de Croissy.

"I thought it very strange," said one of the ladies, "nevertheless it was certainly them."

A new search was made everywhere; Adèle did not know where her sister was, neither could Madame d'Aubonne tell what had become of her daughter. She had gone down to the drawing-room, and was beginning to feel very uneasy, when a servant who observed them enter the yard, exclaimed, "Here they are!"

Every one ran out upon the step, and the two girls perceived, from a distance, the assembly that awaited them. Eudoxia, though almost ready to faint with fear and shame, was, nevertheless, obliged to drag Honorine, who would not advance. They had hardly reached the middle of the yard when they heard Madame de Croissy calling out to them, "Is it possible, young ladies! Is it to be believed!..." Madame
[Pg 182] d'Aubonne hastened to meet her daughter: "Eudoxia," said she, "what can have happened? How is it"....

Eudoxia did not dare to reply, on account of Honorine, who was by her side, but she pressed and kissed her mother's hand, looked at her, and then at Honorine, in such a way that Madame d'Aubonne was convinced that her daughter had done nothing wrong.

They reached the house at last, still accompanied by the reproofs and exclamations of Madame de Croissy, who while they were ascending the steps, turned towards the company and said, "I beg you at all events to believe, that Honorine is not so ill brought up, as to have thought of such an escapade as this, of her own accord. It was Mademoiselle Eudoxia who led her away, and almost by force too; I was a witness to this." Eudoxia was on the point of exclaiming—"Yes, Mademoiselle," continued Madame de Croissy, with an air of command, "I was walking in the shrubbery near the railings, when you said, '*Come, I entreat you.*' I was not then aware of the nature of your request; I see it now, but should never have imagined it. Deny it if you dare."

Madame de Croissy had indeed heard, but misunderstood what Eudoxia had said, in order to induce Honorine to return. Eudoxia did not deny the charge, but cast down her eyes, and burst into tears. Madame d'Aubonne looked at her anxiously, and led her aside, when Eudoxia, weeping, related what had occurred.

"I do not know, my niece, what tale she may be fabricating," cried Madame de
[Pg 183] Croissy, "but I heard her with my own ears, and I hope I am to be believed, as much as Mademoiselle Eudoxia."

"Aunt," said Madame d'Aubonne, with firmness, "Eudoxia is not fabricating any tales; and if I am satisfied with her conduct, I beg to say, with all deference, that no one else shall interfere with her."

"Most assuredly, I shall not take that liberty," replied Madame de Croissy, very much irritated, "but she will have the kindness not to go near her cousins, and she may then make herself as ridiculous as she pleases; I shall trouble myself very little about it."

Eudoxia was no longer able to support herself; her mother led her away, embraced and consoled her. "Mamma," she said, weeping, "without you, I never should have had resolution enough."

"I am sure, my child, that you would. You would have borne everything rather than have exposed Honorine to the anger of her grandmamma; but we are both in the same predicament, and must mutually aid and support each other. Do you not imagine that they think me as much to blame as yourself?"

Eudoxia embraced her mother with transport; she was so happy and proud at being placed by her on the same level with herself. "But, mamma," she said, "although we say nothing to Madame de Croissy, we might at least explain the truth to the others."

"Would you then let them know that Honorine had the cowardice to allow you to bear the blame of a fault which she herself had committed? Would you wish to be
[Pg 184] weak in your turn? Your not accusing Honorine was an act of simple kindness merely; many others would have done as much; if you stop at this point, you have no right to consider yourself more generous than others."

"Mamma, this pleasure then must be very dearly purchased?"

"My child, it is only granted to those who have sufficient resolution to sacrifice every other pleasure to it."

Eudoxia, strengthened by her mother's words, returned with her resolutely to the drawing-room, where pardon had already been obtained for Honorine, whom Madame de Croissy would have sent to dine by herself in her own room. The modest but tranquil countenance of Eudoxia, and the tender but unaffected manner in which her mother treated her, imposed silence on Madame de Croissy, while the others

began to suspect that she could not be so much in fault as Madame de Croissy had supposed; and Madame de Rivry, who knew her well, had already told them that the thing appeared to her quite impossible. Julia, by dint of questioning, at length extracted the truth from Honorine, and told her mother, on condition that nothing should be said to Madame de Croissy; but the company were informed of it, and from that moment treated Eudoxia with a degree of attention which proved to her that the approbation of others, although we ought not to calculate upon it, is still almost invariably accorded to those whose actions are performed solely from a sense of duty.

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EDWARD AND EUGENIA;

OR THE EMBROIDERED BAG AND THE NEW COAT.

"Oh! I do love you so!" said Eugenia to little Agatha, her schoolfellow, to whom she had taken a violent fancy; and as she said this, she almost smothered her with kisses.

"And I love you very much too," said Agatha, disengaging herself from her arms. "But why do you not like me to play with Fanny?"

"Because you would love her more than me."

"Is Fanny then more amiable?" asked one of the governesses, who had overheard her.

"Certainly not," said Eugenia, whom this supposition very much displeased. "But I do not wish her to love Fanny even as much as she loves me."

"You do not then know how to be sufficiently amiable to make yourself more loved than another?"

"Oh! yes, I do," replied Eugenia, with increasing irritability, "but I do not wish her to play with Fanny." Thus saying, she took Agatha by the hand, and made her run
[Pg 186] with her in the walk before them. The governess allowed them to go, quite sure of finding an opportunity of renewing the conversation. After they had run about for some time, Eugenia, feeling fatigued, as it was a holiday, seated herself on a bench in the garden, with a book of tales, which had been given her on the previous evening, and which amused her very much. But Agatha, who was not fond of reading, wished to continue playing. She walked round and round Eugenia, trod upon her dress, and pulled the marker of her book, in order to prevent her from reading. At length she came behind her with a handful of grass, and holding it above her head, she let it fall before her eyes, upon her person, and upon the page with which she was occupied. Eugenia become angry, tore the grass from her hands, and told her to let her alone, for she annoyed her.

"Agatha, go and play with Fanny," said the governess, who was passing at the moment.

"Why do you wish her to go and play with Fanny," asked Eugenia, hastily rising, and ready to fly into a passion, had she dared to do so. At the same time, she threw down the book, in order to go and catch Agatha, who had already set off.

"You do not wish to play with her; probably Fanny might be more obliging...."

"But I have already been playing."

"It seems that it pleased you then, while it does not please you now. As you like to employ the time according to your own fancy, she has a right to employ it according to hers, and I advise her to go and look for Fanny."

[Pg 187] Eugenia, who had nothing to urge, recommenced playing with Agatha, but in such ill humour, that she only tried to contradict her, making her run to the right and to the left against her inclination; pulling her arm sometimes forward, sometimes backward, sometimes upward, for she was taller than Agatha. Agatha got angry, tried in vain to stop her, and not being able to extricate herself from her hands, cried out with all her might to be let go. But Eugenia still went on, saying, "You wished to run, then let us run."

They were, however, stopped at the entrance of an arbour, by the governess, who was walking on this side. "If I were you," she said, addressing Agatha, "I should go and play with Fanny; she would not pull you so roughly by the arm."

"What does she want?" replied Eugenia. "I am doing what she wishes."

"But you do not do it in the manner that she wishes, and since you have no right over her, you can only retain her by doing whatever she pleases. Thus, the moment that you contradict her in the least thing, that you do not yield to all her whims, that you do not accommodate yourself to all her caprices, she will do quite right to go and play with Fanny if Fanny suits her better."

"Very well, let her go," replied Eugenia. "She shall not touch my great doll any more, nor look at my book of prints; and she shall not have the chaplet of horse-chestnuts that I was going to make for her."

"But I did not say that I would go and play with Fanny," replied Agatha, almost crying at the thought of not having the chaplet of horse-chestnuts, "only do not pull
[Pg 188] my arm so violently." Peace was made. It was now the time for going in; besides,

Agatha, dreadfully frightened at the thought of losing the chaplet, did all day just whatever Eugenia pleased; so there were no more quarrels on that occasion.

But they soon recommenced. The mistress said to Eugenia, "Try to love Agatha a little more if you would not have her prefer Fanny."

"And do I not love her enough?" said Eugenia. "I am constantly making her presents, and only the day before yesterday, I gave her my prettiest work-box."

"Yes, after having refused it to her for three days, although you saw that she longed for it very much! But when she thought of telling you that Fanny had one quite as pretty, which she had almost promised her, then with a very bad grace you gave her yours. You did not care about giving her this pleasure, but you were afraid lest another should give it. If you took half the pains to make her love you, that you take to prevent her loving others, you would succeed much better."

But Eugenia did not understand this. She loved Agatha as a doll which amused her, and with which she did what she pleased. She carried her on her shoulders for her own sport, sent her to fetch her handkerchief, or her work, when she had forgotten it, made herself absolute mistress of the little garden which had been given to them in common, and carefully watched that she did not obey the wishes of others, as she would then have been less attentive to hers. Agatha liked Eugenia because she made her presents, and gave her little card-board carriages and other things which
[Pg 189] amused her, but above all because, being much older, cleverer, and more advanced than herself, she did almost all her work for her unknown to the mistresses. Eugenia never restrained on her account either her ill-humour or her caprices. She left her to weary herself when she was not disposed to amuse her, and when the others were too much occupied to do so in her place. She was especially jealous of Fanny, because she knew that Fanny, who was sensible, and manifested a friendship for Agatha, would have paid her more attention than she herself cared to be at the trouble of paying.

The holidays were at hand: Eugenia was going to pass three weeks in the country, at her home, but Agatha, whose parents resided at a great distance, could not go away. Eugenia felt sorry to leave her, but she was consoled by the thought that Fanny was going as well as herself. It so happened that Agatha after being completely ennuyée during the first few days, took it into her head to work, in order to amuse herself. As Eugenia was not there for her to depend upon, she endeavoured to succeed by herself. She was praised for her application; this encouraged her, and she became so fond of working, that she made, especially in embroidery, astonishing progress. She mentioned nothing of this in her letters to Eugenia, as she wished to surprise her; but when the latter returned, Agatha showed her a beautiful bag that she had commenced. "It is very well," said Eugenia coldly, for she never willingly gave praise; then taking the work out of her hands, she was going to do some of it; but Agatha no longer wished any one to touch her work, and therefore prevented her. Eugenia became angry, and when Agatha asked her advice on some point, she
[Pg 190] said, "Oh, you can do very well without it, you have become so clever." Afterwards wishing to know for whom the work was intended, and Agatha refusing to tell her, she asserted that it was for Fanny, or for some new friend which she had made during her absence. Agatha merely laughed, and continued her work. However, she performed many little acts of friendship for Eugenia, who repelled them because she saw her also kind to her other schoolfellows, whom she was very glad to see again. The ill-humour of Eugenia was still further increased by finding that Agatha, who was now more industrious and more tractable, and disturbed the other girls less in their work and in their games, was better received among them, while she on her part felt more pleasure in their society. Still she always preferred Eugenia; but as the latter passed her time in quarrelling with her, they frequently separated in anger.

One day when Agatha had just finished her work-bag, had lined it with rose-colour, and had put in the strings, the girls showed it to one another, and admired it, and all were astonished at the progress she had made. Agatha, greatly pleased, glanced at Eugenia, who ought to have guessed her intention, but her ill temper completely blinded her.

"It is very tiresome," she said, "to hear people constantly talking of the same thing."

"What!" replied Agatha, "are you sorry to hear them speak well of me?"

"What does it signify to me," said Eugenia, "since you no longer love me." Then,
[Pg 191] taking the bag from the hands of the girl who held it, "Let me see this beautiful bag," she continued, "I am the only one to whom you have not shown it!" then seizing it roughly, she crumpled it, soiled it, and rolling it up into a little ball, she began running about and tossing it up in her hands. She thought it was for Fanny, because for two days she and Agatha had held long consultations together respecting the manner of putting in the strings. Agatha ran after her crying, and quite in despair at seeing her work thus pulled about. All the other girls also pursued Eugenia, who seeing herself surrounded, wanted to put it under her feet, in order to be able to

retain it, or perhaps to tear it to pieces. But just at the moment, when she was stooping down for this purpose, one of the girls pulled her by the dress and made her fall upon the grass. The bag was left free: Fanny picked it up and carried it in triumph to Agatha, who being the smallest had arrived the last. She threw herself upon Fanny's neck, exclaiming, "It was for Eugenia, it shall now be for you. It is you who shall be my friend." Eugenia, as she had only herself to blame, became all the more enraged, and declared that she would never have another friend.

Agatha, however, was grieved at having given her pain, and wished to be reconciled to her; even Fanny, who was kind and gentle, wanted to give up the bag to her; but Eugenia, still angry, declared that if she took it, it would only be to throw it over the garden walls; nor would she speak to Agatha, except to call her *a little ungrateful thing*.

"Did she owe you then much gratitude?" asked the governess.

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"Certainly she did, for all that I have done for her?"

"And what did she owe you for all that you have refused her?"

"Was I then obliged to yield to all her whims?"

"It would appear so, since you wished her to yield to all yours."

"That would have been a difficult matter to settle," said Eugenia pettishly.

"And you see that it has not been settled. What motive could Agatha have to induce her to comply with your wishes?"

"I complied with hers often enough."

"Yes, but when your inclinations were opposed, why should it be hers that must yield? For myself I cannot see why."

"It was because she did not love me."

"And because you did not love her either, since you did not yield to her more."

"I certainly loved her much more than she loved me, for I always wished to be with her; but as for her, so long as she was amused, it was much the same to her whether she was with me or not."

"You should then have tried to become necessary to her."

"I do not know how I should have done that."

"Nothing would have been more easy, if you had shown yourself pleased whenever she expressed pleasure, no matter whence that pleasure came. If, for instance, when Louisa called her to look at her book of prints, instead of being angry at her leaving you, you had appeared glad that she was going to be amused, then as her joy would

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have been increased, by her seeing you pleased, she would never have looked at a picture without wishing to show it to you; for her pleasure could never be perfect unless you partook of it, and she would have ended quite naturally, by not desiring those enjoyments which you could not share; but for this you ought to have begun by interesting yourself in her pleasures rather than in your own."

"It was hardly worth the trouble of loving her," said Eugenia bitterly, "if it was to have been for her pleasure, and not for my own."

"Then it was yourself that you loved, and not her."

This conversation did not correct Eugenia. She perceived, indeed, the truth of what had been said to her, but she was deficient in that sentiment of friendship which leads us to think of others before ourselves. As her first impulse, always, was to consider what she wished others to do for her, her second was a feeling of annoyance at their not having acted sufficiently to her liking; in such a case, it was useless to hope that she would think of what she owed to them. Always commencing by imagining that they had acted wrongly towards her, she did not consider herself under any obligation to them; she was ignorant of the delight that is experienced, in making a sacrifice for those we love; and being constantly dissatisfied with others, she never enjoyed the pleasure of feeling satisfied with herself.

She did not endeavour to make new friends in the school. What had passed between her and Agatha, and the conversations of the governess, had convinced her,

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that in order to do so, she had too much to overcome in her own disposition. Besides, the adventure of the embroidered bag had caused her companions to form a worse opinion of her than she deserved. She was therefore passing her time very drearily, when a great misfortune befel her. She lost her father, and this loss was the more grievous, as her mother had been long dead, and she was now consequently left quite an orphan. Her companions displayed much concern for her affliction, and especially Fanny, who, grieved at having given her pain, on account of Agatha, was constantly seeking opportunities of being with her. For a time, as all were occupied about her,

Eugenia was pleased with every one; and as this state of mind rendered her more gentle and considerate, they imagined that her character had altered, and again began to love her. But when, after having occupied themselves for some time with her griefs, her companions returned to their ordinary games and conversations, she was as much shocked at hearing them laugh, as if they had all lost their parents. The mistress one day found her in tears, and complaining that no one any longer took an interest in her misfortunes.

"Eugenia," said the governess, "who is there among your companions for whom, in a similar case, you would have interrupted for a longer period your ordinary occupations and amusements?"

Eugenia only replied by saying, "that no one loved her in that school, and that she wished she could leave it." This satisfaction was soon granted to her. Her father's life had been shortened by the grief occasioned by the bad state of his affairs. When he
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was dead, his creditors came together, and made a small annual allowance to his children; this, however, was not sufficient to defray the expenses of Eugenia's education, and that of her brother Edward, who was pursuing his studies in one of the colleges of Germany. It was therefore arranged that they should both be placed with a cousin, an elderly lady, who consented to be satisfied with the allowance made. Eugenia was transported with joy, at the thought of living with her brother, whom she had not seen for ten years, but who wrote her such charming letters, and who besides, as she was his only sister, ought certainly to love her better than any one else in the world.

She was still more enchanted when she saw him. She was then fourteen years of age, and her brother seventeen; he was tall and handsome, as well as mild, amiable, and intelligent. He was exceedingly kind to her, and promised to teach her all he knew himself; he told her that since they had no fortune, he must try to make one for them, and began by giving her half the little money he had brought with him from Germany. Eugenia wept for joy at the kindness of her brother. When he was gone, she could talk of nothing else. She asked all her companions, whether they had seen him, and whether they did not think him handsome; she related the slightest particular of their conversation, and all that he had done and all that he had seen: there was not a town through which he had passed the name of which she did not pronounce with some emphasis. If she forgot anything, she said, "I will ask him to-
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morrow when he comes." "Is he coming, then?" said the little ones, who, always inquisitive, had formed the project of putting themselves in ambuscade near the door, in order to see what Eugenia's brother was like. "Oh! he cannot fail," said Eugenia, with an air of importance; she already seemed to think that her brother lived only for her convenience, and had nothing to do but to come and see her.

The next day came, but Edward did not make his appearance. Eugenia, greatly agitated, watched the door and the clock. "He must have mistaken the hour," said she. But it was not the hour apparently, but the day that he had mistaken, for it passed and still he did not come. Neither did he make his appearance on the following day. Eugenia's heart was bursting with grief and vexation, and her annoyance was increased by the derision of the little girls, who incessantly repeated, "*Oh! he cannot fail to come*."

"I shall scold him well," said Eugenia, pretending to laugh. The following day she was sent for, as a person had come to take her to her cousin's house. She did not doubt that her brother had also come; but she only saw her cousin's old cook, who told her in a grumbling tone to make haste because the coach must only be kept an hour, and that it was already dear enough. But Eugenia did not understand her. Quite bewildered at not seeing Edward with her, she already thought herself forgotten and abandoned. She scarcely embraced her companions, who had surrounded her to bid her farewell, but throwing herself into the coach began to weep, while the cook kept grumbling between her teeth, "that it was well worth the
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trouble of coming to eat other people's bread only to complain under their very eyes." It was nevertheless certain that the small sum paid for the board of Eugenia and Edward was an advantage to their cousin, who was not rich; but the cook was avaricious, and out of humour, and did not reflect, so that thus she only saw the extra expense. Besides, she was accustomed to govern her mistress, who, provided she had every day a dinner which suited her dog and her cat, fresh chickweed for her birds, and nuts for her parrot, allowed the cook to do just as she pleased. The arrival of these two additional guests quite disconcerted her. Eugenia felt distressed and humiliated, but did not, however, dare to complain. She was no longer with persons to whom she had been accustomed to exhibit her ill humour, and her new position intimidated her. As to her cousin, with whom she was acquainted, she knew very well that she would not torment her, but she also knew that she would in no way trouble herself about her; and it was especially requisite to Eugenia's happiness that people should take an interest in her. Therefore it was of Edward alone that she thought. It was he whom she was anxious to see, in order to let the whole weight of her vexation fall upon him; it was on his account that she was careful on entering not to conceal her eyes too much under her bonnet, so that he might clearly see that she had been

weeping.

She entered the room, but he was not there. The table was laid, but only for two: she saw that Edward would not come, would not dine with her on the day of her
[Pg 198] arrival. She did not inquire for him, for she could not speak. Her cousin wished her good morning, just as if she had seen her on the previous evening, and did not even perceive that her eyes were red with crying. But the moment she began to eat her bosom swelled, and a sob escaped her which made her cousin raise her eyes.

"You are sorry to leave your school, my dear," she said; "that is quite natural, but you will soon get over that." Then, without thinking any more about it, or even troubling herself to see whether Eugenia was eating or not, she began to give the cat and dog their dinners, and to talk to Catau, who, being very ill-mannered, either did not reply at all or gave wrong answers, so that she had to repeat the same question twenty times over. After dinner, an old lodger in the house came up to play a game at piquet, which lasted until the evening. Eugenia could therefore torment or comfort herself, or sulk at her leisure, without there being any one to call her to account for it. At last she heard Edward arrive; she was so greatly delighted, that she endeavoured to frown as much as possible on receiving him, and succeeded so well in giving a gloomy expression to her face, that Edward, who ran eagerly to embrace her, drew back a step or two to inquire what was the matter with her.

"Oh! nothing is the matter with me," she said drily.

He insisted upon knowing, and as she persisted in giving similar answers to his inquiries, he at last pretty well conjectured the cause of her annoyance, and explained to her that during the last three days he had been occupied in visiting
[Pg 199] some of his father's relations, whom he wished to conciliate, in order to see if they could obtain any employment for him; and on this day he had been to visit one of them who lived at a considerable distance, and who could not be seen until four o'clock, so that he had been unable to return by dinner-time. He then reminded her, that it was very unreasonable to be so vexed, and tried to joke with her; but seeing that she neither yielded to reason nor pleasantry, he went off singing, and seated himself for a moment beside the piquet-players. Presently after he went to his room, having first gaily kissed his sister, in order to prove to her, that for his part he was not out of humour.

Eugenia was very much annoyed that he took the matter so easily; and although she had a little recovered, she thought she ought to preserve her dignity as an offended person. Thus, when Edward, on the following morning, asked her whether she would like him to give her some lessons in drawing, she replied coldly, "that she did not know, that she would see." Edward, believing that she was indifferent about the matter, did not urge it further, and she was very much annoyed that he had taken quite literally what she had said. He went out, and she became angry with him for leaving her, although she had not accepted his proposition to remain. He returned to dinner, greatly delighted at having met one of his old companions. His friend had introduced him to his father, and the latter had invited him to spend a few days with them in the country during the summer. Eugenia observed drily, that he was in a great hurry to leave them.

[Pg 200] "It is not just now, and it is only for a few days," replied Edward. "Would you not have taken advantage of a similar offer if it had presented itself to you?"

"Oh! as to that, no such offer would have been made to me."

"And is it then on this account that you are sorry I should profit by it?" said Edward, with still more gentleness than before.

Eugenia began to cry: she felt the injustice of that egotism, which could not endure that those she loved should enjoy any pleasure which she did not share; but it was in her heart, and she did not know how to conquer it. Edward kissed her, comforted her, and passed the whole evening with her, talking to her of their affairs, of his projects, and of a thousand other rational subjects. Eugenia, quite delighted, thought, when she went to bed, that no one could have a more amiable brother than herself. The following days passed off very well. He had proposed to her to employ a part of their mornings in reading English together, and this they had done; but as he was very anxious to gain information, he had been advised to attend some of the public lectures, and to visit the manufactories. The mornings being thus taken up, he proposed to defer the English until the evening; but Eugenia, who was displeased that the lesson did not take precedence of everything else, replied that she did not like studying at night. Edward said no more about the matter.

By degrees he ceased altogether to speak about his affairs. He would have had the greatest pleasure in giving her an account of his proceedings, but Eugenia was
[Pg 201] always annoyed at those occupations which took him away from home, and listened to his accounts of them in so cold and listless a manner, and sometimes even she was so much displeased, that, fancying she took no interest in his pleasures, he soon became silent, and did not again recur to them. Certain of not being able to speak a

word without giving her pain, he became uncomfortable and constrained in her society. In the evening, after having spent some time behind the piquet-table of his cousin, in studying his words, he either retired to his room, or went out. As for Eugenia, she could never go out, for her cousin was subject to rheumatism, and would not have dared to expose herself to the air; and, besides, would not have put herself out of the way on Eugenia's account. Tears often started into Edward's eyes, when he looked upon his sister, and thought of the melancholy life she led; but if he wished to speak a kind word to her, she repulsed him with so much asperity, that he renounced the hope of ever being able to render her happy.

As he was extremely sensible for his age, his father's friends had introduced him into several families, where he had been well received, and was sometimes invited to spend the evening with them. The idea that he could amuse himself while she was wearied to death, threw Eugenia into despair. The house that he mostly frequented, was that of Fanny's aunt, with whom Fanny had resided since she left school, as her mother had been long dead. Eugenia was indignant that Fanny had not sought to renew their acquaintance, though Edward had assured her that she had the greatest
[Pg 202] wish to do so, but was not permitted by her aunt, on account of their old cousin, whom she did not like. Eugenia persuaded herself, however, that Fanny had not done as much as she could have done. She was angry with the aunt, with the niece, and with Edward, who took pleasure in their society, and who no longer dared to speak to her of Fanny's amiability and kindness, as on two or three occasions he had attempted to do.

Eugenia sometimes saw Mademoiselle Benoît. This lady was the governess who had so vainly endeavoured to make her more reasonable. Her griefs were the only topic of their conversation, and Edward was the text.

"Oh! my poor Eugenia," said Mademoiselle Benoît, with an air of compassion, "why do you not love him more? You would then take an interest in his pleasures."

"No," replied Eugenia warmly; "it is because I love him, that I cannot endure that he should abandon me, to go and amuse himself and forget me."

Her disposition became daily more and more morose: a profound melancholy seemed to take possession of her mind; she no longer took pleasure in anything, and even her health began to give way. Edward perceived all this with the deepest grief, but without knowing how to remedy it. On the other hand, a situation which he had hoped to obtain had been given to another; an office in which he had been promised an engagement was never established; the money he had brought with him from Germany was all gone, and he saw nothing before him but unhappiness for both.
[Pg 203] Their mutual friendship would have alleviated it, but Eugenia's disposition marred everything.

One morning, when she was in the hall, she heard Edward, in the passage, talking to the cook.

"Catherine," said he, in a low voice, "could you not occasionally look to my linen? Nothing has been done to it since I have been here, and soon I shall not have a shirt that is not torn."

"Indeed," cried Catherine, in a very loud voice, probably that Eugenia might hear her, "I have so much time to amuse myself in that way! Give them to Mademoiselle Eugenia; she might very well undertake to keep them in order, but she thinks of nothing but playing the fine lady."

"Catherine," replied Edward, in a very firm though low voice, "Eugenia gives you no trouble, she asks no favours of you; and consequently, what she does, or what she leaves undone, does not concern you in any manner."

Eugenia, who had approached the door, did not lose a word of this reply: her heart beat with a joy such as she had not experienced for a long time. She would gladly have gone and embraced her brother, but she did not dare to do so; some undefinable feeling restrained her. However, she opened the door, when a servant came from Fanny's aunt, to invite Edward to pass the evening with them. He said that he would go. The heart of Eugenia was again oppressed: she closed the door. "That does not prevent him from going out to enjoy himself," she said. And she threw herself into a chair weeping, and thinking herself more unhappy than ever. The bare idea of what the cook had said, threw her into a violent passion, without, however,
[Pg 204] leading her to regret her negligence, so much did the thought of her own wrongs prevent her from thinking of those which she inflicted upon others.

At dinner she was more than usually sad, and Edward appeared sad too. A short time after they had left the table, he said that he was going to his own room to study; "And then to spend the evening out?" said Eugenia, with that tone of bitterness which had become habitual to her.

"No," said Edward, "I shall not go."

"And by what wonderful chance?"

Edward told her, that when he was going to dress, he had found his coat so much torn, that he was obliged to resolve on remaining at home.

"That," said Eugenia, "is what happens to me every day."

"Well, Eugenia," he replied, "if that can console you, it will henceforward also happen to me every day." With these words, he went out of the room. Eugenia saw that she had grieved him, and, for the first time in her life, she thought she might be in the wrong. It was, also, the first time she had seen Edward sad and unhappy, and this circumstance so occupied her mind, that she was prevented from thinking so much of herself. Nevertheless, she was not very sorry that he was obliged to remain in the house. When she returned to her room, she heard Catherine, who was very cross with him, crying out, that Madame did not understand having so many candles burnt, that there were none in the house, and that she would not give him any. Until that time, both Edward and Eugenia had bought candles for themselves, in order to
[Pg 205] avoid Catherine's ill temper; but now Edward had no money left. Whilst Catherine went away grumbling, Edward remained leaning against the wall, with his arms folded, and his head bent down. He was pale from the effort he had made to prevent himself from answering Catherine. Although it was beginning to get dark, Eugenia was so struck with the pallid and melancholy expression of his usually animated countenance, that at that moment she would have given the world to prevent his wanting anything. She timidly proposed to him to come and sit in her room, as she had still some candle left. He took his book, and commenced reading. Eugenia was careful not to interrupt him; it seemed as if she were afraid, that by hearing him speak, she should discover the extent of his melancholy; and, besides, what she most wished at this time, was to have Edward to do as he pleased. Two notes of invitation were brought to him, one to a concert, which was to take place the following day, and to which he had a great wish to go, the other to a ball, where he was to have danced with Fanny. He threw them into the fire. "All that is past;" he said, "I must think no more of it."

Oh, how these words pierced the heart of Eugenia! How she reproached herself for what she had said, and for the joy she had at first experienced. Edward went to bed early. As for herself, she could not sleep all night; she thought how wrong she had been in neglecting Edward's wardrobe, and she remembered that he had never even reproached her. She determined not to lose a moment in putting it in order. If she could also mend his coat! If he could go to the concert! She waited with great
[Pg 206] impatience until it was daylight, and until Edward had gone out in his morning wrapper. She then ran and took his coat, sought among her wools for one to match it, found one, and full of zeal, began her work; but the hole was so large, that she tried in vain to cover it. A dozen times she unpicked what she had done, and did it over again; but this kind of work upon a worn-out material only increased the evil. Greatly excited, all flushed and heated, the more she tried to get on, the less she advanced. At length, when she had almost lost all hope of success, she heard Edward return. She began to cry, and when he entered, he saw her with the coat upon her knees, and her eyes filled with tears.

"Here," said she, "I had hoped you might have been able to go to the concert, and I have only made the hole larger." Edward embraced her tenderly; he was delighted to find her attentive, and occupied about him; he called her his dear, his good Eugenia, but all these marks of affection only increased her tears. She could not reconcile herself to the thought of Edward's passing the whole winter without going out.

"I shall be like you then, my dear Eugenia," said Edward.

"Oh, don't think about me."

This was the first time she had made use of such an expression. It was the first time such a sentiment had entered her heart; but she had at length discovered that the griefs of those we love are much more distressing than our own.

As soon as Edward had left her room, she ran to her drawers, gathered together
[Pg 207] her few trinkets, and a louis that still remained of the money that Edward had given her, and wrote to Mademoiselle Benoît, telling her that she wanted most urgently to see her. Mademoiselle Benoît came that very evening. Eugenia told her everything, and said that with her trinkets and this money she must buy a coat for Edward; but the trinkets were of too little value to answer the purpose. Eugenia was in despair. Mademoiselle Benoît proposed a plan to her.

"I have taught you to make flowers," she said; "buy some materials, and I will lend you some instruments, and also assist you. The winter is coming on, ornaments will be required, we shall sell cheap, and shall have as many customers as we desire."

Eugenia embraced Mademoiselle Benoît in a transport of joy. All the vivacity she had formerly employed in making Agatha and her companions angry, now returned, and she determined to commence on the following day. She sometimes worked while

Edward was present, but the greater part of her work was executed in his absence. She would not lose an instant. All her cheerfulness and bloom returned, and Edward was astonished at the change. He thought it arose from her being no longer jealous at seeing him go out without her; and notwithstanding his kindness, he would sometimes have been tempted to be a little vexed, if the uneasiness she manifested when she saw him sad, and the industry with which she occupied herself, when not busy with her flowers, in putting his linen in order, had not led him to forgive what he regarded as a weakness.

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At length, after two months' work, the necessary sum was completed. The coat was ordered, made, brought home, and placed upon Edward's bed. Eugenia had learned from Mademoiselle Benoît, that Fanny's aunt was to give a ball, and she got Edward invited. He came home; she saw him pass, and trembled for joy. He beheld the coat, and could not conceive where it came from. Eugenia had no wish to conceal herself.

"It is I!" she exclaimed. "It is from my work—from my flowers; and here is a note inviting you to a ball at Fanny's this evening."

"What!" said Edward, "are you occupying yourself about my pleasures, while leading so dreary a life?"

"Oh! do not make yourself uneasy; I have discovered a plan of amusing myself; I shall work for you."

Edward was deeply moved; he could not express to his sister all the tenderness he felt for her, nor the esteem with which her conduct inspired him. She would let him have no peace, however, until he was dressed; until he had cast aside his old soiled coat, for the beautiful new one. She was never tired of looking at him, so much did she think him improved. She arranged his cravat and his hair. She was anxious that everything should be in order, and she hurried him to the ball, where she imagined that every one must be delighted to see him, and she felt inexpressible joy at beholding him depart. Mademoiselle Benoît, who came that evening to see her, found her as much animated as if she had been at the ball herself.

"Do you think you love your brother as much now," she said, smiling, "as when you were annoyed at his leaving you?"

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"Oh! a great deal more."

"And have you had to complain of him during these two months?"

"I have never even thought of such a thing."

"I think, indeed, my dear child," said Mademoiselle Benoît, "that an excellent plan to avoid complaining of people is to endeavour to render them pleased with us."

Edward returned home early. Eugenia scolded him for doing so; but he came because he had good news to tell her. Although, from a feeling of proper pride, he did not like to speak of his happiness, he, nevertheless, was not proud with Fanny, who was so kind and sensible; besides, he wanted to tell her what Eugenia had done for him. Whilst he was relating the affair, one of Fanny's relations, who was behind them, heard a part of what was said, and wished to learn the remainder. As he was Fanny's guardian, and a person in whom she had great confidence, she related the circumstance to him, and spoke, moreover, of Edward's position. This guardian was an excellent man; he conversed with Edward, and found that he possessed both intelligence and good feelings: he was a banker, and he told him that he would take him into his counting-house and give him a salary: and, indeed, Edward entered on his new duties the following day. His first month's salary was partly employed in purchasing a dress for Eugenia. She was sorry for it, though not excessively so, for the dress was so pretty, and it was so long since she had a new one. But the following month he bought her a bonnet to match the dress. This time, she scolded him seriously.

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"Very well," said he, "take my money, and let us spend it in common."

Eugenia became his manager; she bought nothing for herself, but she was delighted when she could put in order or mend any of Edward's clothes. She purchased, bargained, and economised for him, and was so careful of his money, that she would not always let him have some when he asked for it, so that he sometimes tried to steal a part of it from her, in order to make her presents.

Edward related to her every evening, what he had seen and what he had done. If sometimes she felt disposed to be a little vexed because he returned home rather later than usual, she took one of his shirts to mend, and thought no more of her ill humour. Mademoiselle Benoît, finding her once thus occupied, said to her, "You must allow, that when we make our happiness consist in the attentions which others bestow upon us, we may often be disappointed, because they are not always disposed to grant these attentions; whereas, when we make it consist in what we do for them, we have it always at our own command."

The banker's wife, who was as kind as her husband, had just returned from a journey; Edward soon spoke to her of Eugenia. She wished to see her: called on her, took her to her house, where Eugenia even passed some days with her, while their cousin, delighted at having saved her favourite canary from a violent attack of the cramp, troubled herself as little at seeing her go out as she had done at seeing her [Pg 211] stay within, wasting away with *ennui*. The banker's wife also introduced her to Fanny's aunt, and the two girls were soon united in the most tender friendship.

The affairs of Edward and Eugenia were arranged, they succeeded to a small inheritance, and are now in easy circumstances. A marriage is spoken of between Edward and Fanny, and it is also possible that Eugenia may marry the banker's son. She is very happy, since affection has conquered the defects of her character. She still finds them starting up occasionally, but when she feels disposed to be irritable, jealous, or exacting, she always succeeds, by dint of reasoning, in convincing herself that her ill humour is unjust; and if it be directed against any one she loves, she says, "*I suppose I do not yet love them sufficiently.*"

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MARIE;

OR THE FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

At the commencement of the revolution, Madame d'Aubecourt had followed her husband into a foreign country. In 1796, she returned to France, with her two children, Alphonse and Lucie, for, as her name did not stand on the list of emigrants, she was able to appear there without danger, and to exert herself to obtain permission for her husband's return. She remained two years in Paris with this intent; but at length, having failed in her efforts, and being assured by her friends that the time was not propitious for her purpose, she determined to quit the capital and proceed to the seat of her father-in-law, old M. d'Aubecourt, with whom her husband wished her to reside, until he was able to rejoin her: besides, having no resources but the money sent her by her father-in-law, she was glad to diminish his expenses by residing with him. Every letter which she received from him, was filled with complaints of the hardness of the times, and with reflections on her obstinacy, in persevering in such useless efforts; and to all this he never failed to add, that as
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for himself, it would be altogether impossible for him to live in Paris, since it was difficult enough for him to manage in the country, where he could eat his own cabbages and potatoes. These complaints were not suggested by poverty, for M. d'Aubecourt was tolerably rich, but like the majority of old people, he was disposed to torment himself on the score of expense, and his daughter-in-law perceived that however economically she might live in Paris, her only means of tranquillizing him, was to go and live under his own eyes.

She therefore set out with her children, in the month of January, 1799, for Guicheville, the estate of M. d'Aubecourt. Alphonse was then fourteen years of age, and Lucie nearly twelve: shut up for two years in Paris, where her mother, overwhelmed with business, had but little time to devote to them, they were delighted to go into the country, and were but little troubled about what she told them, respecting the great care they would have to take not to teaze and irritate their grandpapa, whom age and the gout had rendered habitually discontented and melancholy. They mounted the diligence full of joy; but as the cold gained upon them, their ideas sobered down. A night passed in the carriage served to depress them completely; and when, on the following evening, they reached the place where they were to leave the diligence, they felt their hearts as sad as if some terrible misfortune had just befallen them. Guicheville was still a league distant, and this they must travel on foot, across a country covered with snow, as M. d'Aubecourt had only sent a peasant to meet them with an ass to carry their luggage. When the man
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proposed starting, Lucie looked at her mother with a frightened air, as if to ask her if that were possible. Madame d'Aubecourt observed that as their conductor had managed to come from Guicheville to the place where they were, there was nothing to prevent them from going from that place to Guicheville.

As to Alphonse, the moment he regained the freedom of his limbs, he recovered all his gaiety. He walked on before them, to clear their way as he said, and to sound the ruts, which he called precipices. He talked to the ass, and endeavoured to make him bray, and in fact made such a noise, with his cries of, "*Take care of yourselves, take care of the bogs!*" that he might have been mistaken for a whole caravan; he even succeeded so well in cheering Lucie, that, on arriving at their destination, she had forgotten the cold, the night, and the snow. Their merry laugh as they crossed the court-yard of the château, called forth two or three old servants, who, from time immemorial, had not heard a laugh at Guicheville, and the great dog barked loudly at it, as at a sound quite unknown to him. They waited in the hall for some time, when presently M. d'Aubecourt appeared at the dining-room door, exclaiming, "What a racket!" These words restored quiet; and seeing all three of them wet and muddy, from head to foot, he said to Madame d'Aubecourt, "If you had only come six months ago, as I continually pressed you to do ... but there was no getting you to listen to reason." Madame d'Aubecourt gently excused herself, and her father-in-law ushered them into a large room with yellow wainscoting and red furniture, where, by the side
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of a small fire, and a single candle, her children had time to resume all their sadness. They presently heard Miss Raymond, the housekeeper, scolding the peasant, who had conducted them, because, he had put their packages upon a chair instead of upon the table. "See," she said, in a tone of ill temper, "they have already begun to put my house into disorder." The instant after, Alphonse, rendered thirsty by the exercise he had given his legs, went out to get a glass of water, and perhaps also to obtain a moment's recreation by leaving the room; he had the misfortune to drink out of his grandfather's glass, and Mademoiselle Raymond, perceiving it, ran to him, as if the house had been on fire.

"No one is allowed to drink out of M. d'Aubecourt's glass," she exclaimed: Alphonse excused himself by saying that he did not know it was M. d'Aubecourt's glass. Mademoiselle Raymond wished to prove to him that he ought to have known it;

Alphonse replied; Mademoiselle Raymond became more and more vexed, and Alphonse getting angry in his turn, answered her in no very polite terms, and then returned to the dining-room, slamming the door after him with considerable violence. Mademoiselle Raymond immediately followed him, and shutting the door with marked precaution, said to M. d'Aubecourt, in a voice still trembling with passion, "As you dislike any noise with the door, you will have the kindness to mention it yourself to your grandson; for, as to me, he will not allow me to speak to him." "What do you say, Mademoiselle?" replied M. d'Aubecourt, "is this the style in which children are brought up in the present day? must we bow to them?"

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Fortunately Madame d'Aubecourt was by the side of her son; she pressed his arm to prevent him from answering his grandfather, but he stamped his feet impatiently, and did not speak a word until supper-time. At table they ate but little, and spoke still less, and immediately after Madame d'Aubecourt asked permission to retire. When they were in the room which she and her daughter were to occupy, Lucie, who had until then restrained herself, began to cry, and Alphonse, walking about the room, in great agitation, exclaimed, "This is a pretty beginning!" then he continued, "Mademoiselle Raymond had better take care how she speaks to me again in that style."

"Alphonse," said his mother with some little severity, "remember that you are in your grandfather's house."

"Yes, but not in Mademoiselle Raymond's."

"You are where it is your grandfather's will that she should be treated with respect."

"Certainly, when she does not clamour in my ears."

"I believe, indeed, that you would not be guilty of any want of respect towards her, did she treat you as she ought to do."

"And if she does not, I owe her nothing."

"You owe her all that you owe to the wishes of your grandfather, to whom you would be greatly wanting in respect, were you capable of misconducting yourself towards a person who possesses his confidence. There are persons, Alphonse, whose very caprices we are bound to respect, for we ought to spare them even their unjust displeasure." Then she added, with more tenderness, "My dear children, you do not

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yet understand what caprice and injustice are; you have never been accustomed to them, either from your father or me; but you will do wrong to imagine that you will be able to pass your lives, as you have hitherto done, without having your rights infringed, or your actions restrained, when they are proper in themselves. You must now begin to learn,—you, Alphonse, to repress your hastiness, which may lead you into many serious faults, and you, Lucie, to overcome your weakness, which may render you unhappy." Then she added, smiling, "We will serve together our apprenticeship in patience and courage." Her children embraced her affectionately; they had unbounded confidence in her, and besides, there was so much sweetness in her disposition, that it was impossible to resist her. Lucie was quite consoled by her mother's words, and Alphonse went to bed, assuring her, however, that he was so much excited, that he should not be able to sleep the whole night. Nevertheless, he no sooner laid his head upon his pillow, than he fell into a sound sleep, which lasted until the following morning.

When he awoke, he was astonished to hear the warbling of the birds, for he had persuaded himself, since the previous evening, that they would not dare to sing at Guicheville. As for them, however, deceived by the warm sun and mild atmosphere, which melted the snow, they seemed to fancy that the spring was commencing. This idea rendered them quite joyous, and Alphonse began to be joyous also. He ran about the park in the *sabots* which his mother had bought for him on the previous evening:

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then he returned for his sister, whom, somewhat against her inclination, he dragged through the mud of the park, from which she did not so easily extricate herself as he did. At first she found her sabots very heavy, and very inconvenient: one of them she nearly left in a hole, and two or three times she almost gave up in despair. Alphonse sometimes assisted her; sometimes laughed at her, promising to harden her to it. He returned home, pleased with everything, and disposed to put up with a good deal from Mademoiselle Raymond, whom he found to be better tempered than on the previous evening.

Madame d'Aubecourt had not brought a maid with her. Mademoiselle Raymond, therefore, proposed that she should take into her service a young girl named Gothon, who was her goddaughter, and Madame d'Aubecourt accepted this proposal with her usual grace and sweetness, saying that, recommended by Mademoiselle Raymond, she was sure she would suit her. Mademoiselle Raymond, enchanted, drew herself up, bewildered herself in complimentary phrases, and ended by saying that Mademoiselle Lucie had her mother's sweet look, and that M. Alphonse, though a little hasty, was very amiable.

M. d'Aubecourt's temper experienced the good effects of this return to a friendly understanding. When Mademoiselle Raymond was out of humour, every one in the house was so likewise, for every one was scolded. She was naturally kind-hearted, but easily offended. Subject to prejudices, and being accustomed to have her own way, she feared everything that might interfere with her authority. But when she saw
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that Madame d'Aubecourt interfered with nothing in the house, she laid aside all the bitterness which had at first been produced by her arrival. M. d'Aubecourt, who had hesitated between the desire of spending less money, and the dread of the confusion which might result from the establishment of his daughter-in-law at the château, was comforted when he learned that Madame d'Aubecourt had refused to pay any visits in the neighbourhood, alleging that her present situation, and that of her husband, did not permit of her seeing any one. Besides, she was careful to conform to all his habits, so that everything went on smoothly, provided that Alphonse and Lucie scarcely spoke at dinner, because M. d'Aubecourt, accustomed to take his meals alone, asserted that noise interfered with his digestion; provided they were careful never to exceed a smile, for a burst of laughter would make M. d'Aubecourt start as violently as a pistol-shot; and provided they never entered his private garden, which he cultivated himself, and where every day he counted the buds and the branches. He could not without trembling see Alphonse, who was always impulsive and ever bustling from side to side, go into it, or even Lucie, whose shawl might accidentally catch and break some of the branches as she passed by.

Madame d'Aubecourt had been about six weeks at Guicheville, when she received a letter from her husband, informing her that one of their relations, little Adelaide d'Orly, was living at a village two leagues off. Adelaide was at that time about the age of Lucie; she had lost her mother at her birth, and had been placed at nurse with a peasant, on the estate of M. d'Orly. As she was extremely delicate, and had been
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benefited by the country air, she was left there a long time. The revolution having broken out, her father left France, and not being able to carry with him a child who was only three years old, he thought it best to leave her, for the present, with her nurse, hoping to be able to return soon, and take her away. Things turned out otherwise, however: M. d'Orly died soon after his arrival in a foreign land; his property was sold, and Adelaide's nurse having lost her husband, married again, and left the province, taking Adelaide with her, as she was now her sole protector. For a long time it was not known where she had gone to, but at last it was ascertained, and M. d'Aubecourt, who had received information of it from another relative, begged his wife to see her.

M. d'Orly was the nephew of old M. d'Aubecourt, and had been an intimate friend of his son's, whom at his death, he had entreated to take care of his daughter. M. d'Aubecourt had several times mentioned the matter in his letters to his father, but the latter had remained silent on the subject, from which the son had concluded that he was ignorant of the fate of the child. Such, however, was not the case, for the nurse having discovered, the year before, that he was Adelaide's grand-uncle, had come to see him. M. d'Aubecourt, who feared everything that might put him out of his way, or lead to expense, had tried to persuade himself that she had made a false statement, and that Adelaide was really dead, as had been rumoured. Mademoiselle Raymond, who did not like children, confirmed him in this opinion, which possibly
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she believed to be well founded, for we are always tempted to believe what we desire to be true. The nurse having met with an indifferent reception, and, besides, not caring to have Adelaide, whom she loved as her own child, taken from her, did not insist further, and the child, therefore, remained with her.

As soon as Madame d'Aubecourt had received this intelligence, she communicated it to her father-in-law, at the same time informing him of her intention of going to see Adelaide. M. d'Aubecourt appeared embarrassed, and Mademoiselle Raymond, who happened to be in the room, assured her that the roads were very bad, and that she would never be able to get there. Madame d'Aubecourt saw plainly that they were already in possession of the information which she had supposed herself the first to communicate, and she also perceived that her project was not very agreeable to M. d'Aubecourt; nevertheless, however great might be her desire to oblige him, she did not consider herself justified in renouncing her intention. Her extreme gentleness of disposition, did not prevent her from possessing great firmness in everything that she considered a duty. She set out then, one morning, with Lucie, who was enchanted at making acquaintance with her cousin, and with Alphonse, who was delighted at having to travel four leagues on foot.

As they approached the village, they asked each other what kind of person their cousin was likely to be, brought up as she was among the peasantry.

"Perhaps something like that," said Alphonse, pointing to a young girl, who, in company with two or three little boys, ran out to see them pass. There was a pool of
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water by the side of the road where they were walking, and the children, in order to see them closer, ran into it, splashing them all over. Alphonse wanted to throw stones at them, but his mother prevented him.

"It would be a good joke," said he, "if it turned out to be my cousin, at whom I was

going to throw stones."

Lucie exclaimed against such an idea, and one of the little boys having called the girl *Marie*, she was comforted by thinking that it was not her cousin Adelaide d'Orly, whom she had seen dabbling about with a troop of little idle urchins.

On reaching the cottage, in which Adelaide's nurse lived, they found her laid up with an illness resulting from debility, and from which she had suffered for six months. Madame d'Aubecourt having given her name, the poor woman recognised her, and said she was thankful to see her before she died, and that finding herself unable to go out, it had been her intention to ask the mayor to write to M. d'Aubecourt, "for," said she, "my child" (it was thus she always called Adelaide) "will have no one to look to when I am gone." She had lost her second husband; and had no children of her own, and she did not doubt that her brother-in-law would come and take possession of everything, and turn her child out of doors, who would not then have even bread to eat, for she had nothing to leave her; and the poor woman began to weep. She added, that she had been to see M. d'Aubecourt, who would not listen to her, and she went on to complain of the cruelty of Adelaide's relations, who thus left her a burden upon a poor woman like her. Madame d'Aubecourt interrupted
[Pg 223] her to inquire whether she had any documents. The nurse showed her an attestation from the mayor and twelve of the principal inhabitants of the parish which she had left, certifying that the child whom she took with her, was truly the daughter of M. d'Orly, and baptized under the name of *Marie Adelaide*, and also another from the mayor of the parish in which she was now residing, certifying that the girl living with her under the name of *Marie*, was the same that she brought with her into the parish, and whose age and description corresponded exactly with those of *Marie Adelaide d'Orly*.

"Marie," exclaimed Lucie, when she heard this name.

"Yes, indeed," said the nurse, "the Holy Virgin is her true patron; she has saved her in a dangerous illness: this is her only name in the village."

Lucie and her brother looked at each other, and Alphonse began to laugh, amused at the idea of having been on the point of throwing stones at his cousin. At this moment Marie made her appearance, singing in a loud voice, and carrying a faggot, which she had gathered. She threw it down as she entered, and was somewhat astonished on seeing with her nurse the very ladies whom she had splashed, and the young gentleman who was going to throw stones at her.

"Embrace your cousin, Marie," said the nurse, "if Mademoiselle will be so good as to allow you."

Marie did not advance a step, nor Lucie either.

"Oh! she also was made to wear fine clothes," continued the nurse, "but what more could a poor woman like me do?"

Madame d'Aubecourt assured her that all the family were under great obligations
[Pg 224] to her, and Lucie, on a sign from her mother, went, blushing, and embraced her cousin. It was not pride that had at first withheld her, but the idea of having a peasant cousin had astonished her; and everything that astonished, also embarrassed her. Marie, equally surprised, had allowed herself to be kissed, without moving, or without returning the salutation. Madame d'Aubecourt took her by the hand, and drew her kindly towards her, remarking how much she resembled her father. The resemblance, in fact, was striking. Marie was very pretty; she had fine dark, brilliant, though at the same time very soft eyes; but the way in which she had been brought up, had given a certain brusquerie to her manners. She had beautiful teeth, and would have had a pretty smile, had it not been spoiled by awkwardness, shyness, and the habit of making grimaces. Her complexion, somewhat sun-burnt, was animated, and glowing with health; she was well formed, tall for her age, and had it not been for her awkward carriage, would have displayed nobility even under her coarse dress. It was impossible to make her raise her head, or answer a single word to Madame d'Aubecourt's questions. Her nurse was in despair: "That is the way with her," she said; "if she takes a thing into her head, you will never get it out of it;" and she began scolding Marie, who did not appear in the slightest degree moved by what she said. Madame d'Aubecourt made an excuse for her, on account of her embarrassment, and said that she had a gentle look. The nurse immediately began praising her with as much warmth as she had displayed in scolding her. Marie smiled, and looked at her with affection, but still without saying a word, or stirring from her place.

[Pg 225] Madame d'Aubecourt promised the nurse that she should soon hear from her again, and took away the documents relating to Marie, and which the nurse, with some hesitation, confided to her. She felt sure that she should be able to induce her father-in-law to receive Marie; he was her nearest relative in France, and it was quite impossible that he should not feel what duty required of him in regard to her; still she well knew how much annoyance this would cause him. The children could talk of

nothing else during their return to Guicheville, and M. d'Aubecourt awaited, with some anxiety, the result of the visit. He had nothing to oppose to the proofs she brought with her; nevertheless he said that further information was necessary. Madame d'Aubecourt wrote to every one whom she thought likely to give her any. All agreed with the first. There was, therefore, no longer any doubt of Marie's being really Adelaide d'Orly.

Then M. d'Aubecourt said, "I will think of it;" but the nurse, feeling herself worse, and not hearing from Madame d'Aubecourt, who had been prevented from going to see her, by a severe cold, had got the mayor to write to M. d'Aubecourt. It was also known, since Marie had been talked about at the château, how much people complained in the neighbourhood, of his neglect of his grandniece. Madame d'Aubecourt's visit to the nurse had spread the intelligence, that at last he was going to receive her. He heard this mentioned by the Registrar, by the Curé, and especially by Mademoiselle Raymond, who was much annoyed at it, and who, consequently, was
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perpetually talking of it. In order, therefore, to get rid of a subject which tormented him, he gave his consent in a moment of impatience, and Madame d'Aubecourt hastened to take advantage of it, for she felt extremely anxious about the situation of Marie, and grieved that so much time should not merely be lost to her education, but actually employed in giving her a bad one.

Having sent to inform the nurse of the day on which she would fetch Marie, Madame d'Aubecourt and her children set off one morning, mounted upon donkeys. The one that was to carry Marie, being mounted by a peasant girl, whom Madame d'Aubecourt had engaged to attend the nurse during her illness, which she was grieved to see would not be of long duration. As she could not reward her for all that she had done for Marie, she wished at least to do all that was in her power for her. She had already sent her some medicines suited to her condition, and some provisions rather more delicate than those to which she was accustomed, and she had learned with great satisfaction, that this good woman was in comparatively easy circumstances.

When they reached the cottage they found the door locked. They knocked, but remained for some time unanswered, and Madame d'Aubecourt began to feel excessively uneasy, for she feared the nurse might be dead, and in that case what had become of Marie? At length, the nurse herself, notwithstanding her debility, came and opened the door, telling them that she had been obliged to fasten it, as on the previous day, Marie, imagining that it was the one fixed for her departure, had fled from the house, and did not return until night, and she had been anxious to
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prevent the recurrence of the same thing on that day. Marie was standing in a corner, her eyes swoln and red with crying. She no longer wept, but stood perfectly motionless, and silent. Madame d'Aubecourt approached, and gently endeavoured to induce her to accompany them, promising that she should return to see her nurse. Lucie and Alphonse went to kiss her, but she still continued fixed and silent. Her nurse exhorted her, scolded her, and then began to grieve and weep at the idea of losing her. But all this did not extract a single syllable from Marie, only when she saw her nurse weep the tears rolled down her own cheeks. At length, Madame d'Aubecourt seeing that nothing was to be gained by these means, went over to her, and taking her by the arm, said in a firm tone, "Come, come, Marie, this will not do; have the kindness to come with me immediately." Astonished at this authoritative tone, to which she was not accustomed, Marie allowed herself to be led. Alphonse took her other arm, saying, "Come along, cousin." But when she came near her nurse, she threw her arms round her, weeping and sobbing as if her heart would break. The nurse wept as violently as the child, and Madame d'Aubecourt, though herself greatly affected, was nevertheless obliged to exercise her authority in order to separate them.

At length Marie was mounted on her donkey, she went on in silence, only now and then allowing large tears to escape from her eyes. By degrees, however, she began to laugh at the caracoles which Alphonse endeavoured to make his animal perform. All
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at once Lucie's donkey began to bray, and was going to lie down. Marie jumped off hers before either of the others, and ran to Lucie's assistance, who was crying out and unable to retain her seat. She scolded and beat the animal, and at length reduced him to obedience; but perceiving that he was about to recommence, she insisted that Lucie should mount hers, which was more gentle, saying that she would soon manage the other. This little incident established a good understanding between the two cousins. Marie began to be cheerful, and to defy Alphonse in the race, and had quite forgotten her griefs and troubles, when, on arriving at Guicheville, the sight of Mademoiselle Raymond and M. d'Aubecourt, again rendered her silent and motionless. She was, however, soon roused by Mademoiselle Raymond's dog, who came forward barking with all his might. Like the generality of dogs brought up in the house, he had a great antipathy to ill-dressed people, and Marie's dress quite shocked him. He rushed upon her as if about to bite her, but Marie gave him so violent a kick, that it sent him howling into the middle of the room. Mademoiselle Raymond ran forward and took him up in her arms, with a movement of anger which sufficiently announced all she was going to say, and which

she would have said without hesitation, had not the presence of Madame d'Aubecourt in some degree restrained her. Alphonse forestalled her by saying, that if her dog had been better brought up, he would not have drawn such treatment upon himself. Mademoiselle Raymond could no longer contain herself. Madame d'Aubecourt, by a sign, imposed silence upon her son, who was about to reply. This
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sign, though not addressed to Mademoiselle Raymond, nevertheless obliged her also to restrain her feelings, and she left the room, carrying with her her dog and her resentment.

From this moment war was declared. Zizi, who did not forget the kick which Marie had given him, never saw her without showing his teeth, and if he came too near her, another kick sent him off again, without softening his resentment. Alphonse never met him without threatening him, either with his hand or his cane, and Mademoiselle Raymond, constantly occupied in running after her dog, and protecting him from his enemies, had not a moment's repose between her fears for Zizi's safety and her aversion for Marie, whose follies she eagerly seized upon; and Marie's follies were almost as frequent as her actions.

However, she did not often commit any before M. d'Aubecourt; she scarcely dared either to speak or move in his presence. At meals, during the first few days, it was impossible to make her eat; but as soon as they had risen from table, she could take a large slice of bread, and eat it while running in the garden, where Alphonse speedily joined her. With him she agreed better than with any one else in the house. Both were gay, livery, thoughtless, and enterprising, and vied with each other in all kinds of tricks and follies. Marie, who was very expert, taught Alphonse to throw stones at the cats, as they ran along the leads, and during this apprenticeship he had twice managed to break some panes of glass, one of which belonged to the window of Mademoiselle Raymond's room. In return, he taught his cousin to fence, and they
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often entered the house with their faces all scratched. Marie had also a method of pinning up her dress, so as to enable her to climb upon the trees and walls. Madame d'Aubecourt sometimes surprised her while engaged in this amusement, and reprimanded her severely. Marie immediately became quiet and modest, for she felt great respect for Madame d'Aubecourt, and would never have thought of disobeying her to her face, but as soon as she was out of sight, whether from thoughtlessness, or from not being aware of the necessity of obedience, a thing to which she had never been accustomed, she seemed to forget all that had been said to her. Alphonse occasionally reminded her of it, and to him she willingly listened, for she had great confidence in him. Neither was she obstinate, but she had never been taught to reflect, and her thoughts seldom extended beyond the moment; so that when she took a fancy into her head, she could think of nothing else. She spoke but little, and was almost constantly in motion. Motion, indeed, seemed to constitute her very existence. When her timidity compelled her to remain quiet, this repose was not turned to any advantage, in the way of reflection: the constraint she felt absorbed her mind, and she could think of nothing but the speediest means of escaping from it. Unlike other children, she made no remarks on what she saw around her. When asked whether she did not think the château de Guicheville much more beautiful than her nurse's cottage, she replied that she did; still she never thought of enjoying its comforts and conveniences, and she had more pleasure in sitting upon the tables
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than upon the chairs. Madame d'Aubecourt had a frock made for her like the every-day dress worn by Lucie, and she was delighted at seeing herself attired like a lady, but she always managed to have it too much on one side or the other, while the string belonging to the neck was very usually tied with that which belonged to the waist. She was constantly forgetting to put her stockings on, and her hair, which had been cut and arranged, was almost always in disorder. A pair of stays had been made for her, and she allowed them to be put on without any opposition, for she never resisted; but the moment afterwards the lace was burst and the bones broken; they were mended two or three times, and at length given up. On one occasion, Madame d'Aubecourt had sent her, accompanied by Gothon, to see her nurse. While the girl was gone into the village to execute a commission, Marie made her escape into the fields, in order to avoid being taken back. Half a day was consumed in seeking for her, and everything was in commotion at Guicheville, on account of the uneasiness occasioned by her protracted absence.

All these facts were carefully noted by Mademoiselle Raymond; nor had she any trouble in becoming acquainted with them, for they formed a perpetual subject of conversation between Lucie and Gothon. Lucie could not reconcile herself to the manners of her cousin; besides, her arrival at Guicheville had afforded her very little amusement, for Madame d'Aubecourt, fearful lest she should contract any of Marie's bad habits, left them but little together. Lucie, too, saw much less of her brother than formerly, for the moment he had finished his lessons, he ran off in search of Marie, to
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join him in those sports which were little suited to his sister's disposition, so that she sought amusement in discussing the new subjects for blame or astonishment, which Marie's conduct perpetually supplied. Gothon, her *confidante*, spoke of them in her turn to her godmother, Mademoiselle Raymond, and Mademoiselle Raymond discussed them with M. d'Aubecourt. He attached but little importance to them, so long as they did not decidedly affect himself; but after some time, when Marie had

become accustomed to the persons and things about her, the circle of her follies widened, and at last reached him. Since she had dared to speak and move at table, she seldom spoke without a burst of noise; and if she turned round to look at anything, it was with so hasty a movement, that she upset her plate upon the floor, or shook the whole table. If she climbed upon an arm-chair in the drawing-room, for the purpose of reaching anything, she upset the chair, and fell with it, breaking one of its arms, and with the foot tearing a table-cover, which happened to be near it. Alphonse had frequently warned her not to enter his grandfather's garden; but this advice was forgotten as soon as the garden happened to be the shortest way from one place to another; or that the shuttlecock had chanced to fall into it, or that she wanted to pursue a cat, or a butterfly. On such occasions, M. d'Aubecourt always found a branch broken off, a rose-bush or a border trodden down; and Mademoiselle Raymond, whose window looked upon the garden, had always seen Marie either going in, or coming out of it. These multiplied vexations tormented M. d'Aubecourt
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all the more, from his not complaining of them openly, but only by indirect allusions, as is often the case with the aged. Sometimes he would say that, at his time of life, one could seldom hope to be master of his own house, and that it was natural that people should trouble themselves very little about the aged, or their inconveniences. At another time, he would assure them that they might do just what they pleased with his garden, and that he should not trouble himself any more about it. Madame d'Aubecourt understood all this, and was greatly grieved, and as she perceived that Marie's presence occasioned him a constantly increasing annoyance, she kept her away from him as much as possible.

But the necessity of doing this was very painful to her, for she felt that the only means of making anything of Marie was by gaining her confidence, which could only be done by degrees; by seldom quitting her, by taking an interest in what amused and pleased her, by endeavouring to give her an interest in things with which she was as yet unacquainted, by talking to her, in order to oblige her to reflect, and thus implant some ideas in her mind, which was naturally quick enough, but totally devoid of culture. Could she have followed her own wishes, she would, in the first instance, have overlooked all faults arising from impetuosity, want of reflection, or ignorance, reserving her severity for grave occasions, or rather without making use of any severity, she might have succeeded in leading Marie by the sole desire of giving her satisfaction. Whereas, instead of that, obliged to be incessantly scolding her for faults slight enough in themselves, but seriously annoying to M. d'Aubecourt, she had
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no means of insisting, with particular emphasis, on more important matters. Besides, it happened that, for the first time in his life, M. d'Aubecourt had a violent attack of the gout, and as he was unable to walk, the society of his daughter-in-law had become indispensable to him, and she seldom quitted his room; so that Marie was more than ever left to herself, with no other guardian or preceptor than Alphonse.

Nor was he altogether useless to her. Her want of sense rendered him more reasonable: the defects of her education made him appreciate the advantages he had derived from his own; he corrected her whenever she made use of any vulgar expressions; he taught her to speak French, and scolded her if she happened to repeat any word for which she had already been reprimanded, and by his mother's advice he made her repeat the reading lesson which Madame d'Aubecourt gave him every morning. Marie took great pleasure in doing everything required by Alphonse, who was fond of her, and liked to be with her, and whose presence never embarrassed her, as he had similar tastes with herself. Therefore, when she had read well, and he perceived she took pains to pronounce the words he had taught her, he would not patiently suffer her to be found fault with; and he was fond of boasting of her dexterity and intelligence in their games, and of the vivacity and at the same time gentleness of her disposition.

And in truth, as he observed to his mother, no one had ever seen Marie in a passion, nor had she ever been known to exhibit any impatience at being kept
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waiting, or any irritability when contradicted. Always ready to oblige, the ball of worsted had no sooner fallen on the floor, than she had picked it up, and she was always the first to run and fetch Madame d'Aubecourt's handkerchief from the other end of the room. If, while eating her breakfast, she saw any poor person, she was sure to give him almost the whole of her bread; and one day, when a cat had flown at Zizi, and was biting him, Marie, notwithstanding the scratching and anger of the animal, tore him from Zizi's back, where he had already drawn blood, and threw him to a great distance; at the same time becoming angry with Alphonse, for the first time in her life, because he laughed at Zizi's predicament, instead of trying to extricate him. Alphonse laughed still more at his cousin's anger, but he related the circumstance to his mother. Lucie, who had also seen what Marie had done, told Gothon of it, and she informed Mademoiselle Raymond; but Mademoiselle Raymond was so much excited against Marie, that she would not have been moved by anything that came from her, even had Zizi himself related it to her.

However, these various manifestations of Marie's kindness began to increase her cousin's affection for her. The feast of Corpus Christi was drawing near, and Lucy had worked for several days with great industry upon an ornament, designed for the

altar which was to be erected in the court-yard of the château. Marie had watched her working with much pleasure; she had a great respect for the ceremonies of the church, and this was about the whole amount of the religious education her nurse had been able to impart to her. Deprived for a long time of the clergy and the mass,
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the poor woman had regretted them exceedingly, and when the practices of religion were re-established, she experienced great delight, in which Marie shared, though without very well knowing why, for her knowledge did not extend very far; but she was always angry when the little boys of the village made use of any irreligious expressions, and told them that God would punish them. She had learned by heart the prayers, in order to sing them at church with the priests, and Lucie was somewhat embarrassed by this, because it attracted attention to them; but Madame d'Aubecourt allowed her to continue the practice, as she sung with earnestness, and was thereby kept quiet in church. She was fond of going to church, because her nurse had told her to pray for her; and now she thought she was performing a meritorious act, in standing by Lucie's frame, while the latter worked the ornament for the altar, and assisting her by cutting her silks, threading her needles, and handing her the scissors.

Since the day that she made her escape into the fields in order to avoid returning to Guicheville, she had never been allowed to visit her nurse; this favour was denied under pretence of punishing her, but in reality because the poor woman was so ill that she no longer seemed conscious of anything. Madame d'Aubecourt had been several times to see her, but without being recognised. She took care that she wanted nothing that could alleviate her condition, but she was anxious to spare Marie so sad a scene. Marie, taken up with a crowd of objects, only thought of her nurse occasionally, and then she manifested great impatience to go and see her. She
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had no idea of her being in danger, and flattered herself, as she had been led to expect, that when she recovered, she would come to Guicheville. The evening before the fête, being in the yard, she saw a peasant who had come from the village in which her nurse lived. She ran to him, asked him how her nurse was, and whether she would soon be able to come to Guicheville.

"Oh! poor woman," said the peasant, shaking his head, "she will go nowhere but to the other world, every one says that she will not be long here."

Marie was struck as with a thunderbolt. This idea had never occurred to her. Pale and trembling, she asked the man whether her nurse had got worse, and how and when she had become so.

"Oh! Mademoiselle Marie," said he, "ever since you left her she has been declining; that is what has brought her to the state she is in."

He was, however, wrong in this opinion, for during the few conscious moments that she had enjoyed since Marie's departure, she had greatly rejoiced that her mind was at rest on her account, but what the man had said was the rumour of the village. Marie, weeping and sobbing, ran to find Alphonse, for she was afraid to address herself directly to Madame d'Aubecourt, and she entreated him to ask his mother to let her go and see her nurse. "I will come back," she said, clasping her hands; "tell her that I promise to come back the moment Gothon tells me." Alphonse much moved, rose to beg his mother to grant the permission which Marie solicited; he met his sister, who whispered to him that they had just learnt that the nurse had died the
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previous evening,—the peasant had slept at the town, and therefore was not aware of what had happened. Marie, who followed Alphonse at some distance, saw him stop to speak to Lucie, and exclaimed, "Oh! do not prevent him from asking if I may go to see her, I promise you I will return." Her look was so suppliant, and the expression of her sorrow so intense, that Lucie had great difficulty in restraining her tears while listening to her. They made a sign to her to tranquillize herself, and hastened to their mother to state her request.

Madame d'Aubecourt did not wish to inform her at that moment of her nurse's death, for though Marie had usually excellent health, yet during the last few days she had exhibited, on two or three occasions, feverish symptoms, consequent upon her rapid growth, and Madame d'Aubecourt was afraid that this intelligence might be injurious to her. She hastened to Marie and endeavoured to calm her, promising that in a few days she should do as she wished, but that at the present moment it was impossible, as Gothon, Lucie, and herself were busy in working for the festival of the following day. She assured her also, that it was quite a mistake to suppose that it was her departure which had made her nurse so ill, and at length she succeeded in tranquillizing her a little. But for the first time in her life, Marie experienced a sorrow which fixed itself upon her heart, and would not leave it. She thought of her poor nurse, of the last time she had embraced her, of her grief when she saw her depart, and then she uttered cries of anguish. She prayed to God, and several times
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in the night she woke Lucie, by repeating, in an under-tone, as she kneeled on her bed, all the prayers she knew. She thought that the following day, being a grand festival, it would be the most favourable time to beg of God to restore her nurse to health, and as her devotion was not very rational, she imagined that to merit this grace, the best thing she could do was to contribute to the adornment of the altar,

which was to be erected in the court-yard of the château. She therefore rose before it was light, and left her room unheard, for the purpose of seeking, in a particular part of the park, for some flowers which she had observed growing there, and of which she intended to make some bouquets and garlands; but on reaching the spot, she perceived, to her great grief, that a heavy rain which had fallen the evening before, had destroyed all the blossoms on the trees. She could not find a single branch that was not faded, and in the rest of the park there were scarcely any but lofty trees. She saw no chance of meeting with anything of which she could make a bouquet. Whilst looking about, however, she passed by M. d'Aubecourt's garden, which at daybreak exhaled a delightful perfume; she thought that if she were to take a few flowers they would not be missed. She began by gathering them cautiously, in different places; then, when she had plucked a very beautiful one, another like it was requisite to form a pendant, on the other side of the altar; thus her zeal, and her love of symmetry, led her at every moment into fresh temptations, and then she remembered that M. d'Aubecourt had the gout, that he could not leave the house, and would not see his
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flowers, that they would be of no use to any one and that no one would know what she had done: at last she forgot all prudence, and the garden was almost entirely stripped.

Just as she had finished her collection, she perceived from the terrace, the peasant who had spoken to her, passing along the road, at the bottom of the park; she called to him and begged him to tell her nurse not to be too much grieved, that she should soon go and see her, for they had promised to allow her to do so.

"Oh! poor woman," said the man, "you will never see her again, Mademoiselle Marie, they are deceiving you, but that is not my business."

With these words he struck his horse, and galloped off. Marie, in the greatest anxiety, threw down her flowers, and ran into the yard, to see if she could find any one who could explain to her what the man meant. She saw the kitchen-maid, who was drawing water from the well, and asked her whether Madame d'Aubecourt had sent the previous evening to inquire about her nurse. "Sent, indeed!" said the girl, "it was not worth while." Marie became dreadfully uneasy, and began to question her, but the girl refused to reply. "But why," said Marie, "why did Peter tell me I should never see her again?"

"I suppose," replied the servant, "he had his own reasons for saying so," and she went away, saying that she must attend to her work. Marie, though it had not yet occurred to her that her nurse was dead, nevertheless was very unhappy, for she perceived that something was concealed from her, and being timid in asking questions, she was at a loss to know how to obtain the information she wanted. At
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this moment she perceived one of the small doors of the yard open. She had so long been in the habit of running alone in the fields, that she could not believe there was any great harm in doing so, and, accustomed to yield to all her emotions, and never to reflect upon the consequences of her actions, she ran out while the servant's back was turned, determined to go herself and learn something about her nurse.

She walked as fast as she could, agitated with anxiety, at one moment for her nurse, at another for herself. She knew she was doing wrong, but having once begun, she continued. She thought of what Alphonse would say, who, though always ready to excuse her before others, would, nevertheless, scold her afterwards, and sometimes severely enough, and she remembered her promise to him, only a few days before, to be more docile, and more attentive to what Madame d'Aubecourt said to her. She thought, too, that it might be for her want of due submission, that God had thus punished her, for she had yet to learn that it is not in this world that God manifests his judgments. However, she did not think of returning; she felt as if she could not go back; and then the idea of seeing her nurse again, and of comforting her, filled her with anticipations of pleasure, which it was impossible for her to renounce. Poor Marie! the nearer she drew, the more she dwelt upon all this, and the more lively became her joy. The anxieties which had tormented her, began to vanish. She hurried on, reached the village, ran to her nurse's door, and found it closed: she turned pale, but yet without daring to conjecture the truth.

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"Has my nurse gone out?" was all she could ask of a neighbour, who was standing at her door, and who looked at her with an air of sadness.

"She has gone out, never to return," was the reply. Marie trembled, and with clasped hands leaned against the wall.

"She was carried to her grave yesterday evening," added the woman.

"To her grave!... Yesterday!... How?... Where have they taken her?"

"To Guicheville; the cemetery is at Guicheville."

Marie experienced an emotion indescribably painful, on learning that, the evening before, and so near to her, the funeral had taken place, without her knowledge. She recollected having heard the tolling of the bells, and it appeared to her, that not to have known it was for her poor nurse they were tolled, was like losing her a second

time; then, as the thought of never seeing her again passed before her mind, she sat down on the ground by the door, and wept bitterly.

During this time, the neighbour told her that her nurse had regained her consciousness a few hours before her death, and had prayed to God for her little Marie, and had also spoken of her to the Curé of Guicheville, whom Madame d'Aubecourt had sent to see her. Marie wept still more. The woman tried to induce her to return to Guicheville, but she would not listen to it. At length, after she had cried for a long time, the good woman took her to her cottage, and succeeded in making her drink a little milk, and eat a piece of bread, when, seeing her more calm,
[Pg 243] she again endeavoured to persuade her to return home. But Marie, who was now capable of reflection, could not endure the idea of facing Madame d'Aubecourt, whom she had disobeyed: still, what was to become of her? Her sorrow for the loss of her nurse was redoubled. "If she were not dead," said she, sobbing, "I should have remained with her." But these regrets were to no purpose: this the neighbour tried to make her understand, and this Marie felt but too well; nevertheless, as her reason did not restrain her when she was about to leave Guicheville, neither did it in the present instance induce her to return, although she knew it was necessary; but Marie had never learned to make use of her reason, to control either her impulses, her wishes, or her antipathies.

At length, the woman perceiving, after two hours of entreaty, that she could gain nothing, and that Marie still continued there, either pensive or crying, without saying a word or deciding on anything, she determined to send to Guicheville, and inform Madame d'Aubecourt; but when she returned from the fields, where she had gone to seek her son to send him with the message, Marie was not to be found. She sought for her in vain through the whole village, and at length learned that she had been seen going along a road which led to Guicheville. She immediately suspected that she must have gone to the cemetery, and in fact Marie had gone there, but not by the direct way, for fear of meeting any of the inmates of the château. As the boy had not yet started, his mother ordered him to take the shortest way to the house, and tell them that it was in the direction of the cemetery they must look for Marie.

[Pg 244] During Marie's absence, a terrible scene had been enacted at the château. M. d'Aubecourt, who she imagined would be confined to his room for another week, feeling much better, wished to take advantage of a lovely morning to go and see his garden. As he approached it, leaning on the arm of Mademoiselle Raymond, he perceived Marie's hat half-filled with the flowers which she had collected, and part of which lay scattered on the ground, where she had dropped them, after having spoken to the peasant. He recognised his streaked roses, and his tricoloured geraniums; he picked them up, anxiously examined them, and looked at Mademoiselle Raymond, who, shaking her head, observed, "It is Mademoiselle Marie's hat." He hurried on to his garden; it seemed as if an enemy had passed through it: branches were broken, bushes had been separated in order to get at a flower which happened to be in the midst of them, and one border was quite spoiled, for Marie had fallen upon it with her whole length, and in her fall had broken a young sweetbrier, recently grafted.

M. d'Aubecourt, whose sole occupation and pleasure consisted in his flowers, and who was accustomed to see them respected by every one, was so disturbed at the condition in which he beheld his garden, that the shock, increased, perhaps, by the effect of the air, or by his having walked too fast, made him turn pale, and lean on the arm of Mademoiselle Raymond, saying that he felt faint. Greatly frightened, she called out for assistance. At this moment, Madame d'Aubecourt came up: she was calling for Marie, and very uneasy at not finding her anywhere.

[Pg 245] "You want Mademoiselle Marie," said Mademoiselle Raymond: "see what she has done!" and she pointed to M. d'Aubecourt, to the pillaged garden, and to the hat filled with flowers. Madame d'Aubecourt did not in the least understand what all this meant, but she hastened to her father-in-law, who said to her in a feeble voice, "She will kill me." He was carried to his bed, where he remained a long time in the same state. He experienced suffocating paroxysms, which scarcely permitted him to breathe. The gout had mounted to his chest, and they feared every moment that he would be stifled. Madame d'Aubecourt perceiving that the mere name of Marie redoubled his agitation, endeavoured, though in vain, to impose silence on Mademoiselle Raymond, who was incessantly repeating, "It is Mademoiselle Marie who has brought him to this condition." Lucie, quite ignorant of what had happened, came to tell her mother that Marie was nowhere to be found, and that perhaps it would be advisable to send some one to the village, where her nurse had resided.

"Yes! look for her everywhere," said M. d'Aubecourt in a low voice, interrupted by his difficulty of breathing. "Yes! look for her everywhere, in order that she may kill me outright."

Madame d'Aubecourt entreated him to be calm, assuring him that nothing should be done but what he wished, and that Marie should not come into his presence without his permission.

In the mean time, the news of what Mademoiselle Raymond called Marie's

wickedness, soon spread through the château. Alphonse was thunderstruck, not that
[Pg 246] he believed in any bad motive on the part of his cousin, but, accustomed to respect his own duties, he could not conceive how any one could so forget themselves. Lucie, who was beginning to be fond of Marie, felt grieved and anxious; the servants talked over the matter amongst themselves, without much regretting Marie, who had not made herself loved by them; for it is not enough to be kind-hearted, it is necessary to use sufficient reflection to render our kindness agreeable and beneficial to others. Marie, sometimes familiar with the servants, would very often not listen to them when they spoke to her, or would deride their remonstrances. She always laughed when she saw the cook, who was deformed, pass by, and she had several times told the kitchen-maid that she squinted. She had never asked herself whether these remarks gave pain or pleasure to those to whom they were addressed.

Almost the whole of the morning was passed in anxiety, and the man who had been sent to the village, had not returned, when the Curé came to the château, and requested to see Madame d'Aubecourt. As he was leaving the church, after having finished the service, he met the son of the neighbour with whom Marie had spoken, and being acquainted with him, he asked him if he knew what had become of Marie, for he had been informed of her disappearance. The peasant told him what had taken place, and added, that he thought she must be in the cemetery. They immediately went there, and looking over the hedge, they beheld Marie seated on the ground, crying. They saw her kneel down with clasped hands, then kiss the earth, and
[Pg 247] afterwards seat herself again, and weep, with a depth of sorrow which penetrated them to the soul. It was evident that at that moment Marie believed herself alone in the world, and abandoned by every one. She entreated her nurse to pray for her.

They did not enter the cemetery for fear of frightening her, but the Curé, leaving the peasant as sentinel, went to communicate his discovery to Madame d'Aubecourt. She was very much embarrassed; she could not leave her father-in-law, though he was beginning to recover, for the slightest agitation might cause a relapse, and she was satisfied that neither Mademoiselle Raymond, nor any one belonging to the house, would succeed in inducing Marie to return. She hoped the Curé would be able to effect this, and as she did not wish her to enter the château at the present moment, for fear the news might reach M. d'Aubecourt, she requested the clergyman to take her to his house, where his sister, who had been a nun, now resided with him.

In consequence of this determination, the Curé returned to the cemetery, where he found Marie still in the same attitude. When she saw him, she turned pale and blushed alternately; yet, however she may have stood in awe of him, she felt so completely abandoned, since she no longer dared to return to the château, that she experienced an emotion of joy on seeing some one whom she knew.

"Marie, what have you done?" said the Curé, addressing her with some degree of severity. She hid her face in her hands, and sobbed. "Do you know what has taken
[Pg 248] place at the château?" he continued. "M. d'Aubecourt has been so overcome by the ingratitude you have evinced in devastating his garden, which you knew was his sole delight, that he has had a relapse, and Madame d'Aubecourt has passed the whole morning agitated by the anguish occasioned by his condition, by her anxiety on account of your flight, and by her grief for the impropriety of your conduct."

"Oh, M. le Curé," exclaimed poor Marie, "it was not from wickedness, I assure you. I wanted to adorn the altar, that God might grant me the grace of curing my poor nurse; and she was already *there*," she said, pointing to the ground, and redoubling her sobs.

The Curé, profoundly touched by her simplicity,
seated himself by her side, upon a bank of turf.
—P. 248.

The Curé, profoundly touched by her simplicity, seated himself by her side, upon a bank of turf, and said to her with more gentleness, "Do you think, Marie, that the way to please God, and obtain his favours, is to distress your uncle, who has received you into his family, and to disobey Madame d'Aubecourt, who shares with you the little she has reserved for her own children. If anything can afflict the souls of the just, you have distressed that of your poor nurse, who looks down upon you, I hope, from heaven, for she was a worthy woman. She regained her consciousness for some hours before her death. I visited her at the request of Madame d'Aubecourt, and in speaking of you, she said, 'I hope God will not punish me for not having done all that was necessary to restore her sooner to her relations. I loved her so much, that I had not the resolution to separate myself from her. I know very well that a poor woman like me could not give her an education. She has often grieved me also, because she
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would not go to school, and because I had not the heart to oppose her. Oh, M. le Curé, entreat her for my sake, to learn well, and to be obedient to Madame d'Aubecourt, in order that I may not have to answer before God for her ignorance and her faults.'"

Marie still continued weeping, but less bitterly. She had again knelt down, and clasped her hands; it seemed as if she was listening to her nurse herself, and entreating her forgiveness for the grief she had caused her. After the Curé had admonished her for some time longer, she said to him in a low voice, "M. le Curé, I entreat of you to ask forgiveness for me of Madame d'Aubecourt; beg Alphonse and Lucie to forgive me; say that I will do all they tell me, and learn all they wish."

"I do not know, my child," said the Curé, "whether you will again be permitted to see them. M. d'Aubecourt is so extremely angry with you, that your mere name redoubles his sufferings, and I am afraid you cannot return to the château."

This intelligence struck Marie like a thunderbolt: she had just clung to the idea that she would do all she possibly could to please her relations, and now they abandoned her—cast her off. She uttered cries almost of despair. The Curé had much difficulty in calming her, with the assurance that he would exert himself to obtain her pardon, and that if she would aid him by her good conduct, he hoped to succeed. She allowed herself to be led without resistance. He took her to his own house, and gave her into the charge of his sister, a very worthy woman, though somewhat severe. Her
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first intention had been to reprimand Marie; but when she saw her so unhappy, and so submissive, she could think of nothing but consoling her.

The Curé returned to the château to give an account of what he had done. Madame d'Aubecourt and Lucie were affected as he had been himself by the sentiments of poor Marie, and Alphonse, with his eyes moist with tears, and at the same time sparkling with joy, exclaimed, "I said so." He had not, however, said anything, but he had thought that Marie could not be altogether in fault. It was arranged that as her return to the château was out of the question for the present, she was to remain as a boarder with the Curé. Madame d'Aubecourt, on leaving Paris, had sold some of her remaining jewels, and had destined the money she received from them for the support of herself and her children. It was out of this small sum that she paid in advance, the first quarter's salary for Marie, for she well knew that the present was not the time to ask M. d'Aubecourt for anything.

Alphonse and Lucie rejoiced at the arrangement, as it did not remove Marie away from them, and Alphonse promised himself to be able to go and continue her reading lessons; but the following day the Curé came to announce to them that his sister had received a letter from her superior, inviting her to rejoin her, and a few other nuns of the same convent, whom she had gathered together. He added that his sister proposed to set out at once, and that if they consented to it, she would take Marie, who would thus pass with her the time of her penitence. Alphonse was on the point of protesting against this proposition, but his mother made him feel the necessity of
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accepting it, and all three went to take leave of Marie, who was to set out on the following day. Marie was extremely grieved when she learned the mode in which they disposed of her; she felt much more vividly her attachment to her relations since she had been separated from them, and it now seemed to her that she was never to see them again, and she said, crying, "They took me from my nurse in the same way, and she is dead." But she had become docile; and, besides, Madame Sainte Therèse, —such was the name of the Curé's sister,—had something in her manner which awed her a good deal. When she heard of the arrival of Madame d'Aubecourt and her children, she trembled very much, and had she been the Marie of a former time, she would have made her escape; but a look from Madame Sainte Therèse restrained her. Lucie, on entering, went and threw her arms round her neck, and she was so much moved by this mark of affection, when she only expected severity, that she returned the embrace with her whole heart, and began to weep. Alphonse was exceedingly sad, and she scarcely dared to speak to him, or look at him. "Marie," he said, "we are all very grieved at losing you." He could say no more, for his heart was full, and he knew that a man ought not to display his sorrow too much, but Marie clearly perceived that he was not angry with her. Madame d'Aubecourt said to her, "My child, you have occasioned us all very great grief in compelling us to separate ourselves from you, but I hope all will yet be well, and that by your good conduct you will afford us the opportunity of having you back again." Marie kissed her hand
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tenderly, and assured her that she would conduct herself properly, she had promised it, she said, to God and to her poor nurse.

They were astonished at the change that had been wrought in her by two days of misery and reflection. She save sensible answers to all that was said to her, she remained quiet upon her chair, and already looked to Madame Sainte Therèse from time to time, for fear of saying or doing anything which might displease her. The austere look of this lady somewhat terrified Alphonse and Lucie, on their cousin's account, but they knew that she was a very virtuous person, and that there is nothing really alarming in the severity of the virtuous, because it is never unjust, and can always be avoided by doing one's duty. Alphonse gave Marie a book, in which he begged her to read a page every day for his sake, and he also gave her a little silver pencil-case, for the time when she should be able to write. Lucie gave her her silver thimble, her ornamented scissors, an ivory needlecase, and a *ménagère*, furnished with threads, because Marie had promised to learn to work. Madame d'Aubecourt gave her a linen dress, which she and Lucie had made for her in two days. Marie was greatly consoled by all this kindness, and they separated, all very melancholy, but still loving each other much more truly than they had done during the two months they had passed together, because they were now much more reasonable.

Marie departed; M. d'Aubecourt recovered; and quiet was again restored in the château: but this sending away of Marie was a subject of great surprise in the village,
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and as Mademoiselle Raymond had not concealed her aversion for her, she was looked upon as its cause. She herself was not liked, and an increased interest was therefore felt in Marie's fate. Philip, the gardener's son, who regretted Marie because she played with him, told all the little boys of the village that Zizi was the cause of Mademoiselle Raymond's antipathy to her, and whenever she passed through the streets with Zizi, she heard them say, "Look, there's the dog that got Mademoiselle Marie sent away!" She therefore did not dare to take him out with her, except into the fields, and this consequently increased her ill feeling towards Marie.

As to M. d'Aubecourt, on the contrary, being kind-hearted, though subject to whims and ill-temper, he had ceased to be irritated against her, now that she was no longer in his way. He permitted Madame d'Aubecourt to talk of her, and even to read to him the letters in which Madame Sainte Therèse gave an account of her good conduct; and, finally, as no one knew better than Madame d'Aubecourt how to

persuade people to do what was right, because all were won by her extreme sweetness, while her good sense inspired confidence in her judgment, she induced him to pay the trifling salary of Marie; and he even sent her a dress. It was Alphonse who communicated all this good news to her, at the same time adding, that both his sister and himself endeavoured to do everything they could to please their grandfather, that when he was very much satisfied with them, he might grant them a favour, which would give them more pleasure than anything else in the world,
[Pg 254] namely, the permission for her to return. He told her that he had begun a pretty landscape for M. d'Aubecourt's fête, which was that of St. Louis, and that Lucie was working him a footstool on which to support his lame foot.

Marie was enchanted at receiving this letter, which she was already sufficiently advanced to read herself. The brother of one of the nuns, who had a garden in the neighbourhood of the place in which she resided, and who was very fond of Marie, had given her two very rare trees; she would have been delighted could she have sent them to M. d'Aubecourt for his fête, but she hardly dared to do so, and besides, how was she to send them?

Madame Sainte Therèse encouraged her, and it so happened, that a relative of one of the nuns had occasion to go, precisely at that time, in the direction of Guicheville. He was kind enough to take the trees with him, and had them carefully secured on all sides, so as to prevent their being too much shaken in the journey. They arrived in very good condition, and were secretly committed to Madame d'Aubecourt, and on the morning of St. Louis's day, M. d'Aubecourt found them at his garden gate, as if they had not dared to enter it. On them was this inscription: *From Marie, repentant, to her benefactor*, written in large letters, with Marie's own hand, for she could as yet only write in large hand. M. d'Aubecourt was so much affected by this present, and its inscription, that he wrote a letter to Marie, in which he told her that he was very much satisfied with the account that had been given him of her conduct, and that if she persevered he should be very glad to see her again at the
[Pg 255] château. This was a great joy for Madame d'Aubecourt and her children, to whom M. d'Aubecourt read his letter, and they all wrote to Marie. She had sent word to Alphonse by the traveller, that Madame Sainte Therèse had forbidden her to read in the book which he had given her, because it consisted of tales; that this had very much grieved her, and she begged him to choose from among the books which Madame Sainte Therèse did permit her to read, one in which she could every day read more than a page for his sake. She asked Lucie to send her a strip of muslin, which she wished to scallop for her, because she was beginning to work well, and she sent word to Madame d'Aubecourt that she kept for Sundays the dress which she and Lucie had given her, the day of her departure. These messages were faithfully delivered. Alphonse, by his mother's advice, selected for her, *Rollin's Ancient History*. Lucie sent at the first opportunity, two trimmings for handkerchiefs, to be scalloped, one for Marie and another for herself, and Madame d'Aubecourt added an English belt to wear on Sundays with her dress.

From this moment the children redoubled their care and attention to their grandfather. Lucie wrote his letters, under his dictation, and Alphonse, who had found means of constituting himself sole manager of Marie's trees, because he had received the instructions of the man who brought them, entered every day into the garden to attend to them, and he occasionally watered M. d'Aubecourt's flowers, who soon looked to him so much for the care of his garden, that he frequently consulted him as to what was to be done in it. Lucie was also admitted to the council, and
[Pg 256] Madame d'Aubecourt likewise gave her opinion occasionally. The garden had become the occupation of the whole family, and M. d'Aubecourt received much greater pleasure from it than when he had it all to himself.

One day when they were all together, one watering, another weeding, and a third taking insects from the trees: "I am sure," said Alphonse, replying to his own thoughts, "that Marie would take care of them now with as much pleasure and attention as ourselves."

Lucie blushed and glanced at her brother, not daring to look at M. d'Aubecourt. "Poor Marie!" said Madame d'Aubecourt, with tenderness, though not with any sadness, for she began to feel quite sure that she would return. "We shall see her again, we shall see her again," said M. d'Aubecourt. The subject was not pursued further at that time, but two days afterwards, when they were all in the drawing-room, Madame d'Aubecourt received a letter from Madame Sainte Therèse, who informed her that in the spring of the following year, she intended to pass three or four months with her brother, prior to her settling finally in the place where she then was, and that being anxious that Marie should edify the village of Guicheville, where she had set such a bad example, she would bring her there to make her first communion. Lucie uttered a cry of joy, "Oh! mamma," she said, "we shall make it together!" for it was also in the following year that she was to make her first communion. Alphonse, much affected, looked at his grandfather, "Yes, but," said he, after a moment's silence, "Marie will then go away again."

[Pg 257] "After her first communion," said M. d'Aubecourt, "we shall see."

Lucie, who was seated by her grandfather, quietly knelt down on the footstool upon which his feet were placed, and as she gently bent her head over his hands, in order to kiss them, he felt the tears of joy fall upon them. Alphonse was silent, but his hands were tightly clasped together, and an expression of happiness pervaded his whole countenance.

"If she is as good a child as you two," said M. d'Aubecourt, "I shall be delighted to have her back with us."

"Oh! she will be! she will be!" said both the children, their hearts swelling with pleasure. They said no more, fearing to importune M. d'Aubecourt, who loved tranquillity, and had accustomed them to restrain their feelings; but they were very happy.

There was great satisfaction throughout the château; Marie's faults were forgotten, while her disgrace was pitied. Mademoiselle Raymond was the only person who felt any annoyance; not that she was really ill disposed, but when once she took up any prejudices, she seldom overcame them. Besides, the continued reproaches made to her for her dislike of Marie had the effect of increasing it; and as the other servants made a sort of triumph of her return, she was all the more displeased with it. But she had insensibly lost much of her ascendancy over the mind of M. d'Aubecourt, who, now that he was surrounded by more amiable society, was less dependent on her and less afraid of her ill temper; for Madame d'Aubecourt spared
[Pg 258] him the trouble of giving his orders himself, and thus freed him from a thousand petty annoyances. Mademoiselle Raymond therefore manifested nothing of her displeasure before her superiors, and the end of February, the time fixed for Marie's return, was looked forward to with great impatience.

Marie arrived in the beginning of March. For more than a week, Alphonse and Lucie went every day to wait for the diligence, which passed by the château. At length it stopped, and they saw Marie descend from it. They scarcely recognised her at first, she had grown so much taller, fairer, and handsomer; her bearing was so much improved, and her deportment so modest and reserved. She threw herself into Lucie's arms, and also embraced Alphonse; Madame d'Aubecourt, who had perceived her from the window, hastened to meet her. All the servants ran out; Zizi also ran out barking, because all this commotion displeased him, and besides, he remembered his former aversion for Marie. Philip gave him a blow with a switch, which made him, howl terrifically. Mademoiselle Raymond, who was slowly approaching, rushed towards him, took him in her arms and carried him away, exclaiming, "Poor fellow! you may now consider that your days are numbered." The servants heard this, and glanced slyly at her and Zizi.

Marie was led to the château, and Madame Sainte Therèse, who had gone to her brother's, left word that she should soon come and fetch her. M. d'Aubecourt had given permission for her to be led to him; he was in his garden; she stopped at the gate, timid and embarrassed.

[Pg 259] "Go in, Marie, go in," said Alphonse; "we all go there now, and you shall go in and take care of it as we do."

Marie entered, walking with great care, for fear of injuring anything as she passed along. M. d'Aubecourt appeared very glad to see her; she kissed his hand, and he embraced her. They happened to be standing near the two plants which she had given to him. Alphonse showed her how much they had prospered under his care. He also pointed out such trees as were beginning to bud, and all the early flowers which were making their appearance. Marie looked at everything with interest, and found everything very beautiful.

"Yes, but beware of the Feast of Corpus Christi," said M. d'Aubecourt, laughing.

Marie blushed, but her uncle's manner proved to her that he was no longer displeased with her; she again kissed his hand with a charming vivacity, for she still retained her liveliness, though it was now tempered by good sense. She spoke but little,—she had never indeed been talkative, but her replies were to the purpose, only she constantly blushed. She was timid, like a person who had felt the inconvenience of a too great vivacity. Madame Sainte Therèse returned. Marie seemed to feel in her presence that awe which respect inspires; nevertheless, she loved her, and had great confidence in her. Madame Sainte Therèse said that she had come for Marie. This grieved Alphonse and Lucie excessively. They had hoped their cousin would have remained at the château the whole of the day, and they had even been anticipating a further extension of the visit; but Madame Sainte Therèse said that as Marie had
[Pg 260] commenced the exercises for her first communion, it was necessary that she should remain in retirement until she had made it, and that she was not to go out, except for her walk, nor were her cousins to see her more than once a week. They were obliged to submit to the arrangement. Although Madame d'Aubecourt did not approve of this excessive austerity, which belonged to the customs of the convent in which Madame Sainte Therèse had passed the greater part of her life, she was so virtuous a person, and they were under so many obligations to her for all that she had done for Marie,

that they did not consider it right to oppose her. When Marie was gone, Alphonse and Lucie were eloquent in their praises of her deportment, and the grace of her manners: their mother agreed with them, and M. d'Aubecourt also expressed his satisfaction, and consented positively that immediately after her first communion, she should again become an inmate of the château.

It was decided that the first communions of the village should be made on the feast of Corpus Christi, and that until then, Madame d'Aubecourt should go every other Thursday to pass the afternoon at the Curé's house, where Marie expected them with great delight. She saw them besides every Sunday at church, when, of course, she did not speak to them, but they exchanged a few words on coming out, and sometimes, though rarely, they met in their walks; thus they did not lose sight of each other, but were able to converse about their various occupations. Marie had read the whole of her Rollin: Alphonse pointed out to her other historical works, and
[Pg 261] she gave him an account of what she read. He applied with great zeal to his studies, in order to be able to give her, hereafter, lessons in drawing and English; and Lucie never learned a new stitch, or busied herself with any particular work, without saying, "I will show it to Marie." Every one was happy at Guicheville, and all hoped to be still more so.

The feast of Corpus Christi was drawing near; the two girls, equally inspired with piety and fervour, beheld its approach with mingled joy and fear. Alphonse thought of the happy day which was to bring back Marie, and to exhibit her, as well as his sister, as an example to the young girls of the village. He would have been glad to have signalized it by some fête, but the seriousness and holiness of such a day would not permit of amusement, or even of any distraction. He determined at least to contribute as much as he possibly could to those attentions which were allowable. Madame d'Aubecourt had provided for Lucie and Marie two white dresses, both alike; Alphonse wished them to have veils and sashes also alike. From the money which his grandfather had given him for his new year's gift, and which he had carefully saved for this occasion, he sent to purchase them at the neighbouring town, without saying anything on the subject to Lucie, who did not consider it proper to occupy herself with these matters, and left them all to her mother's care. Madame d'Aubecourt was the only person admitted into his council, and with her permission, the last evening but one before the festival, he sent Philip, with the veil and sash, to Marie, accompanied by a note, in which he begged her to wear them at her first communion.

[Pg 262] Philip was very much attached to Alphonse and Marie; this was almost his only merit; in other respects he was coarse, quarrelsome, and insolent, and had an especial aversion to Mademoiselle Raymond; and as he and his father were the only persons in the house who were but slightly dependent upon her, he amused himself by provoking her whenever he could find an opportunity. He never met her with Zizi without making some disagreeable remark about the animal, to which he always added, "It's a great pity they don't let you eat Mademoiselle Marie," at the same time threatening him with his hand. Mademoiselle Raymond would get angry, while he would go off laughing. If he chanced to meet Zizi in a corner, a thing which very rarely happened, because his mistress no longer dared to let him go about, he would tie a branch of thorns to his tail, a stick between his legs, or cover his face with paper; in fact he thought of everything which could displease Mademoiselle Raymond, who thus lived in a state of perpetual apprehension.

As Alphonse was very anxious that Lucie should have the surprise of seeing Marie dressed exactly like herself, he had told Philip to go to the presbytery without being observed, and Philip, who was very fond of doing what he ought not to do, took a fancy to get there by climbing over the wall, which was not very high. When on the top, he perceived Marie, who was reading on a slight elevation which had been raised near the wall, for the purpose of enjoying the very beautiful view which it commanded. He called to her in a low voice, and threw her the packet which Alphonse had confided to him, and was preparing to descend, when he perceived
[Pg 263] Mademoiselle Raymond walking by the side of the wall, with Zizi panting before her. As she approached, Philip, finding under his hand a piece of flint belonging to the wall, threw it at Zizi, and hid himself among the trees which overhung the wall at this spot: Mademoiselle Raymond, who was stooping down at the moment for the purpose of removing something from Zizi's throat, received the flint on her forehead, where it left rather a large wound. She screamed, and raised her head. Perceiving Marie on the mound, who, having heard her cry, stood up, and was looking at her, she did not doubt that it was she who had thrown the stone. Redoubling her speed, she hastened to the presbytery to complain, without perceiving Philip, who, nevertheless, was not very well concealed, but whom she had no idea of finding there. As to him, the moment she had passed, he jumped down and made his escape as fast as he could. Mademoiselle Raymond found no one at home but Madame Sainte Therèse. The Curé had gone to the neighbouring town on business, and would not return until the following evening. She related to her what had occurred, showing her forehead, which was bleeding, though the wound was not very deep; she also showed the stone, which she had picked up, and which might have killed her. She asserted that it

was Marie who had thrown it; but Madame Sainte Therèse could not believe such a thing. She, however, accompanied her to the garden, in search of Marie.

When Marie saw them approaching, she hid her packet under a cluster of
[Pg 264] rosebushes, for, being as yet unaware of what had occurred, she was afraid that Philip had done something wrong, and in order not to be compelled to say that he had been there, she did not wish what he had brought to be seen; however, she blushed and turned pale alternately, for she was afraid of being questioned, and did not wish to be guilty of an untruth. Madame Sainte Therèse, on coming up to her, was struck with her air of embarrassment, and Mademoiselle Raymond said to her, "See, Mademoiselle Marie, how well you employ the last evening but one before your first communion! After that you will be called a saint in the village. I shall only have to point to my forehead." Saying this, she showed it to Marie, who blushed still more at the thought that Philip could have committed so disgraceful an act.

"Is it possible, Marie," said Madame Sainte Therèse, "that it can be you who have thrown a stone at Mademoiselle Raymond?" and as Marie hesitated, seeking for an answer, she added, "You must surely have hit her unintentionally; but nevertheless, this would be an amusement very unbecoming your age, and the duty for which you are preparing yourself."

"Madame," replied Marie, "I assure you that I have not thrown any stone."

"It seems, then, to have come of its own accord," said Mademoiselle Raymond, in a tone of great asperity, at the same time pointing to the spot where she stood when the stone struck her: it was evident that it could only have come from the garden, and from an elevated position.

Madame Sainte Therèse interrogated Marie with increased severity, and Marie, trembling, could only reply, "I assure you, Madame, that I have not thrown any stone."

[Pg 265] "All that I can see in the matter," continued Mademoiselle Raymond, "is that I doubt whether Mademoiselle Marie will make her first communion the day after to-morrow."

"I am very much afraid that she has rendered herself unworthy of doing so," replied Madame Sainte Therèse. Marie began to weep, and Mademoiselle Raymond hastened to relate her adventure at the château, and to say that probably Marie would not make her first communion. She referred to her talent for throwing stones at the cats, as they ran along the leads, and added, "She makes a fine use of it."

Lucie was horrified. Alphonse, quite bewildered, ran to question Philip, and to know whether, when he executed his commission, he had observed anything amiss at the Curé's house, and whether Marie appeared sad. Philip assured him that he had not perceived anything whatever wrong; at the same time carefully avoiding any mention of the means by which he had transmitted the packet to Marie; and he so represented matters, that Alphonse did not suspect anything. Madame d'Aubecourt, being very uneasy, wrote to Madame Sainte Therèse, who replied that she could not at all understand what had happened, but that it seemed to her impossible that Marie should not be greatly in fault: and during the course of the following day, they learned from Gothon, who had received her information from the Curé's servant, that Marie had cried almost all the day, and that Madame Sainte Therèse treated her with great severity, and had even made her fast that morning upon bread and water. In the evening, Lucie went to confession to the Curé, who had returned, and saw Marie
[Pg 266] coming out of the confessional, sobbing violently. Madame d'Aubecourt went to Madame Sainte Therèse, and asked her whether Marie was to make her first communion on the following day. Madame Sainte Therèse replied, in a sad and severe tone, "I do not at all know."

As they were in the church, nothing more was said. Marie cast upon her cousin, as she passed by, a look which, notwithstanding her tears, expressed a feeling of satisfaction. She whispered something to Madame Sainte Therèse, who led her away, and Lucie entered the confessional. After having finished her confession, she was timidly preparing to ask the Curé what she so much desired to know; but before she could summon courage to begin, he was sent for to a sick person, and hurried away, so that she had no time to speak to him.

She passed the whole of that evening and night in inexpressible anxiety, which was so much the more intense, from the manner in which she reproached herself for every thought which wandered from the sacred duty of the morrow. Then she prayed to God for her cousin, thus uniting her devotion with her anxieties, and the thought of the happiness which was in store for her, with the supplications which she breathed for her dear Marie. The morning came; she dressed herself without speaking, collecting all her thoughts, so as not to allow a single one to escape her which could occasion her any uneasiness. She embraced her brother, and begged the blessing of M. d'Aubecourt and her mother, which they gave her with great joy, and
[Pg 267] M. d'Aubecourt added, that he blessed her both for himself and for his son. All sighed

that he was not present at such a time, and after a moment's silence, they repaired to the church.

The girls who were to make their first communion were already assembled. Lucie, notwithstanding her self-possession, surveyed them with a glance, but Marie was not among them. She turned pale and leaned upon the arm of her mother, who sustained and encouraged her, and telling her to commit her griefs to God, led her into the row of girls, and passed with M. d'Aubecourt into the chapel at the side. Behind the girls, stood Mademoiselle Raymond and Gothon, and the principal people of the village. "I was quite sure she would not be there," said Mademoiselle Raymond. No one answered her, for all were interested in Marie, whom they had often seen in the cemetery during the past months, fervently praying at the foot of the cross which she had begged might be erected over the grave of her poor nurse. Lucie had heard Mademoiselle Raymond's remark, and, violently excited, she prayed to God with all her strength to preserve her from all improper feelings; but her agitation, and the restraint she had imposed upon her thoughts, affected her so much, that she could scarcely support herself. At length, the door of the sacristy opened, and Marie appeared, conducted by the Curé and Madame Sainte Therèse; she came forward with the white veil upon her head, beautiful as an angel, and as pure. A murmur of satisfaction ran through the church. Marie crossed the choir, and, after bending before the altar, went and knelt at the feet of M. and Madame d'Aubecourt, to ask
[Pg 268] their blessing. "My child," said the Curé to her, sufficiently loud to be heard, "be always as virtuous as you are now, and God also will bless you."

Oh! what joy did Lucie feel! She raised to heaven her eyes moistened with tears, and believed that in the happiness she then experienced, she felt the assurance of divine protection throughout the whole of her future life. M. and Madame d'Aubecourt, deeply affected, bestowed their blessing upon Marie, who knelt before them, while Alphonse, standing behind, his face beaming with joy and triumph, looked at her with as much respect as affection. Madame d'Aubecourt herself led Marie to Lucie's side. The two cousins did not utter a word, nor give more than a single look, but that look reverting to Madame d'Aubecourt before it fell, expressed a degree of happiness which no words could have conveyed, and the eyes of Madame d'Aubecourt replied to those of her children. The long-wished-for moment had arrived at last; the two cousins approached the altar together. Lucie, more feeble, and agitated by so many emotions which she had been forced to repress, was almost on the point of fainting: Marie supported her, her countenance beaming with angelic joy.

Having received the communion, the cousins returned to their places, prayed together, and after having passed a part of the morning in the church, went to dine at the château, where Madame Sainte Therèse and the Curé had been invited. Marie and Lucie talked but little, but it was evident that they were very happy. Alphonse, his relations, the servants, all appeared happy too; but this joy was silent, it seemed
[Pg 269] as if they feared to disturb the perfect calm which these young souls, pure and sanctified, ought to enjoy. The looks of all were unconsciously turned towards them, and they were waited upon with a kind of respect which could not suggest any sentiments of pride.

After having again gone to church in the afternoon with Lucie, Marie came back with her, to take up her abode at the château. The evening was very happy, and even a little gay. Alphonse ventured to laugh, and the two cousins to smile, In the room in which they slept, and next to the bed occupied by Madame d'Aubecourt, Marie found one exactly like Lucie's. All the furniture was alike; henceforth they were two sisters. From the following day, she shared in all Lucie's occupations, and especially in her care of M. d'Aubecourt, who soon became as fond of her as he was of his grandchildren. Mademoiselle Raymond having fallen ill some time afterwards, Marie, who was very active, and had been accustomed to attend to her poor nurse, rendered her so many services, went so often to her room, to give her her medicines, was so careful each time to caress Zizi, and even occasionally to carry him a bit of sugar to pacify him, that the feelings of both were changed towards her: and if Zizi, who was the most vindictive, still growled at her now and then, he was scolded by his mistress, who begged pardon for him of Marie.

Marie had related to Alphonse and Lucie, but under the strictest secrecy, all that had taken place. She told them that Madame Sainte Therèse, having questioned her
[Pg 270] to no purpose, had treated her with much severity; that she had said nothing, fearing, that if the truth were known, Philip might be discharged, but that she had been very unhappy during those two days; that at length, the Curé having returned, she took the resolution of consulting him in confession, well assured that he would then say nothing about the matter; and that he advised her to confide what she had done to Madame Sainte Therèse, on her promising inviolable secrecy. This she had done, so that they were reconciled. She, moreover, told Lucie that the reason of her crying so much on leaving the confessional, was because the Curé had exhorted her in a most pathetic manner, in recalling to her mind her poor nurse, who had been carried to the grave precisely on the same day, and at the same hour, the preceding

year. Alphonse scolded Philip very severely, and forbade him ever to do any harm to Zizi, or anything which might displease Mademoiselle Raymond. The latter, being freed from annoyance on this point, consoled herself for not being so completely mistress of the château as formerly, by the reflection, that Madame d'Aubecourt and her children, in relieving her of many cares, left her more at liberty. Besides, the regard they had for her on account of her fidelity and attachment, flattered her self-love, so that her ill-humour perceptibly decreased; so that song and laughter were now as frequently heard at Guicheville, as murmuring and scolding had been during many previous years.

M. d'Aubecourt returned to France. He found but little of his property remaining, but still sufficient for the support of his wife and children. Marie, on the contrary, [Pg 271] had become rich: her right had been recognised, not only to her mother's fortune, but even to that of her father also, as he had died before the laws against the emigrants had been enacted. The elder M. d'Aubecourt was her guardian, and as, though a minor, she enjoyed a considerable income, she found a thousand opportunities of making this family, which was so dear to her, partake in its enjoyment; in fine, in order to unite herself entirely to it, she is going to marry Alphonse, who loves her every day with a deeper affection, because every day she becomes more amiable. Lucie is transported with joy at the prospect of becoming in reality Marie's sister: Madame d'Aubecourt is also very happy, and Marie finds that the only thing wanted to render her own happiness complete, is the power of making her poor nurse a partaker in her joy. Every year she has a service celebrated for her at Guicheville, and all the family look upon it as a duty to assist at it, in order to show respect to the memory of one who so generously protected the childhood of Marie.

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THE LITTLE BRIGANDS.

"PETER, Jacques, Louis, Simon, listen! listen!" cried Antony to his companions, a set of little vagabonds belonging to the village of Marcieux, who were playing at quoits upon the village green. A postchaise had just passed by, from which had been thrown a paper, containing the remains of a pie. Antony had immediately seized it: it chanced to be the *Journal de l'Empire*, of the 22nd of February, 1812, and as he was able to read, for he was the son of the village schoolmaster, he had discovered, while eating the crumbs which it contained, the following paragraph:—

"*Berne, January 26th, 1812.*—A certain number of students, of the second and third classes of our college, between the ages of twelve and thirteen years, who had read during their hours of recreation, romantic tales of brigands, formed themselves into a company, elected a captain and officers, and gave themselves the names of different brigands. They had secret meetings, in which they smoked, held their orgies, and bound themselves by oath to preserve secrecy in all their operations, &c."

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This was what he wished to read to his comrades. "Oh! brigands! brigands!" they all exclaimed, after having heard it. "That's capital! Let us all be brigands. Charles, will you be one?" they cried to the Curé's nephew, who was coming up at the time.

"What is it? what is it? Oh, yes, I don't mind," said Charles, without knowing what they wanted. Charles was a good boy, but he had one great fault, and that was disobedience to his uncle, the Curé, who had forbidden him to associate with the other little boys of the village, almost all of whom were mischievous and bad. Instead of obeying this order, he stopped whenever he could find an opportunity, to play with one or other of them; he even made appointments to meet them at different places, through which he would have to pass, when his uncle sent him out on any commission. When in their company, they led him into many follies, which he did not willingly commit, but he was unable to resist their persuasions. He was very angry when he saw them throw stones to bring down the fruit, or walk in the fields of ripe corn, or spoil the asparagus-beds: on these occasions, he declared he would never play with them again, but he invariably returned, nevertheless. He now said he would be a brigand because he thought it was a game.

It was first determined that they must have sticks; they therefore ran to a heap of faggots, and drew out from it some of the thickest branches. Charles urged in vain, that these faggots belonged to his uncle, the Curé, who had purchased them that
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morning; they replied, that brigands were not afraid of curés, and that all the curés in the world had only to come to them, and they would find their match. Charles laughed at all these follies, and Simon, the one of whom he was most fond, because he was gay and good-natured, although a very naughty boy, having selected a stick for him, he took it. Then they began brandishing their sticks, raising their heads, and assuming as wicked an expression as they possibly could, after which they began to deliberate on what was to be done next.

"We must first of all swear that we are brigands," said Antony, "and then," added he, referring to the paper, "then we'll steal everything we can find, and we'll hold our orgies."

"We'll steal!" repeated Charles, who was beginning to find this rather an extraordinary kind of game.

"Certainly, since we are brigands."

"I won't steal."

"Oh, you'll steal, you'll steal," cried all the little boys. "You are a brigand, so you must steal."

"I will *not* steal."

"What does it signify to us," said Simon, who was always anxious to accommodate matters, "if you won't steal, so much the worse for yourself, that's all."

"Yes, if you are such a fool," said the others, "so much the worse for yourself—you'll get nothing."

"But what is the meaning of holding orgies?" said one of the troop. Charles explained that it meant to get tipsy.

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"Ah! yes, and to smoke too," said Antony, again consulting his paper; "we will go together to the tavern."

"Of course they'll let you go there!" said Charles.

"Oh, brigands are not afraid of anything, and besides no one will know it. We'll go to Troux, that's a league from here. Brigands don't want leave, they do just what they please, and set every one at defiance." And the little wretches again brandished their sticks in the air with greater fierceness than before.

"Come," said Antony, "we must swear that we are brigands."

"Nonsense!" said Charles, "let us leave off this stupid game, and play at quoits. Simon, come and play at quoits; I owe you a revenge, you know," and Simon was willing enough to go and have his revenge; but he was withheld by the others, who told him he must take the oath, and that Charles might go if he liked, because he was a fool. Charles ought to have gone; nevertheless he remained. Antony said they must have some wine; and as he had been reading history in an old Latin and French book, which his father used in teaching Latin, he said that they would do as the conspirators of former times had done, that is, they would put a little of their blood into the wine, and afterwards drink it, and then they would be bound to be brigands all their lives. This they thought would be delightful.

"But how shall we get blood?" said one of them.

"Oh, we must prick our fingers," said another. "I have a large pin which fastens my trousers."

[Pg 276] They agreed to make use of the pin, each one determining in his own mind not to go very deep. But they wanted some wine; this was a great embarrassment. They asked Louis, who was the son of the wine-merchant, to go and steal some from his father's cellar. Louis replied that he would not go in the daylight, for fear of being seen, and beaten. They said that, for a brigand, he was very cowardly; still none of them would go in his stead. At length Simon, who was the most daring, went and begged some of the innkeeper's servant, who liked him because, when he met her in the streets, heavily laden, he assisted her in carrying her jugs. She gave him a little that remained at the bottom of a measure, and he carried it off triumphantly in an old broken sabot, into which he had poured it. Antony was the first to prick his finger, but as he felt it hurt him, he said that it bled quite enough, although it did not bleed at all. The others then pretended to prick their fingers, and they shook them very much, as if they really had bled a great deal. Charles alone refused to imitate them, and Jacques struck him violently with the pin, and caused the blood to flow. He was very angry, and fought with Jacques. Simon took his part, and beat Jacques. Charles, being in a rage, wanted to upset the wine, which was in the sabot, but the others prevented him, and told him he refused to drink and take the oath, because he was a traitor, and wanted to inform against them. Even Simon himself said, that if he did not drink with them, it would prove that he was a traitor. This was painful to Charles, especially as Simon had just been defending him. "You promised to be a brigand,"
[Pg 277] they all cried. Charles assured them that he had no wish to inform against them but that he would not be a brigand. They again exclaimed, with greater vehemence, "You must be a brigand, you promised to be one," and Simon held the sabot to his mouth. Charles resisted, but they asserted that he had drunk, and therefore was a brigand. He went away very angry, declaring that it was not true.

However, he did not long retain his anger against Simon, who on the following day waited for him as he passed down the street, for the purpose of telling him to come and see a large sausage which they had found the means of snatching from the hooks of a pork-butcher's shop in the village. Charles at first positively refused to go, but Simon said so much about the size of the sausage, that he became curious to see what it really was. He therefore went in the afternoon upon the green, where they were eating it. It was indeed very large. They told him how they had managed to get it, their fear of being seen by the shopkeeper, and the tales with which Simon had amused him outside the shop, while one of them stole into it. All this made Charles laugh, and he so completely forgot the evil of such actions, that when they invited him to taste the sausage, he took a piece and ate it. But he had no sooner swallowed it, than he felt distressed at what he had done. He immediately left them without saying a word, and the more he thought of it, the more he was tormented. His anxiety increased after he got home, for his uncle made him repeat the lesson in the catechism, which on that day happened to fall on the commandment, "*Thou shalt not steal*."

[Pg 278] His uncle explained to him that those who took what did not belong to them, were not the only thieves, but that those also were such who bought without paying, whose expenses were greater than their means, who borrowed what it was not possible for them to return, and above all, those who profited by what others had stolen.

Charles became pale and red by turns; fortunately for him, it was getting dark, and his uncle did not observe his agitation. He made no reply, and as soon as he could get away, he went and concealed himself, in order to give vent to his tears. At supper he ate nothing, saying that he was sick, and in truth the piece of sausage he had taken, had made him feel ill. He could not sleep; his conscience reproached him with having participated in the theft, since he had profited by it, and he felt that he

could no longer tell them that they had done wrong, since they would say, "That, however, did not prevent you from eating some of the sausage."

He knew, and his uncle had often repeated it to him, that one cannot hope for forgiveness from God, without at least returning the value of what has been stolen. He would most willingly have given the little he possessed to be delivered from so heavy a burden; but how was he to make the butcher accept it? It would be necessary to explain everything, and accuse his companions. This he would not have thought of doing, even if he had not considered himself bound by his promise; he therefore determined to go and lay the four sous, which was all the money he possessed, upon the door-step of the pork-butcher's shop, thinking that he would
[Pg 279] take them up, supposing them to belong to him. He passed before the door two or three times, without daring to carry his plan into execution; at last, at a moment when he was not perceived, he laid them on the threshold, and ran away to the corner of the street, in order to see what would happen. He had no sooner stationed himself there, than he saw Antony come up, who, prowling about the shop, and perceiving that its owner's back was turned, stooped down to pick up the money. Charles rushed upon him to prevent him. Antony struggled, and the shopkeeper turned round at the noise. "What are you doing in front of my shop?" he exclaimed, in an angry tone; for he remembered what had been stolen from him. "What does M. Charles mean by lurking about here for a whole hour? Be off with you; I do not accuse you, M. Charles, but I don't want any one in front of my shop."

"He ought to be accused as much as any one else," said Antony, and Charles in despair beheld himself driven away, without daring to resist, as he would have done on any other occasion. He ran after Antony, in order to get back his four sous, saying that they belonged to him, but Antony only laughed at him. He dared not compel him to give them back, for Antony had over him the advantage of a scamp, who laughs at everything that can be said to him, while Charles did not possess that of an honest man, which consists in having nothing to conceal, for his conduct had not always been irreproachable.

As he stood there, sad and ashamed, Jacques and Simon happened to pass by.
[Pg 280] "Oh," said Simon, in a low voice, "we have got such a beautiful basket of peaches, which Dame Nicholas was going to carry into the town, and which we took from off her donkey, while she was gone to pick up sticks by the side of the park walls. We have hidden it there in the ditch. Come and see it."

"No, I will not," said Charles.

"Well, they are not for him," replied Jacques, "he has had no trouble in getting them; he is a cowardly brigand."

"I am not a brigand," said Charles, "and I do not care for your peaches."

"You were not so squeamish about the sausage, though."

Charles, on any other occasion, would have replied by a blow; but now he was humbled, and remained silent, and Jacques went away, singing at the top of his voice, to the air of "*C'est un enfant*," *he's a child*:—

"He's a coward,
He's a coward."

"Why will you not come?" asked Simon.

"Simon," replied Charles, who wished to reform him, "it is very wrong to steal, and to keep company with those who steal."

"That's all very fine! but you did not think so yesterday."

"But since then I have bitterly repented of it."

"Very well, you may repent again to-morrow, come along;" and Simon, who was accustomed to make him do pretty nearly what he pleased, dragged him along by the arm.

"No, no. I will not go."

"Very well, don't come, then;" and he pushed him rudely back: "I see very well it's because you won't let me have my revenge."

[Pg 281] "But, Simon, how am I to do it? I have no more money."

"You have still the four sous that you won from Louis and me."

Charles related what he had done, and what followed; Simon laughed so heartily, that Charles almost laughed to see him laughing: however, he became impatient. "If I could only make him restore them," he said.

"Oh," said Simon, "brigands never restore anything; but come presently and play at quoits upon the green. Since it is that rascally Antony who has stolen them from

you, we shall easily find the means of winning them again from him."

"No," said Charles, "I will not go."

"Very well, as you like. I shall win them for myself then."

As Charles, notwithstanding his misfortunes, was rather more satisfied with himself, he dined better than he had supped on the previous evening. Nevertheless, he thought it would have been very pleasant to have won back his money from Antony. The following day was Sunday, and his uncle gave him the key of his garden, desiring him to carry it to Madame Brossier, one of his parishioners, who was very old and infirm. She lived at the distance of four or five hundred paces from the village, and in going to mass had a much shorter journey to make, by crossing the Curé's garden, than by going round by the streets.

Charles set out. His way lay near the green, and as he passed, he looked towards it, walking more slowly, and endeavouring to discover what his comrades, whom he
[Pg 282] saw there assembled, were about. In this manner he approached them, found that they were playing at quoits, and drew still nearer, in order to ascertain whether it was Simon who was winning. The latter observed him, and called to him, inviting him to go halves with him. Charles at first made no reply; Simon renewed his proposal: it was against Antony that he was playing, and Charles therefore agreed, forgetting that he had no right to play, since he had no money to pay if he lost. This idea occurred to him in the midst of the game, and he became so terribly alarmed at the thought of losing, that he could hardly breathe. He watched the game with anxious attention; and on two occasions he fancied he saw Simon, with whom he was to share, take an opportunity, while approaching for the purpose of measuring, to push his quoit in such a way as to make it appear that he had won, when in reality he had lost. However, he did not dare to say anything; but whether it was for the sake of not injuring Simon, or for the sake of not losing, he could not decide, so much was he confused. He won a sou, and went away, still more troubled, if possible, than on the previous evening. He thought that Simon had cheated, and that from this dishonesty had come what he himself had gained; and that though Antony had stolen the money from him, still this was no reason why he should steal it in his turn. He would have been glad to have asked some one whether he had any right to keep this money, or whether, on the contrary, he ought not also to return even what Simon had gained, since he had not given notice that he was cheating. But whom was he to ask? It is
[Pg 283] one of the misfortunes of those who have been guilty of any disgraceful act, that they dare not seek advice, even though it be for the purpose of repairing their fault. Charles's conscience tormented him so much, that he tried to distract his thoughts, in order not to feel his self-reproaches. He therefore began running, to try and shake off his painful impressions, but on reaching Madame Brossier's door, he perceived that he had not the key of the garden. He imagined at first that he must have dropped it while running, and therefore searched for it for some time, but at last recollecting that he had lent it to Simon to measure the distance of the quoits, he went back to ask him for it. Simon, however, was not there, nor Jacques either, and the others declared that they had not got his key. Charles was going to run after Simon.

"Don't go," said Antony, "he'll come back presently, and you will miss him. Let's have a game instead."

Charles was just in a condition for committing faults; he did not know whether the money he had belonged to him or not, and it would seem that those who have had the misfortune of rendering their duties so difficult and complicated, that they no longer know how to extricate themselves from their embarrassments, are apt to abandon altogether the care of their conscience, and become reckless, so that they go on from bad to worse, and thus deprive themselves of the means of repairing their errors.

Charles played, and lost not only his sou, but four others which he did not possess; still he wanted his revenge, but Antony refused to play any longer, and Simon did not
[Pg 284] return. Charles thought but little of this, so much was he occupied with his game; however he had once inquired if Simon was not coming back. "Yes, yes! when the fowls get teeth," replied Antony, deriding him. Charles had scarcely heard him. Whilst he was asking for a last game, which would probably have again made him lose what he did not possess, Jacques arrived at full speed, and without perceiving Charles, for it was beginning to get dark, he called out from a distance, though in a suppressed voice, "It's the key of the garden sure enough, we have tried it, and are going to fetch some baskets."

Charles perceived that they were talking of his key, and saw clearly that he had been expressly detained, in order to allow Jacques and Simon time to take it away. He was going to run after Jacques, but Antony retained him: "Pay me my four sous first," said he.

"I will pay you them to-morrow, but I must have my key."

"Are you afraid any one will eat your key?"

"No, but I don't want any one to go to my uncle's garden and steal his fruit, as they did the basket of peaches, and the sausage;" and he continued to struggle, but Antony kept him back.

"There is a great deal of harm," said Louis "in picking up the fruit which has fallen, and is rotting on the ground." But Charles, who knew very well that they would not content themselves with this, struggled still more violently.

"You will have to let me go in the end," said he, "and then I will run and tell my uncle to make them give up his key."

"And I will tell him," said Antony, "to make you give me my four sous."

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"Very well! Let me go; I will say nothing about it."

"Swear it on the faith of a brigand."

"But I am not a brigand."

"You are, you are a brigand," exclaimed all the little boys at once, taking hold of each other's hands, and dancing round him in such a manner as to prevent him from getting away. "Swear it on the faith of a brigand." Charles stamped, cried, and made every effort to get away, but in vain; he was obliged to swear on the faith of a brigand, that he would not tell, and that he would pay the four sous on the following day; that is to say, he promised to give what he did not possess: but his first faults had led him into a bad path, and now he could not get out of it.

As soon as he got free, he began to run as fast as he could in the direction of the house, but at some distance he met his uncle, who stopped him and inquired whether he had given the key to Madame Brossier. Charles, dismayed and confused, stammered, and could only repeat:

"The key, the key ... the key, uncle."

"Have you lost it?"

"Yes, uncle," said Charles, delighted at this excuse. The Curé was a good quiet man, who never got angry: he merely said, "Very well! we must look for it."

"What uncle, at this hour? it is almost dark."

"We shall have much more difficulty in finding it when it is quite dark;" and he began to look for it, Charles pretending to do the same. They met Antony and his companions, who were returning to the village; the Curé inquired for his key; they

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replied that they had not found it, and Charles, filled with indignation, heard them as they went away, laughing among themselves, and saying, "It will be found, M. le Curé, it will be found." He saw them running, and felt convinced that they were hastening to take advantage of his uncle's absence to effect their purpose. He trembled for his uncle's beautiful apricot-tree, so laden with fruit that some of the branches had to be supported; but above all, he trembled for Bébé, a beautiful little lamb, which the Curé's servant had brought up, and of which Charles was passionately fond, for it knew him, would run to him, as far as the length of its cord would allow, the moment it perceived him, would caress him, and eat from his hand. It was tied in the garden, and if these good-for-nothing fellows were to take it away, and hurt it, the poor thing might bleat as much as it pleased, without any possibility of the servant's hearing it, as the garden was at some distance from the house, and only connected with it by a narrow path, passing along the back of the church. He could not endure the thought. "Uncle," said he, in great agitation, "let me go; if any one has found the key, he may get into the garden; I will put something in the lock to prevent them from opening it."

"No! no!" said the Curé, "you would spoil my lock:" Charles had already set off. The Curé again cried out to him, forbidding him to put anything into the lock. Charles promised not to touch it, and ran on, and his uncle, seeing it was getting too dark to leave any chance of finding the key, went to pay a visit in the village.

Charles reached home, quite out of breath; he found everything perfectly quiet.

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Bébé was in her old place, and came to lick his hand; he breathed more freely, but he was still in constant fear of hearing the little brigands arrive. What was he to do then? He had placed himself in the most distressing dilemma in which a man can be placed, that of either failing in his word, or of allowing a wrong to be committed, which he had the power of preventing. His uncle had forbidden him to put anything in the lock, but he thought that if the ladder which was used for mounting the trees, were placed across the door, it might hinder its being opened. He had just begun to drag it along with much difficulty, when he heard several persons speaking in a low voice outside the wall, and close to the door; he saw that there was no time to reach it with the ladder, and therefore rushed forward, that he might at least push it with all his might; but at that moment the key was put into the lock, and the door suddenly burst open. Charles was almost thrown down, and he beheld the five little brigands enter the garden.

"Go back! go back!" he said, "go back, or I'll call out."

"Go and call outside then!" said Jacques, pushing him out of the garden, the door of which he closed, after having taken out the key. Charles did in fact cry out, and knock, but they threw a flower-pot over the wall, which fell upon his shoulder and hurt him a good deal. He saw another coming, and concluded that he could not stay there. Being obliged to go round, he made all the haste possible, though his fears made him tremble; he found the gate of the yard open, ran along the walk without being seen from the house, and heard Bébé bleating in so pitiable a manner, that it filled him with terror.

[Pg 288] "Tie it tight round her neck," said Jacques; "tie it very tight." Charles uttered a loud cry. Simon rushed upon him, placed his hands before his mouth, and aided by Antony, retained them there, notwithstanding his struggles, while the others endeavoured to tighten the cord round the neck of the lamb, already half-choked. Poor Bébé, however, uttered a last and feeble cry; Charles heard it; despair gave him strength; he tore himself from the hands that restrained him, and screamed out "Help! help!" He was heard; the Curé, who had been looking for him, and the servant who was coming to take in Bébé, hurried to the spot. The little brigands saw themselves discovered, and fled to different parts of the garden. They tried to make their escape, but they had closed the door. The servant had already recognised and boxed the ears of two or three, whilst Charles, solely occupied with Bébé, untied her so that she could breathe, and kneeling beside her, kissed her, cried over her, and tried to induce her to eat the grass he offered her. After having severely reprimanded the little brigands, and driven them out, the Curé and the servant returned to Bébé. Charles was surprised to hear the servant say that there were four of them, Simon's name not being mentioned. He thought he must have contrived to escape; but as he was walking along a narrow path behind the others, and leading Bébé, who was still so much frightened that she would hardly allow herself to be conducted, he perceived Simon crouched behind a large lilac-tree. He was at first on the point of crying out, recollecting that it was he who had placed his hands upon his mouth,
[Pg 289] while the others were trying to strangle Bébé; but a feeling of generosity, and the recollection of his own faults, restrained him. He beckoned to him to follow quietly, and whilst the Curé and the servant entered the house, he gave him the means of escaping through the gate of the yard. On being questioned by the Curé, Charles took the determination of humbly confessing his faults, and of asking pardon of God, and of his uncle, who treated him with kindness, but, nevertheless, imposed a penance upon him. Charles begged him to advance the little sum which he allowed him monthly, that he might pay Antony, and also return the money which Simon and himself had won from him, in no very honourable manner. He wished, besides, to give something to the pork-butcher. The Curé consented, although he had a great dislike to see money given to Antony, who would be sure to make a bad use of it. Nevertheless Charles owed it, and his uncle made him observe, that the inconveniences of bad conduct often continue long after the fault has been corrected, and still compel people to do things which they very much regret. As for the money for the shopkeeper, Charles did not wish to give it himself, and his uncle approved of this, because there are faults so disgraceful, that unless we are compelled to avow them, for the sake of avoiding falsehood, they ought not to be confessed before any one but God. His uncle promised to give this money back as a restitution with which he had been intrusted. Charles expressed his fear that in this case, the quarter from whence it came might be suspected; but his uncle reminded him, that as he had been
[Pg 290] so little afraid of suspicion in doing the wrong, he must brave it in repairing his fault, and that an irreproachable conduct was the only means of re-establishing his reputation, which might very well be injured by this adventure.

The others endeavoured to tighten the cord round the neck of the lamb, already half choked. —P. 288.

And it was so, indeed, for some time. The Curé, in his sermon the following day, having spoken against theft, without naming any one, and warned the parents to watch over their children who were acquiring dangerous habits, all those who had children were very uneasy, and endeavoured to discover what he meant by this. The servant, notwithstanding her master's injunctions to the contrary, could not help relating the whole affair. The little brigands were severely punished by their parents, who, afterwards, however, asserted that Charles was the worst amongst them, as he had opened the door to them, and then betrayed them. The little boys, on their side, insulted him whenever they saw him. Simon was the only one who was not angry with him. Charles, when he happened to meet him, for he no longer sought his company, tried to persuade him to reform, and Simon made many promises to that effect, but he did not keep them, and he became at last so bad, that Charles was obliged to give up speaking to him altogether. Neither did he regret doing so, as Simon soon lost the good qualities which he naturally possessed; for there is no virtue that can stand against the constant habit of doing wrong, nor any sentiment which will not, in the end, be entirely smothered by want of principle.

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OLD GENEVIÈVE.

"How stupid you are! How absurdly you have put in that pin! You have laced me all on one side. Oh! I shall be horribly dressed; this is unbearable: I never saw anything so awkward."

It was pretty much in this style that Emmeline was in the habit of speaking to old Geneviève, whose duty it was to wait upon her, since she had lost her nurse, and after having seen Emmeline quite an infant, she never expected to be treated by her in this way; but it had been observed that for some time past, Emmeline, though naturally kind and gentle, and even rather timid, had nevertheless assumed with the servants haughty airs, to which she had not previously been accustomed. She no longer thanked them when they waited upon her at table, and asked for what she wanted without even saying, *if you please*. Up to this time, she had never followed her mother through an antechamber, where the servants rose as they passed, without acknowledging by a slight bow, this mark of their respect; but now she seemed to think it would be derogatory to her dignity, not to pass among them with her head higher than usual. It might, however, be seen that she blushed a little, and
[Pg 292] that it required an effort on her part to assume these manners, which were not natural to her. Her mother, Madame d'Altier, who began to perceive this change, had more than once reprimanded her on account of it, so that Emmeline did not dare to give herself too many of these airs in her presence. She chiefly affected them when in the society of Madame de Serres, a young woman of seventeen, who had been a year and a half married, and who from her childhood, had been greatly spoiled, as she was very rich and had no parents. Even now she was spoiled by her mother-in-law, who had been very anxious that she should marry her son, and also by her husband, who, almost as young as herself, allowed her to do just what she pleased. As she was not in the habit of inconveniencing herself in the least for any one, she did so still less for her servants; consequently she was incessantly complaining of their insolence, because the severe and imperious manners she assumed towards them, sometimes led them to forget the respect they owed her, while the extravagance of her whims rendered them impatient.

Emmeline, who was at that time fourteen years of age, and desirous of playing the grand lady, imagined that she could not do better than imitate the manners of her cousin, whom she saw almost every day, because Madame de Serres, when in Paris, resided in the same street as Madame d'Altier, and in the country occupied a neighbouring château. Emmeline had not, however, dared to display the whole of her impertinence towards her mother's servants, who had been a long time in the family, and accustomed to be well treated, and who, the first time she manifested these
[Pg 293] arrogant and impertinent airs, would probably have laughed outright at her. She therefore contented herself with being neither kind nor civil to them. They did not serve her any the less on this account, because they knew it was their duty to attend to her; but when they compared her with her mother, who showed so little anxiety to exercise the right which she really had to command them, they thought the conduct of Emmeline very ridiculous.

Emmeline, indeed, was sometimes conscious of this, and became mentally impatient, because she did not dare to subject them to her authority; but she revenged herself upon Geneviève, who, born on the estate of M. d'Altier, was accustomed to regard with great respect, even the little children of the family of her seigneurs; besides, until lately, she had never had the honour of being completely attached to the château, though she had been employed there almost daily during the last twenty years, in some inferior occupations; consequently, when Madame d'Altier, on her arrival in the country this year, knowing her respectability, had engaged her to assist Emmeline in dressing, and to attend to her room, she considered herself elevated in condition, but without being any the more proud on this account. She looked upon Emmeline, whom she had not seen for ten years, as a person whom she was bound to respect, and from whom she ought to endure everything. When the latter, therefore, thought proper to exercise her authority over her, by making use of any harsh expression she could think of (and she would have used many more had she not been too well brought up to be familiar with them), Geneviève never replied; she only made all the haste she could, either to get away, or
[Pg 294] to avoid irritating her further, and in consequence, she was only the more awkward, and the more harshly treated.

One day, while she was arranging Emmeline's room, it happened that the latter wished to send her on an errand into the village; but as Geneviève continued her occupation, Emmeline became angry, considering it very strange that she was not obeyed. Geneviève represented to her that if, after breakfast, when she returned to her room to draw, she did not find it in order, she would scold her, and that, nevertheless, it was necessary to have time for everything. As she was right, Emmeline ordered her to be silent, saying that she provoked her. Madame d'Altier,

who from the adjoining room, had overheard the conversation, called to her daughter, and said, "Are you quite sure, Emmeline, that you were right in your discussion with Geneviève? because, after having assumed such a tone as that with a servant, it would be extremely annoying to find, in the end, that you had been wrong."

"But, mamma," replied Emmeline, a little ashamed, "when instead of doing what I tell her, Geneviève amuses herself with answering me, it is necessary to stop her."

"You are then certain, before having examined, or even heard her reasons, that they cannot be good?"

"It seems to me, mamma, that a servant is always wrong in arguing, instead of doing what she has been ordered to do."

"That is to say, she is wrong even when she is right, and when she is ordered to do anything which is impossible."

"Oh! mamma, these people always find things impossible, because they do not like them."

[Pg 295] "This is the way your cousin would talk: I wish, Emmeline, you had spirit enough to invent ridiculous airs for yourself, instead of assuming those of other people."

"I don't stand in need of my cousin," said Emmeline, much piqued, "to know that Geneviève never does half she is told to do."

"If you have no other means of obtaining her obedience than those you have just employed, I am sorry for it; I must take her away from you, for I pay her to wait upon you, and not to be ill treated; I have never paid any one for that purpose."

Madame d'Altier said these words in so firm a tone, that her daughter did not dare to reply. However, she consoled herself in talking to her cousin, who came to spend an hour with her, and they both agreed that Madame d'Altier did not know how to manage her servants. This was an unlucky day for Emmeline; the conversation with her cousin had taken place in one of the garden-walks, and just as she had terminated it, she saw her mother coming from a neighbouring one. Madame d'Altier smiled at the prattle of these little personages, who presumed to set themselves up as judges of her conduct. She looked at her daughter, who blushed excessively, and seeing Geneviève, she called to her to remove some branches, which were in her way. Geneviève replied, that she would come as soon as she had carried some food to the turkeys, which were screeching like mad things, because they were hungry. "In truth," said Madame d'Altier, "it is evident, as you very justly observed, that I do not know how to get served before my turkeys; I suppose, therefore, I must be thought
[Pg 296] more reasonable and less impatient than they are. But at this moment they beheld Geneviève, who putting, or rather throwing, on the ground the vessel she held in her hand, began to run with the utmost precipitation towards the house. "Gracious me!" she cried, as she ran along, "I have forgotten to close the window in Mademoiselle Emmeline's room, as she ordered me. I must make haste," she repeated, quite out of breath. "I congratulate you, my child," said Madame d'Altier, "I see that you have more talent than my turkeys even, in getting waited upon."

Emmeline said nothing, but she glanced at her cousin as she was accustomed to do, whenever anything was said which displeased her. Madame de Serres, who considered herself interrupted in her important conferences with her cousin, and who was afraid to display all her fine ideas in the presence of her aunt, of whose good sense and raillery she stood in awe, returned to her carriage, for the purpose of paying a visit in the neighbourhood, accompanied by her lady's-maid, who always attended her in her drives, because she was still too young to go alone. She promised to come back to dinner, and Emmeline went to attend her flowers.

"Oh, dear," she exclaimed, as she reached the terrace, where the pots were arranged, which served for the decoration of her room, "last night's rain has scattered the blossoms of all my roses, and my jasmine has not a single flower left upon it. Geneviève might have taken them in last night, but she can do nothing. She never thinks of anything."

"But, mademoiselle," said old Geneviève, who happened to be close at hand, "I
[Pg 297] dare not touch your flowerpots, for fear of breaking them."

"Did you take in mine?" said Madame d'Altier.

"Oh! yes, madame."

"I am very glad to find," said Madame d'Altier, looking at her daughter, "that I can be attended to without compelling attention."

"But, mamma, I never told her not to touch my flowerpots," replied Emmeline.

"No; but probably for the smallest thing she breaks, you scold her so much, that she is afraid to run the risk of again exposing herself to your anger."

"It is absolutely necessary, mamma," she said, as she ascended the steps to take in her flowers, "Geneviève is so awkward, and pays so little attention, that...." As she uttered these words, one of the flowerpots slipped from her hands, fell on the steps, and was broken into a thousand pieces.

"She is so awkward," rejoined Madame d'Altier, "that precisely the same thing happens to her sometimes, that would happen to you as well, had you the same duties to perform."

"Indeed, mamma," said Emmeline, very much irritated, "what has happened to me is quite disagreeable enough without...."

"Without what, my child?"

Emmeline paused, ashamed of her impatience. Madame d'Altier took her hand, and made her sit down by her. "When your ill-humour is over, my child, we will reason together." Emmeline kissed in silence the hand of her mother, who said, "Is it
[Pg 298] then so very vexatious a matter, my child, to have broken this pot of coloured earth, which can be immediately replaced by one from the greenhouse, where you know you can choose for yourself?"

"No, mamma, but...."

"It cannot be on account of your anemone, which is past flowering, and which you told me you would return to the beds. You are spared the trouble of unpotting it." Emmeline smiled.

"Yes, mamma, but on these occasions one always feels something disagreeable, which makes one dislike...."

"To be tormented; is it not so, my dear? And yet it is precisely these moments you select to scold and ill-treat Geneviève, when any accident of this kind happens to her, as if to add to her vexation and confusion."

"But, mamma, it is her duty to pay attention to what she is doing."

"Is it more her duty than it is yours, when you are attending to your own business? Do you wish her to be more careful of your interest than you can be yourself, and require that her anxiety to serve you should make her escape accidents, which you cannot avoid, for your own sake?"

"But, nevertheless, what I break is my own, and I am quite sufficiently punished, whereas she...."

"Cannot be sufficiently punished, I perceive, for having caused you a momentary vexation; and not only is this your own opinion, but you want it to be hers likewise, for you would consider it very improper if she wished to prove to you that you were wrong."

[Pg 299] "Undoubtedly, mamma, it would be very absurd if Geneviève took it into her head to argue with me, when I told her to do anything."

"I understand. When you are out of humour, Geneviève ought to say to herself, 'I am a servant, it is consequently my duty to be rational and patient, for the sake of Mademoiselle Emmeline, who is incapable of being so. If my age, my infirmities, or, in fine, any weakness of my nature, render my duties at certain time more difficult to perform, I ought resolutely to surmount every obstacle, for fear of causing Mademoiselle Emmeline a moment's disappointment or contradiction, as she would not have sufficient strength of mind to endure it. If her impatience wounds my feelings, if her ill-temper provokes me, if her fancies appear to me ridiculous and unbearable, still I ought to submit to them, as she is a poor little creature, from whom one cannot expect anything better.'"

"Geneviève would show very little attachment," replied Emmeline, greatly piqued, "if she could entertain such thoughts as these."

At this moment Madame de Serres arrived, very much agitated and angry. "Just imagine, my dear aunt," she said to Madame d'Altier, as she approached, "my maid is going to leave me. She selected the time when she was in the carriage with me, to announce her intention; therefore I had her set down in the road, and she may get back as she pleases. Will you have the kindness to allow your maid to accompany me home? I had this person in my service long before my marriage, and she leaves me for a situation which she says suits her better. Who can rely on the attachment of such people?"

[Pg 300] "Were you very much attached to her?" asked Madame d'Altier, carelessly.

"Oh! not at all; she is slow and disagreeable. I should have taken another could I have found one."

Madame d'Altier laughed. It seemed to her excessively absurd that it should be a perpetual subject of complaint and astonishment, that a servant is not more attached

to the master whom he has served many years, while the master considers it quite a matter of course to care nothing about the servant, by whom he has been served during all this time. Madame de Serres did not perceive that her aunt was laughing at her, but Emmeline observed it, and it sometimes happened that even she thought her cousin rather ridiculous. Madame de Serres consoled herself by jesting about the pleasure she should have in being under the protection of Mademoiselle Brogniard, Madame d'Altier's lady's-maid, who took her pinch of snuff with such gravity, and when in the open fields, walked as uprightly, and made her courtesy as regularly as if she had been in a drawing-room, in the midst of fifty people. It was agreed, as the weather was fine, and the distance but trifling across the fields, that Madame de Serres should walk, and that Emmeline should accompany her with Mademoiselle Brogniard, and also that they should call and take some milk at a farm, which lay almost on their road. They set off soon after dinner; but scarcely had they reached the farm, when the weather, which up to that time had been fine, suddenly changed, and the rain began to fall in torrents. When, after the lapse of an hour, it had ceased,
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and they resolved to continue their way, the country was so completely inundated, that they sank ankle-deep into the mud. Madame de Serres was in great distress because she had not returned home in her carriage. Emmeline, rather shocked at observing that she thought of no one but herself, exclaimed, as she perceived Geneviève coming towards her with a parcel,

"Well! as for me, here's Geneviève bringing my cloak and boots."

"No," replied Geneviève, "but I have brought Mademoiselle Brogniard's fur shoes, and wadded dress, for I thought that with her rheumatism the damp might do her a great deal of harm."

"You might at least, at the same time," said Emmeline, angrily, "have brought my boots."

"But you did not tell me to do so, Mademoiselle."

"Neither did Mademoiselle Brogniard tell you to bring hers."

"But she knew, Mademoiselle Emmeline," replied Mademoiselle Brogniard, sententiously emphasising every word, "that I should be greatly obliged to her; and indeed, Geneviève, I am extremely obliged to you."

"I have only done my duty," said Geneviève, as she assisted Mademoiselle Brogniard to put on her dress. She then went away, leaving Emmeline extremely annoyed at finding that Geneviève considered herself bound to be more attentive to Mademoiselle Brogniard than to her. Madame de Serres tried to jest on account of Mademoiselle Brogniard being the best clad and the best served of the three; but as
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the latter said very little, her pleasantry soon terminated, and her lamentations about the carriage recommenced. At last, as they drew near the high road, she perceived it slowly returning, and in a transport of delight ran forward towards it.

"Mademoiselle Brogniard," she said, "I shall soon be at the château; it will be unnecessary for you to accompany me any further: farewell, my dear," she cried out to Emmeline, "I am delighted to spare you the rest of the way," and she departed, without once thinking that she could have saved Emmeline a walk in the mud, by taking her back in her carriage, at least as far as the avenue of her mother's château. Emmeline reflected upon this, and saw clearly that her cousin's plan of not troubling herself about the comfort of those who were in her service, formed part of a much more extensive plan, which was that of not troubling herself about any one.

These reflections, and the representations of her mother, had the effect of sparing Geneviève some haughty airs, and some caprices; but Emmeline could not treat her with kindness. Her orders were always delivered in a brief and dry manner, and she was constantly giving orders. She took no pains to discover whether what she ordered could be easily or more conveniently done at one time, or in one manner than another, neither did she take any interest in anything that concerned Geneviève, for Emmeline imagined that this kind of familiarity would have made her appear childish.

Towards the end of the summer, Madame d'Altier and her daughter went with Madame de Serres to spend some days at a château in the neighbourhood. Madame
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de Ligneville, the mistress of the château, was a young woman twenty-two years of age, extremely gentle and amiable, and especially remarkable for her kindness to her servants, the greater part of whom had surrounded her from her childhood. Her housekeeper had been her former governess, and Madame de Ligneville was not afraid of allowing authority in her household to one who had formerly possessed it over her own person; for in proportion as she became reasonable, her governess became as submissive as she had formerly been rigorous in exacting obedience. Her lady's-maid was the daughter of this governess, and had been brought up with her, but she was not on this account the less zealous or respectful. Her footman had belonged to her father, her gardener was in the family before her birth, and sometimes related to her how, when a child, she used to plant bits of apricot, in

order that they might become apricot-trees. Every one adored her; everything in her household seemed regulated by an invisible machinery, and without anything being ever said; an order appeared like an advertisement to which every one hastened to attend. It was a matter of doubt whether Madame de Ligneville had ever scolded her servants, and they themselves did not believe that she had; for if at any time she was obliged to reprove them, they were more conscious of their own fault than of the reprimand of their mistress. Emmeline saw with astonishment that this kindness on her part did not in the least detract either from her elegance or her dignity. It even seemed, that without ever commanding, she had much more the appearance of being
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mistress than Madame de Serres, who could only obtain obedience by dint of talking, tormenting, and scolding. She also observed, that although people were sometimes amused by the little haughty airs and caprices of her cousin, Madame de Ligneville was treated with much more respect and friendship.

They had been staying with her for some days, when all the company of the château were invited to a fête, which was to be held at a few leagues' distance. Madame de Serres and Madame de Ligneville took a fancy to go there in the costume of a peasant of the province. Emmeline had a dress of this kind, which was immediately sent for to serve as a pattern for the others; but on examining it, Madame de Ligneville found it rather complicated, and was afraid her maid would not have time to complete it for the following day, as they were to set out early.

"Oh! my maid must find time to finish mine," said Madame de Serres. "I do not put up with her fancies in this way. You spoil your servants, my dear," she said, addressing Madame de Ligneville. "I know it through Justine, who I believe is cousin to your Sophie; but I warned her that she need not expect to be treated in the same manner; for, believe me, you will get nothing from them in this way."

Madame de Ligneville did not reply, for she was not at all anxious to enforce her opinions on others. Madame de Serres hastened to give her orders, and Justine immediately set to work. At night, when her mistress retired to her room, the costume was considerably advanced, but it did not suit her fancy. She became angry;
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said she would never wear such a frightful thing as that, and ordered her to begin it all over again. Justine replied that it would be impossible to finish it in that case, unless she sat up all night. Madame de Serres told her that she must do so, adding that it was no great hardship. Justine asserted that she could not, as she was very much fatigued already from having worked the whole of the evening. Her mistress told her that she was an impertinent creature, and that she must either contrive to bring her the dress by the time she awoke on the following morning, or never again appear in her presence.

On awaking the following morning, she found her dress in precisely the same condition as she had left it the previous night. Justine told her, that as it seemed to be her intention to discharge her, she had come to ask for her dismissal. Madame de Serres flew into a passion; ordered her to leave the room; desired her never to come into her presence again, and sent to ask Mademoiselle Brogniard to assist her in dressing; in fine, she made so much noise about what she termed Justine's insolence, and was altogether so unreasonable, that the whole house soon became aware of what had occurred, and all were greatly amused by it, for they had already heard of several similar incidents which had happened to her. At breakfast, she affected a manner more than usually easy, to conceal the ill-humour which was nevertheless perceptible through it. She made no allusion to her dress, neither did Madame de Ligneville, as she had resolved not to put on her own, should it even be completed; while Emmeline, very sad because her mother, in order not to annoy her cousin,
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would not allow her to wear hers, although it was very becoming to her, began to think that Madame de Serres had acted very improperly in her treatment of Justine.

After breakfast, all were preparing to go and dress, when their attention was drawn to Madame de Ligneville's room, in order to see a singular flower, which her gardener had brought her. While there, Sophie entered by one of the inner doors of the apartment, holding in her hand Madame de Ligneville's dress, completely finished, and the prettiest thing imaginable: every one looked at it, and all felt tempted to glance at Madame de Serres, who, although she blushed, yet hastened to express her approbation.

"Indeed, Sophie," said Madame de Ligneville, very much embarrassed, "I had given it up altogether, for I never could have thought you would have been able to finish it."

"Oh, madame," said Sophie, heedlessly, "my cousin helped me, and we got up very early."

This cousin was Justine. Madame de Serres blushed still more, and Madame de Ligneville did the same; but every one else felt disposed to laugh. Emmeline perceived this, and from that moment her cousin appeared to her as ridiculous as she was in reality. All insisted that Madame de Ligneville should wear her dress; Emmeline, consequently, wore hers also; and as Madame de Ligneville pretended to be her elder sister, they passed the day together. This was very gratifying to Madame

d'Altier, as Madame de Ligneville was an extremely sensible woman, and Emmeline found her so kind and so charming, that she became very much attached to her. Two
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or three times Madame de Ligneville remarked, as she looked at her dress, "There really is a great deal of work in it; that poor Sophie must have laboured very hard." And Emmeline, because she was pleased with her, considered as very charming what a short time previously she would have regarded as beneath her dignity; and she also felt that it might be very gratifying to receive such proofs of affection. She enjoyed the fête very much. However, the heat of the weather, and the fatigue she had undergone, brought on, after her return, a slight illness, which confined her for some time to her bed. One day during her indisposition, she heard Geneviève, who had paid great attention to her, say, "I must take care of her, poor little thing, though I am quite sure that when she gets well she will vex me very much." She felt humiliated at finding herself in need of Geneviève's generosity. During her convalescence, she also frequently required her assistance, for she was very weak, and Geneviève had to aid her in almost every movement. She was therefore obliged to lay aside some portion of her pride, and learn that the authority and dignity of one who can do nothing for herself is, after all, no very great affair. She felt that, if servants have need of masters for their support, masters, whom custom and wealth have habituated to a multitude of luxuries, have also constant need of servants, for their comfort and convenience. She likewise learned, in the end, that an industrious and honest servant can always find a master willing to pay him, whereas a master who is willing to pay, is not always sure of meeting with a servant who will serve him
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with zeal and affection, and consequently that it is particularly important to masters that their servants should be contented. She thus returned to her natural disposition, which was that of wishing to have every one satisfied with her, and she found that there was no other state of mind either so agreeable or so convenient as this.

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JULIA;

OR THE STORY OF MADAME CROQUE-MITAINE.

Two years had elapsed since Madame de Vallonay had placed her daughter at school, in order to go and nurse her husband, who was ill at a fortified town, in which he commanded, and which was at any moment liable to attack. Circumstances having changed, M. and Madame de Vallonay returned to Paris, and brought their daughter home again. Julia was thirteen, she was sufficiently intelligent and sufficiently advanced for her age; but a child of thirteen, however advanced, cannot possibly understand all that is said by persons older than herself. She had, however, acquired a habit of regarding everything that she did not understand as ridiculous. Accustomed to the chit-chat of school-girls, who among themselves discussed, criticised, and decided upon everything, she fancied she understood a thing when once it had formed the subject of conversation at school. Thus, if any circumstance was spoken of, Julia maintained that the fact had happened differently; she was quite sure of it, for Mademoiselle Josephine had heard so in the holidays. If told that such
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or such a style of dress was in bad taste, "Oh, but it must be fashionable, nevertheless, for three of our young ladies have adopted it for ball dresses this winter." It was the same on more serious matters: whatever one of the elder girls related, from having heard her parents mention it, whether about peace or war, or the theatre, to which she had never been, it became a general opinion, to which neither Julia nor her companions ever thought there could be anything to oppose.

Thus, there never was a visit paid to her parents, that Julia did not exclaim, the moment the persons were gone, "Oh! mamma, what an absurd thing Monsieur or Madame So-and-so said!" Her mother permitted her to express her opinion in this manner when she was alone with her, in order to have an opportunity of proving to her, either that she did not understand what had been said, or that she did not understand what she wanted to say herself; but when there was company, she carefully watched, that her daughter did not give way to any rudeness, such as whispering, while laughing or looking at some one, making signs to a person at the other end of the room, or seeming to be unable to restrain her laughter.

Julia, who stood in awe of her mother, usually behaved pretty well in company. One day, however, when two or three of her schoolfellows had come to dine at Madame de Vallonay's, the Curé of the Vallonay estate, being in Paris on business, dined there also. He was a very worthy and sensible man, who said many excellent things, though in a rather more tedious manner than other people, while he
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introduced into his conversation old proverbs, very useful to remember, but which appeared to Julia excessively ridiculous, because she was unaccustomed to this style of speaking. Moreover, she had never before seen the Curé, and it was her habit always to discover something extraordinary in persons whom she saw for the first time. Her companions were as foolish as herself. Before dinner they amused themselves by mimicking the gestures of the Curé, whom they saw from an adjoining apartment, walking up and down the drawing-room with M. de Vallonay; this had put them into such a mocking humour, that during the whole of dinner, there was a constant succession of whisperings and laughings, for which they sought a thousand frivolous pretexts. Sometimes it was the dog who scratched himself in a droll manner, or who, in putting his paw upon Julia's knee to beg for something to eat, pulled her napkin, or else Emily had drunk out of her glass, or had taken her fork or her bread. Madame de Vallonay, though excessively annoyed, was nevertheless fearful of allowing her displeasure to be visible, lest the Curé should suspect its cause, but in the evening, when the company had departed, she scolded her daughter very seriously, and made her feel the rudeness, and even absurdity, of such conduct, and assured her that if such a thing occurred again, she would not allow her to associate with companions, who encouraged her in such disagreeable habits. Finally, as she was anxious to accustom her to reflect upon the motives of her actions, she asked her what there was so very remarkable in the conversation of the Curé de Vallonay.

"Oh! mamma, he said everything so oddly."

"As, for example:"—

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"Well, mamma, he took the trouble of telling me that more flies were to be caught with a spoonful of honey than with a barrel of vinegar."

"And, it appears to me, Julia, that this maxim was never better applied; and it would have been a fortunate thing had it recalled to your mind at that moment, that love is gained by doing what is pleasing to others, not by mockery and disagreeable behaviour."

"And then he recited to papa, who apparently knew it very well beforehand, that

verse of La Fontaine—

"Plus fait douceur que violence."
Gentleness does more than violence.

"Which means...?" asked Madame de Vallonay.

"Which means ... which means...." And Julia, probably rather annoyed by the conversation, was entirely taken up with pulling with all her strength the string of her bag, which had become entangled with the key of her work-box.

"Which means," continued Madame de Vallonay, "that you would do much better, were you gently to untie the knot in that string, instead of tightening it as you are doing, by pulling it in this irritable manner. I see, Julia, that you will often require to be reminded of the Curé's proverbs."

"But, nevertheless, mamma, they are things which everybody knows, and it was that which wearied me, and made me laugh with those girls."

"Which everybody knows? which you, Julia, know, do you not?"

"I assure you I do, mamma."

[Pg 313] "You, who might learn something from every one! You, who might find something instructive in the story of Madame Croque-Mitaine, if indeed, you were capable of understanding it!"

"The story of Madame Croque-Mitaine!" exclaimed Julia, very much piqued: "that story for babies, which my cousin brought the other day for my little sister?"

"Exactly so, the one he made for her, when I showed him that bad engraving which I had given her, and which represented Madame Croque-Mitaine, with her bag and stick, threatening all the little children that she will take them away, if they are not good."

"What, mamma! and you really believe that I should learn something from that story?"

"No, because I am not sure that you have penetration enough to understand its utility. Come, let us see, here is the paper, read it..., come, read on."

"Oh! mamma."

"Oh! my child, you will have the kindness to read it aloud to me; if my dignity is not hurt by hearing it, surely yours need not be so by reading it."

Julia, half-laughing, half-pouting, took the manuscript, and read aloud the following story:

MADAME CROQUE-MITAINE:

A TALE.

[Pg 314] "Come away! come away, Paul," said little Louisa to her youngest brother, "we have more time than we want; the shop where they sell flowers and toys is at the end of the next street; mamma is dressing, and before she has finished we shall be back again, you with your whip, and I with my nosegay, and we will bring back one for mamma too, which will please her."

Taking Paul by the hand, she walked off with him as fast as their little legs could carry them. Louisa was nine years old, and Paul only seven, and they were two of the prettiest children imaginable. Louisa was dressed in a frock of snow-white cambric, and a rose-coloured sash encircled her little waist. As she walked along, she admired her red shoes, while her fair hair fell in ringlets over her shoulders. Paul's hair was neither less fair nor less beautiful; he wore a nankeen dress, quite new, an embroidered waistcoat, and an open worked shirt; but all these were nothing in comparison with the pleasure which awaited them. Their mother had promised to take them to the fair of Saint Cloud, and they were to set out in an hour. In the country, where, up to the present time, they had resided, they had been permitted to run about in the park, and sometimes even into the village; since they had come to Paris, however, they had been forbidden ever to venture beyond the carriage-gate, but the habit of attending to these injunctions was not yet confirmed, and besides, Louisa wanted to have a bouquet to take with her to Saint Cloud, and Paul wanted a whip, that he might whip his papa's horses, for he had promised to take him by his side in front of the calèche, and they hastened to buy these things unknown to their mother, with the money that she had just given them for their week's allowance.

[Pg 315] All the passers-by stopped to look at them: "What pretty children!" they said, "how can they be allowed to go in the streets alone at their age?" And Louisa pulled Paul by the hand, in order to walk faster, so as not to hear them. A cabriolet which was

coming very quickly behind them, made them redouble their haste. "Let us run fast," said Louisa, "here comes a cabriolet," but the cabriolet also ran, and Louisa, in her fright, turned to the right instead of to the left, and passed the flower-shop without perceiving it. The cabriolet still followed them, every instant drawing nearer; the noise of the wheels so bewildered Louisa, that thinking it was upon her heels, she rushed into another street. The vehicle took the same direction, and in turning round, the horse trotting in the middle of the gutter, sent up such a shower of mud and water, that our two terrified children were completely covered by it.

Paul instantly burst into tears: "My embroidered waistcoat is spoiled," he exclaimed.

"Be quiet," said Louisa, "we shall be observed," and she cast an anxious and melancholy look, sometimes around her, and sometimes on her cambric dress, which was even more splashed than Paul's waistcoat.

"Shall we soon reach the toy-shop?" asked Paul, still crying, though in a lower tone.

"We have only to go back," said Louisa, "for I think we have come too far; if we take the same way back, we shall soon be there," and she pulled Paul still more forcibly, while she kept close up to the wall, in the hope of not being seen; nevertheless, she did not know how she could venture to enter the toy-shop, or return home to her mother, with her dress in this condition.

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All the streets seemed alike, and a child knows only the one in which it lives. Louisa did not return through the same streets by which the cabriolet had followed her. The farther she went, the more uneasy did she become, at not reaching the shop, and she dragged Paul's arm, who, not being able to walk so fast, said to her, "Don't go so fast, you hurt me." They went down a little street, which somewhat resembled one in the neighbourhood of their own house through which Louisa had sometimes passed, but at the end of it they found no passage, and instead of their road, they beheld ... Madame Croque-Mitaine, rummaging with her crook in a heap of rags.

You know Madame Croque-Mitaine. You have seen her humped back, her red eyes, her pointed nose, her dark and wrinkled face, her dirty and withered hands, her petticoat of all colours, her sabots, her bag, and that long stick with which she turns up and examines every heap of rubbish she meets with.

At the noise made by the two children in running, she raised her head, looked at them, and guessed, without much difficulty, from their frightened looks, and by the tears which still flowed down Paul's cheeks, and the sobs which swelled the bosom of Louisa, that they ought not to be where they were.

"What are you doing here?" she asked of them.

Louisa, without replying, leaned against the railing, holding Paul still more firmly.

"Have you a tongue?" continued Madame Croque-Mitaine. "You have at all events
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very good legs to run with," and she took Louisa by the hand, saying, "Hold up your head, my little one, what has happened to you?"

Louisa was so unaccustomed to speak to persons whom she did not know; the stories which her nurse had been foolish enough to repeat to her about old women who take away little children; the wrinkles, the ill-tempered look, the costume, and the first words addressed to her by Madame Croque-Mitaine, had so much terrified her, that notwithstanding the softened tone in which she now spoke to her, Louisa did not dare either to raise her eyes, or to reply.

"Well," said the old woman, "I see that I shall not get a word from them, nevertheless, I will not leave the poor children here. Will you," she said, addressing Paul, "will you tell me where you come from, and where you are going to? Are you also dumb like your sister?"

"We are going to the toy-shop," said Paul.

"And we have lost our way," rejoined Louisa, who began to feel a little less afraid of Madame Croque-Mitaine.

"Your mamma, surely, did not allow you to go out?" continued the old woman.

Louisa cast down her eyes.

"Well! well! you must first come to my house, in order that I may get rid of some of this mud for you; you are almost as dirty as I am."

"No! no!" exclaimed Louisa, who began again to be frightened at the recollection of the stories of her nurse.

"What do you mean by '*No*?' Are you afraid that I shall eat you? Oh! I see they have made you afraid of Madame Croque-Mitaine; but make yourself easy, she is not

so bad as they have told you."

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And, indeed, this Madame Croque-Mitaine was only what they all are; that is a poor old woman, who had no other means of gaining a living, than by picking up rags here and there, and selling them afterwards to persons as poor as herself.

She threw her stick into her bag, took the two children by the hand, who still walked with hesitating steps, and went down one of the narrow streets.

Every one looked with astonishment, both at the conductor, and those whom she conducted; their pretty dresses, all splashed as they were, nevertheless formed a singular contrast with hers, and it was quite evident, by their looks of shame, that they had met with some accident, occasioned by their own fault.

"I verily believe," said a man, "that those are the two children I met some time since, and who were walking along so gaily, holding each other by the hand."

"What has happened to them?" asked another.

Louisa wished, notwithstanding the fear which she had not yet entirely overcome, to hasten the steps of Madame Croque-Mitaine, in order to escape from the looks of the curious.

"Stop! stop!" said the old woman, "do not pull me so much, I have my sack to carry, and I cannot go so fast."

At last they arrived in front of a dirty little house, into which they entered, through a door half-mouldered away. Madame Croque-Mitaine opened it, and made the children go in before her. She followed them, put down her sack, and called her daughter, saying, "Charlotte, bring some water and a cloth here, to wash these poor

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little creatures." Charlotte came out of a corner where she was spinning some coarse hemp; her clothes were as ragged as those of her mother, and she was only two or three years older than Louisa; but when the latter saw her, she felt a little more confidence. Charlotte washed Louisa, while the old woman did the same service for little Paul. The cloth was very coarse, and the maids not very careful. Paul cried, and said they rubbed him too hard, but Louisa was too much ashamed to venture any complaint.

When this operation was over, "Now," said the old woman, "you will tell me where you live, that I may take you home."

"In the Rue d'Anjou," said Louisa, immediately.

"Ha! ha! You can speak now without waiting to be pressed; come along, then; it is not very far from here," and she set off with the two children, who were now quite comforted.

As she had left her sack at home, they could walk faster. When once they had reached the Rue d'Anjou, Louisa went direct to her own door. They found, on entering, the whole house in commotion. They had been sought for ever since they had left. All the servants had dispersed themselves in different directions in search of them; and their mother, in great anxiety, had also gone out to look for them. The moment the portress saw them, she uttered a cry of joy, and ascended with them to the apartments. "Here they are! here they are!" she cried out from a distance, to the nurse, who was quite in despair at not having watched them more carefully; and

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Louisa ran and threw herself into her arms, crying with shame, fear, and pleasure. At the same moment their mother returned, a prey to the deepest anguish. Transported with joy at finding them again, she never thought of scolding them as they deserved. "What has happened to you? What have you done?" she asked, taking them upon her knees, and covering them with tears and kisses.

"They lost their way, madame," said Madame Croque-Mitaine, for Louisa did not dare to reply. "I met them in a *cul-de-sac*, at some distance from here: the little girl told me that she was going to buy nosegays for herself and you, and a whip for her brother; but surely it must have been without your permission."

"Good heavens, yes!" replied the mother, still trembling, "and is it you, good woman, who have brought them back to me?"

"Yes, madame, but I first went and washed them at my house. No doubt they must have been splashed by a coach; if you had only seen the state they were in!" And Louisa, greatly ashamed, would have been glad to hide her dress, which was covered with mud; while Paul, on the contrary, showed his waistcoat to his mother, saying, "But, mamma, I shall want another waistcoat to go to Saint Cloud."

"Oh, my dears," said their mother, "no Saint Cloud for this day. I am still trembling with the fright you have caused me. It is already late, and your papa is still seeking for you. If you had not ventured out alone, and without my permission, you would neither have been splashed nor lost, and we should now have been on our way to Saint Cloud; it is right you should be punished for your fault; go then and change

your clothes."

[Pg 321] Paul was very much disposed to cry and pout; but Louisa, feeling the justice of her mother's words, took his hand, and left the room with him, followed by her nurse.

Their mother remained with Madame Croque-Mitaine. "These poor children were very much afraid of me, madame," said the old woman. "They would scarcely go with me, and I had great difficulty in inducing them to enter my hovel."

"How much I am indebted to you!" replied the mother. "Had it not been for you, they would not now be here, and God only knows what might have happened to them. Oh, how much I owe you!"

"Oh, nothing at all, madame; if my daughter had lost herself, and you had chanced to find her, you would have done as much for her."

"Have you a daughter, my good woman?"

"Yes, one twelve years old, may it please you, madame; Charlotte is very pretty, though I say so."

Louisa returned at this moment.

"Louisa," asked her mother, "did you see little Charlotte?"

"Oh yes, mamma, it was she who washed me."

"Well, shall we go and pay her a visit?"

"Oh yes, mamma, I should like that very much."

"Come, then, with me, my child."

Louisa followed her mother into her room, and, at her suggestion, hastily made up a packet containing two dresses, still very good; some underclothing, a cap, two handkerchiefs, and two pair of stockings.

[Pg 322] "Come, then, let us take these things to Charlotte," said her mother; and Louisa, greatly delighted, exclaimed, "Oh, mamma, I think they will just fit her; she is not much bigger than I am."

"Will you conduct us to your house, my good woman," said the mother to Madame Croque-Mitaine, who was greatly rejoiced by this visit.

"Charlotte will not have gone out, will she?" demanded Louisa, blushing.

"No! certainly not," replied the old dame, "she never goes out without my permission;" and they quickly descended.

Their walk did not occupy much time. Louisa almost ran. As they entered the house, Madame Croque-Mitaine made numberless apologies for the dirty floor, and the worn-out door. Louisa had already gone to look for Charlotte, in the corner where she was spinning. The little girl was rather ashamed of coming so badly dressed into the presence of such a grand lady.

"Come forward, miss," said her mother. "Make a courtesy; this is the mamma of Mademoiselle Louisa, whom you washed a short time since. Oh, I assure you, madame, she did it very cheerfully," and Charlotte, not daring to look up at such a great lady, glanced at Louisa, and smiled. The latter wanted immediately to dress her in her frock, to put on her white stockings, a handkerchief, and a cap, in order that she might have the pleasure of looking at her.

"Let her do that, herself," said her mother; "she will dress herself when she likes. Tell me, my little girl, would you like to come and live near Louisa?"

Charlotte looked at her mother, as if to ask her what she ought to reply.

[Pg 323] "Answer, child," said the latter.

"You shall not leave your mother," continued the lady, "for I have a proposition to make to her. My doorkeeper is going away, and I have not yet engaged another in her place. Would you like to take the lodge, my good woman? We do not keep late hours at my house, and you will not have much trouble."

Madame Croque-Mitaine was overjoyed at this offer; it was a good and secure situation, and she accepted it with the most lively gratitude. It was agreed that she should enter upon her duties on the following day, and Louisa returned home with her mother. Her father, who had just come in, scolded her a little for what she had done, a fault of which she had not at first felt the full extent; and Louisa, while acknowledging her fault, said, nevertheless, that her nurse ought not to have told her bad stories about Madame Croque-Mitaine, and that she was much better pleased at having had an opportunity of doing a service to Charlotte than if she had gone to St. Cloud.

"Well, my child," said Madame de Vallonay to Julia, when she had finished reading, "what useful reflections do you deduce from the story of Madame Croque-Mitaine?" Julia smiled, but said nothing, as if she imagined that her mother was laughing at her. But Madame de Vallonay having pressed for an answer, she said, with a contemptuous expression, "Indeed, mamma, if you made me read it, in order to teach me not to be afraid of old women, who go about picking up rags in the streets, I think I knew that much before."

"And do you see nothing else in it?"

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"What! mamma, that we ought not to be disobedient? this is a thing one scarcely needs to learn at my age."

"I am very glad," said Madame de Vallonay, smiling, with a slight tinge of sarcasm, "that this lesson has become quite useless to you. But cannot you see any others?"

"What others can there be?"

"As for that, my child, I will not point them out to you. You might then find that I was only repeating what all the world knows. Look for them yourself."

With these words, Madame de Vallonay went to her husband's study, as she wished to speak with him, and left Julia with her work, her books of history, and her sonata to practise. When she returned, it was ten o'clock, and as she opened the door, Julia screamed and started from her chair greatly frightened.

"What is the matter, my dear?" said her mother.

"Oh! nothing, mamma, I was only frightened."

"Frightened at what?"

"Because you startled me."

"What childish nonsense! Come, it is late, you must go to bed."

"Are you coming, mamma?"

"No, I have a letter to write."

"Well, mamma, I will wait until you have finished it."

"No, I wish you to go to bed."

"But, mamma, if you will let me, as I pass by, I will carry your desk and lamp into your bedroom, you will be able to write there more comfortably."

"No, my dear, I shall write much more comfortably here. Cannot you go to bed without me?"

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Julia did not move. She looked at the wax taper, which her mother told her to take, with an expression of dismay, and without lighting it, and seemed from time to time, to listen anxiously in the direction of the door. Her mother could not conceive what was the matter with her.

"Indeed, my dear," she said, smiling, "I think you must be afraid of meeting Madame Croque-Mitaine by the way."

Julia smiled too, though with some embarrassment, and confessed that she had been reading in a book which lay upon the table, a story of robbers and assassins, which terrified her so much that she had not courage to go alone to her room, which was separated from the boudoir by the drawing-room and her mother's bedroom.

"We had agreed, Julia, that you should not read anything without my permission. I think it would not have been quite so useless if Madame Croque-Mitaine had taught you not to disobey."

"Mamma, I did not think I was doing much harm, because it was a book for young people, and you had already allowed me to read some of the tales."

"You should have waited until I had given you permission to read the whole, and the story of Madame Croque-Mitaine ought to have taught you, that children should not undertake to interpret the wishes of their parents, as they can seldom understand the reasons on which they are founded. Louisa and Paul, like you, thought they were doing no great harm, and like you, too, they fell into the very inconvenience from which it was intended to preserve them. Go, my child, go to bed,

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and if your fear prevents you from sleeping, you can reflect on the moral contained in the story of Madame Croque-Mitaine."

Julia saw she had no alternative; she lighted the taper as slowly as she could, and as she went out, left the door of the boudoir open; but her mother called her back to

shut it. Then, seeing herself alone, she began to walk so fast that the taper went out at the door of her room. She was obliged to retrace her steps. When she reached her room a second time, her heart beat violently; she started at every creaking of the floor, nor could she go to sleep, until her mother came. These absurd fears tormented her for two or three days, though she did not dare to speak of them, for fear of being again reminded of Madame Croque-Mitaine; but she had not yet escaped from her.

One of Julia's companions had been presented with two little white mice, the prettiest little things imaginable. They were inclosed in a large glass-case, through which they could be seen; a kind of little wheel had been suspended from the lid, which they turned round with their paws, like squirrels, in trying to climb upon it, and thus they fancied they were travelling a great distance. As her friend could not carry them with her to school, where she had still to remain for a year, Julia begged that she would lend them to her for that time, promising to take great care of them; and, indeed, she attended to them herself. Her mother would not allow her to have animals to be taken care of by the servants, for she thought such things can amuse only when one attends to them oneself, and that if they do not amuse, they are not
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worth the trouble of having. Julia gave them their food frequently enough, but she frequently forgot to shut the case; then they made their escape. They had hitherto been always caught, but one day, when they were out enjoying themselves, and when Julia, according to custom, had been so careless as to leave her door open, a cat entered, and Julia, who returned at that moment, saw her eating one of the mice without any power of preventing it. She was in despair, and exclaimed twenty times, "Oh! the vile cat! the horrid cat!" and declared that had she known this, she would never have taken charge of the mice.

"My dear child," said her mother, when she was a little pacified, "all your misfortune comes from your not having again read, at that time, the story of Madame Croque-Mitaine."

"But, mamma," said Julia impatiently, "what could that have to do with it?"

"You would have seen then, that we ought never to undertake anything without being sure of having the power of accomplishing it. For what happened to Louisa and Paul arose from their not sufficiently considering, before they went out to the toy-shop, whether they should be able to reach it without going astray, and without being afraid of the carriages; just as you did not sufficiently consider, before you took charge of the mice, whether you were able to take proper care of them."

"But, mamma, it would have been necessary to have foreseen."

"That you would have been careless; that the mice would escape from an open
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case; that when they were out, the cat would eat them. All this you might very easily have thought of, had you been able to profit by the story of Madame Croque-Mitaine."

Julia thought her mother's raillery very disagreeable, but she was soon consoled, for her friend, to whom she wrote an account of her misfortune, told her, in reply, that she was not angry with her, and besides, she was invited to a ball, the first to which she had been since she had left school. Julia danced pretty well. During the two years she had passed at school, she had been one of those selected to dance the gavotte, at the distribution of prizes, and as always happens in polished society, many compliments had been paid her, so that she felt the greatest desire to dance the gavotte at a ball. Scarcely had she arrived at this one, when she communicated her wishes to the daughter of her hostess, who was her cousin, and the mother having become acquainted with her desire, arranged one for her, towards the middle of the ball. Madame de Vallonay being quite ignorant of the matter, was greatly astonished when they came for Julia to dance. She at first refused to let her go, but the lady of the house had calculated upon her performing this dance with her son, and thought it would be very pretty to see them in it, as they were nearly of a size, and also much alike. Madame de Vallonay, finding that she made a point of it, that the company were already arranged for the gavotte, and that this discussion attracted general attention, consented to let her daughter go, although with extreme reluctance, because she considered it absurd to take up in this manner the attention
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of every one, in looking at persons who do not possess any talent capable of affording amusement.

Not so with Julia: convinced that she was going to delight every one, she walked across the room with a lofty air, which caused much laughter. She heard this, and reddened with anger, especially when she saw one lady speaking in a whisper, while looking at her with a quizzical air, and heard another behind her saying, "How ridiculous to interrupt the ball, in order to let that little girl dance the gavotte!" However, she was not discouraged; she did her best, held her head still higher than usual, and displayed all those graces which had obtained her such brilliant success at school. She was, therefore, dreadfully annoyed when, at the end, the ironical laughter which mingled with the applause, and even the exaggeration of the applause itself, showed her that she was an object of ridicule. Scarcely had she

finished her last courtesy, when the young ladies and gentlemen crowded forward to take their places in the country dance. Julia, as with difficulty she passed through them, conducted by her partner, who was wiping his brow, heard it murmured around her, "It is well that that is over; it has been a very stupid affair."

She felt deeply humiliated; her heart was oppressed, and she cast down her eyes: she supposed that no one would again ask her to dance, and indeed, two country dances had taken place without her having been invited to join. Anticipating, therefore, nothing but vexation from this ball, from which she had promised herself so much pleasure, she told her mother that she was tired, and entreated her to go
[Pg 330] home. Madame de Vallonay easily guessed the cause of her fatigue; but that she might not increase her annoyance, she did not mention the subject that evening. The following day, however, she wished to know whether it was she who requested to dance the gavotte. Julia, though very much ashamed, confessed that it was.

"It has turned out very unfortunately for you, my poor Julia," said Madame de Vallonay; "what a pity that you did not call to mind at that moment the story of Madame Croque-Mitaine."

"And what use would it have been to me?"

"It would have taught you that we always run the risk of committing folly, when we wish to follow one general course of action, without reflecting whether the circumstances are altered. Thus, Louisa and Paul, who were accustomed to run about alone, in the country, in places where there was no danger of their meeting with carriages, or cabriolets, or passers by, never thought that in the streets of Paris, it would be quite a different affair; and you, who were in the habit of dancing the gavotte at school, where you were applauded, because the strangers who were there were anxious to please the mistress, did not reflect that it would be quite another matter when you danced it in the midst of a large number of persons, who took no interest in you, and who were assembled there to dance themselves, and not to look at you."

"But, mamma," said Julia, who was anxious to turn the conversation, "you find everything in Madame Croque-Mitaine."

"I could find many other things also; and if you wish, we shall have enough there for a long time to come."

[Pg 331] "Oh! no, no, mamma, I entreat you."

"I shall be very glad not to speak of it any more, my child, but only on one condition, which is, that for the future, you will not take it into your head to imagine that what is said by grownup people can be a fit subject of raillery for a little girl like you; and that, when their conversation wearies you, instead of pretending that it does so, because it is ridiculous, you will, on the contrary, say to yourself, that it is because you have not sufficient penetration to understand it, or sufficient sense to profit by it. Take care, for if you fail, I shall send you again for instruction to the story of Madame Croque-Mitaine."

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AGLAÏA AND LEONTINE;

OR MANŒUVRING.

AGLAÏA resided in a provincial town, with her grandmother, Madame Lacour, the widow of a respectable notary. As Madame Lacour was in easy circumstances, and, moreover, exact and economical, she was enabled to live very agreeably, associating only with persons of her own class, without seeking those who were distinguished by a more elevated rank, or greater wealth. She received company every Thursday, and spent the other evenings in visiting her friends at their own houses. Aglaïa, who always went with her, met on these occasions young people of her own age, and these in like manner accompanied their parents on the Thursdays to Madame Lacour's *soirées*. In the summer they made up parties for the country, and spent the day in the gardens belonging to one or other of the society. These gardens not being very distant, the young people walked there, while the elder ones rode upon donkeys. They amused themselves in the fields, and returned home in the evening very tired, but very happy, and a few days afterwards commenced again.

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Aglaïa, who was mild and amiable, was very much beloved by her companions; but her greatest friends were Hortense Guimont, and her brother Gustave, the children of the physician of the town. Hortense was fourteen years of age, Aglaïa a year younger, while Gustave was sixteen. Though Aglaïa was less familiar with him than with Hortense, she was still very fond of him. She even felt for him a certain degree of deference, for Gustave was much advanced for his age, highly esteemed in the town for his diligence and success in his studies, and looked upon as one destined to obtain honourable distinction in his future career. Even those who had known him from his childhood, no longer called him *little Guimont*, but *young Guimont*. Some even said *M. Guimont*. Parents held him up as a model to their sons, and his companions were proud of him, and always treated him with respect.

His sister, Hortense, was also very amiable and sensible. M. Guimont, their father, brought them up very judiciously. Although his society was much courted by the most distinguished families of the town, not only on account of his talents as a physician, but also on account of his amiability and conversational powers, he would never take his children into the high circles which he occasionally frequented himself. "I wish my daughter," he said, "to remain among those with whom she is destined to pass her life; and as to my son, if his talents procure him hereafter the means of being well received in the world, I shall be delighted; but I will not inspire him with a taste for elevated society, until I am quite sure that he will be able to maintain his position there with honour."

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It was sometimes said to him, "With your extensive connection, you might easily advance your son." He replied, "If my son has merit, he will advance himself; and if he has not, I would not wish to place him in a position in which he would only discover his own incapacity;" and he added, "Gustave is in a much better position than I was when I began, for there are many persons, I believe, who will be disposed to take an interest in him on my account; he must do the rest for himself, and he will be able to do it much better than I could do it for him, for I cannot make people take an interest in him on his own account." Nevertheless, M. Guimont could not entirely resist the importunities of some friends, who were particularly attached to him, and who pressed him very much to bring his son to visit them. However, Gustave, who was proud, felt ill at ease in the society of persons with whom he was not on an equality, and who thought they were conferring an honour on him, in receiving him into their circle; and he was equally ill at ease with the young people of this class, since he could not treat them as companions. He was afraid of being too cold, and did not wish to be too polite, because an excess of politeness might have been regarded as adulation; neither did he wish to be too attentive, because he felt that his attentions could not be flattering to any one. He therefore entreated his father not to take him again into such company, and resolved to devote his energies to the acquirement of personal merit, that he might hope one day to be sought for on his own account, to confer, in his turn, honour on those who received him, and see them attach importance to his attentions.

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He always felt happy at Madame Lacour's, who was a woman of good sense, and an intimate friend of his father. He was very fond of Aglaïa, who had been brought up by her grandmother, as well as any young lady could be in a country town, and who showed a disposition to improve her mind. Madame Lacour had begged him to revise her exercises, and he was a severe master; indeed, Aglaïa was more afraid of his disapprobation than of that of her grandmother. Whenever he was dissatisfied with her, it was always Hortense who restored peace between them, and being older and more advanced than Aglaïa, she generally looked over her exercises before they were shown to Gustave, so much was she afraid of his finding fault with her. Notwithstanding all this, however, they agreed very well, and, next to his sister,

Aglaïa was the person in whom he reposed most confidence. She was very proud of this, for all the young people with whom she was acquainted, attached great value to Gustave's friendship.

The nobility and people of wealth seldom spent more than the winter in the town. In summer all went to their country seats. The town, however, was not on this account any the less gay for Aglaïa, or the reunions of Madame Lacour; but as it was more quiet, every unusual occurrence created a proportionate sensation. People were therefore very much taken up with M. d'Armilly, and his daughter Leontine, who had just arrived there. M. d'Armilly had recently purchased a château in the environs, which being uninhabitable, he was having rebuilt; and in order to be able to superintend the operations, he had established himself in the town: but he was
[Pg 336] very seldom at home, and usually slept at a neighbouring farm, that he might be nearer his workmen. He left his daughter under the care of a confidential person, who acted as her governess, and who could have educated her very well, as she was herself well educated, had she not, for the sake of pleasing M. d'Armilly, who quite spoiled his daughter, allowed her to have her own way in everything.

Leontine was as foolish as a spoiled child, and excessively proud. She was fifteen years old, just the age when ridiculous ideas are most apt to enter the head of a young girl. Having some relations of high rank, she had lived in Paris in the most fashionable society, and had assumed some of the airs of a woman, while adding to them all the follies of a child. Her father and herself having been received, on their arrival, with all the respect with which an innkeeper is usually inspired by the sight of one of the greatest landowners of his neighbourhood, she thought she must maintain her dignity by corresponding manners. She asked if at that time there was any one in the town whom she could visit; they named Madame Lacour, M. Guimont, M. André, a linen-manufacturer, M. Dufour, a wholesale wine-merchant, &c. She inquired about some persons of higher rank, whom she knew were resident there, but all were then out of town; and Leontine, satisfied with having indicated by her questions the kind of society to which she had been accustomed, did not dare, however much she may have felt inclined to be impertinent, to display more than half the ridiculous airs which she had prepared to mark her contempt for the more humble names.

[Pg 337] Reduced to the society of her governess, and to a few excursions made with her father to the château which was in course of erection, Leontine's only amusement was to select from her wardrobe whatever was most novel, and best calculated to produce an extraordinary sensation in a provincial town, and then to go daily and display her haughty airs on the public promenade. Every one looked at her, but this was what she wished; every one ridiculed her without her being aware of it, but in secret all the young girls began to imitate her. It was soon observed that they carried their heads much higher, and that an innovation was made in the manner of fastening their sashes. Aglaïa had already turned and returned her bonnet in two or three different ways, in the hope of imparting to it something of the style which Leontine's displayed, and she had also tried two or three modes of arranging the folds of her shawl.

Gustave had remarked this, and laughed at her, and though she would not admit the charge, she still felt very much annoyed with him, because he would not appreciate the beauty of a bow, which she had succeeded in placing in precisely the same manner in which Leontine's had been arranged on the previous evening.

The excitement became general: even Hortense, accustomed as she was to defer to her brother's opinion, had already twice disputed with him, maintaining that it did not follow, that because a fashion had been introduced by Leontine, it was not pretty; and that if it was pretty, it was quite rational to adopt it. Gustave, almost as much a
[Pg 338] child, in his own way, as Aglaïa in hers, would not allow that Leontine should be imitated in anything, so much was he annoyed at the importance attached to everything she did. In fact, she could not take a step, but it was known; people were informed of what her father's cook had bought for dinner, and various intrigues were resorted to in order to discover what she ate for breakfast. It was known whether she heard mass attentively or not, and this at least proved that the observers had been inattentive; in a word, she could not pass down the street without every one rushing to the window to see her.

One may judge of the excitement at Madame Lacour's, when one morning, Leontine, accompanied by her governess, Mademoiselle Champré, called there to pay a visit. Madame Lacour's husband, who for many years had been a notary in another province, had rendered M. d'Armilly important services in his affairs. This gentleman, having discovered that his widow resided in the town, desired his daughter to call upon her, as he was too much occupied at the moment to go himself; and Leontine, who began to get very dull, was not sorry to have a pretext for laying aside her dignity. Madame Lacour, who had shared but little in the extreme interest taken in all her actions, was but moderately excited by her visit, but Aglaïa blushed a dozen times before Leontine had spoken to her, and a dozen times more while answering her.

It is not so easy as may be imagined to assume airs with persons who are not accustomed to them, and whose simplicity interferes with them at every moment; when not sustained by a suitable concurrence of circumstances, and by the example
[Pg 339] of others, a person relapses into his natural manners in spite of himself, and the studied tones of impertinence only return at intervals, and as it were by an effort of the memory. Leontine was much less ridiculous than could have been supposed. Madame Lacour, with her customary indulgence, was pleased with her, and Aglaïa thought her charming.

It was Thursday: in the evening at Madame Lacour's *soirée*, nothing was talked of but the morning's visit. "She has then, at last, made up her mind," said some of the ladies; "I suppose she will do us also the honour of paying us a visit;" and they were not a little shocked that Leontine had commenced with Madame Lacour. Others took refuge in their dignity, and professed to care nothing at all about her. Others, again, less reserved, asked what she had said, calculated the day she would call upon Madame Dufour or Madame André, and whispered among themselves that she would probably not visit Madame Simon, whom they considered as somewhat inferior to themselves, and they agreed that it was quite natural that she should not call on her. The young ladies in their circle repeated very much the same things as their mothers, and with still greater volubility. As for Aglaïa, she narrated, explained, and repeated her story, in the most imposing and animated tones; but while in the midst of her excitement, she perceived that Gustave was watching her from his part of the room, and shrugging his shoulders with an ironical smile. This disconcerted her exceedingly; but seeing Hortense listening to her with more attention than her
[Pg 340] brother, she resumed the conversation, and would willingly have continued it throughout the entire evening. It was with pain that she heard any other subject introduced, and she contrived to revert to her favourite topic every moment. "That is precisely," she would say, "what Mademoiselle Leontine d'Armilly was telling me this morning." If any particular place in the neighbourhood was alluded to, "Mademoiselle Leontine d'Armilly has not yet seen it," said Aglaïa. Some one spoke of the excessive heat of the day, "Mademoiselle Leontine d'Armilly was surprised to find grandmamma's room so cool," observed Aglaïa.

At this moment she was balancing herself on her chair, the two front legs slipped backwards, and both Aglaïa and the chair fell. Every one hastened to help her up, and Gustave amongst the rest; but seeing that she was unhurt, he said, "I suppose Mademoiselle Leontine d'Armilly did that too." Every one laughed: Aglaïa, very much ashamed, and very angry, did not again pronounce Leontine's name, neither did she speak to Gustave the whole evening. Though she was afraid of vexing him too much, still it is certain that she began to withdraw her confidence from him, for she could not speak to him on the subject that chiefly occupied her thoughts. She was also a little afraid of Hortense, and thus she was ill at ease with those whom she most loved, because they did not share in the ridiculous pleasures of her vanity.

The others, while ridiculing the importance she attached to Leontine's visit, were not the less anxiously looking forward to a similar visit for themselves. For two or
[Pg 341] three days, at the hour at which Leontine had called on Madame Lacour, all the young ladies kept themselves fully prepared, and constantly on the look-out; she did not, however, make her appearance; but they learned that she had invited Aglaïa to breakfast with her; and in the evening, at the assembly, Aglaïa hardly dared to speak of the breakfast in the presence of Gustave, and she merely said that Leontine was to fetch her on the following day for a walk. Her companions drew themselves up with an expression of mortification. All the annoyance produced by this preference was quite evident: one of them, named Laurette, less proud and more thoughtless than the rest, said to Aglaïa, "Very well, I shall ask mamma to let me call on you at that hour, and I shall be included in the party." Aglaïa, very much embarrassed, stammered out some excuses; she said that Leontine was not acquainted with Laurette, and that she did not know whether such a thing would be agreeable to her. Laurette said that it was all the same to her, that she should find others to walk with her, and immediately made a proposal to that effect to two or three other girls, who accepted it, saying, "Oh! as for us, it does not become us to be so proud." One of the mothers overheard this conversation; fortunately it was not Laurette's, for she would have made a scene. However, the lady in question did make some observations on the imprudence of exposing oneself to insults, together with other remarks full of bitterness, which were repeated by the young people. The evening passed in the most disagreeable manner. Madame Lacour being indisposed, had remained at
[Pg 342] home, and at night M. Guimont, having called for his own children, also accompanied Aglaïa home. She kept close to him, in order to avoid speaking to Hortense or Gustave, whose displeasure she had noticed, though they had said nothing; and though Hortense, with her accustomed kindness, had several times tried to interrupt the conversation, when she thought it likely to be disagreeable to Aglaïa. Had the latter reflected, she would have felt that the pleasure of being preferred to bear Leontine company was but a poor equivalent for the embarrassment she suffered in the society of those she loved; but vanity blinded her, and she did not see how much she lowered herself, in looking upon such distinction as an honour.

The following day, Aglaïa, dressed in her gayest attire, accompanied Leontine to the promenade. Her manner sufficiently betrayed the pride she felt, at being thus an object of attention, while at the same time it showed her embarrassment with Leontine, with whom she was not at her ease, being constantly afraid of saying something which might appear unbecoming. What was most extraordinary in all this was, that whilst it gave her no uneasiness to make herself ridiculous in the eyes of a great number of persons with whom she was destined to pass her life, the bare idea of appearing ridiculous to a single person whom she scarcely knew, and with whom she would only associate for a couple of months, at the utmost, would have caused her inexpressible vexation. Every one was on the promenade. The mothers passed close to Aglaïa, with lofty and displeased looks, making ill-natured remarks, which
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she dreaded might reach the ear of Leontine. Some of the young ladies too, assumed all their dignity. The young men all bowed to her; but on that day she thought some of them so common-looking, and so deficient in style, that they were extremely annoyed at the manner in which she returned their salutation, watching, as it were, for the moment when she could do so without being observed by Leontine. The latter had already asked her the names and professions of several; and Aglaïa had answered her with some degree of pain, as they had not very brilliant titles for presentation. When she perceived any grounds for criticising either their persons or their dress, she eagerly seized upon it, fearing that Leontine might suppose she had not observed it. Never before had she discovered so many defects in her friends and acquaintances. At length she perceived at a distance Hortense and her brother. "Oh!" said she, "those two are very amiable." She was dying to introduce them to Leontine, for she fancied they would be as pleased to be acquainted with her as she herself was, for, notwithstanding their disagreements, she really loved them. Besides, she was proud of Gustave, proud of his talents, and of his reputation, and she was delighted to be able to boast of them to Leontine; she began, therefore, to praise him with great warmth, assuring her that he composed most charming verses, and that every one considered him destined to shine in the *very best society of Paris*.

"To do that, my dear," replied Leontine, with the air of one who understood all these sort of things, "to do that, he must acquire a little more style, for at present he
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looks very much like a schoolboy;" saying this she glanced carelessly at Hortense and Gustave, and began to speak of something else.

Aglaïa blushed, partly for Gustave and partly on her own account, for she felt that she had compromised herself. By this time her two friends were close to her; she would willingly have stopped and spoken to them, and she slackened her pace for that purpose, but Leontine, whose head was turned in another direction, continued to walk on, and Aglaïa followed her, casting towards Hortense, for she dared not look at Gustave, a glance of mingled shame and sadness, which seemed to say, "See, I know not what to do." Gustave shrugged his shoulders at beholding his weak-minded little friend reduced to such slavery.

The following day nothing was talked of in the town but the impertinences of Aglaïa. One said that she had pretended not to see her; a third, that she had not bowed to her; another, that she had looked at her with a laugh, while joining Leontine in ridiculing her. The young men were divided in their opinion, some being for, others against her. Gustave was the only one who said nothing, but he appeared sad, and Hortense endeavoured to palliate her faults.

Two days afterwards, Aglaïa took Leontine for a walk into Madame Lacour's garden. As she did not know what refreshment to give her, she had persuaded the servant to bring her some milk and cakes, but she dared not say a word to her grandmamma on the subject, for fear she should tell her to invite her other friends also. Aglaïa would indeed have found this much more pleasant than her *tête-à-tête*
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with Leontine; but then she did not know whether such a thing would be agreeable to her visitor, and she was so childish, that she felt more timid with her than with a grownup person. Whilst they were in the garden, Laurette happened to pass by the gate, and seeing it open, went in. She was returning with the servant from her father's garden, where she had been gathering some fruit and salad. She had her basket on her arm, and wore her every-day dress, which was not over clean, as she was rather careless. The servant had the manners and coarse voice of a peasant, and was carrying in a cloth a ham, which a few days before she had buried in the ground, in order to render it more tender, and which she had now been to fetch. Judge of Aglaïa's embarrassment at such a visit. Had she been a sensible girl, had she possessed any real dignity, she would, in an unaffected manner, have accustomed Leontine from their very first acquaintance to see in her the simple habits suitable to a small fortune, and thus have prepared her for similar habits in the persons of her acquaintances. To do this, there would have been no need of discoursing about household duties, a subject of conversation by no means amusing; it was simply required that she should not carefully shun all allusion to them as something humiliating. Thus, for instance, she need not have resorted to a thousand evasions to conceal from Leontine, that it was herself and her grandmother who made all their preserves, and prepared for the winter their pickled cucumbers, their vegetables, and their dried fruits. Leontine, had she known this, might perhaps have considered

it more pleasant not to be obliged to take all this trouble, but she certainly would [Pg 346] never have ventured to make it a subject of contempt; for that which is reasonable, if performed in an unaffected manner, without either shame or ostentation, always carries with it something which is imposing, even in the estimation of those who are not reasonable. Had Aglaïa acted in this manner, she would have felt no embarrassment at this apparition of Laurette, with her salad, and of her servant with the ham; but as it was, all the fine-lady airs which she had assumed, were completely upset, and she therefore gave Laurette a very bad reception. Indeed, had it not been for Mademoiselle Champré, who made room for her on the grass where they were seated, she would have left her standing. Laurette, who was very ill-bred, made many absurd remarks, and the servant also joined several times in the conversation. Aglaïa was in torture. At last Laurette went away, for the servant, annoyed at being kept waiting, detailed all that had to be done in the house, in order to hasten her departure. In the evening, at Madame Dufour's *soirée*, to which Laurette accompanied her mother, it was whispered that Aglaïa had given a luncheon to Leontine, in her grandmother's garden, to which no one had been invited; that Laurette had gone there by chance, and that she had not even been asked to take anything. This caused a great deal of excitement, and it was resolved that, as Madame Lacour allowed her granddaughter to be guilty of such rudeness, they would not go to her *soirée* on the following Thursday.

Madame Lacour knew nothing of all this; she had been ill for a week, and had seen no one but M. Guimont, who took no interest in such absurdities. She received [Pg 347] company on the Thursday for the first time, and was astonished to find that nobody came. She supposed they still considered her ill, and finding it getting late, sent her servant to the houses of two or three of her neighbours, to tell them she was waiting for them. They replied, that they could not come. This answer was given in the presence of an old lady, who, having no daughter, did not consider herself bound to share in the resentment occasioned by Aglaïa's conduct; besides, being fond of news and gossip, she was glad to have an opportunity of ascertaining what was going on at Madame Lacour's; whether the agreement which had been made would be adhered to; what Madame Lacour would think of it, and what Aglaïa would say. When, therefore, Madame Lacour expressed her astonishment at being thus abandoned, "It is not at all surprising," said the old lady, "after what has happened."

"What has happened then?" asked Madame Lacour.

Hereupon the old lady detailed, with all the exaggerations usual in such cases, the misconduct of Aglaïa, and the consequent indignation of her friends. During this recital, Aglaïa was in the most painful situation; she made excuses, endeavoured to justify herself, denied some things, and explained away others; but all this did not prevent Madame Lacour from being excessively angry with her. She told her that she felt disposed to send her that very moment to apologize to all those ladies, but that, at all events, she should have to apologize. M. Guimont and his children entering at [Pg 348] this moment, found her in tears. "I hope, at least," added Madame Lacour, "that your rudeness has not extended to the children of my friend M. Guimont; for this is a thing I would never forgive."

Hortense blushed a little, and ran to embrace Aglaïa; Gustave was silent, but Madame Lacour having asked him, whether it was because he was displeased with Aglaïa, that he had not come to correct her exercises for several days past, he assured her that he had been very much occupied, a statement which his father confirmed, and he proposed to look over them at once. Aglaïa, trembling, went and brought her papers, and gave them to him, not daring, however, to raise her eyes; he corrected them, but without talking to her, as he was accustomed to do, and when he had finished, he went over to see the game which M. Guimont was playing with Madame Lacour and the old lady. Aglaïa's heart was very heavy. Hortense consoled herself as well as she could, and said to her, "We shall have plenty of other things to chat about now; a German lady, the Princess de Schwamberg, arrived about an hour ago; she will be obliged to remain here for some days, because her governess, of whom she is very fond, and whom she treats like a friend, has been taken ill. It turns out that the governess, who is a French-woman, is a relative of Mademoiselle Champré. It was my father who informed them that she was here, with Mademoiselle d'Armilly, and the princess intends, with M. d'Armilly's permission, to send her daughters to spend a portion of their time with Mademoiselle Leontine."

Aglaïa, notwithstanding her grief, thought with a certain degree of satisfaction, [Pg 349] that she should see these German princesses; her vanity rejoiced extremely at the idea of being admitted into such distinguished society. She put many questions to Hortense, to which the latter was unable to reply, as her father never conversed with her about such frivolities; besides, the game was over, and Gustave approached them; Aglaïa therefore became silent.

The following day, Madame Lacour was still too angry for Aglaïa to think of asking permission to visit Leontine, but she hoped that perhaps Leontine might send and invite her. However, she heard nothing of her, either on that day or the next. It had been agreed that, on the following Sunday, Leontine was to take her for a drive in

her father's carriage. Madame Lacour, when apprized of this arrangement, was extremely unwilling to give her consent, but as it was made, she did not like to interfere with it. She, however, again severely reprimanded Aglaïa for her misconduct, and ordered her to show the greatest politeness to all her acquaintances whom she might chance to meet. At the hour appointed, Aglaïa went to Leontine's house. She was told that she was on the parade with the Mesdemoiselles Schwamberg, where the carriage was to take them up. She went there, and seeing the carriage in the distance, hurried on, and arrived, quite out of breath, expressing her fear that she had kept them waiting. "Oh! not at all," said Leontine, "we were not waiting for you, for there is no room."

"What!" exclaimed Aglaïa, with astonishment, "did you not tell me...." "You see clearly, my dear," replied Leontine, in a tone of impatience, "that there is no room: Mesdemoiselles de Schwamberg, Mademoiselle Champré, and myself make up four."

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Mademoiselle Champré was going to speak, and one of the princesses proposed to make room for her. "No! no!" said Leontine, "we should be stifled; it must be for another time."

At this moment the coachman mounted his box; Leontine gave Aglaïa a patronising bow, and the carriage drove off. Aglaïa remained stupified. All who were on the promenade had been drawing near during the debate, and had witnessed her humiliation. She heard their titterings and whisperings, and on raising her eyes, beheld several of her acquaintances looking at her with an air of derision, while others turned away, shrugging their shoulders. She made her escape, her heart swelling with shame and anger. Some ill-bred young men followed her, ridiculed her, and made a thousand offensive remarks, which reached her ears. One of them, leaving his companions, passed before her, and taking off his hat, said, "This is what Mademoiselle Leontine d'Armilly does." The servant who accompanied Aglaïa, became angry with them, and said that their parents should be informed of their conduct. This, however, only increased their laughter and mockery. Aglaïa walked as fast as she could, in order to escape from them, and reached home heated and weeping. Interrogated by her grandmother, she was obliged to relate what had happened, and she had the additional mortification of being told that it was quite right, and that she had only received what she deserved. Nevertheless, Madame Lacour determined, without communicating her intentions to her granddaughter, to give a lesson to those ill-bred young men, through M. Guimont, who possessed great authority in all the circles of the town.

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Aglaïa spent two days very unhappily; she would not have ventured out at all, had not her grandmother absolutely ordered her to do so, so much did she dread to meet any of those persons who had ridiculed her. Twice she had met Leontine, who, laughing and talking with Mesdemoiselles de Schwamberg, had scarcely noticed her. No one had visited her, not even Hortense. She knew that on the Wednesday there was to be a *réunion* at Madame Dufour's garden, and she had not been invited. She was grieving at seeing herself thus abandoned by every one, when on the Wednesday Hortense came to see her. She was very much astonished, for she thought that she was at the garden with the others. Hortense told her that her father had permitted her and her brother to refuse the invitation. Aglaïa timidly asked why.

"Because I preferred spending the day with you."

"And Gustave?" said Aglaïa, still more timidly.

"Gustave," replied Hortense, somewhat embarrassed, "would not go, because you had not been invited, and gave this as his reason, because he did not wish it to be supposed that he had quarrelled with you, but he said that he should come to the house as little as possible, 'because,' he observed, 'I can no longer rely upon Aglaïa, who can abandon her old friends to accommodate herself to the caprices of Mademoiselle d'Armilly.'"

Aglaïa wept bitterly, Hortense endeavoured to console her, but she could not venture to hold out any decided hopes that her brother would relent, for he appeared to be very decided, and Aglaïa felt more than ever that the friendship of Gustave was much more honourable than the momentary partiality of Mademoiselle d'Armilly.

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While Hortense and she were sitting together very sorrowfully, Gustave came in. He still looked somewhat serious, but he was less cold. They both blushed with surprise and pleasure at seeing him. "Aglaïa," he said, "must come to the parade with us; I have asked my father to take us, and he is now dressing to come. I have just learned," he continued very warmly, "that there is a report that Aglaïa is afraid to show herself on the parade after what has recently occurred; we must prove that this is not the case; every one will be there on their way home from Madame Dufour's garden, and we must show them that she has still her ... former friends to support her."

He had hesitated, not knowing what to say. Aglaïa, greatly affected, threw herself into the arms of Hortense, as if to thank Gustave, but she was grieved that he had hesitated, that he had only spoken of *former friends*. "Are you not still my friends?"

she exclaimed, leaning her head on Hortense's shoulder. Hortense embraced her, and endeavoured to console her. Gustave said nothing, but when for an instant she raised her eyes towards him, she perceived that his face wore a softer and less serious expression. Madame Lacour was not in the room at this moment, as he had availed himself of her absence to relate what he had heard, for, as she was still an invalid, they wished to say as little as possible to her about these broils, which were beginning to annoy her, and might end in making her seriously angry with those acquaintances with whom M. Guimont was anxious to reconcile her. They therefore
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simply asked her to allow Aglaïa to walk out with M. Guimont and his children. To this she willingly consented, being delighted to have her granddaughter in such good company. M. Guimont arrived. Hortense took her father's arm, and Gustave offered his to Aglaïa. She trembled a little, and did not dare to say a word. At length a stone caught her foot in such a way that she must have fallen, had he not supported her: he inquired with such eagerness and kindness whether she were hurt, that she began to gain courage. She spoke of her exercises, told him what she had done, and asked his advice. At length she summoned up courage to say, "Will you always be angry with me?"

Gustave did not reply. Tears started to Aglaïa's eyes; she held down her head, but Gustave nevertheless perceived that he had grieved her. "We are not angry," he said, with some degree of emotion; "but what grieves us is, that you could so readily forget your old friends for a mere stranger."

Aglaïa's tears now flowed fast. "I did not forget you," she murmured, "for all my anxiety was to make you acquainted with Leontine."

Gustave crimsoned, and replied with warmth, "We would not have formed acquaintance with Mademoiselle d'Armilly. Her society does not suit us. We wish to associate with those only who treat us as their equals."

Aglaïa understood by this reply how much he must have felt humiliated on her account, in consequence of the slavish deference she had manifested in Leontine's presence; she had reflected much on this subject during the last two days, and at this
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moment Gustave's pride made her blush for it still more. "Very well," she said, after a moment's silence, "how must I act towards Leontine? for perhaps she may wish to see me again; perhaps even I may now meet her on the parade."

"Ask my father," said Gustave; for he was too sensible to trust altogether to his own judgment in such a case. They approached M. Guimont, and Gustave repeated to him her question.

"My dear child," said M. Guimont, "how would you act if it were Laurette, or Mademoiselle Dufour, who had treated you as Mademoiselle d'Armilly has done? You would not quarrel with her on this account, for that would be to attach too much importance to such things; but as it would have been evident that she cared little about your society, since she neglected to show you those attentions which alone could render hers agreeable to you, you would treat her with great reserve, and carefully avoid everything that could lead her to suppose that you wish to retain her acquaintance. You ought to act in the same manner with Mademoiselle d'Armilly. According to the usages of society, you are not her equal, since she is richer and of higher birth than you are; these usages have their reasons, whether good or bad, and we must conform to them. Therefore, you ought to regard it as a matter of course, that those who occupy a more elevated station than yours, should not seek your society; and you ought to endure good humouredly the petty distinctions which they think themselves entitled to claim. But no one is obliged to associate with those who
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do not treat him in a manner congenial to his feelings; therefore, you ought not to think of associating with a person of superior station to your own, except when she altogether forgets this inequality, and treats you as she does her other acquaintances." Gustave listened with great pleasure to these observations of his father, in whose judgment he had full confidence, and who sometimes had to check his rather exaggerated notions of self-respect. Aglaïa thanked M. Guimont, and promised to act towards Leontine with proper reserve.

"Oh, if you see her again," said Gustave, "she will resume her influence over you, and we shall have the same thing over again." Aglaïa assured him that he was mistaken; but Gustave seemed sceptical on the subject.

"Aglaïa would be in no danger," said M. Guimont, "if she were always accompanied by a sensible person; but her excellent grandmamma cannot always be with her."

"Very well," said Aglaïa, taking the arm of Hortense, while she still held that of Gustave, "in order that I may always have some one to support me, if M. Guimont will consent, and my grandmamma permit, I will never go anywhere when she is not with me, unless I can have Hortense and Gustave by my side."

"That might perhaps be inconvenient to you sometimes," said Gustave, who nevertheless was greatly pleased with her declaration.

"No, no," she exclaimed; for she felt at that moment that nothing could confer on her such happiness or honour, as to be always surrounded by those good and worthy friends. They reached the parade: it was already crowded. Aglaïa held the arm of [Pg 356] Hortense, and Gustave walked by her side with a proud and satisfied bearing. The young men who had ridiculed her, now bowed with a disconcerted air, for M. Guimont, who had already reprimanded them, gave them a look of severity, which made them cast down their eyes. Aglaïa blushed a little, but she felt protected, and rejoiced in her position. Madame and Mademoiselle Dufour passed by. M. Guimont, with a smile, took their arms, and obliged them, after some little manœuvring, to walk with them. The friends who were with Madame Dufour, followed, and thus Aglaïa saw herself in the midst of that society which had been so dissatisfied with her conduct. At first no one spoke to her, and even some disagreeable allusions were allowed to escape; but the presence of M. Guimont restrained them, especially as he had already spoken to several of these persons about the absurdity of their bickerings.

Still Aglaïa felt very uncomfortable, but at each unkind word, Hortense tenderly pressed her hand, and Gustave approached her, to show her some mark of attention, or to offer a kind word; and this friendliness was very consoling to her. At length they ceased to torment her, but she trembled at beholding Leontine coming towards them, accompanied by Mesdemoiselles de Schwamberg. Leontine approached her, and said something expressive of her regret at not having been able to take her in the carriage two days previously. Mademoiselle Champré had at last taken upon herself to make her feel how ridiculous her behaviour had been: and as the young princesses, who were very polite, had been extremely grieved at the annoyance [Pg 357] which Aglaïa had experienced on their account, Leontine, therefore, in order to retain their good opinion, endeavoured in some degree to repair an error, which she assured them had been committed through mere thoughtlessness. She made her excuses with an awkward air, which she meant to be easy. Aglaïa was silent, and this silence, together with the number of people who surrounded her, embarrassed Leontine extremely, and she said to her, with some degree of brusquerie, "Will you take a turn with us?"

"No," said Aglaïa, indicating by her looks the persons by whom she was surrounded, "I am with these ladies." Leontine blushed, bowed, and went away, with an air of considerable annoyance. Aglaïa's refusal had a very good effect; nothing was now thought of but Leontine. She was examined at every turn of the walk, with a degree of attention which ended in embarrassing her very much, though she affected an air of *hauteur* which disconcerted no one. The next Thursday, Madame Lacour was again surrounded by most of her friends. There were some few complaints and expostulations, but the lovers of peace interfered, and put a stop to them as quickly as possible, and at last everything went on as formerly. When the princesses were gone, Leontine wished to renew her intimacy with Aglaïa, but the latter sent word that she could not go out; though with her grandmamma's permission, she invited her to their party. Leontine, to while away her time, twice accepted the invitation, but she felt no enjoyment. Surrounded by persons who were entire strangers to the manners to which she was accustomed, she knew not how to act towards them, and [Pg 358] was continually doing something amiss. A fortnight previously, Aglaïa would have proclaimed silence, in order that she might be heard, but now she had discovered that it was not her good opinion which it was of consequence to obtain. Leontine, dissatisfied, ceased to seek her society, and ended by being so completely wearied, that she obtained her father's permission to pass the remainder of the summer with one of her aunts. Aglaïa's companions still kept up, for some time, a little of their resentment against her, but she was sustained by the friendship of Hortense and Gustave, to whom she attached herself more and more, and at last she felt at a loss to conceive how she could for a moment have preferred, to the happiness she found in their society, the discomfort and constraint to which she had submitted in the company of Leontine.

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OH! OH! OH!

A TALE.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" cried little Louis, "see, my tooth moves again, I cannot eat;" and he put his breakfast down upon the table.

"And it will continue to move until it is taken out," said his mother.

"I don't want to have it taken out, it would hurt me so."

"Do not complain then of its being loose."

"But I can't eat."

"In that case let me take it out, it is only a first tooth, and has scarcely any hold."

"Oh! indeed! It has scarcely any hold! I am sure it has very long fangs."

"As you prefer to let it remain, you must put up with the annoyance it causes you."

Louis did not reply, and his mother urged him no further; she wished to direct and mould the inclinations of her children, not to constrain them; she therefore gave few commands or prohibitions. A command cannot correct a fault, nor can a prohibition prevent an inclination to disobedience; therefore she preferred to wait with patience,
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and teach her children to correct themselves. Louis again tried to eat his breakfast, but his tooth clattered and shook at every mouthful, and being persuaded that by moving it, it hurt him, he put down his bread and his apple, and went to play with Fidèle.

Fidèle was a charming dog, of a very gentle disposition, and accustomed to allow himself to be tormented, without manifesting any displeasure. Louis took him by the paws: "There, stand up, Fidèle; make a bow; give me your paw; no, not that, the other one;" and Fidèle obeyed him with the best grace imaginable, though this kind of sport did not at all please him. With a docile dog, almost anything may be done. Louis, in order to prolong his game, took it into his head to take hold of Fidèle by the tail, and thus to force him to rise upon his fore-paws, and then to turn a somerset. At the first attempt, Fidèle contented himself with resisting, with a slight growl merely; at the second, the growl became louder, but at the third, Louis pulled his tail so violently, that Fidèle, quite angry, turned upon him and slightly bit his little finger. "Oh! oh! oh!" cried Louis, "the horrid dog has bitten me; mamma! Fidèle has bitten me; oh! how my finger pains me!"

"Let me see, my boy; oh! that's nothing, I can hardly see the mark of his teeth; what were you doing to him?"

"I only took hold of his tail, to teach him to turn a somerset, but he wouldn't stand on his fore-paws."

"You certainly hurt him much more by pulling his tail, than he has hurt you by his bite; why do you expect him to be more patient than you are?"

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"I will never play with him again."

"You can do as you like as to that, he will not complain."

Louis went away, and as he passed by Fidèle, the dog began to growl. "Go away," said the child, "I don't wish to be bitten again," and he held his little finger in his other hand, as if it had been dreadfully wounded. He went to look for his little sister Henriette, to come and play with him, but she had just pricked her finger with her needle, and being as little able to bear pain as himself, she received his proposition with a very bad grace. "Let me alone," she said, "I have pricked my finger," and she watched the blood which scarcely tinged the water into which she had plunged it.

"That's a funny sort of a wound!" said Louis, "Why the blood doesn't come!"—"A funny sort of a wound? Oh! you shall see if it is so funny," and she immediately pricked him with the needle, which she still held in her hand. "Oh! oh! oh! nurse, Henrietta has pricked me, give me a glass of water, oh!" The nurse brought him the water without looking at him, she was leaning her head upon her left hand.

"Just look, nurse, how she has pricked me."

"What am I to look at? What a terrible affair: what would you say if you had such a tooth-ache as I have?"

"Have you the tooth-ache?"

"Yes: I have had no sleep these three nights, and I shall certainly go to-morrow and have the tooth which torments me taken out; for I don't want to let my work lie

there," and she went and resumed her sewing.

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When Louis, after having well squeezed his finger, could make no more blood flow from it, he was greatly embarrassed. How was he to amuse himself? Fidèle still growled at him, Henriette was out of temper, and his nurse had the tooth-ache and was busy; every one was taken up with his own sufferings. Louis did not find the house very gay; he therefore went back to his mother, who, at all events, was not a grumbler. At this moment he heard on the stairs the voice of little Charles, one of his companions. He rushed forward to open the door. Charles, accompanied by his tutor, had come to ask him to join him and five or six other boys of his age, in a walk to the Canal de l'Ourcq, to see the skating. Louis, transported with joy, obtained his mother's consent: he put on his great coat and his fur gloves, and they set off.

It was the middle of winter, but the weather was dry, and the sun brilliant. The little boys ran and jumped about the whole of the way. Louis did the same at first, but by degrees he felt his nose getting cold, and one of his hands was fully employed in holding it and keeping it warm. His fingers soon became numb; he put the hand he was not using into his pocket, and complained of being obliged to leave the other exposed to the air; then his feet became cold. It was quite useless to tell him that if he ran about, he would soon get warm again.

"How am I to run," he replied, "when my feet are frozen?"

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He dragged himself along, with great difficulty, by the side of the tutor, slipping at every step, notwithstanding the slowness of his pace, and every now and then withdrawing his hand from his nose to breathe upon his fingers, and then hurriedly replacing it, with an appearance of the utmost concern. They reached the side of the canal, which was covered with skaters, who, with a free and unrestrained air, with head erect, and arms sometimes crossed, sometimes in motion, glided rapidly over the smooth expanse, on which the timid walker could scarcely maintain his footing.

The children, with the permission of their guide, went down upon the ice in order to have a slide. Louis suffered himself to be persuaded to follow them, and soon, by sliding in the same place, they had formed a long path, as polished as a mirror, over which, after taking a slight run, they glided with the rapidity of lightning. Louis had not yet dared to venture upon it.

"Come, Louis, have a slide," said one of his companions, "how can you avoid being frozen if you do not move about?"

Louis made up his mind to do so; he took a run of a few steps, reached the glistening path, and ventured on it, still holding his nose with one hand and keeping the other in his pocket. He proceeded, and maintained his equilibrium; but a mischievous little boy, who was more used to this sport, rushed after him, and reaching him before he got to the end, gave him a push, which made him fall with some violence upon the ice.

"Oh! oh! oh!" exclaimed Louis. "Oh! oh! oh! who has thrown me down? I can't get up; help me to get up. Oh! oh!" and he continued on the spot where he had fallen,

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because he would not make use of one of his hands to lean upon the ice. His companions laughed both at his awkwardness and his misfortune. The tutor went to him, raised him up, and endeavoured to console him, telling him that such falls only gave a little pain, which was soon over. But Louis cried, and became angry, left the canal, and went and stood against a tree, which was growing on the banks, turning his back to the skaters. An old soldier passed by him, laughing heartily.

"What a pity I have a wooden leg!" He had one, in fact. "What is the matter with you, my little friend," he said to Louis, seeing his loneliness and melancholy. "Why are you not down there with the rest?"

"But can I skate?"

"You do not know how to skate? Go quickly then and learn; I wish I were your age, to be able to do the same: at all events you can amuse yourself by sliding."

"Yes, to have them push me, and throw me down."

"Well, if they push you, you can push them in return, and if you fall, you can get up again."

"Yes, and freeze my hands by putting them upon the ice."

"Oh! you are afraid of freezing your hands; poor child! what would you have done, if, like me, you had fallen into a deep ditch, in the midst of a battle, and when it was intensely cold?"

"Into a ditch? Oh! they would soon have come and taken me out."

"You think so, do you? but I can tell you, that before any one would have come and taken you out, you would have been frozen to death. Oh! if I had not broken my leg, how I should have returned to the action!"

"What is the matter with you, my little friend?" he said to Louis, seeing his depression and melancholy.—P. 364.

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"If your leg was broken, how did you get out of the ditch?"

"The deuce! would you have had me remain in it? It was not very comfortable there, I assure you. I dragged myself along upon my hands, and in less than five minutes I was out of it."

"And what did they do to your leg afterwards?"

"What did they do to it? why, they cut it off; thank God! no harm came of it; and I manage to get along pretty well upon my wooden leg. Come along, my little friend, we will both go upon the ice; you shall learn to slide, and I will protect you from being pushed."

Louis, who had been interested and cheered by the conversation of the pensioner, followed him. The tutor, who had overheard what was said, allowed him to do so. He walked at first upon the ice with great precaution; the good soldier allowed him to hold his hand for a few minutes.

"Now," said he, "you must go alone. You have your two legs, and I am going to look at you. Forward, march!"

Louis began to slide.

"Take your hand out of your pocket," cried the pensioner, "and let go of your nose; are you afraid it will fall off? Make use of your arms to balance yourself; hold up your head; stretch out your leg; bravo! that's the way; leave yourself free, unbutton your great coat, don't you see how it hinders you?"

Louis unbuttoned his coat, stretched out his arms, and allowed himself to go on without fear. In a quarter of an hour he had learned to slide as well as any of the little boys on the canal.

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"Listen," said the pensioner, "let us join your comrades; they have not seen you. You shall go upon their slide, and in your turn push the boy who threw you down a little while ago. Keep yourself up, at all events."

They made a slight circuit; the moment arrived; Louis started.

"Ha! ha! here's Louis," was exclaimed from all sides. He reached his adversary in the middle of the slide, pushed him, made him come down with considerable force, then turned round, and finished his course in grand style; while the other, somewhat

ashamed, got up without saying a word.

"Who taught you to slide?" asked all the children.

"I did, young gentlemen," said the man with the wooden leg, "and I warrant you he is not afraid of any of you now."

The boys, very much astonished, resumed their sports, and Louis maintained his place amongst them very well. When the hour for departure came, he went to say good bye to his friend the pensioner, who pressing his hand warmly, said, "Good bye, comrade, till we meet again; if I happen to be here when you return, I will teach you to skate."

As they went home, Louis did not complain of the cold, did not put his hands in his pockets, left his nose exposed to the air, ran about like the rest, and reached the house not only without having grumbled, but without having suffered. As he was running towards his mother to tell her his tale, he saw her talking to a poor old woman, who was crying, and who seemed to be asking assistance. "Oh! madame,"
[Pg 367] said she, "you could never imagine what my Jacques has done. He is my only support, and though he is not yet fourteen, he works so well at his master's, who is the carpenter at the corner, that every evening he brings me home tenpence for his day's wages. We have nothing but that to live upon, for it is very little I can do. Well, about a fortnight ago, my poor Jacques had the misfortune to put his wrist out of joint, in carrying a wainscoting. He came home in great trouble; fortunately I had saved during six months ten shillings, to buy him a waistcoat. I gave them to him, and told him to go immediately and have his wrist set by the surgeon of the district, who is very clever. He went out, and I supposed that he had done so. Nothing of the kind. He was afraid that it would cost too much. Our neighbour, the blacksmith, offered to set it for half a crown; he allowed him to do so, and brought me home the remainder, saying that he had not been asked for more; but certainly his wrist must have been badly set, for since that time, it has been swelling, and getting numb; and on looking at it, I saw clearly that the bones were not in their right place. By dint of questioning, I at last got the truth from him. We have been to the surgeon, who says that it can be cured, but that it will take a long time, and much medicine, and we have no means of getting any, as my poor Jacques has not worked for a fortnight, and will not be able to work for a long time to come. In God's name, madame, you, who are so good, have pity on us!" Here the poor woman ceased.

Louis had listened to her with great attention. His mother, very much affected
[Pg 368] herself, observed how this recital led him to reflect upon his own want of fortitude in bearing pain; she did not know that he had already begun to be ashamed of it. "My good woman," she said, "give yourself no uneasiness, as your son can be cured, he shall be cured. Let us go for him. I will take him myself to the surgeon's, who will again examine his arm, and I will pay the expenses of the treatment. Will you come, Louis?"

"Oh! yes, mamma, I want to see Jacques very much."

Henriette, who was working at her embroidery, in a corner of the drawing-room, exclaimed, "And I too, mamma."

"Yes, you too, my child; come, be quick, Jacques's cure must not be delayed."

They set off at once. There were no complaints of the cold during the whole of the way. On arriving, they found Jacques employed in making the handle of a tool with his remaining hand. His mother informed him, with tears of joy, of the success of her visit. "He did not want me to apply to you, madame," she added; "he said that other people ought not to be tormented with his troubles." Jacques advanced, and expressed his thanks, with some embarrassment.

"It must have given you a great deal of pain, Jacques, did it not?"

"Oh! not much, madame, if I could only have worked!"

"Come, come, cheer up, you shall be cured as soon as possible. You are a good and a brave boy;" and Jacques bowed with an air of increased embarrassment.

[Pg 369] They went to the surgeon's, who was not acquainted with Jacques's whole history, because he would not allow his mother to relate it at their former visit. As soon as he learned it, he took the most lively interest in the courageous child, and his attentions were soon efficacious. At the end of a fortnight, the swelling began to decrease. They were obliged to prevent Jacques from working so soon as he wished, but they gave him hope that it would not be long before he was again in a condition to handle the plane; and in the mean time he wanted for nothing. Louis, on his return home, said to his mother, "Mamma, tie a thread round my tooth," and he immediately pulled it out himself, having learned by the example of the pensioner, as well as by that of Jacques, never to cry out, "Oh! oh! oh!" for so slight a cause as a little cold, or a prick of a pin.

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HELEN;

OR THE FAILURE.

"Take care, Helen!" said Madame d'Aubigny, to her daughter, "when you are going one way, you are looking another; in this manner you will never go straight anywhere."

And such was exactly the case. Whether in the street, or on the promenade or even when running in the fields, Helen seldom thought of looking before her, or watching her steps; her attention was constantly directed to one side or the other, to see if any one noticed her; and when she fancied herself observed, she gave herself all sorts of airs and graces. Often when at the Tuileries, she was so completely absorbed in endeavouring to give a graceful turn to her head, or in casting down her eyes, when she considered it suitable to do so, or in looking at the leaves with an air of abstraction, according as one or other of these different movements appeared to her best calculated to attract attention, that she struck against a tree, or against some one coming in an opposite direction. Often when wishing to jump gracefully over a pool of water, she fell into the middle of it, and was covered with mud. In fine, Helen did nothing in a simple manner, like other people, and merely for having the
[Pg 371] thing done; she neither walked, nor ate, nor drank, for the sake of walking, or eating, or drinking, but in order that people might see the grace she was able to throw into all her movements; and had there been any one to observe her while sleeping, she would certainly have contrived the means of sleeping gracefully.

She little thought how much all these efforts tended to defeat the very object which she had in view, and yet she might easily have perceived, that if, while doing one thing, her thoughts were on another, it was quite impossible that she should do the thing well, and consequently impossible that she should be favourably noticed. If, when she saw some one entering the room, in whose eyes she wished to appear agreeable, she began to talk with greater animation to the person near her; if she threw more vivacity into her gestures, and made her gaiety more conspicuous, still, as she was not really amused, but only supposed that she had the appearance of being so, her laugh was not hearty, her gestures were unnatural, and her gaiety so obviously forced, that no one could possibly fancy that she was really gay, while the pretence of being so occupied her thoughts. In like manner, no one who saw her bestowing alms would have supposed that she was really kind-hearted, and yet Helen gave when she was not observed, and she gave with good will; but if there happened to be any one near to notice her, it was no longer of the poor that she thought, but of the pleasure of being seen bestowing alms. Her pity then assumed an appearance of exaggeration and eagerness, which made it quite apparent that her object was to
[Pg 372] display it. Her eyes indeed expressed compassion, but instead of being fixed upon the beggar, they were turned towards the persons present, so that it might have been said that it was they, and not the beggar, who had caused her emotion.

Madame d'Aubigny had continually reprimanded her daughter for this tendency, which she had displayed from her childhood, and had succeeded in correcting the most absurd and gross of her affectations; and Helen herself, as she advanced in age, became more skilful in detecting such as were likely to appear too glaring; but as her affectations also increased in number, she merely took a little more pains to conceal them, without being able to persuade herself that, while she had them at all, they could not possibly be concealed. "My child," her mother would sometimes say to her, "there is but one way of obtaining praise, and that is by acting well; and as there is nothing commendable in an action done for the sake of commendation, it is impossible that such actions should secure you praise: rest assured, therefore, that to make praise and reputation your aim, is a certain way of never obtaining it." Helen felt, to some extent, the truth of these remarks, and she promised herself to conceal her vanity with greater care, but it returned at the first opportunity; and besides, where is the girl who fully believes all her mother says to her?

In the same house with Madame d'Aubigny, there lodged one of her relations, Madame de Villemontier, whose daughter Cecilia was Helen's particular friend. Cecilia was so full of kindness and simplicity, that she did not even perceive Helen's
[Pg 373] affectation, and was continually disputing on this subject with the old Abbé Rivière, the former preceptor of M. de Villemontier, Cecilia's father, and who, after having educated his son, and resided with him at the college, where he finished his studies, had returned to take up his abode in the house, where he was respected as a father, and where he occupied himself in the education of Cecilia, whom he loved as his own child. They never quarrelled, except on Helen's account, whose affectation appeared so absurd to the Abbé Rivière, that he was incessantly ridiculing it. Accustomed to speak exactly what he thought, he did not restrain himself in her presence, though there was all the more necessity for doing so, as Helen, who had always heard him spoken of with great consideration at Madame de Villemontier's, and had witnessed

the pleasure caused by his return, and the respect with which he was treated, felt extremely anxious to gain his good opinion. This desire was increased by the praises he constantly bestowed on Cecilia. It was not that she was jealous; for, notwithstanding her vanity, she was incapable of any meanness, she only thought that she merited the same praises as her friend, and indeed, she would have done so, had she not sought for them. But her desire of being noticed by the Abbé Rivière destroyed all the means she would have had of gaining his esteem; therefore, did he torment her with provoking jokes, which had only the effect of rendering her more anxious to gain his approbation, and induced her to make redoubled, though always awkward and misdirected efforts to obtain it. The Abbé was a very well-informed
[Pg 374] man. Helen could not be so foolish as to make a parade, in his presence, of the small amount of knowledge which a girl of her age is capable of possessing; but she never allowed a day to pass without finding some indirect means of alluding to her love of study. Some remark was made about walking: she said that she took very little pleasure in it, without a book: it was also one of her greatest griefs that her mother would not permit her to read before going to bed; and then she related how, during the morning, she had so completely forgotten herself, that three hours had passed without her being conscious of it. The Abbé pretended not to hear her; this was one of his mischievous ways; then she emphasized, and varied her expression. "Yes," she said, as if speaking to herself, "I commenced at a quarter to one, and when, for the first time, I looked at the timepiece, it was four o'clock; so that more than three hours had elapsed without my having perceived them."

"There was nothing lost, however," said the Abbé, "for you took very good notice of them afterwards."

Helen became silent, but she did not the less begin again on the following day.

What the Abbé most praised in Cecilia's conduct, was her attention to her mother, who was in very delicate health. One evening, Madame d'Aubigny happened to faint. Helen, who was in the habit of taking her work, and sitting with Madame de Villemontier almost every evening, did not come down on this occasion, except for a moment, to relate the accident, and to have the pleasure of speaking of the anxiety which it had caused her. She began by expatiating so much upon the alarm she felt,
[Pg 375] when she beheld her mother pale and almost unconscious, that the Abbé could not help saying, "I see clearly all that Mademoiselle Helen has suffered from her mother's accident, but I should like to know what Madame d'Aubigny has suffered."

The following day, Madame d'Aubigny, though still indisposed, insisted that her daughter should go as usual, and pass the evening with Madame de Villemontier. She entered with an air of languor and fatigue, saying that she was very sleepy, in order that they might understand that she had passed a bad night. As the questions to which she was anxious to reply, were not put to her, she endeavoured to lead to them in another way. She observed that the weather was delightful at five o'clock that morning: that her mother had been very restless until two, but that at three o'clock she slept quietly; from which it was evident that Helen must have got up at these various hours, for the purpose of ascertaining how her mother was. Several times she requested to know the hour, saying that although her mamma had given her permission to remain until ten o'clock, she should certainly return to her at nine. She inquired again at half-past eight, and again at a quarter to nine. During this time, Cecilia, without being observed, had two or three times raised her eyes to the clock. A minute before nine she rang the bell; her mother asked her why she did so. "You know, mamma," said Cecilia, "that it is time for you to take your broth." Helen immediately jumped up, with a loud exclamation, and put away her work in a great hurry, for fear of staying beyond the hour.

"These two young ladies," said some one present, "are very punctual, and very attentive."

[Pg 376] "Yes," murmured the Abbé, between his teeth, and looking at Helen, with a provoking smile, "Cecilia is wonderfully careful of her mother, and Mademoiselle Helen of her reputation."

Helen blushed and hastened to depart, dreading some fresh sarcasm; but Madame de Villemontier, having requested the Abbé to accompany her, and to bring word how Madame d'Aubigny was, he took the candle and followed her. She walked so fast, that he could not keep up with her. "Wait for me," said he, quite out of breath, as they drew near, "you will break your neck."

"I am so anxious to know how mamma is!"

"How fortunate you are," said the Abbé, taking her arm, "to be able in the midst of your anxiety, to think of so many other things! As for me, if any one of whom I am very fond was ill, I should be so taken up with his illness, that it would be impossible for me to notice what I did for him, still less to think of making others observe it; but women are so strong minded."

"Really, M. l'Abbé," said Helen, whom this remark embarrassed, "you can never

let a minute pass without tormenting me!"

"That is to say, without admiring you. We admire others for their general conduct; we love and admire them because they have acted with propriety, during a long space of time, and on various occasions; but we must admire Mademoiselle Helen on every occasion. Every action, every thought, every movement of hers, demands an eulogium."

And the mischievous Abbé, with his eyes fixed upon Helen, and holding the candle in such a position as fully to display the sarcastic expression of his countenance,
[Pg 377] stopped at every step, and emphasized every word, prolonging as much as possible both his remarks and his journey. They did, however, at last reach the apartments of Madame d'Aubigny, and Helen was delighted to free herself from his arm, and make her escape. The Abbé's raillery greatly pained her, but still she saw beneath it so much kind feeling, that she could not be angry with him. He, on the other hand, touched by the gentleness with which she received his reproofs, and the desire she manifested to gain his esteem, felt anxious to correct her, especially as he perceived that, notwithstanding her affectation, she was really kind-hearted and sensible.

Madame d'Aubigny had an old servant who was rough and ill-tempered, although he was all day long reading moral and religious books. She had allowed him to have with him a little nephew, to whom he pretended to give a good education. This man's sole talent for teaching consisted in beating little François when he did not know his lesson in history or in the catechism; and François, to whom this plan did not impart any taste for study, never knew a word of it, and was consequently beaten every day. One morning, Helen saw him coming down stairs sobbing loudly; he had just received his usual correction, and was to receive twice as much if he did not know his lesson when his uncle, who had gone out on an errand, returned. Helen advised him to make haste and learn it; the boy said he could not.

"Come, come," said Helen, "we will learn it together, then," and she led him into the room, where she set to work so diligently to make him repeat it, that the Abbé
[Pg 378] Rivière, who came to see Madame d'Aubigny, entered without her hearing him.

"Make haste," said she to François, "so that no one may know that it was I who taught it to you."

"Ha!" said the Abbé, "I have at last caught you doing good for its own sake."

Helen blushed with pleasure; this was the first time she had ever heard him seriously praise her. But at the same moment, vanity usurped the place of the good feelings which had animated her: her manners ceased to be natural, and though she continued precisely the same occupation, it was evident that she was no longer actuated by the same motive.

"Well! well!" said the Abbé, "I am going away, resume your natural simplicity, no one is going to look at you."

In the evening, at Madame Villemontier's, Helen found an opportunity of speaking of François. The Abbé shook his head, aware of what was coming; and Helen, who had her eye upon him, understood him, and checked herself. However, her tendency got the better of her discretion, and half an hour afterwards she returned to the same subject, though in an indirect manner. The Abbé happened to be near her: "Stop, stop," said he in a whisper, touching her elbow, "I see you want me to relate it, and, indeed, it is best that I should," and hereupon he began:—

"This morning, François ..." and he assumed a manner so emphatic and comical, that Helen did all she could to make him desist: "Let me go on," he whispered, "and
[Pg 379] when there is anything that you wish to be made known or particularly remarked, merely give me a sign."

Helen, ashamed, pretended not to understand him, but yet could not keep from laughing. It may easily be imagined that she lost all desire of speaking of François during that evening, and from that moment, the Abbé, as he had told her, assumed the part of trumpeter. As soon as she opened her lips to insinuate anything to her own advantage, he immediately caught the word, and broke forth into a pompous panegyric. If her movements indicated any desire of attracting attention, "Look!" he would say, "what grace Mademoiselle Helen displays in all her movements." If she uttered a loud and forced laugh, "I beg you will observe," he said to every one, "How gay Mademoiselle Helen is to-day:" then he would afterwards approach her and whisper, "Have I fulfilled my functions properly? I shall do better another time," he would add, "but you do not give me notice, and I can only speak of what I perceive," and nothing escaped him; still there was mixed up with all this, something so comic, and at the same time so kind, that Helen, at once annoyed, embarrassed, and obliged to laugh, insensibly corrected herself, as well from her dread of the Abbé's remarks, as from his presenting her affected manners in a light so ridiculous, that she could not help being herself struck by their absurdity.

She has at last succeeded in entirely correcting herself of them, and she

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endeavours to gratify her self-love by more substantial and reasonable pleasures, than that of having people observing her at every moment of the day, and of directing attention to her most insignificant actions. She acknowledges that she owes this change to the Abbé Rivière, and says, that if all the young girls who feel disposed to give themselves affected airs, had, in like manner, an Abbé Rivière at their side, to show them, at each repetition of them, the impression which they produce on those who witness them, they would not long take the trouble of making themselves ridiculous.

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ARMAND;

OR THE INDEPENDENT LITTLE BOY.

M. de Saint Marsin, on entering one day into the apartment of his son Armand, found him in a violent passion, and heard him say to his tutor, the Abbé Durand, "Very well! Of course I shall obey you; I must do so, because you are the strongest, but I can tell you that I do not recognise your right to compel me, and I shall hate you as unjust, and a tyrant."

After this speech, on turning round with a movement of irritability, he perceived his father standing at the door, which he had found open, and looking at him with a calm and attentive countenance. Armand turned pale, then blushed; he feared and respected his father, who, though exceedingly kind, had something very imposing both in countenance and manner, so that he had never dared to resist him directly, or put himself in a passion in his presence. Dismayed, and with downcast eyes, he awaited what M. de Saint Marsin was going to say; when the latter, having entered, sat down near the table, upon which Armand had been writing, and which formed the subject of his quarrel, for the Abbé Durand had insisted on his removing from the window, as it diverted his attention from his work.

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"Armand," said M. de Saint Marsin, in a serious but calm tone, "you think, then, that no one has a right to force you to obey?"

"Papa," said Armand, confused, "I did not say that to you."

"But you did say it to me, for the power which M. l'Abbé possesses, he holds directly from me, his rights are founded upon mine, and these I have transmitted to him. Are you not aware of this?"

Armand was well aware of it, but he could not make up his mind to obey the Abbé Durand, as he did his father; or rather obedience was in all cases extremely disagreeable to him, and fear alone prevented him from manifesting his sentiments before M. de Saint Marsin; for Armand, because he was thirteen years of age, and possessed of some intelligence, considered himself a very important personage, and his pride was habitually wounded, because he was not allowed to follow his own inclinations: he therefore rebelled against what he was commanded to do, not because he considered it unreasonable, but simply because it was commanded, and he several times hinted to the Abbé Durand, that if parents ruled their children, it was simply because they were the strongest, and not because they had any legitimate right to do so. M. de Saint Marsin, who was aware of all this, was very glad to have an opportunity of coming to an understanding with him on the subject.

"Tell me," he continued, "in what respect I commit an injustice, in obliging you to obey me, and I am ready to repair it."

Armand was confused, but his father, having encouraged him to reply, he said, "I
[Pg 383] do not say, papa, that you commit an act of injustice towards me, only I do not exactly see how it can be just for parents to compel their children to follow their wishes; for children have *wills* as well as parents, and they have as much right to follow them as their parents have to follow theirs."

"I suppose it is because children, not being reasonable, it is necessary that their parents should be reasonable for them, and compel them to be so too."

"But," said Armand, hesitatingly, "if they do not wish to be reasonable, it seems to me that that is their affair; and I cannot understand how any one can have the right of compelling them to be so."

"You therefore consider, Armand, that if a child of two years of age took a fancy to put his hand into the fire, or to climb up to a window at the risk of falling out of it, that no one would have a right to prevent him from doing so."

"Oh, papa, what a difference!"

"I see none: the rights of a child of two years of age, appear to me quite as sacred as those of a child of thirteen; or if you admit that age makes any difference, then you must allow that a child of thirteen ought to have less than a man of twenty."

Armand shook his head, and remained unconvinced; his father having encouraged him to state his opinion, "I have no doubt," he replied, "that there are some good reasons to oppose to this, although I cannot discover them; but even allowing that it may be to the advantage of children to be forced to obey, still I do not see how any one can have a right to benefit another against his will."

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"Well, then, Armand, you do not wish me to force you to be reasonable by obeying me."

"Oh, papa, I did not say that, but...."

"But I understand it very well; and as I do not wish that you should be able to consider me unjust, I promise you that I will not again compel you to obey me until you tell me you wish me to do so."

"Until I wish you to force me to obey you, papa?" said Armand, half-laughing and half-pouting, as if he imagined that his father was ridiculing him. "You know it is impossible that I should ever wish that."

"That remains to be proved, my son. I wish to have the pleasure of seeing it; and from this moment, I resign my authority, until you request me to resume it. You must make up your mind to do the same, my dear Abbé," said M. de Saint Marsin, addressing the Abbé Durand. "Your rights cease at the same time as mine."

The Abbé, who understood the intentions of M. de Saint Marsin, smiled, and promised to conform to them. As for M. de Saint Marsin, he still retained his grave expression, and Armand looked from one to the other, with an air of uncertainty, as if to ascertain whether they were in earnest or not. "I do not know," continued his father, "what was the act of obedience so exceedingly displeasing to Armand, but after these new arrangements, he ought to be exempted from it."

"That is a matter of course," replied the Abbé.

"Come, my boy," said M. de Saint Marsin, "use your liberty without restraint, and do not think of renouncing it until you are quite sure that you no longer wish to
[Pg 385] retain it, for I warn you that then, in my turn, I shall exercise my authority without scruple."

Armand saw him depart with a stupified look, and could not bring himself to believe what he had heard. As the first essay of his liberty, he replaced by the side of the window the table which he had begun to remove from it, and the Abbé Durand, who took up a book, allowed him to do so without appearing to notice him; he merely observed, when Armand sat down to continue his exercise, "I do not know why you take so much trouble to settle yourself so comfortably, for I suppose, that now you are master of your own actions, we shall have but few lessons."

"I do not know, sir," replied Armand, "on what grounds you imagine that. I should think I am not so much of a baby as to require to be put into leading-strings, and you may rest assured I shall require no force to induce me to do what I know to be reasonable."

"Very well!" said the Abbé, and continued his reading, while Armand, in order to prove his assertion, never once looked towards the window, but did his exercise twice as rapidly and twice as well as usual. The Abbé complimented him upon it, and added, "I hope your liberty will always answer as well as it has done on this occasion."

Armand was enchanted, but his pleasure was somewhat diminished in the evening, when, on asking his tutor whether they should go out for a walk, the Abbé replied, "Certainly not, for if you took it into your head to walk faster than me, or run
[Pg 386] about, or go through a different street to that which I wished to take, I should have no power to prevent you, and I am too old and too stout to run after you. I cannot undertake to conduct through the streets a giddy fellow, over whom I possess no authority." Armand became angry, and contended that the Abbé was unreasonable. At last he said, "Very well, I promise not to walk faster than you do, and to go just where you please."—"That is all very well," replied the Abbé; "but you might take some fancy into your head, which I ought to oppose, and as I have no power to restrain you, you might bring me into trouble."

"I am willing to promise obedience during our walk," said Armand.

"Very well! I will go and inform M. de Saint Marsin, that you renounce the treaty, and wish to replace yourself under authority again."

"No! no! it is only for the period of our walk."

"So," replied the Abbé, "you not only wish to follow your own will, but you want to make me do the same. You wish me to resume my authority when it suits you, and to relinquish it when you no longer desire it. I must say in my turn, no! no! no! If I consent to resume my authority, it will be to continue it; therefore, my dear Armand, you must make up your mind, either to renounce the treaty, or to give up your walk for the future."

"But papa wishes me to walk," replied Armand drily.

"Yes, but he does not require me to walk with you, when I can be of no use to you. He has no right over my actions, except in so far as he gives me a right over yours.
[Pg 387] When he intrusted to me a part of his authority, it was quite natural that he should prescribe the manner in which he wished me to exercise it. Now that he intrusts

nothing to me, of what have I to render him an account?"

"As to that," said Armand, "I do not know what should prevent my going out by myself."

"No one in the world will hinder you. You are as free as the air."

"The proof that I am not so," replied Armand carelessly,—"the proof that this is all a fairy tale, is, that I am still with you, M. l'Abbé."

"Not at all," said the Abbé calmly, "it is your father's wish that I should give you lessons, as long as you are disposed to take them, but this does not bind you to anything: it is also his wish, that as long as I remain with him, I should share the apartment which he gives you; he has a right to do what he pleases with it, and I have a right to comply with his wishes if I choose to do so. As to the rest, you can do in it whatever you think best, provided you do not annoy me, for in that case, I shall exercise the right of the strongest, and endeavour to prevent you. With this exception, you may go out or you may remain, just as you please; it is all the same to me. I shall see you do the things which I have heretofore forbidden, without troubling myself in the slightest degree. And if you wish that we should not speak to each other, or even look at each other, I do not ask for anything better: that will be exceedingly convenient to me."

"Why, M. l'Abbé, you are carrying things to extremes!"

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"Not in the least, everything is quite natural. What interest would you have me take in your conduct, when I am not responsible for it?"

"I thought you had more friendship for me."

"I have as much as I can have. Are you of any use to me? Can I talk to you as to a friend, of the books which I read, and which you would not understand? Can I speak to you of the ideas which interest me? You, whom a serious book sends to sleep, and who feel no interest in history, except for its battles? Can you render me any service? Can I rely on you, in any case in which I may stand in need of good advice, or useful aid?"

"So, I perceive that people are loved only when they can be useful. This truly is admirable morality and friendship!"

"I beg your pardon; we also love people because we can be useful to them; we become attached to them because they have need of us, and it is on this account that we are fond of children. We are interested in what they do, from the hope we entertain of teaching them to do well: we love them, notwithstanding their faults, because we believe that we possess the power of correcting those faults; but the moment you deprive me of all influence over your conduct, the moment I become useless to you, what interest can I have in troubling myself about you?"

"But we have passed many years together. You have seen me every day."

"If we are to become attached to a child, merely from seeing him every day, why am I not equally attached to Henry, the porter's son, who waits upon us? I have seen
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him for as long a time; he has never refused to do anything I asked him: he has given me no annoyance; I always find him in good humour; he renders me a thousand services, and is far more useful to me than you can be."

"Nevertheless, it would be rather strange if you liked Henry better than me."

"If up to the present time I have liked you better than him, it is because, as you were confided to my care, the submission you were obliged to render me gave you the desire of pleasing me, and this made you deserve my friendship; and because also, as your interests were confided to me, I acted for you as I would have acted for myself, and even with more zeal than I could have felt in my own case. But now that you have undertaken to think for yourself, I have nothing more to do but to think for myself."

Armand had nothing to reply; he thought to himself that the way to force those on whom he was dependent to have as much affection for him, as when he was under their authority, was to conduct himself as well, as if he were still obliged to obey them, and he determined to adopt this method. But Armand did not yet possess either sufficient sense, or sufficient firmness of character, to adhere to such resolutions, and it was precisely this which rendered it necessary for him to be guided and controlled by the will of others; left to himself, he was not as yet capable of meriting their affection.

Many children will, doubtless, be astonished, that Armand did not profit by his liberty to throw aside his studies, run about alone, and do a thousand absurdities; but
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Armand had been well brought up, and his disposition was good, notwithstanding the caprices which occasionally passed through his brain; and at thirteen years of age, though children have not always sufficient strength to do what is right, they begin, at

least, to know what is right, and to desire to be regarded as rational beings; and, besides, notwithstanding all his fine arguments, he had acquired the habit of obedience, and would have found it very difficult to oppose directly, any command of his father or tutor, in such a way that it might come to their knowledge. However, the following morning, he thought his liberty might surely extend so far as to send and buy a rasher of ham for his breakfast, a thing of which he was very fond, but which he was very rarely allowed to have. He wanted to send Henry for it; but Henry, who at that moment had something else to do, said that he could not go. He was usually rather insolent to Armand, who, on his part, often became excessively angry with him, because he did not obey him as readily as M. de Saint Marsin or the Abbé Durand. On the present occasion, elated by the new importance which he thought he had acquired, he assumed a more imperious tone, and expressed his anger more loudly than usual, but this only increased Henry's ridicule. He even affected to lecture Armand, saying that M. de Saint Marsin did not allow him to send out of the house for anything, and reminded him that he had been already scolded for that very thing.

"What does that matter to you," said Armand, still more angrily, "have I not a right to send you where I please?"

"No, my son," replied M. de Saint Marsin, who happened to be passing at the
[Pg 391] moment, "Henry is not under your orders, but under mine."

"But, papa, do you not wish him to wait upon me?"

"Undoubtedly, my son, he has my commands to that effect, and I trust he will not neglect them; but he will wait upon you according to the orders I give him, and not according to those you give him."

"Nevertheless, papa, it is necessary that I should ask him for what I want."

"You need only let me know what you want, and what I tell him to do for you he will do."

"But I think, papa, you have often allowed me to give him my commands myself."

"That was at a time when there were things which I could allow you to do, because there were others which I could forbid. I could then, without danger, allow you to have some authority in my house, because, as you could only do what I pleased, your authority was subordinate to mine. I did not fear that you would give my servants any orders at variance with my wishes, since I had the right to forbid your doing anything which displeased me; but now that you are at liberty to do whatever suits you, if I gave you the right of commanding my servants, it might suit you to send them to all the four corners of Paris, at the very moment that I required their services here, and I should have no means of preventing you. You might tell them to go to the right while I told them to go to the left; there would be two masters in the house, and that would never answer. Impress this fact upon your mind, my
[Pg 392] son, that you can have no authority over any one, unless I give it to you, and that I cannot give it to you, unless I have the power of compelling you to make a reasonable use of it." Then, turning to the boy, who while pretending to be busily occupied in cleaning Armand's shoes, was, in reality, amusing himself all the while with what was passing,—

"Listen, Henry; you will do with great care for Armand's service, everything which I order you, but you will do nothing whatever that he orders."

"It is well worth while to be free," said Armand, discontentedly.

"My child," said M. de Saint Marsin, "I do not interfere with you in any respect, not even with your giving orders to Henry, if that affords you any pleasure; but then, you must, in turn, allow me to have the privilege of forbidding him to execute them."

Saying this, he went away; and when he had got to some distance, Henry began laughing, and said, "It is a fine thing to order one's servants, when one has got any to order!"

Armand was enraged, and attempted to give him a kick, but Henry avoided it, saying, "I have had no orders to allow myself to be beaten; therefore mind what you are at," and he took up a boot with which he was preparing to defend himself. Armand would not compromise his dignity by contending with him, and therefore left him, saying that he was an insolent fellow, and that he would pay him off some day.

"Yes! yes! and I will pay you, when you pay me for the ham which I have bought for you this morning."

[Pg 393] This recollection redoubled Armand's ill-humour; he felt inclined to go and get it himself; but in addition to his being unaccustomed to go out alone, he was proud, and could not make up his mind to stop at the shop of the pork-butcher, especially as the man knew him, from having seen him frequently pass by with the Abbé Durand, and it would have been very annoying to him to explain to such a person the reason

of his coming himself, and of his being alone. To have profited by his liberty, Armand ought to have been better able to manage for himself, and to overcome his repugnance to a thousand things, which he could not bring himself to do. He began to discover that he was made to pay dearly for a freedom from which he hardly knew how to extract any advantage; nevertheless he had nothing to complain of. No one controlled his actions, and he could not help acknowledging, that the Abbé Durand had a right to refuse to take him out, and his father a right to forbid his servants to execute his orders. He felt that the kindness which these servants had hitherto manifested towards him, could result only from their submission to the authority of his father and his preceptor; still he persuaded himself that the latter, by acting as they did, took an unfair advantage of the need he had of their protection. He did not remember, that when we cannot do without people, we must make up our minds to be dependent on them.

Being out of temper this day, he learned his lessons badly; then interrupted them, and did not finish them. The manner in which he had gone through his morning's
[Pg 394] tasks left him in no humour for the evening's studies: he therefore passed the afternoon in playing at battledore and shuttlecock in the yard with Henry, with whom he was very glad to be on better terms again; but when he saw his father return, he hid himself. The remainder of the day he was afraid to meet him, for fear of being asked whether he had been at work. At night, he returned to his room, much embarrassed, and scarcely daring to look at the Abbé, who, however, said nothing, but treated him as usual. It was of no avail for Armand to say to himself that no one had a right to scold him, and that he was free to do as he pleased: he was, nevertheless, ashamed of wishing for and doing what was unreasonable; for the man who is most completely master of his actions, is no more at liberty to neglect his duties, than a child whom we compel to fulfil them: the sole difference is, that the man possesses reason and strength to do what is right, and that it is because the child does not yet possess these qualities, that he stands in need of being sustained by the necessity of obedience. Nothing would be more unhappy than a child left entirely to himself; half the time he would not know what he wanted; he would commence a hundred things, and never finish one of them, and would pass his life without knowing how. Even he who considers himself reasonable, and who, on this account, thinks that there is no necessity for his being commanded, does not perceive that all his reasonableness springs from his doing what is commanded without repugnance, and without ill-temper; and that if he had no one to guide him, he would be quite incapable of guiding himself. Armand had some notion of all this,
[Pg 395] but it was a confused one: he did not reflect much upon the matter, and merely thought that, after all, there was no such great pleasure in being free.

The next day, which was Sunday, two of his companions, the sons of an old friend of M. de Saint Marsin, came to see him. They were about fifteen or sixteen years of age, frank and thoughtless, and often amused Armand by relating anecdotes of their college, and of the tricks of the boys; but they sometimes shocked him also, by their coarse and disagreeable manners. They, on their side, often ridiculed him for being too orderly, too neat, and too elegant. As their father was not rich, he had only placed them at college as day-scholars; and as they always went there alone, they laughed at Armand, who could not move a step without his tutor. He was therefore delighted to be able to tell them that he was free to do whatever he pleased.

"That's good," said they, "we shall have fine fun: we will go to the place where we went last Sunday; one can play at ball there with all the people of the neighbourhood, who are dressed in their Sunday clothes: they swear, they fight; it's capital sport! Jules was near getting a thrashing from one of the players, because he laughed at him for never sending back the ball." "And Hippolyte," said the other, "had his nose and lips swelled for three days, from having been hit by the ball, in the face; and then they drink beer. Though we were sent to stay here the whole morning, we were determined to go there; will you come with us?"

"Certainly not," replied Armand, to whom this sport offered few attractions: he
[Pg 396] had no ambition to contend with a porter, nor be struck by a ball, nor to drink beer at a tavern. "You must come," continued his companions. "Oh, we'll polish you up; we'll show you how to amuse yourself."

"I wish to amuse myself in my own way," said Armand, who endeavoured, but in vain, to extricate himself from his friends, who had each taken one of his arms, in order to drag him against his will out of the yard where they were. Armand cried out and struggled, and, seeing his father at the window, "Papa," said he, "don't let them drag me away by force."—"I! my son," replied M. de Saint Marsin, "why do you ask me to prevent these young gentlemen from doing anything? You know very well that every one is free here. My friends, amuse yourselves according to your own fancy. Armand, do just what you please. I have no wish to restrain you in any respect," and he withdrew from the window. The two lads laughed outrageously, repeating, as they held Armand tightly by the arm, "Armand, do just what you please;" and seeing that M. de Saint Marsin left them a clear stage, they forced Armand to run along the streets, in spite of his cries and struggles. As they passed along, people exclaimed,

"Look at those young rascals fighting!" and, indeed, Armand did not make a very respectable appearance; he was without cravat, or hat; he had on a soiled over-coat, and his stockings were tied in a slovenly manner; it was this which delighted his mischievous companions, for they knew he had a great objection to be seen in public, unless when well dressed, and they had sometimes fancied, when walking with him,
[Pg 397] that he had manifested some degree of pride, in consequence of being better dressed than they were. The remarks which were made on them increased his annoyance and anger. "Let me go!" he exclaimed, "you have no right to hold me against my will." "Hinder us, then," said his tormentors; but Armand was strong in arguments only, so that in order to avoid being dragged along by force, he was obliged to promise that he would go with them voluntarily; but he was indignant at the treatment he had received, and might perhaps, notwithstanding his promise, have been tempted to make his escape, had not his two tormentors kept constant guard over him, "Don't be a baby," they said, "you don't know how much you'll be amused."

They soon reached a kind of tavern-garden, where several men were playing at ball. Jules' first joke was to push Armand in amongst them; a ball struck him on the left ear, and the man whose throw he had interfered with, gave him a blow with his fist on the right shoulder, in order to push him out of the way. This threw him on the feet of another man, who sent him off with a second blow, at the same time swearing at him, and telling him to mind what he was about. He had not time to reply to this one, before the ball came bounding close to him, and one of the men who ran after it, for the purpose of sending it back again, threw him on the ground with an oath, at the same time falling with him; every one laughed, and especially Jules and Hippolyte. Armand had never in his life felt so enraged, but seeing that his anger was
[Pg 398] impotent, his heart was ready to burst, and had not his pride restrained him, he would have cried with vexation. However, he restrained himself, and withdrawing from the players, he seized the moment when Jules and Hippolyte, who had probably had sufficient of this kind of sport, were no longer watching him, and leaving the garden, he hastened home as fast as he could, trembling lest he should see them coming after him. His heart swelled with anger and a sense of degradation, to find that he was unable either to defend himself, or to punish those who had so unworthily used their strength against him. He reached home at last: his father was coming out as he entered, and asked him, somewhat ironically, whether he enjoyed his walk. Armand could no longer contain himself; he said it was a shame to have encouraged Jules and Hippolyte to drag him away by force, as they had done: "If it was to punish me," he continued, "for the agreement you pretended to make with me, I ought to have been told of it. I did not ask you to make such an agreement."

"My child," said M. de Saint Marsin, "I have no wish to punish you; I have nothing to punish you for; I have no right to punish you. On the other hand, what right had I to prevent your companions from doing what they pleased with you. When you were dependent upon me, I could say, I do not wish him to do such and such things, consequently I will not allow any one to force him to do them. I could exercise my authority, and even my strength, if necessary, to protect you from those who might desire to interfere with you. I could not permit any one to infringe my rights, by
[Pg 399] compelling you to obey them, but now you depend upon yourself only; it is your business to defend yourself, to say I will not, and to discover what your will is worth. So long as you are unwilling to be dependent upon any one, no one is obliged to assist you."

"I see, then," said Armand, in a tone of irritation, "that because I am not dependent upon you, if you saw any one going to kill me, you would say that you had no right to defend me."

"Oh! no," said M. de Saint Marsin, smiling. "I do not think my forbearance would extend quite so far as that: however, I will think about it. I have not yet examined the case. I do not very well see what are the duties of a father towards a child who does not consider himself bound to obey his father. And remember that this is not my fault, for I never before met with a child who entertained these ideas."

With these words he went away. Armand, who clearly perceived that they were making game of him, began to weary of these pleasantries; but at the same time, he was becoming confirmed in the idea of following his own will. Near the place where he had seen the ball-playing, he had noticed another spot where they were firing at a target, and the idea of this had recurred to him since his return. His father, when in the country, had begun to teach him the use of firearms, and had even occasionally allowed him to accompany him on a shooting excursion, an amusement which greatly delighted Armand. But M. de Saint Marsin would not permit him to use firearms in Paris, notwithstanding his earnest assurances that he would employ them with the greatest prudence. This prohibition was very grievous to Armand, who, in his
[Pg 400] wisdom, was quite satisfied that he would be able to amuse himself in this way without any danger. As he had no fancy for practising with such people as he had just escaped from, it occurred to him that he might at least have a target in his father's garden, or shoot at the sparrows. He went to fetch from his father's study, where they were always kept, his gun and some pistols which had been given him by one of

his uncles. It was a mere chance that he got at them, for since he had been intrusted with his liberty, M. de Saint Marsin, fearing he might make a dangerous use of them, had always been careful to keep them locked up; but his valet de chambre having to get something from the place where they were kept, had, notwithstanding the strict injunctions given to him, forgotten to relock the place, and take away the key. Armand therefore found the gun, the pistols, and some ammunition. On descending to the garden, he observed a cat running along the cornice of a neighbouring house; he took aim, missed, and walked on. He entered the garden, and there shot away right and left, and kept up a firing sufficient to alarm the whole neighbourhood.

After exhausting his ammunition, he was returning across the yard, loaded with his artillery, when a man, who was talking very vehemently with the porter, rushed towards him, saying, "Oh! that's him! that's him! I knew very well it came from here. It is you, then, sir, who have been breaking my windows and my furniture, and were very near killing my son. Oh, you shall pay well for this! I will be paid; if not I'll go and fetch the police, and take you before a magistrate!" He was in such a rage, that
[Pg 401] he poured forth a torrent of words, without allowing himself time to take breath, and all the while he shook Armand by the arm. "Yes, yes, I'll take him before a magistrate," he said to the gossips of the neighbourhood, who began to crowd round the gate.

"That's right," said one; "with his gun and pistol shots, one would have supposed that the enemy was at hand."

"The balls hit our walls," said another, "and I didn't know where to hide myself."

"Our poor Azor barked as if he was mad," said a third, "and I am still trembling all over."

"They shall pay me," continued the man. Armand, confounded, neither knew what had happened, nor what they wanted. At length he became aware that the shot which he had fired at the cat, had struck a window above the ledge along which the animal was walking. He had loaded his gun with ball, thinking that small shot would not be sufficient to kill it, and the ball had entered the window of one of the finest apartments in a furnished house, and had broken a looking-glass worth two thousand francs, shattered a pendule, and knocked off the hat of the landlord's son, who happened to be standing near the chimney-piece. At every incident the man related, he shook the arm of Armand, who was making fruitless efforts to escape from him. "You shall pay me," he continued, "as sure as my name is Bernard, and something more into the bargain, to teach you not to fire at other people's houses."

"He would be rather puzzled to pay, I should think," said one of the women.

[Pg 402] "If he pays," added another, "it will not be out of his own purse."

"It's all the same to me," said Bernard. "I must be paid: I don't care by whom. Where is M. de Saint-Marsin? I wish to speak with M. de Saint-Marsin!"

"Here I am," said M. de Saint-Marsin, who entered at the moment. "What do you want of me?"

At the sight of his father, Armand turned pale; yet his presence gave him confidence of protection. Whilst they were explaining the facts of the case, he timidly raised his eyes, but immediately cast them down again, like a criminal awaiting his sentence. When M. de Saint-Marsin understood the cause of all this commotion, he said, "M. Bernard, I am very sorry for the misfortune that has happened to you, but I can do nothing in the matter. If it be really my son who has broken your looking-glass, you must arrange with him, it is not my business."

"But it must of necessity be your business, Sir," replied M. Bernard, "otherwise who is to pay me?"

"I know not, Sir, but if my son has done it, it was during my absence, so that no one can suppose I have had anything to do with it. I do not answer for his actions."

Then turning towards Armand, he said, "You must see, Armand, that this is just; that I cannot be responsible for your actions, when I have no means of making you obey my wishes."

Armand was unable to reply, and stood with his eyes cast down, and his hands
[Pg 403] clasped, while large tears rolled down his cheeks. M. Bernard, in a terrible fury, insisted on taking M. de Saint-Marsin before the magistrate.

He ran to take refuge with his father, round whom he clung with all his strength.—P. 403.

"It is not I who ought to go, it is my son," said M. de Saint-Marsin.

"Oh, your son may be sent to prison."

"I am very sorry, Sir, but I can do nothing."

"To the correctional police," continued M. Bernard.

"I shall be exceedingly grieved, but I cannot prevent it."

Armand at each word sobbed violently, and raised his eyes and clasped hands towards his father. Some one whispered to M. Bernard, "Here is the commissary of police passing by." Armand heard him, and uttering a loud scream, he tore himself from the hands of M. Bernard, and ran to take refuge with his father, round whom he clung with all his strength, exclaiming, "Oh, papa, do not let the commissary take me away; have pity on me!... Do not let me go to prison!"

"What right have I to prevent him, my son? or in what respect is it my duty to do so? Have you not renounced my protection?"

"Oh, restore it to me! restore it to me! I will obey you, I will do everything you wish."

"Do you promise me this? Do you really desire that I should resume my authority?"

"Oh! yes! yes! Punish me in any way you please, but do not let me go to prison."

[Pg 404] "Follow me," said M. de Saint-Marsin; and turning to M. Bernard, he said, "M. Bernard, I trust this matter may be arranged without the intervention of the magistrate; have the goodness to wait here for me a few minutes."

When he entered the house, he said to Armand, "My dear son, I do not wish to take advantage of a moment of trouble; think well of what you are going to do: have you made up your mind to obey me, and are you now convinced that I have a right to exact obedience? I will not conceal from you, that if M. Bernard takes any proceedings, it will in all probability be against me, and that after having compelled me to pay the damages, I shall be ordered to prevent you from committing similar acts for the future. Will you believe, then, that you are bound to submit to my authority, or will you wait for the magistrate to order you to do so?"

"Oh! no, no, papa!" said Armand, confused, and kissing his father's hand, which he covered with tears. "Forgive me, I entreat you."

"My dear child," said his father, "I have nothing to forgive you: in granting you your liberty, I knew very well that you would abuse it. I knew that by allowing you to follow your own judgment, I exposed you to the danger of committing many faults; but it is for this reason that you ought to feel the necessity of sometimes submitting to my judgment."

Armand was unable to express his gratitude for so much indulgence and kindness. M. de Saint-Marsin returned to M. Bernard, and told him he would have an estimate made of the amount of damage done, which fortunately was not so great as M. Bernard had at first represented. Nevertheless it was considerable, and Armand, who
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happened to be in his father's study on the day when they came to demand payment, did not dare to raise his eyes, so much was he ashamed of what he had done.

"You now understand, my son," said M. de Saint-Marsin, "that parents have a right to prevent the follies of their children, since they have to pay for them; but it is not only for such faults as they have to pay for, that they are responsible, but for all the faults of their children, when they have the power of preventing them."

"To whom are they responsible, papa?"

"To God and to the world. To God, who requires that men should be good, reasonable, and as much as possible enlightened, but who does not require that children should become all this, by their own unaided efforts. He has, therefore, intrusted their education and instruction to their parents, and for this purpose has given them the authority necessary for compelling them to receive instruction, and to endeavour to become virtuous. On the other hand, as the world also demands that children should be so brought up, as to become worthy members of society, when they conduct themselves ill, when they manifest vicious propensities, it is the parents who are reproached: they ought therefore to possess the means and authority of correcting and controlling their actions, until they attain sufficient strength and reason to be rendered responsible for themselves."

Armand felt the truth of these arguments. He still occasionally found obedience troublesome, but he no longer obstinately clung to his own ideas, for he perceived that there are many things which cannot possibly be thoroughly understood by a boy of thirteen.

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THE SECRET OF COURAGE.

WHILE rummaging one day in her mamma's drawers, Clementia found a tale, which had been written by one of Madame de Laumont's friends, for the purpose of throwing ridicule on the absurd fears of her daughter, as well as upon a scene to which those fears had given occasion. She asked her mother's permission to read it, this Madame de Laumont granted, and she read as follows:—

THE FORMIDABLE MONSTERS.[B]

[B] This tale is not from my own pen, it was given to me by a friend, who composed it on a scene which actually took place.

In the time of the fairies, when every story commenced with *There was once upon a time*, many wonderful things were to be seen. The learned men who have discovered that the bones of animals found at Montmartre, do not belong to any species existing at present, ought to endeavour to ascertain whether they may not have belonged to some animals of that period. I am going to speak of two of the most singular that then existed, and to relate the terror caused by their apparition, in a fairy castle, where dwelt the princess Tantaffaire and the princess Morgeline.

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One day in the beginning of December, an animal, almost as large and strong as a man, was observed to enter the castle, walking on his hind legs, and enveloped in a covering which resembled the skin of a rhinoceros. His skull alone was covered with a species of hair, of a deep black, and the fore part of his head presented a skin nearly of the same colour as the rest of his body. He had large black and white eyes, which rolled incessantly, and which appeared to possess an extraordinary degree of vivacity, while to the two jaws of his wide mouth were attached teeth, as white as those of the elephant, and which seemed disposed to devour everything they could seize upon. The strangely-articulated growling which escaped him, seemed to indicate that he wanted something in the house, whereupon the servants eagerly chased him from room to room, until he reached the one occupied by the two princesses of whom I have spoken. In this room there was a long tube, which extended as far as the upper terraces, which were frequently visited by the cats. As soon as the monster perceived this tube, which had become blackened by the dust and smoke from the fire usually lighted in it, he took off one of the thick skins which covered the upper part of his body, and disclosed in one of his large paws, a new claw, flat and sharp, and suddenly darting into the tube, he showered after him, a black powder as offensive as the vapours of the infernal regions.

The princess Morgeline, at this unexpected sight, could not help uttering the most fearful cries. Every one tried in vain to calm her; every one pointed out to her, that

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the creature had not injured any one; she was not to be quieted until she had seen him disappear by the chimney, for I had forgotten to tell you that this smoky tube was precisely what at the present day is called a *chimney*.

The princess Tantaffaire, who was older than Morgeline, and possessed a clear and sound judgment, endeavoured to persuade her that it was absurd to be afraid; since these animals come every year, and never do anything more than pass up the tubes, and take away the dust which, in some way or other, seemed to supply them with food. Morgeline would listen to nothing. The reasonings of the other princess were soon troubled by a frightful noise, made by the monster, when he had reached the upper end of the tube. Similar cries proceeded from the neighbouring houses at the same moment, and seemed to unite in the most dreadful discord, as if to deafen the inhabitants of the country for a quarter of a league round. It appeared to be the habit of these animals to march in troops, and to spread themselves nearly all at once over the same district, for the purpose of seeking food.

However, Tantaffaire, still courageous, asserted that Morgeline, who did not know where to hide herself, ought to make an effort to overcome her fears; that she ought to be compelled to remain and see the monster again when he descended from the tube, in order to convince herself that there was nothing dangerous about him. "If we allow her to run away," she argued, "she will be again frightened at another time. Let us force her to examine, and then she will be at rest for the future."

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The princess Tantaffaire reasoned very well, but all at once there came out from behind the wainscoting a little creature, which could scarcely be perceived, so rapid was its flight; it seemed to be of a dark-grey colour, and nearly as large and as formidable as a sparrow.

"Let us fly!" exclaimed the princess Tantaffaire; "run, Morgeline!" and she herself

fled with the utmost precipitation.

"But what is the matter?" said the servants, who had not observed anything, and who were occupied in cutting some bread and pouring out something to drink for the first monster, who had descended from the chimney, twice as black as he was before, and who was making horrible efforts to get rid of the soot which he had swallowed.

"What, Mademoiselle Tantaffaire, are *you* now afraid of the chimney-sweep?"

"No! no!" she cried, "no! but there is a mouse."

At that moment the fairy who presided over the house, entered, accompanied by a beautiful yellow cat, which, smelling the mouse, hunted for it and caught it.

The fairy turned towards poor Tantaffaire:

"You see, Mademoiselle, that it does not require the power of a fairy, nor even that of an ordinary woman, to free oneself from the terrible object which made you run away. I have only had to bring in a cat, a feeble animal, which the Savoyard who terrified Morgeline could strangle with the greatest ease: nevertheless, you had the sense not to be afraid of the latter; you reasoned very correctly while encouraging
[Pg 410] your little friend; but when it became necessary to apply to yourself the principles you so well laid down, you have altogether failed; nor have you even had the strength of mind to conceal, so far as not to infect others, a childish fear, with which you have been reproached from your infancy."

The fairy said a great deal more to the same effect, for the fairies, who have the power of doing so many things with their wands, have also the power of saying still more; but it will be sufficient for you to know, that during this lecture, Tantaffaire seemed very much ashamed, and that it is asserted, that she succeeded, in the end, in overcoming in herself, those fears which she considered so blamable and ridiculous in others.

And now, perhaps, you will ask me what there is so extraordinary in my tale? What! do we still meet with reasoning princesses who are afraid of these little creatures, a thousand times smaller than themselves, which neither bite, nor pinch, nor scratch, and which run so rapidly, that they can scarcely be perceived?

"Mamma," said Clementia, "I saw immediately that it was a chimney-sweep, and then a mouse that was meant;" and after a moment's reflection, she added, "One ought not, certainly, to be afraid of either chimney-sweeps or mice; but I do not think it was so ridiculous in the princess Tantaffaire, to have been more afraid of a mouse than of a chimney-sweep."

"Why so, my dear?"

"Why, mamma, because we know very well that the chimney-sweep is a man."

[Pg 411] "And I think no one can be ignorant that a mouse is a mouse."

"No; but we know why the sweep comes, and what he wants to do; whereas this little creature, which runs nobody knows how, and nobody knows from where, and which goes and returns hardly giving one time to see it.... In fact, mamma, many persons who are grown up are afraid of mice, but no one is afraid of a chimney-sweep."

"And yet they are perfectly aware," said Madame de Laumont, "that the one does no more harm than the other."

"Oh! mamma, as if one was afraid of nothing but what does harm. When we are in the country, and the wind whistles through the corridors of the château, when I hear it moan in the night through the crevices of the door or of the window, I know that it can do me no harm, and yet I am so frightened, that I cover my head with the sheet, and pull the clothes as tightly round me, as if I had to protect myself from some great danger. When it thunders, I am quite aware that the peal which we hear, can do no harm, since this noise is only the echo of the sound, which has already passed, and yet you know, mamma, that at those two terrific claps of thunder which we had last year in the country, if you had not absolutely forbidden me, I could not have helped running about and screaming, as people do when they are very much afraid."

"And, when I forbade you, that prevented you from doing so; I am sure that if I
[Pg 412] were to forbid your rolling yourself up in your sheets, when you hear the wind whistle, it would prevent you from doing that also?"

"Oh! yes, certainly, mamma."

"Very well, then I forbid your doing so. Do you consider that that will prevent you from being afraid?"

Clementia reflected a moment, and then told her mother that she did not suppose it would.

"What do you think about," asked her mother, "when the wind whistles, and you roll yourself up in your sheets?"

"I do not think about anything, mamma, I assure you; I am afraid, that is all."

"And when you hear it without tightening your sheets, since I have forbidden you to do so, what will you think about then?"

"I shall think, mamma, of what you have forbidden me," said Clementia. Then, after a moment's reflection, she added, "I think, perhaps, that this idea might prevent me from being afraid; for I remember, when it thundered so loudly last year, that at the second peal I thought of your having forbidden me to cry out at the first; I thought of restraining myself, and consequently thought less of being afraid."

"This is what always happens, my child. The best means of overcoming fear, is to think of something which may divert our thoughts from it. Those who are afraid of mice, are quite capable of being afraid of chimney-sweeps, if, when one made his appearance, they did not think he came to sweep the chimney, and that it is desirable that chimneys should be swept, in order to prevent their catching fire; in fact, if they
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did not think of many things which prevent them from dwelling upon the impression which his disagreeable appearance might make upon them. If mice were as useful to every one as sweeps are, no one would be afraid of them."

"Do you think so, mamma?"

"You know well enough, for instance, that if it were the custom to make ragouts of them, Catherine, who runs away the moment she sees one, would, instead of doing so, think only of catching it, and would be no more afraid of it than she is of the eel, which twists about in her hand like a serpent, and which you think it would be impossible for you to touch. In the same way she would think only of the ragout she was going to prepare, and not of her absurd fears."

"But, mamma, one cannot always conjure up an idea which will enable us to overcome fear."

"Nothing is easier. You see that by a simple prohibition, I have given you sufficient means to diminish your fear of the thunder, and of the wind; as to those things which I do not forbid, you have only to forbid them yourself."

"One cannot always find something to forbid oneself."

"Always, my child, when we are disposed to yield to fear, for we are led to do many things which we ought to think of forbidding ourselves, and when we do not yield to them, we soon lose the habit of doing so. Do you remember the habit you had two years ago, of looking, before you went to bed, both under your own bed and mine, and of examining all the closets and doors of the apartment? When I compelled you to go to bed without all these precautions, were you any longer tormented by fear?"

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"Oh! dear, no, mamma; the following day I thought no more about it; but I am quite sure, however, that if I had missed of my own accord, I should have fancied that that was the very time when there would be some one concealed."

"Because you were not then convinced that it was unreasonable, and that you ought not to yield to it. The idea of resisting a bad habit, by reasoning against it, would have diverted your mind, as much as my prohibition, from the fear which had induced you to form it."

"In fact, mamma, those who are afraid of nothing, must, I should suppose, be thus fearless, because they never think about fear, otherwise I could not comprehend them."

"And those who are afraid of everything, are so because they are in the habit of thinking about what may frighten them. Do you suppose that the soldiers in a battle, if they allowed themselves to think of all the balls which might reach them, would have sufficient courage to stand their ground for a minute? Instead of this, they think only of what they have to do, of repelling the enemy, of gaining ground upon him, or of distinguishing themselves, in order to gain reward. It is thus they forget the bullets and press forward; it is thus also that you, who are so afraid of a little pain, do not, when you romp with your brother, regard the blows you may receive, because you think only of those you wish to give. Think of anything but that which may cause fear. In this, my child, lies the whole secret of courage."

In the evening, Clementia, having occasion to pass through some of her mother's
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apartments, and afterwards through a long corridor, wanted to take a light. Her mother asked her whether she did not know the way well enough to do without it. Clementia did, but she felt timid; her mother perceived this, and Clementia

acknowledged it. After having reasoned with her respecting the kind of danger she might encounter, "Come, let us make a trial," she said, "go very slowly, examine well whether you are afraid, and of what you are afraid, so that you may give me an account of what you have felt; if you feel too much afraid, come back."

Clementia hesitated; her mother's pleasantries, by making her laugh, diminished a little her fear. At the first emotion of terror which she experienced, she stopped, according to her mother's advice, in order to ascertain what had caused it; she felt that it had no reasonable foundation, and continued her way: she stopped again at the entrance of the dark corridor, to consider whether she should retrace her steps; but she thought she was not sufficiently frightened to return, and when she entered the corridor, she found she was not so much afraid as she had at first expected to be, because indeed there was no cause for fear. Having reached the spot to which she was going, she returned with much less difficulty, and agreed with her mother that her fear had been less than usual. Repeated experiments rendered her quite courageous against the night, the mice, and all other imaginary dangers. As to real dangers, every one knows that we ought not to expose ourselves to them without necessity, and she learned, by her own experience, that in these cases, it is not of the danger we think. She had occasion to attend upon a person, of whom she was very
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fond, through a contagious disease, and every one was astonished that she had no fear on her own account. It was because her mind was so much occupied with the illness which she was attending, that she had no fear of that to which she exposed herself.

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THE DREAM;

AN EASTERN TALE.

Narzim was a pious child, filled with filial love, and ever obedient to his mother Missour, a poor widow who lived with him, in a little hut, in the environs of the mighty Delhi. With them also lived the young Elima, the daughter of Missour's sister. Elima had large black eyes, a mild expression, and a sweet smile. Narzim would sometimes say to her, "Elima, you shall be my wife, and we will not leave Missour: when her sight, which daily becomes weaker, has altogether gone, we will lead her under the palm-trees, and the pleasure of hearing you will make her forget, for a few moments, that she is no longer able to see. I shall be strong then; I will cultivate our fields of rice, and the sweet voice of Elima will render my labour light." Elima smiled, and rejoiced at the thought of never leaving Missour.

Their union was their only happiness. Missour's husband had been killed by robbers, who had ravaged his field, and since that time Missour had been able to cultivate only a portion of it, hardly sufficient for herself and family. Often the remembrance of her husband's death, of his last looks, and of his last words, would
[Pg 418] occasion her inexpressible anguish. In those moments, when she was overwhelmed with fatigue, misery embittered her heart; and, ready to murmur against the Author of her being, she would say, "Has Brama then created us for the purpose of rendering us unhappy?" Then she would shed torrents of bitter tears. Narzim and Elima beheld her weep, and wept also: without being able to understand the whole amount of her grief, they felt it; it surrounded them with a dark cloud, filling their hearts with sadness; at those times their childish sports were suspended, and even their voices died away upon their lips, for they could only have uttered words of sorrow. Elima no longer dared to smile; Narzim remained motionless, while the vivacity of his age which boiled within him made him rebel against the grief with which he felt himself overwhelmed, and he repeated to Brama the words he had heard his mother Missour utter, "Why hast thou created us to render us unhappy?"

One evening he fell asleep in the midst of these sad and culpable thoughts. Scarcely had slumber sealed his eyelids, when a soothing balm seemed to flow through his veins, and calm the agitation of his soul. A celestial form appeared before him: it was that of a young and handsome man; his eyes were as soft as those of Elima, and his hair fell in ringlets round his neck, like that of Narzim. White and glittering wings sustained him in the air, where his light and pliant limbs seemed to float, like the folds of his garments. Narzim recognised in him one of the angels[C] commissioned to execute the will of the great Brama.

[C] In the East these angels are denominated *Deptas*.

[Pg 419] "Narzim," said the angel, in accents so sweet, as almost to conceal the reproach which they conveyed, "you think that you were created to be unhappy."

"Mighty Depta," replied Narzim, "from the moment of my birth, misfortune has constantly been my lot: without the affection of Missour and of Elima, I should know no happiness on earth, and even this happiness is embittered by their misfortunes."

"Narzim," replied the angel, "it is the will of Brama that you should be happy; but such is the condition of mortals, that happiness cannot be attained without some sacrifices. The great Brama will render them for you as light as possible, he only requires you to renounce one of the blessings you possess; and in the place of this single one, all the happiness of the earth shall be yours. Come, you are about to enjoy riches and pleasure."

With these words, he took him in his arms, and raised him into the air; at least so it seemed to Narzim in his dream. It also appeared to him, that in proportion as he withdrew from the earth, his heart became torn with anguish, while the air resounded with his cries. "Let me return to Missour and Elima," he said. "What will they think of my absence? what will become of them?"

"The happiness of seeing them," said the genius, "is the sacrifice which is demanded from you. You must renounce them for ever."

"Without them," replied Narzim, "what happiness can I enjoy? Pleasures and riches would only be a torment to me."

[Pg 420] "You will forget them," said the angel. "A breath will erase from your mind every trace of their remembrance."

"Stop!" exclaimed Narzim, turning away his face, for already he thought he felt

the icy breath which was to destroy all his tenderness for the objects of his affection. "Stop! it is far better to suffer with them than to forget them."

At these words, the angel opened his arms, and Narzim felt as if he were descending gently towards the earth. "You have refused happiness at the price at which it was offered to you," said the angel, as he flew away; "but Brama is good; when you can no longer endure your misfortunes, call to me, and I shall be ever at hand to aid you."

He disappeared, and Narzim imagined in his dream that years passed rapidly before him; he seemed to have arrived at manhood, and to have acquired a friend. This friend said to him, "We will dwell in the same cottage. Missour shall be my mother; Elima shall be my sister. We will cultivate together the field of rice; the labour of our hands will render their subsistence more abundant." Afterwards it appeared to him that he went one day to the city of Delhi, to sell a little rice, a portion of the surplus of their crop; and that on his return he found neither his friend nor Elima. Missour, dying with grief, informed him that his friend, assisted by two men as wicked as himself, had carried her away by force; that she had never ceased to call her dear Narzim to her aid; that for a long time she had heard her cries; and that for herself, overwhelmed by the loss of Elima, and by the ill-treatment she had
[Pg 421] received in endeavouring to defend her, she felt that she was on the point of death. And indeed Missour expired shortly after she had said these words. Such, at least, was the dream of Narzim.

He fell into the deepest despair. "For them," he said, "I have refused both riches and pleasures, and, behold, they are both torn from me."

"Come, then," said the angel, suddenly presenting himself before him, "the sacrifice shall this time be very light. The faint hope of recovering Elima, is all that Brama desires you to abandon, in exchange for the delights that he will heap upon you."

"May I still preserve this hope then?" exclaimed Narzim.

"Brama," said the angel, "has given me no commands to take it from you, but I can do nothing to restore Elima to you."

"Mighty Depta, I will hasten to seek Elima through the whole world. The hope which you leave me is a blessing, which I cannot exchange for any other."

"Go! and when you are still more unhappy, call upon me. Brama has commanded me never to refuse you my aid."

Narzim sold his little inheritance and departed, seeking everywhere for his lost Elima, sometimes believing himself on the point of discovering her, at others despairing of ever beholding her again; and though often ready to sink overcome by grief, fatigue, and hunger, he never felt tempted to call upon the Depta, who would have required him to renounce the hope of finding her.

It seemed to him in his dream, that one evening, having sunk down at the gates of
[Pg 422] a large city, no longer able to struggle with his misfortunes, he awaited death, and did not desire to live. The angel presented himself before him, surrounded with a great light.

"Narzim," said he, "you may live, you may revive to joy and health; Elima, even, may be restored to you. Listen only to this man, and learn from him what sacrifice Brama demands for so many benefits."

Narzim turned round, and by the light that emanated from the body of the angel, he saw beside him a man richly clad, but pale and trembling, and with looks gloomy and terrified.

"Hearken," said the man, hurriedly. "A shameful crime has just been committed; I am the author of it; I have been discovered; I am pursued, and shall soon be taken; the condemnation, which I cannot escape, will deprive me of my honours and of my wealth; you, poor unfortunate, have nothing to lose; a slight but ignominious punishment will be the only chastisement that you have to fear; take this dress, which will be recognised, give me yours, declare yourself the culprit, and you shall enjoy for the remainder of your days, the wealth which will be insured to you by the necessity I have for your secrecy."

Narzim remained silent.

"Quick! the moments are precious: you hesitate, miserable wretch, who have not two hours to breathe the air of the living? Can you value their esteem?"

"Let me die," said Narzim, "unknown to men; I aspire not to their esteem, but I could not live an object of their contempt."

The angel disappeared, and darkness again enveloped Narzim. The culprit was
[Pg 423] still beside him, endeavouring to force upon him the exchange, which was to load

him with the appearance of crime: but the presence of the angel had restored all his strength to the son of Missour; he defended himself. The vigilant eyes which had discovered the crime, had pierced the darkness, even to the very spot where the criminal had taken refuge; he was seized; and Narzim, freed and restored to misery, did not regret the disgrace which would have enriched him.

However, his ideas became confused, as often happens during sleep; and without being able to follow the thread of his destiny, he found himself plunged into new and deeper misfortunes. Accused of a murder which he had not committed, he had been thrown into a dungeon, and was on the point of suffering the punishment of the crime. Mute, overwhelmed with the deepest despair, he saw the angel appear before him.

"What do you now require of me?" he said; "What sacrifice can I offer to Brama? There is nothing left to me. I have no longer anything to relinquish in exchange for the happiness which he would offer me."

The celestial messenger, without replying, looked at him with an anxious and tender expression.

"You are mistaken," said a voice which seemed to proceed from the depths of his own thoughts, without striking upon his ears; "there still remains one sacrifice for you to make, by which you may be saved. Behold, sleeping near you that man formerly so powerful; if he sleeps, it is because misery has suspended his faculties; he has attempted the life of his sovereign, nothing can save him; neither his former
[Pg 424] power, nor his gold, nor his jewels, with which, even in his prison, he has surrounded himself, can seduce in his favour guards who would pay with their lives a moment of weakness, or even of negligence; but you, an obscure criminal, scarcely known to those who are about to punish you, take possession of his treasures; you can do so without difficulty; they will open for you the gates of your prison, they will cover your flight until you reach a place of safety. Lose not a moment; you can yet purchase your life by the sacrifice of your virtue."

Narzim raised his eyes towards the angel, and still beheld the same expression of tenderness and compassion, and felt that such words could not have come from a messenger of heaven. He looked at the riches spread out before him; they dazzled not his eyes, and he felt that it would be easier to walk to the scaffold, than to lay a hand on what did not belong to him. He again raised his eyes towards the angel: he raised them filled with an expression of noble joy, for Narzim had just discovered how much he loved virtue. The angel read his thoughts.

"Well, Narzim," he said, with a smile almost divine, "at this moment do you consider yourself created solely for misery?"

"Mighty Depta," said the son of Missour, with a transport such as he had never before experienced, "at this moment Narzim feels that he is happy."

"You see," said the angel, "that even in the deepest distress, there still remain to you possessions so precious, that you cannot make up your mind to part with them.
[Pg 425] Cease, then, to complain, and never again dare to say that beings capable of loving virtue are created solely for misery."

At this moment the eyes of the angel sparkled with a flame so dazzling, that Narzim could not endure its brightness. He prostrated himself on the ground, and on rising, beheld neither the angel nor his dungeon, nor the wretch who shared his chains. His eyes opened; he awoke; daylight was shining into his cottage; Elima and Missour still reposed there. Narzim had lost nothing; he felt his heart expand with joy. It flowed into it as from an inexhaustible fountain, which the words of the angel had unsealed. There was strength in his soul, and it seemed to communicate itself to his limbs. He appeared to himself to have passed over the days of his childhood, to such an extent did a new vigour animate his whole being. The virtue he had just contemplated presented itself to him, with all his duties; and in the fulfilment of these duties he perceived the seeds of happiness.

"Mother," said he to Missour, as soon as she had opened her eyes to the dawning day, "I complained of misery without thinking that I had not yet purchased happiness. Solely occupied in sharing the sports of Elima, I have too far prolonged my childhood, and your tenderness for me has too long forgotten the years which, as they pass, ought to bring with them the time for labour. Look at the arms of Narzim, they are strong, and shall cultivate for you our field of rice."

His mother smiled, and placed in his hands the instruments of labour. Narzim
[Pg 426] learned to use them, and use increased his strength. Missour was no longer overpowered by fatigue, nor was the end of her days overshadowed by that despair which an exhausted body sheds over a sick mind. Joy again returned to the lips of Elima, and to the eyes of Narzim. Sometimes he raised them towards heaven, as he had done at the moment when he first learned how much he loved virtue: then his soul became filled with a holy and sweet confidence, and with a deep sense of gratitude towards that great Being who has placed in the heart of man the germ of a

happiness of which nothing can deprive him, but his own will.

THE END.

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Transcriber's note

Obvious printer errors have been silently corrected. Original spelling was kept. Variant spellings were made consistent when a predominant preference was found.

Chapter headings have been harmonized and made consistent both in text and in Table of Contents. Illustrations have been moved so that they do not break up paragraphs while remaining close to the text they illustrate.

The following changes were made:

- Page v: in the Table of Contents, page '313' replaced by page '309'
- Page 46: 'on' replaced by 'in' (in twenty-four days)
- Page 70: 'Juliet' replaced by 'Juliette' (Madame de la Fère turned to Juliette)
- Page 102: 'be' inserted (What is to be done?)
- Page 109: 'come' replaced by 'came' (Suzette, who had followed her, came forward eating)
- Page 256: 'together:' replaced by 'together!' (she said, "we shall make it together!")

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