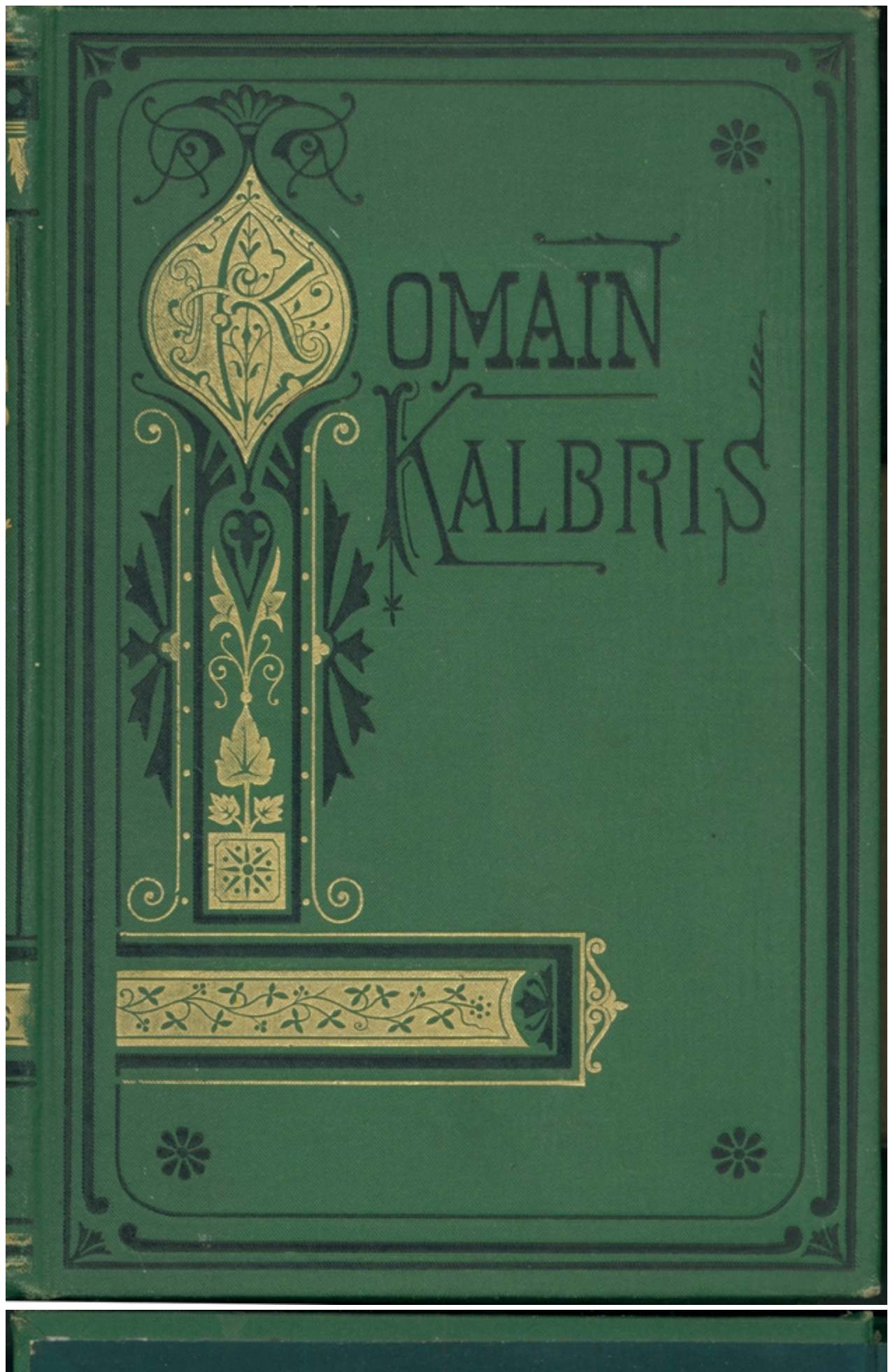




ROMAIN KALBRIS.

HIS ADVENTURES BY SEA AND SHORE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF
HECTOR MALOT,

BY
MRS. JULIA MCNAIR WRIGHT.

WITH FORTY-SIX ILLUSTRATIONS BY EMILE BAYARD.
ENGRAVED BY PANNEMAKER.



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ROMAIN KALBRIS.

CHAPTER I.

FROM my present position no one need conclude that I had Fortune for my foster-mother. My ancestors, if the word is not too ambitious, were fishermen. My father was the youngest of eleven children, and my grandfather had much difficulty in raising his large family, for in this trade of fishing, more than in any other, the gain is not in proportion to the toil. You may count surely on toil and

danger. The question will be whether you make anything by your exertions.

At the age of eighteen my father was drafted by the "maritime conscription," a sort of enrolment by means of which the state secures service from all mariners during some time in thirty-two years—*i. e.*, between the ages of eighteen and fifty. My father left home knowing neither how to read nor write. He returned first master, the highest grade to which those can come who have not passed through the government schools.

Port-Dieu, our country, being neighbor to the British isles, the state stations there a revenue cutter, whose mission it is to prevent the people of the island of Jersey from catching our fish, and at the same time to force our own sailors to observe the fishery laws. It was upon this cutter that my father was stationed to continue his service. This was a favor; for however much accustomed a man may be to seafaring, and to calling his ship his country, he is always happy to return to the land of his birth.

Fifteen months after my father's return I was born. I made my appearance in this world on a Friday in March, the day of the new moon, so the gossips with one accord predicted that I would have adventures, that I would make voyages on the sea, and that I would be very unhappy, *unless* the influence of the

moon counteracted the baleful effects of *Friday*! As for adventures, I have had them; they are just what I am about to relate to you; as for sea-voyages, I have made them; in regard to the strife of diverse fates in my life, you may pronounce your own opinion when I am done my story.

To predict voyages for me was simply to say that I was a child of the Kalbris family, for, father and son, all the Kalbris have been mariners, and if the legend is true, they have been so since the Trojan war. Pray observe that *we* do not give ourselves this ancient origin, but the wise men do so, who pretend that there are at Port-Dieu one hundred families precisely, those of fishermen, who have descended from a Phœnician colony.

It is certain that we have black eyes, a ruddy and olive skin, sharply-cut noses and nothing whatever of the Norman or Breton type; our boats also are an exact copy of the ship of old Ulysses as Homer paints it, a single mast with a square sail—a kind of fishing craft very common in the Archipelago, but curious in *Manche* (our department of France).

As for ourselves, our traditions do not go back very far, and their uniformity serves to confuse them. Among us, if you mention anybody, the history is but little varied—every one has been to sea; and among a people whose names are hard to remember, and who

have died mostly in storm, in battle or on English prison-ships, history has much of repetition. In our graveyards the plain slabs bear the names of wives and mothers, but few are found set up over men: they do not die at home in bed.

Like all families, we have our heroes; one of them was my maternal grandfather, who had been the companion of Surcouf; the other was my grand-uncle Flohy. As soon as I was old enough to know what was said around me I heard his name ten times a day; he was in the service of a king of India, who had elephants; he commanded troops against the English; he had a *silver arm*. Elephants and a silver arm! surely this must be a fairy tale! A desire for adventures was born in every Kalbris; this feeling impelled my father to set out on a new expedition a few years after his marriage. He might have commanded one of those vessels which every springtime go to Iceland, but he preferred the service of the state. I do not remember his departure. My first recollections are of that time when I noticed days of tempest and stormy nights, and was sent by my mother to the post-office.

How many times have I found my mother praying in the windy, blustering nights! For us a storm at Port-Dieu was a storm over all the world, and the wind which whistled around our cottage seemed to us

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to be shrieking through my father's sails. Sometimes the storm was so severe that it threatened to tear our frail home to pieces, for our dwelling was that of poor people; it was fortunate that one side was sheltered by a jutting cliff, and the other by a wreck which had once been the saloon of a three-masted vessel which had fallen a victim to equinoctial gales. One night in October my mother aroused me; the tempest was fearful; the wind howled like demons; the house shook, gusts entering the ill-fitting windows shook the feeble flame of our candle, and finally extinguished it. In the lull of the wind we could hear the thunder of the surf against the rocks. Despite the uproar, I fell asleep directly as I knelt beside my distracted mother; suddenly the window was snatched from its hinges, and flung into the room, broken into a hundred fragments; it seemed to me that I was caught up by a whirlwind.

“Ah! Heaven help us!” cried my mother; “your father is lost!”

My dear mother, like many fishermen's wives, had a faith in signs and presentiments. A letter which she received from my father some months after that terrible night rendered this belief even more fixed by a trifling coincidence—he had been in that same week of October assailed by a storm and in much danger. The sleep of a sailor's wife is a sad sleep. To dream

of shipwreck, to wait and watch for letters by the mail, which perchance never come—between these two agonies her life passes.

At the time of which I speak letters were not delivered as they are now ; for us they were distributed at the grocery-store, and if any one failed to call for his letters, they were presently sent him by some passing school-boy.

The day when the mail-carrier arrived at Terre-Neuve the grocery was crowded. All the sailors were absent fishing for codfish, and a stranger coming to the town would have thought himself in the island Ariosto tells of from which men were excluded. Dozens of women pressed forward for news. Their babes in their arms, they waited until their names were called. Some read their letters with bursts of laughter, others wept. Those who had no letters questioned everybody who had received any. Among sailors the proverb, "No news is good news," does not hold true.

There was one old woman who came every day for six years, and in all that time never received a letter. They called her "Mother Joan," and people told how a dory manned by her husband and four sons had disappeared in a squall without leaving a trace of men or boat. Since that hour she came each morning to the office, hoping to hear that, swept out to sea, her dear ones had been picked up by a passing ship.

“There is nothing for you to-day,” the postmaster would say, pityingly; “there will be to-morrow.”

“Yes, to-morrow,” she would answer, and depart, to return next day.

People said her brain was astray. If that were true, and Mother Joan was foolish, I have never seen since a folly so sad and sweet as hers.

Nearly every time that I went to the office I found the mail arrived. As the postmaster was also a shop-keeper, he naturally attended first to those who wanted salt or coffee, and thus gave us more time to wait. Methodical and rigorous in the pursuit of his double profession, he delayed us yet longer by all sorts of ceremonies. As grocer, he wore a blue apron and a paper cap; as postmaster-general of our town, he felt bound to officiate clad in the glories of a cloth coat and a velvet cocked hat. Nothing in the world could have persuaded him to have dealt out mustard with the cocked hat on his head; and knowing that he had in his hands a letter on which the lives of ten men depended, he would not have handed it across the counter when he was wearing his blue apron.

Each morning at the store “Mother Joan” recommenced her recital: “They were fishers. A squall came up suddenly, and they must have been obliged to fly before it. They were unable to get to the ship *Friendship*; they flew past the *Prudence* without speak-

ing her. But you all know well that with a sailor like my John there can be no danger. They must have been picked up by a large ship which will one day bring them home. Did not Melanie's boy return so? They carried him clear to America. Ah! when they get home, how tall my Jerome will have grown! He was just fourteen. Fourteen and six—how many is that? Ah! twenty! Twenty years! Why, he will be a man!"

She died without believing them dead. A few days before her death she gave our pastor thirty dollars to give to her Jerome when he came home. Despite her want and woe, she had saved this much, and left it for her love's token.





CHAPTER II.

THE absence of my father was to have been of three years' duration. It lasted for six. The commander was replaced, but ship and crew were kept upon the Pacific.

I was ten years old when he came home. It was on Sunday, just after church-time. I was leaning by the gate watching a frigate weigh anchor, when coming up from the dock I saw a French marine in his best

uniform. The quay was the favorite lounging-place of many old salts who in all weathers and on all days sat upon beams, barrels or boxes, watching the sea and sailors. They gathered together two hours before high tide, and remained for two hours after the tide ran out.

"Romain," cried old Captain Houel to me, dropping his spyglass, "see your father. Run to the quay if you wish to meet him."

I was willing to run, but I had legs stout as a pair of beer-casks. It was hard work. When I reached the quay, my father was besieged by a crowd of friends. One begged him to stop for a cup of coffee in a water-side eating-house, another cried to him to have a mug of cider.

"To-morrow, to-morrow, friends," he said. "I must first see my wife and my baby."

"Your baby? Ah, he! Behold your famous baby!" and there I was, sure enough, but grown beyond his knowledge.

During six years of travel my father had seen many things, and I was eager to hear his tales. In appearance hasty and rough, he was at heart the most genial and long-enduring of men, and with unfailing patience he told and retold the stories which best pleased my infant imagination.

Among his narratives there was none so fascinating

and so often called for as the account of my uncle John. During a stay at Calcutta my father had heard mentioned a general Flohy who was an ambassador to the English governor from a native sovereign.

People said he was a marvellous man. He was a Frenchman who had entered as a volunteer the service of the king of Berar. In a battle with the English he had by a heroic action saved the Indian army. For this he was made a general. A bullet had destroyed his hand. He replaced the lost hand by one of solid silver; and when he rode into the capital of the king of Berar, holding with this hand the reins of his horse, the Indian priests prostrated themselves before him in adoration, saying that in the holy books of Berar it was written that the kingdom would attain its highest glory when its armies should be led by a stranger from the West, who might be recognized by a *silver hand*.

My father was presented before General Flohy, and was received by him with open arms. During eight days my uncle treated him like a prince, and wished him to remain longer in Calcutta. The duties of a marine are inexorable, and my father was forced to leave his relative.

This history produced a very lively effect on my imagination. My uncle occupied all my thoughts.

I dreamed of elephants and palanquins. I saw constantly two soldiers escorting him who wore a silver hand. Until then I had had a certain admiration for a Swiss soldier who attended our church, but tales of my uncle's two gorgeous slaves led me to despise a man whose halberd was plain iron and his hat glazed leather.

My father rejoiced in my enthusiasm. My mother endured it, for with maternal tenderness she dreaded the effect such romances would produce upon me.

"Come, come," she would remonstrate; "you will give him a taste for sea-going."

"Never mind; that will be no worse than my own life, and may turn out as grandly as his uncle's."

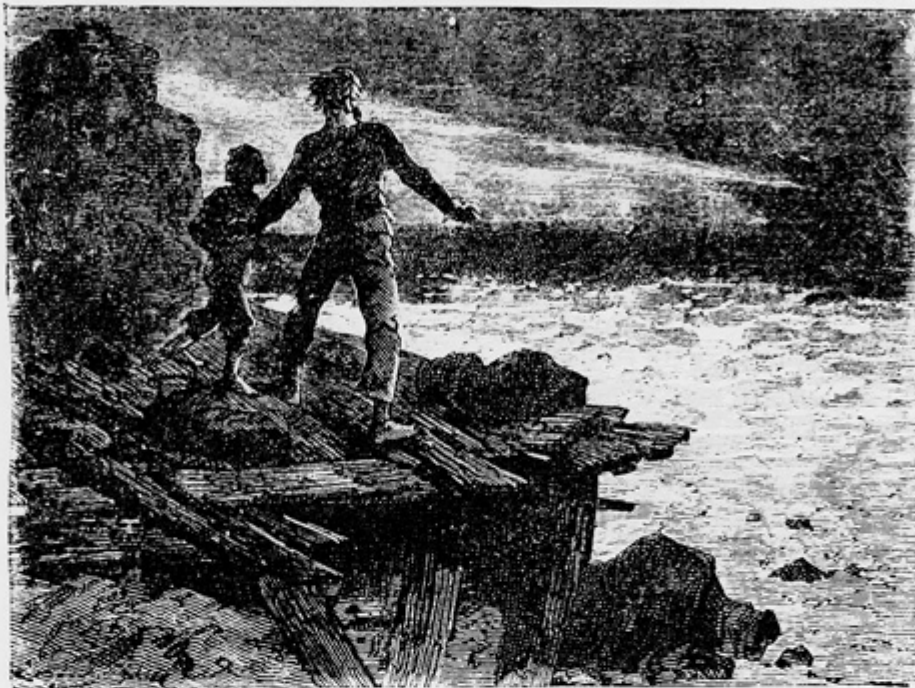
Become like my uncle! My poor father little knew what a fire his light words kindled.

It was necessary for my mother to resign herself to the thought of my becoming a sailor, but in her innocent love she wished to soften for me the rough beginning of that hard life. She persuaded my father to leave the service of the state and obtain the captaincy of a craft bound for Iceland, that I might serve my sea-going apprenticeship under him.

By this means she hoped to keep us both at home in winter, when the fishing-vessels return home and

are laid up. But who can prevent the ordained combinations and misfortunes of human destiny—who can arm a man against his allotted fate?





CHAPTER III.

MY father reached home in August. In the month of September, usually the most delightful season of the year, the weather became tempestuous. We had a series of hard storms in place of the ordinary succession of calms. On all sides people spoke of shipwrecks. A steamer had been lost, crew and cargo, on the Blanchard shoals. Many ships from Granville had disappeared, and people said that the Jersey coast was strewn with fragments of wreck. The earth was covered with broken branches; green apples, blown from the trees, lay all over the ground. Many trees were torn up by the roots, and the leaves, swinging half broken on

the branches, faded as if scorched by the breath of fire. All the world seemed to live in fear, for, alas! it was the season for the home-coming of the ships from the Newfoundland fisheries.

Such weather continued for some three weeks. Then one evening the fury of the storms seemed suddenly to culminate over land and sea. I had believed the tempest subsiding, but at tea-time my father laughed at me when I asked him if we should go next day to examine some nets which had been neglected since the beginning of the gales.

"To-morrow," he said, "there will be furious gusts from the west. The sun is setting in a sea of blood; there are too many stars in the sky; the ocean groans; the land is hot. To-morrow, boy, you will see more than ever you saw before."

Thus, on the morrow, instead of going to look after nets, we set ourselves early to carry large stones to pile upon our roof. The west wind woke with the dawn. There was no sunshine, but the sky was a dull gray, broken here and there with long lines of pale greenish light; and although the sea looked quiet, from afar there came a groaning sound like low thunder. All at once my father, who was on the roof, ceased his work. I climbed up beside him. Far off on the horizon we could see a white speck against the sombre sky. It was a large ship.

"If they do not have a care, they will drive upon their destruction," said my father.

The fact is, that during a west wind it is impossible to enter Port-Dieu safely.

A blaze of lightning for a second set the ship in full view. Instantly we lost sight of it. The clouds gathered in black confusion. They piled themselves upon each other like mountains, and rolled under the whirling winds like fickle wreaths of smoke. Low down in the sky the lightnings blazed continual fires.

Father and I made haste to the village. Every one was running to the quay, for already the news had spread that a ship was nearing the coast, and was in instant danger.

So swift had been the advance of the storm that even now the whole sea, near and far, right and left, was lashed to a foam, a mass of tossing snow. It rose more rapidly than usual into great waves, which with their terrific roar nearly paralyzed the senses.

The clouds, lashed by the gale, were so black, so threatening, that they seemed to press with a tremendous weight upon the shuddering sea.

The ship swept on. It was a brig, and was almost bare of canvas.

"See, she is running up signals of distress. She belongs to the Brothers Leheu," said Captain Houel.

The Brothers Leheu were the richest traders in the country.

"She wants a pilot!"

"Ah, yes, a pilot, but how can a pilot reach her?"

There stood the pilot himself, old Father Housard, and he it was made this reply. No one made any reply. All knew that he was right, and that to reach the brig was impossible.

At the same moment we saw running from the village the elder of the Leheu brothers. He had learned that his ship was in danger. Scarcely had he turned the corner than the wind, sweeping upon him, scattered him in the street like a pack of cards. I speak without exaggeration: hat, cane and kerchief and M. Leheu went various ways. Panting, struggling, puffing, laboring, like a boat in the waves, he stood amid the crowd at last; he had made no effort to regain his hat, and every one could see that he was in a state of fearful anxiety. He was one of those men to whom pecuniary loss is the greatest possible calamity.

He gazed at his brig; she had been built at Bayonne, and was splendidly fitted out; this was her first voyage, and she was not insured.

"Twenty cents a ton on her if you will bring her in!" cried M. Leheu, catching Father Housard by the arm.

"To bring her in makes it needful first to get aboard of her," was the answer.

The waves leaped high up above the pier; the wind carried with it the foam of the water, sea-weeds, sand from the shore, even tiles from the houses of the coast-guard. The clouds seemed to trail upon the sea, their blackness making the white foam whiter still.

When those on the brig saw that the pilot did not set out, she turned half her length, trying to make a tack while waiting.

Consider, now: to remain outside was sure shipwreck; to run into the harbor without a pilot was even more assured destruction.

M. Leheu did not cease to cry, "Twenty cents a ton—forty cents a ton!" He ran to and fro, and in the same breath entreated and berated:

"Ah, you are all the same—ready to go to sea when no one needs you, lying close at home if there is any danger."

No one replied. They only shook their heads silently. This enraged him: "Every one for himself. There goes three hundred thousand francs to wreck. You are a gang of thieves!"

My father stepped forward:

"Give me a boat; I will try and reach her."

"Kalbris, you are a brave man."

"If Kalbris goes, I will go with him" said Father Housard.

"Twenty cents a ton—that is what I promised you," said M. Leheu.

"Hold there!" said Father Housard; "I do not risk it for money, but to save the sailors' lives. But if I never come back, and my widow asks you for two cents next Sunday, don't refuse it."

"Kalbris," cried Leheu, "I will adopt your son."

"All right. Get us quickly Gossman's boat."

This boat was famous all along the coast for being able to carry sail in almost any weather. It was called the *Saint John*.

"I will let it go," said Gossman, finding all eyes fixed upon him, "but it is to Kalbris that I lend it, thinking he will bring it home safely."

My father took me in his arms. All were running to the beach, where the *Saint John* was drawn up high and dry. A moment more, and the sail and rudder were adjusted.

Besides my father and the pilot, a third man was needed. One of our cousins offered himself; his family remonstrated.

"Kalbris is going," he said.

My father again clasped me to his bosom, saying, in a choked voice, "No one knows what is now to happen. This embrace is for your mother."

Running out of port against the wind was very difficult. They towed the boat along as far as the piers extended, but the mouth of the harbor was besieged by great waves, and it seemed as if the *Saint John* would never be able to live in them. The lighthouse keeper tied some small cables about him; and while the men strove to tow the *Saint John* down the channel, he lowered himself from the parapet and crept forward to the extreme front of the pier, holding with his hands to the iron railing which was fixed there. He did not expect by single strength to do the work that five strong men failed to accomplish, but only—and it was hard work—to pass the moving cable through the bronze pulley-block, which is in the extremity of the pier, in such a manner that the boat could not be dragged back by the waves as soon as the hold of the men on the tow-ropes relaxed. Three times he was covered with great waves, but he was used to these watery avalanches, and, stubbornly resisting them, was able to fasten the rope. The *Saint John* now began to make progress, but plunged so deeply in the troughs of the sea that it seemed as if it must fill and sink. But the cable held well, and at last its work was done. The *Saint John* cast it off, and dashed forward to the open sea. I leaped upon the highest post of the pier, and clasped so closely with arms and knees the mast set up for the signal lights



THE TWO WERE THEN MADE FAST TO EACH OTHER.

that I could not be shaken down. This mast swayed and creaked as if it were yet a living tree balancing itself on its own roots in its native forest.

I saw my father at the helm; near him the two men braced themselves up, with shoulders to the wind. The *Saint John* advanced by jumps. One instant it seemed to hang suspended, then it leaped like a wild horse across the crest of the next wave. It was constantly disappearing in clouds of spray.

The brig, as soon as it came in view, changed its course and held toward the lighthouse. The *Saint John* also altered its bearing and made for the ship, so that after some minutes they came near together. The boat passed under the bows of the big ship, and soon swung around her as if on a pivot; the two were then made fast to each other.

"The tow-line will not hold," cried some one, "and they will never be able to board the brig."

This looked reasonable. How could the two get close enough for Father Housard to get on the great ship? Either the boat would be mashed like an eggshell, or the pilot would drop into the sea.

Held together by ropes, lifted on the same huge wave, the ship and the boat shivered near each other; when the bowsprit plunged, we could see the decks had been swept clear, and no one was able to stand upon them.

"Leap now! leap!" yelled M. Leheu.

Three times did Father Housard essay to spring, but on the second the waves swept the two vessels asunder. Finally the brig lurched toward the *Saint John*, and as the cloud of spray fell we saw that the pilot had made his leap, and was clinging in the ship's shrouds.

The wind seemed to increase in fury, despising all obstacles; there were no lulls, no moment for breath; the waves piled one upon the other in mountains.

The brig ran wildly before the tempest, carrying only sail enough to direct it. As the ship rolled in the deep troughs we could see only the torn fragments of sail high up on the masts; finally, as it rose on a wave, we perceived that its topsail had been torn off, and that it scarcely obeyed the helm. A simultaneous cry broke from every mouth. The *Saint John*, upon which my father and cousin remained, followed the brig at a little distance, fearful of going too near that tossing mass, which was now only two or three hundred rods from the mouth of the harbor. The boat did well until a foremast was torn from the brig, which, lurching, fell across the boat's path, and at once the huge mass of the large vessel came between us and the frail craft which held so much of our hopes.

Two minutes after the brig gained the channel.

It was the boat which I followed with my eyes. I saw nothing else. Driven from its true route by the motions of the ship, it missed the entrance and drove



WHEN I LOOKED UP, I SAW THE ST. JOHN BORNE ON THE CREST
OF A MIGHTY WAVE.

toward a small cove to the right of the harbor, where ordinarily in times of storm there was pretty good refuge.

But on this unhappy day, here as everywhere else, the sea was in furious commotion; it seemed an absolute impossibility to gain shore in the teeth of the wind; the sail was rent away, and the anchor dragged at once and would not hold, and the frail boat presented its broadside to the full force of huge waves which flung themselves upon it from a prodigious height.

Again they strove to anchor. Between them and the shore was a line of rocks which in half an hour more would be covered by the rising tide, and give them a last chance of gaining land. Would that anchor hold? Would not the ropes break. One plunge on those jagged rocks, and the little *Saint John* would be forever lost. I was only a child, but I knew enough of the sea to comprehend the full meaning and importance of this last attempt.

Around me I heard dozens asking questions of each other. We had left the pier and run along the shore, where we pressed closely together to resist the force of the wind.

One said, "Kalbris is a stout swimmer."

"Ah, yes! but who could swim in that seething whirlpool?"

"If the *Saint John* rides at anchor, they are safe;

if she breaks loose, she will go to pieces in two minutes."

A mere plank herself, the little *Saint John* rode amid a mass of débris of broken boards, sea-weeds, pebbles boiled up from the bottom, surf and foam. As the waves struck the rocks they were flung back with a fearful din, and piled up one upon the other.

While I stood breathless, my eyes on the *Saint John*, I felt myself clasped closely. I turned. There was my poor mother, who had run to me, having seen all the trouble from our little cottage on the cliff. Close by us stood Captain Houel and some others. They spoke kindly, seeking to cheer us. My mother stood silently gazing with wide-open, tearless eyes.

All at once a wild cry rose up to heaven :

"The anchor has broken loose!"

My mother fell upon her knees, drawing me down with her.

When I looked up, I saw the *Saint John* borne on the crest of a mighty wave; carried by it like a feather on its summit, she passed the barrier of rocks, but the wave broke, the boat fell forward, turning over, and I saw nothing more but a whirling, seething mass of foam.

Two days after they found the body of my father, terribly mutilated, drifted among the rocks. The body of my cousin never came ashore.



CHAPTER IV.

FOR six years the place of my father had been empty at our table, but our home had never seemed so desolate, so miserable, as it did the sad morning which followed this catastrophe.

His death did not absolutely make us beggars, for we had our cot and a little plot of land, but my mother was compelled to work for our daily bread.

She had once been the best laundress in all the country; and as the white bonnet, the common head-gear of Port-Dieu, has frequently to be ironed and peculiarly polished in fine style, she went back to her old business.

The Brothers Leheu came to our aid in this fashion:

“My brother and I will engage you on alternate Mondays,” said the elder to my mother. “An assured day for work once a week is something worth having ;” and that was all. It was a cheap manner of paying for the life of a man.

A working day in those days lasted from sunrise to sunset. I had then each day, before and after school-time, several hours, when my mother was absent, and I was left at liberty to please myself.

My chief delight was to stroll along the pier or upon the sea-beach, according as the tide was low or high.

It was useless for my poor mother to try to keep me in the narrow limits of our yard. I had always many reasons which to my idea fully justified my escape. Indeed, few were the days when I did not play truant, either because the Newfoundland ships were coming in, or because there was a marvellous high tide or a glorious storm.

One day when there had been a spring-tide I ran away from school, and made an acquaintance which had a marked influence on my character and decided my whole after life.

It was at the end of September, and the tide on Friday in retreating had laid bare a long ridge of rocks which had not been seen for some years. On Friday morning, in place of going to school, I clam-

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bered down the cliff, and while waiting for the tide to run out I ate my luncheon. I had only two hours to wait.

The sea rose like an inundation; and if the eye turned one instant from the rock, it vanished in the flooding waters before there was time to look again, drowned in the tide, which rose with a swiftness so noiseless that it seemed rather that the rock had melted away than that the sea had swelled over it. There was no tumble of waves, nothing but a narrow line of foam between the blue sea and yellow sand, while far off on the horizon sight was lost in a gray distance. One could see farther off than ordinarily. On the one side was the Cape Vauchel, on the other the steep promontory of Aval. These could only be seen in remarkably clear weather.

The tide remained at its height what seemed to my impatience a long while, but at last began to ebb with the same swiftness with which it had flowed. I followed the retiring waves. I had hidden my shoes and my satchel in a cleft of the rock, and I trod barefooted along the sands, where every footprint at once filled with water. Our shores are generally sandy, but one finds rocks here and there which the greedy sea has not been able to gnaw away. Among these shoals little black lakes form at low tide. I was wading in one of these lakes, hunting for lobsters

under the sea-weeds, when I heard some one hail me. Those who are doing wrong are never brave. I was terrified for a moment; but raising my eyes, I saw that I had nothing to fear. The person who called me was not sent from the schoolhouse, but was an old gentleman with a white beard whom in our village we had nicknamed Mr. Sunday, because he had a servant whom he called Saturday.

In fact, the gentleman was named M. de Bihorel, and he lived on a little island fifteen minutes' row from Port-Dieu. Once upon a time this island had been the end of a tongue of land, but it had been cut off from the granite of the isthmus, and so transformed to a true isle of ocean, being at high tide only accessible by boat from any side.

M. de Bihorel had the reputation of being the most eccentric of men for forty miles around. He owed this reputation to an immense umbrella which he always carried open over his head, the absolute solitude in which he lived, and a mingling of harshness and benevolence in his bearing to his neighbors.

"Ha, little one!" he cried. "What are you doing there?"

"You see yourself, sir. I am catching lobsters."

"Very well. Let your lobsters alone, and come with me. You can carry my wallet. Hurry, now, and you will never repent it."

I did not answer, but my looks spoke for me.

"Ho, ho! you don't want to?"

"Because—because—"

"There, now! never mind telling your reasons. What is your name?"

"Romain Kalbris."

"You are the son of that Kalbris who perished in an attempt to save a brig last year? Your father was worthy of being called a man."

I was proud of my dear father, and these words caused me to look less crossly at M. de Bihorel.

"You are eleven years old," he said, taking me by the hand. "To-day is Friday, and you have run away from school."

I looked down, blushing.

"You have played truant," he said. "It is not hard to guess that. Now, I am going to tell you why. Do not tremble, you little simpleton. I am not a wizard. Come, now, look me in the eyes. Did you come out here to fish?"

"Yes, sir, and to see the *Dog's Head*."

The *Dog's Head* is a rock which is rarely uncovered.

"Well, well, I also am going to see the *Dog's Head*. Pick up my wallet, my son, and come with me."

I followed him without uttering a sound, I was so ashamed that he had found out my wrong-doing so easily. Although I knew him well, this was the first

time that I had spoken to him, and I was unaware that his pleasure was to search out the secret springs of action in those whom he met. Much acuteness and ready sympathy, with a long experience, made him generally correct in his estimates; and as he feared nobody, he spoke out his sentiments, whatever they were, either kindly or angry.

Well, although I had little wish to speak, it became needful for me to do so, at least to reply to the questions which he did not fail to ask me.

Before a quarter of an hour was past I trotted along by his side, telling him all that I knew about myself, my mother, my father, all my family, and not failing to relate all my romances about my uncle in India. In this part of my tale he seemed especially interested.

"Curious," said he, "this tireless spirit of adventure. Norman blood, mingled with the old Phœnician, whence are they called Calbris or Kalbris?"

This inquiry was a general one, which he did not expect me to answer; and now he began to pause to examine the sand over which he walked, and to gather from time to time shells and plants and sea-weeds, which he bade me put in his wallet.

"What do you call that?" he said to everything.

Nearly always I remained mute, because I did not know what to reply; though I knew the shells and herbs well, I did not know their names.

"You are a true child of your country," he said, impatiently; "for you as for others the sea is only good to pillage and ravage, and is an eternal foe against which to arm yourselves. Will you never see that it is a bountiful mother and nurse as well as the land? The sea has forests and plains and mountains, and these forests are peopled with animals as well as those of the earth; can you never speak of this infinite horizon, these depths, these waves, except in connection with storm and shipwreck?"

He spoke vehemently, so that I was stupefied, being but a child; and now I record rather the impression of his words than the words themselves. Perhaps I have illy remembered what I so little comprehended, but even yet such a lively recollection haunts me of that time, that I seem to see the old man, sheltered by his big umbrella, extending one arm to the high sea, and chaining my eyes to his own.

"Come here," he said, showing me a crack in the rock from which the water had not withdrawn—"come let me teach you a little of what is in the sea; what is this?"

He pointed my finger toward a kind of little yellow stem fastened at the base to the rock, and finished at the top by a yellow corolla, bordered by scallops and ruffles which were black and white.

"Is it a plant? Is it an animal? You know noth-

ing about it? Ah, well, it is an animal. If you have time to stay here, you will perhaps see it loosen itself, and you know that flowers are unable to walk off as they choose. Mark it clearly; you are about to see this apparent flower lengthen itself, contract itself, balance itself like a ballet-dancer. Wise men call it a sea anemone. But that you may be convinced that it is an animal, watch it catch a shrimp; you know that flowers cannot eat."

Saying this, he took a shrimp and threw it into the corolla of the anemone; the seeming blossom closed, and the shrimp was swallowed.

In a hollow full of water I caught a little ray-fish. It had hidden in the sand, but its brown and white spots betrayed it. I took it to M. de Bihorel.

"You have found that ray," he said to me, "because it has spots, and what has shown it to you makes it known also to voracious fish who eat it. At the bottom of the sea goes on a constant war, in which everybody kills everybody else, as sometimes happens ashore. They fight for glory and for pleasure. These poor rays swim badly, and would not fail to be exterminated if nature had not made provision for them. Look at the tail of this creature; it is armed with thorns and darts, therefore it cannot be attacked from behind; its enemies dare only approach before its coat

of armor. There is in nature a law of universal equilibrium, or compensation; you may to-day begin to catch a glimpse of it; you will apprehend it better as you grow older."

I was astounded. Can I express what an effect this object lesson produced upon a naturally inquisitive child, who never before had found any one able to answer his innumerable questions? The fear which had until now closed my lips was immediately dissipated.

Following always the retreating sea, we reached at last the *Dog's Head*. How long we rested there I know not. I had lost all consciousness of time. I ran from rock to rock, and I carried to M. de Bihorel the shells and plants which I for the first time appreciated. I filled my pockets with a store of treasures which appeared to me very curious when I found them, but which I soon cast out in favor of others which had the incontestable advantage of being new.

Suddenly lifting my eyes, I could no longer see the sand-beach. It had vanished in a light fog. The sky was a uniform pale gray. The sea was so calm that we could scarcely hear it washing about us. Had I been alone, I would have hastened homeward, for I know how difficult it becomes in time of fog to find one's way along the coast, but M. de Bihorel

said nothing, and I was too bashful to propose a return.

Meanwhile, the fog, which enveloped us on all sides, drew closer, like a cloud of smoke mounting from earth to sky.

"Ah, ah! see the fog," said M. de Bihorel. "If we do not wish to play Hide and Seek in right good earnest, we had better go back. Pick up my wallet."

But at that instant the fog touched us, clasped us closely, shut us in, and on all sides we could see nothing, neither the sea nor five steps before us. We were lost in a gray obscurity.

"The sea is this way," said M. de Bihorel, without disturbing himself. "We have only to walk straight before us."

To walk straight forward on the sand, with nothing to guide one, no sound, no sight, no trace of your own steps to show which way you came, no unevenness to tell whether you go up or down, this is verily to play most seriously the game of "the green carpet of Versailles," in which one has his eyes blindfolded, and is bidden to go, without deviating one step, from the Garden of Latona to the Fountain of Apollo. We, on the soundless sand, had this additional aggravation of our trouble, that we were more than a mile from the cliffs and high-water mark.

We had not walked ten minutes before we stumbled upon a pile of rocks which I recognized.

"These are the *Green Rocks*, sir," I said.

"This is the *Chicken's Head*," said my old friend.

"No, sir," I persisted, "these are the *Green Rocks*."

He gave me a little tap on the cheek.

"Why, what a wise little noddle you have!" he said.

If these were the *Green Rocks*, we should turn to the right in order to get to the village of Port-Dieu; but if they were the *Chicken's Head*, we should turn to the left, or we would have our backs toward home.

In full day nothing is easier than to distinguish between these two rocks. Even at night, if the moonlight shone clearly, I could easily have recognized them, but in the fog we could see rocks draped in seaweed, and that was all.

"Hark," said my friend, "the noise of the shore will guide us."

We listened, but heard nothing, not even the ripple of the waves. There seemed to be no breath of wind on the sea. We were as if buried in a bale of white cotton, which deafened our ears and blinded our eyes.

"It is the *Chicken's Head*," said M. de Bihorel.

I dared contradict no longer, and turning followed my guide, taking the course to the left.

"Come near to me, my child," said he, in a soft voice. "Give me your hand. Let us not lose each other. So, now ; we keep step."

We hastened along for some ten minutes, then I felt his hand clasp mine closely. We heard a faint roaring of surf.

"You were right," he said. "Those *were* the *Green Rocks*. We should have gone to the right. Let us return."

Return where? How should we guide our way? We knew where was the sea, because we heard the waves break softly, but on every hand we heard no other sound, and we could not tell when we turned in which direction to go. The fog constantly thickened, and now to the mist was added the natural obscurity of evening. We could not trace our own footprints, and only with the greatest difficulty could M. de Bihorel tell the time by his watch. It was six o'clock, and now the tide was beginning to come in. A high tide!

"It is needful for us to hurry," he said. "If the tide overtakes us, we shall fare badly. What a pity that you and I do not wear seven-league boots!"

He spoke cheerfully, for the trembling of my hand told him that I was afraid.

"Fear not, my child," he said; "presently the wind will blow from the land and scatter this fog. Besides, we shall soon see the lighthouse, which will presently be lit."

His words gave me no comfort. I knew very well that we would not be able to see the blaze of the lighthouse. For the next ten minutes I thought of three women who the preceding year had been surprised on the sands by a thick fog, and had been drowned. Their bodies had been found eight days after, and I saw them now before my eyes, all white and stiff in their poor dripping rags. Although I desired to restrain myself, I began to cry.

Without any vexation M. de Bihorel tried to calm me by kind words.

"Call aloud," he said; "if there is a coast-guard pacing the cliff, he will hear us and answer."

We both shouted—he with a tremendous voice, I with a voice broken by my sobs. No answer came, not even an echo. That mournful silence filled me with a great fear. It seemed to me that I was buried at the bottom of the sea.

"Come on," he said; "can you walk briskly?"

He took me by the hand, and we walked we knew not where. By the words which he addressed to me from time to time I knew that he was anxious, and had no confidence in his own encouraging suggestions.

After a long half hour of travel despair seized me all at once, and I flung myself upon the sand.

"Leave me, sir, leave me to die; I hinder you," I cried with loud sobs.

"Forward cheerily," he cried; "we have seen enough now. Do you wish to add to the water by floods of tears? What will your mother do if you die? Up now for her sake."

His words were useless; entirely overcome, I remained without power to move. Then I broke into a cry:

"Sir!"

"What is it my child?"

"There, there! stoop down here."

"Do you want me to carry you, my poor little lad?"

"No, sir; take my hand, do."

He gave me his hand, and I pressed it into the beach beside mine.

"Well, what now?"

"Don't you know, sir? Feel the water."

Our shores are formed of very fine sand, deep and spongy; at low tide this sand is full like a sponge, and the water percolates it in a million invisible streams, which follow the slope of the beach toward the sea. It was upon one of these threads of water that I laid my hand.

"Oh, sir, the sea is that way," I said, reaching out my arm in the direction of the running water. At the same time I rose up, hope lending me new strength. M. de Bihorel did not need to drag me forward.

I pressed forward, each moment bending to press my finger into the sand to feel the course of the water, by which I guided our way.

"You are a brave boy," said my friend; "without your energy and knowledge we should surely have been lost." Not five minutes after he had thus expressed his anxieties it seemed to me that I felt no more water. We went on some steps; then I put my hand on the dry sand.

"There is no more water," I said.

He stooped and felt about with both hands; only damp sand clung to our fingers. At the same instant we heard a low roaring. He listened:

"Lad, you deceive yourself; we are going to the sea."

"No, sir, I assure you. Don't you know that if we went toward the sea the sand would be wetter and wetter?"

He said nothing, lifted himself up, and we stood undecided, lost a second time. He took out his watch; it was too dark to see the hands, but he felt them, and it was a quarter before seven. The tide had been rising for an hour.

"Sir," I said, "you see we are getting near the shore." As if to confirm my words, we heard behind us a rushing sound. We could not deceive ourselves—it was the incoming water.

"It is a gully that is before us," he said.

"I think so, sir."

These shores, because they are formed of a shifting sand, are not entirely level. They form here and there little hills, separated from each other by little valleys. Although to the eye the whole stretch of beach looks even, and the differences of level are very slight, they are indicated by the water; so much that the tide rises in the little depressions and fills them, while the hillocks remain dry like islands, laved on all sides by the swelling flood, which separates them like small rivers. We were facing one of these rivers. Was it deep? All our future lay in this query.

"We must cross over this gully," said M. de Biherel; "take my hand."

And as I hesitated, he continued: "Which do you fear most, wetting your feet or your head? As for me, I choose the feet. There is now no danger like standing still."

"Oh, but, sir, when we get into that water, we shall have lost our way, and how can we tell on which side to get out?"

"But, boy, do you mean to stay here and be overtaken by the sea?"

"No, sir. But do you pass over first. I will stay here and shout to you, and you will go straight before my voice. When you are on the other side, call, and I will come to you."

"Go first, my child."

"No, sir; I am a better swimmer than you are."

"My brave child!" He clasped me in his arms as if I had been his son. His tenderness cheered my heart. There was no time to lose. The sea made swift progress. Each second we heard it more plainly washing in. He entered the water, and I began to shout.

"Do not scream," said M. de Bihorel. "Do you not know a song? It is better to sing if you can."

"Yes, sir;" and I began to sing:

"There was a man in Norman land,
People called him Hammer-hand;
His eyes like an owl's, his hair like wool,
With silver and gold his pockets were full.
Tra, la, la, la, tri lillah!"

I stopped a minute:

"Are you on your feet, sir?"

"Yes, child; and I think the water gets shallower. Sing on."

“ His lips were always as red as a beet,
He never was hungry when he had enough to eat.
His mouth was too small, for, as it appears,
It had to stop when it touched his ears.
Tra, la, la, la, tri lillah !”

I was going on with the third verse of this jolly ditty, when M. de Bihorel cried, “Take your turn. The water does not reach my knees. Come;” and he began singing a song without words sad as a wail for the dead.

I entered the water, but being much shorter than the old gentleman, I was soon beyond my depth. That was nothing to me, for I could swim like a fish. The only trouble was that I had difficulty in directing my course aright, and it took me full a quarter of an hour to reach him.

At last we were together again, and we made no delay to get beyond the water upon the sand. He gave a deep sigh of satisfaction which showed how intense had been his anxiety.

He tried to jest. He held out his snuff-box. “Take a pinch. You have earned it,” he said; but in dipping his fingers into the box he found it wet. “My snuff from Paris, and my watch which never fails to keep time, are all full of water. What will my man Saturday say to that?”

I made no reply. I was wondering if all danger



WE RECOMMENCED, THEN, TO WALK HAND IN HAND.

were passed. Indeed, it was not. Before us lay more road to be traversed than we had yet accomplished. We were surrounded by the same dangers, and we had the same difficulties in directing our steps. The fog seemed ever to thicken; and although we seemed to be pressing toward the cliff, we could hear no sounds from which we could decide in what direction the land lay. We heard no lowing of cattle, no crack of carter's whip, no creaking of the Norman wagons—nothing. Before us was a profound stillness; behind, the ominous roar of the ocean.

Still the tide rose higher. That was our only guide now, but one most dangerous and deceitful. If we advanced too rapidly, we lost the sound; if we tarried, the water might swallow us up before we could reach high ground or the steepness of the beach should check its rate of rising.

We recommenced, then, to walk hand in hand. Often did I bend to feel the sand, but could perceive no water in it. We were upon a sort of hillock cut up by hollows in which the water remained stagnant or spread itself out in little streams. The hope which had animated me when we had successfully passed the gully died away. Then we both stopped at the same moment. *We had heard a clock strike.* The clear strokes penetrated the thick fog. After an interval of two or three seconds we heard another clock,

and then a third. They were the church-clocks of Port-Dieu. We had only to press forward in the direction whence they came, and we were safe. Without saying anything, with one accord we began to run.

"Hasten," said M. de Bihorel. "The bells are ringing for evening service, but they only ring a short time. They really ought to ring longer."

On we ran, not taking time to breathe, fearful of losing one of those precious directing sounds. We did not speak to each other, but I knew well that if we could not reach the high shores and a path before the bells ceased ringing, we should only have been saved for a few moments, to be lost again.

They ceased. We were yet far out upon the sands. Perhaps the cliffs were rods away—perhaps a step might take us to them. But in which direction should that step be taken? We could only feel that safety was yet far off, and that we were still in imminent danger.

"Stay," said M. de Bihorel; "do not let us take another step at a venture. Feel the sand, my boy."

I felt it. I buried both hands in it. It was quite dry.

"Have you counted how many gullies we have passed?"

"No, sir."

"Then you do not know whether any yet remain to be crossed. If we have got by all, we have only to wait. When the sea reaches us we will walk on before it."

"Yes. But if all are not passed?"

He made no reply, for he only could have said in that case what I already knew—that if there were another gully between us and the solid earth, while we tarried the sea would silently fill it, and we could only pass it by swimming, having thus the danger of being dragged down by the current, hurled maybe against the rocks, unable to direct our course and hopeless of safety.

We had a moment of terrible anxiety, remaining on that dry sand knoll, not daring to decide whether to move or to stand still, to turn backward, forward, right or left. So long as we did not move we knew that our faces were landward, looking where the bell-strokes had come to us. As soon as we took a step we could not tell but that we stepped away from our desired haven. Oh, the agony of such uncertainty!

Our sole hope was that a puff of wind might lift the veiling fog and show us the lighthouse. We could expect no sound to guide us. We thought we were south of the village, opposite a deserted cliff, where at almost any hour there would be no sounds of life. The fog was so thick, so compact, so cold, so

still, that to believe it would suddenly lift or break was to believe we should see a miracle.

The miracle came to us. What do you think? Once more the bells broke forth, now ringing for a baptism, and in Normandy they baptize in churches, and ring the joy-bells for half an hour if parents are rich enough to pay the ringers.

Oh, joy! In ten minutes we had reached the rock-bound coast, the dry, green, happy land. We trod upon the tongue of rocks which ran out toward M. de Bihorel's island. In very deed we were safe. My old friend asked me to go home with him. We were hungry, cold, weary. His house was near, but I felt sure my poor mother was home from her long day's toil, and I did not wish to give her time to be terrified on my account.

"Go, then, and tell your mother that I shall call on her to-morrow evening."

I was sorry he meant to pay a visit which should make known to my mother all the dangers I had meant to conceal, but dared not say so.

Strangely enough, my mother had not yet got home. Presently she came in. By that time I had lit the fire and put on dry clothing. I gave her M. de Bihorel's message.

The next evening, as he had promised, he came. I trembled when I heard his step. I had hoped I

should escape having my truant-day and my peril discussed.

"Has that boy told you what happened to him and to me yesterday?" he asked.

"No, sir," replied my mother.

"Very well, ma'am. He ran away from school for all day."

My poor mother regarded me with sorrowful uneasiness, believing that she was about to hear some terrible accusation against me.

"Ah, Romain!" said she, sadly.

"Do not groan over it," interrupted M. de Bihorel, "for it was providentially made the means of saving my life. There, my lad! you need not tremble. You behaved like a brave child. Madame Kalbris, you have reason to be proud of him."

He then related how he had found me at play, and how we had both been caught in the fog.

"You see," he continued, "that without him I would have been lost. Is not that plain, my dear madame? In the morning I despised his ignorance because he did not know the right name for the seaweed; but when danger came, my science helped me very little, and I leaned on the instinct of the child. But for him crabs, lobsters and crayfish would now be studying my anatomy. I am in debt to your son, and now I must pay it."

My mother shook her head.

"Do not be alarmed," he said. "I do not propose anything which will hurt your feelings or be beneath the service which I have received. I perceive that your child is curious to see and to know. Let me take charge of his education. I have no children, but I love them dearly. He will not be unhappy with me, I am sure."

My mother was overwhelmed with the greatness of this proposition, but she did not accept it.

"Stay," said M. de Bihorel, holding out his hand to her. "I know you are about to refuse me. You love this child ardently. You love him for himself and for the father he has lost. He is your all, and you wish to keep him. Is not this true? Now, I shall show you why, nevertheless, you should let me have him. He has a fine mind which deserves to be cultivated. Here in this village such cultivation is impossible, and without meddling with your affairs it is impossible for you to send him away from home to school. Let me add that a child of his venturesome and independent character needs governing and watching. Think of that. Do not answer me hastily. Reflect on this subject when the first emotions of your maternal heart have calmed. I will come tomorrow."

When he went out, we sat down to supper, but my

mother could not eat. She looked anxiously at me. Then, when her eyes met mine, she turned and looked at the fire.

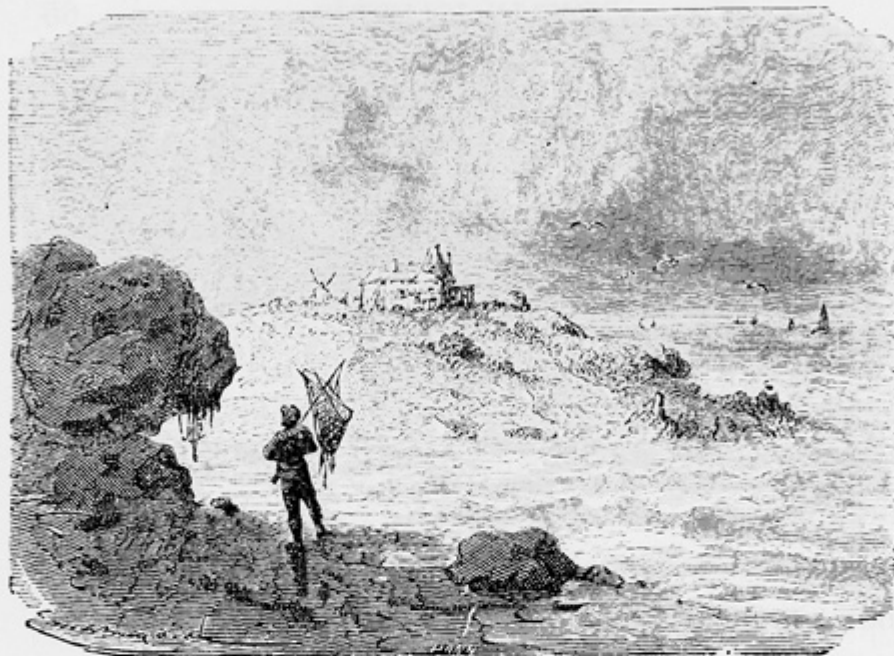
When I said good-night before going to bed, I felt her tears falling on my cheeks. Why did those tears flow? Was she not proud of me? Was she distressed at what M. de Bihorel had told her? Was she grieving and despairing at thought of our separation?

I had not thought before of parting from her, and now the idea distressed me sorely.

"Do not cry, dear mother," I said, hugging her with a boy's rough fondness; "I shall never go away from you."

"Ah, my child," she replied, "I already see that it is better for you. M. de Bihorel is right. I shall accept his offer. I do so because I love you, my precious child."





CHAPTER V.

MY reception at the house of M. de Bihorel fully justified his wide-spread reputation for originality. When I reached his place, I found him standing at the house door; for having seen me from afar, he had come to meet me.

“Come here,” he said, without giving me time to look about. “Have you ever written a letter? No? Ah, well, you may now write one to your mother to say that you have reached here safely, and that Saturday will go to-day to buy you some clothing. By that letter I shall find out how much you know. Come in and sit down by my desk.”

He took me into a grand library full of books,

pointed me to a table on which lay paper, pens and inkstands, and then left me alone. I would much have preferred crying to writing, for that brisk business manner chilled me to the heart. After a few minutes of emotion I conquered my grief and set myself to obey. The fact is that I put quite as much salt water as ink on my paper, for I felt already homesick, and could think of nothing to say but "Dear mother, I have got here. Saturday is going to buy me some clothes." It was short enough, but it was quite impossible for me to put down another word. I was about a half an hour in this wretched frame of mind, and I do not know how much longer it would have lasted had not my attention been interrupted by the following conversation, spoken in loud tones in the next room by M. de Bihorel and his servant Saturday.

"So, then," growled Saturday, "this youngster has got here."

"Why, did you think he would not come?"

"I did not think he would upset the whole house by getting here."

"In what way, Saturday?"

"You, my master, breakfast about noon—I take my bite early in the morning; shall this youngster wait until midday to eat with you, or will he get a mouthful with me about sunrise?"

"Nonsense about your bites and mouthfuls!"

"Bless me, sir, I know what I am talking about. I have never been a child's nurse."

"You have been a child, have you not? Remember your own experience. Come, now, take your orders. Treat this boy as you treated yourself; that will do very well, won't it, eh, eh, eh, Saturday?"

"No, sir, nothing of the kind, in your house. I was a poor chap, and was brought up rough and hard. If you want him raised in that style, you had better send him home again; there he will stand a better chance. My master, do not forget that you owe that little fellow a great deal, having taken him from his mother and his home."

"Don't forget it yourself, Saturday, and act accordingly."

"Then I mean in the first place to give him sugar in his bread and milk."

"Saturday, you must give him whatever you liked at his age, or rather you must ask him what he likes, and then let him have it."

"If you manage in that way, we will have jolly times," said the man-servant, chuckling.

"Saturday, do you know what comes of helping and taking care of young children?"

Saturday hesitated a moment, and replied :

"A deal of broken crockery comes of it, and a horrible waste of good provisions."

"God sends us yet something else, my man. In them he freshens our hearts, and gives us back the childhood we have lost. He reunites us to the past, and lets us have for a reality a vanished and beloved dream."

Hardly had he finished these words when he stood before me in the library, taking up my wonderful effort at letter-writing.

"You know nothing at all," he said, having looked at my queer scribble. "So much the better; I will not have the trouble of unlearning you a pack of folly. Run off now, and play."

That island was a queer place. From its shape it was called the "Granite Glove," and I have never seen anything like it. From the shore the isle presented the appearance of an elongated triangle, of which the base was turned shoreward, and only separated from the main land by an arm of the sea some four hundred feet wide. On this side all the slope was covered with luxurious vegetation, herbs, trees and blooming vines, which seemed to thrive in crevices of the hard granite, which pierced in sharp needle-like peaks among them. On the seaward side all was bare, bleak, peeled by the winds and scorched by salt spray and burning sunshine reflected from the shining

waters. The house was built on the very highest point of this island, on the right side, where the ridges united to form a little plateau; and in virtue of its position it commanded a circular view, which embraced the sea and the land, looking to the horizon on either side. It was also exposed to the violence of the wind from every quarter, and was the especial mark of the fury of the storms. But neither winds, nor swirling rains, nor thundering seas, prevailed against this stone-built and rock-founded dwelling. It had been erected a century before, in times of wars with England, and had been fashioned to withstand the brunt of battle. It was to have been the castle of a strong coast-guard, and there were embrasures for mounting guns, while the top had been made nearly bomb-proof. When M. de Bihorel had bought this odd little fort, he had changed the exterior by a gallery and put up some wooden outbuildings and a wing, while he had made the interior a handsome and comfortable abode, dividing it into halls and chambers. It was not splendid, nor was it very large; but he was not a man who cared for external shows, and he gloried much in the strength and comfort of his odd abode, which withstood the rage of the winds as solidly as the rock upon which it was built.

These wild winds, enemies against which man must defend himself, are at the same time friends of this

island. They give to it in winter a temperature higher than that of the adjacent land—so much so that in the crevices and nooks of the rocks flowers and shrubs are to be found belonging to a more southerly latitude, and which will not flourish on the coast, as, for instance, rose-laurels, fuchsias and fig trees.

Much of the beauty of this spot was due to the bounty of nature, but something also was to be credited to the united efforts of M. de Bihorel and his servant Saturday, who had transformed the island into a luxuriant garden; only that part exposed to the west had defied their toils. That, continually beaten by wind and swept by the salt foam of the sea, served only as a pasture for two little Breton cows and a flock of black sheep. It was curious to contemplate these wonders of transformation and renewal, and consider that they had been wrought only by two pair of hands, for M. de Bihorel never hired any laborer besides Saturday.

I had often heard the country people say that M. de Bihorel lived thus from avarice; after I went to stay with him, I perceived that he was guided by high principles of virtue.

“Each man,” he said, “should be able to help himself, and should not consider that money was bestowed on him merely that he might pamper his appetite and indulge in idleness. I wish to *live* what I *believe*.”

He was careful to carry out these theories in every affair of his life, no matter how small. He lived on the fruits of his orchard and garden, the milk of his cows, fish caught by Saturday, bread made in the house from coarse flour ground in a little mill of his own construction—a windmill—assuredly in his idea a wonder of mechanical skill. He grew his wheat on his own island, and pressed cider in a portable press from his own apples.

To do Saturday justice, I must say that he was behindhand in none of these labors. He had been a cabin-boy, a sailor, the private servant of a state officer, cook on board a coasting-vessel. He had served an apprenticeship to nearly every trade under the sun.

The intercourse of these two was not as master and domestic, but as two friends. They ate at the same table, the only distinction being that M. de Bihorel occupied the chief place.

Their life had in it something so simple, and yet so dignified, that it now astonishes me, though I was too young to appreciate it when I became a third in that little household.

“My child,” said M. de Bihorel to me some days after my arrival, “I have no intention of making of you a fine gentleman—that is, a lawyer or doctor—but merely a seaman and an honest man. It is needful

that I instruct you. I will give you lessons while walking and playing. Will that method of study be to your taste?"

I was too untrained to more than half comprehend him, but the practice of our daily lives explained his meaning.

I had been somewhat surprised to hear that education could go on while one was playing. I was yet more astonished when he began the work that same afternoon. Hitherto I had studied only from dreary-looking books, under terror of the master's rod.

I was that day accompanying M. de Bihorel in a walk on the shore, and suddenly he called me to stop. We were on the edge of a little oak wood.

"What are these?" he demanded, pointing to some ants which ran across the road.

"Ants."

"Well, and what are they doing?"

"Oh, why they are carrying something or other."

"Good! You shall follow them to their ant-hill, watch them, and tell me if you see anything singular about them. If you see nothing to-day, you will go back to study them to-morrow and the next day, and so on until you have observed something."

After two days spent cheerfully looking at ant-hills, I saw that there were some ants which did

absolutely nothing, while there were others which toiled unceasingly, even giving food to the sluggards."

"That is well," he said, when I had communicated to him my observations; "you have seen the thing most noteworthy. That is enough. These ants which do nothing are neither sick nor feeble, as you imagine; they are the masters, and the others which work are their slaves. Without the aid of these slaves they would be incapable of going to seek their food. Consider, now: is it not often the same in our world? There are yet some lands where men who do nothing are supported by those who toil. If idleness could be explained by any fact of sickness among the masters, nothing would be more natural than the labor of some and the ease of others. Such a state of things would be necessary. But this is not the reason. Among the ants the masters are exactly those which are the most apt in all which demands strength and courage, as war, for instance. Let us go together to observe the habits of ants, and we shall, without doubt, soon be witnesses of a pitched battle. Only the masters will take part in that, and their whole object will be to capture more slaves. While you sit here waiting for the sight of a battle, I am going to give you a book to read. In that book a wise man named Huber gives an account of a great battle of ants which went on exactly at the time when about a hun-

dred leagues away a great fight took place between some armies of men. I do not know what made the war among the insects, but the men thought they had the very best reasons for fighting, and the slaughter was terrible. I was in the midst of it, and only escaped death as if by a miracle. We marched along the bank of a river called the Elbe, and opposite us, upon the right bank, the Russians had a formidable battery of artillery, of which we continually heard the roar, but of which we could not see the execution, because we were hidden by fog, smoke and whirlwinds of dust. All along the march I had but one thought; that was that I had come to the day of my death, for it was necessary for us to pass under the fire of those guns. I remembered that it was my mother's birthday—an anniversary which we had always celebrated, and on which I had often been most joyous. Suddenly I looked down, and saw, in a moist ditch in which I was walking, a spray of myrtle in full bloom. You must not believe that in battles things pass, as you see represented in pictures, with a clock-work regularity. We were deployed as skirmishers—that is, we were free in our movements. Despite the dangers of our position, those little blue flowers attracted me. I went to gather the sprays of myrtle; at the same moment I felt as if a terrible wind swept above me. Then I heard a loud sound as of thunder, and my back

was covered with a shower of loose earth. We were just before the battery, and had received its full discharge. If I had not stooped so low to gather those fair blue blossoms of hope, I should, like many of my comrades, have fallen, shot through the chest. I remained safe with my little bouquet. It did me good then, as often, to think of my mother. By the time we were again in range of Russian fire, Marshal Ney had captured their guns."

All eagerness at this narration of the battle of Friedland, that same evening I read Huber's battle of the ants. Huber was blind; he saw only through the eyes of the most devoted and intelligent of friends, and to him he dictated the charming book he has written upon ants and bees. If M. de Bihorel had not thus recommended this reading, if he had forced it on me as a task in place of giving it to me as a reward, what effect would it have produced upon a child of my age, ignorant as I was? Thanks to the manner of his presentation, the lesson entered a mind fully prepared for it, and to this day, despite the flight of years, I find Huber's volume more fresh in my memory, and more delightful, than books which were read yesterday.

M. de Bihorel did not care to have me read very many books. He gave me the Bible, the *Imitation of Christ*, for Sundays, and for my sole *pleasure-reading*

a book which his fresh, child-like spirit held most dear, which he quoted daily, and upon which he sought to model his life at the *Granite Glove*. It was the book which had inspired his toils, his servant's name, had given him the notion of his huge umbrella. The book was *Robinson Crusoe*, the history of the famous castaway and his man Friday.

"Read that," he said, putting it in my hands; "there is the story of a man of moral courage. You will see how a man can live and be happy and busy alone; how one can begin alone to fashion for himself all needful articles; how he can dwell for years with none to speak to but God.

"You will not see all this at one reading; it will come to you by and by. Just now, like all other readers, it will seem to you rather as a fascinating tale than a grand moral lesson."

I do not think there has ever been a child who could read *Robinson Crusoe* indifferently. As for myself, I was transported with delight in it.

I will be honest, however, and admit that I was not so much charmed by the philosophy as by the romance of the book—those adventures on the sea; the deserted island; the shipwreck; the savages; the fight; the man Friday. At last my Indian uncle had a rival.

I thought I found in this book a justification of

my desires. Who does not put himself in fancy in the place of De Foe's hero, and does not ask, "Why do not such wonders happen to me? Why can I not also have adventures?"

Babes of six months are not the only creatures who believe if they stretch out their hands they can grasp the moon.

Saturday, who knew so much, did not know how to read. Seeing my extravagant delight, he asked me to read those adventures to him.

"He will relate them," said M. de Bihorel, "and that will be pleasanter and more improving to both of you. The primitive style was for people to recite the adventures of heroes."

Ten years of seafaring had given to Saturday a certain experience, and he did not permit all my statements to pass unquestioned.

I had one sole reply to make: "It is written."

"Are you sure the book says so, my little Romain?"

I would then take the book and read aloud. Saturday would listen and rub his nose; then with blind faith, he would say,

"Since it is written, it must be right; but, all the same, I have been in Africa, and I never saw lions swim out to attack boats. Go on, Romain; heave ahead!"

Saturday had also sailed in northern seas, and he

repaid my recitals by stories of his voyages. One year, surprised by ice, they had been obliged to remain all winter. Six months they lay amid the snows. More than half the crew died—the dogs were dead—not of cold and hunger, but from loss of light. They had no oil to keep their lamps burning, and they died of the darkness. It was nearly as beautiful as *Robinson*, but sometimes it was too beautiful to be believed.

“Is that written?” I would demand.

Saturday was then obliged to convince me that he had not *read*, but that he had *seen*.

“What difference does *seeing* make, if it is not written?” I would say.

Such companionship, such conversation and such reading were evidently not calculated to tranquillize my lively spirits or to set before me the glories of a quiet home life. My poor mother, seeing all my venturesome sea-going proclivities so amazingly encouraged, a thousand times wished she had kept me away from M. de Bihorel.

“My dear woman,” the good man would say, “I would give you back your child if I could see any way for you to guard, train and provide for him, but at the best you could not change his natural temperament. His desires are born in his blood. He comes of a venturesome race. Why seek to perform the impossible? Sailors are not generally very fortunate—I

agree with you there—but after all, some of them reach great things.”

Such is the heedless ingratitude of children that at that moment I would readily have left that noble protection at the *Granite Glove* to go to sea.

M. de Bihorel had studied the voices of birds, and in their cries he persisted in believing that he had found a language, for which he had composed a dictionary. He wished me to learn this lexicon, but it was absolutely impossible for me to comprehend it. This occasioned the only difficulty between us. On account of my ignorance of “bird tongue” he would fly into wrath. I would burst into tears.

His bird-language was, however whimsical, very curious, and to this day I regret that I did not remember some of the words. Everything which a bird ought to express M. de Bihorel affirmed that he had been able to translate. According to him, talk in the trees ran this way: “I am hungry. . . . Come, let us get some breakfast. . . . Save yourself, quickly. . . . Let us build a nest. . . . Kia ouah tsioni, behold a storm is rising.”

But I was altogether too much of a child and of a country boy to admit, upon any reasoning, that birds and beasts could speak.

“Why,” said my old friend, “music is a language. Among men it expresses much. Why can it not ex-



M. DE BIHOREL HAD STUDIED THE VOICES OF BIRDS.

press everything among birds? Our dogs, our horses, all our domestic animals, know what we say to them. Why, then, is it impossible that they should have a means of talking with each other, or that we should learn what they say? Their language sounds no more barbarous than African or Celtic dialects."

My mother at first considered these pursuits a manner of sacrilege, but M. de Bihorel puzzled her by his arguments, so she dropped her objections.

"You will see one day," said M. de Bihorel to me, "the usefulness of what appears to you absurd. Your mother is afraid that you will be a sailor. I have no anxiety about it, for if you entered the navy to-day, in four or five years you would leave it with disgust. But you have a passion for travelling. It is the ruling passion of your family, and we must in some way manage to satisfy your wishes and at the same time accord with the desires of your mother. I wish you would become such a man as Andreas Michaux, whose life you were reading the other day, or as Siebold, the Dutch physician who visited Japan, or like that Englishman, Robert Fortune. I wish you would be able to travel in unknown countries; that you could return and enrich France by your geographical discoveries, by new varieties of animals and plants; that you might become the soldier of science. Would not this be better than to spend your days as

a sailor, ever on the seas, frolicking ashore in the cafés of Rio Janeiro or Havre, and flying from Liverpool to Calcutta? If ever you live to realize my wishes for you, you will see that these studies of nature, of animals and birds are not useless."

It was a charming dream. Unfortunately, it was only a dream. Whether I should ever have directed my life in accordance with these hopes of M. de Bihorel, I cannot tell, for he ceased to have charge of me at the very time when I needed him most, and began most to profit by the example and lessons of a man truly excellent, despite his numerous oddities. I must now relate this great misfortune—the loss of my second father.

I habitually accompanied M. de Bihorel in all his pedestrian or boating excursions. We loved to be together. Sometimes, however, he took a little sail-boat and went out alone, that he might study at his leisure the habits of the birds in the island of Cranes, about three long leagues from Port-Dieu.

One day he went off thus early, before I had risen, and we were greatly surprised that he did not return home in time for dinner.

"He has lost the help of the incoming tide, and now he will not get in until evening," said Saturday.

The weather was calm, the sea smooth as glass,

there was no appearance of any danger, but Saturday seemed unquiet.

Evening came, but M. de Bihorel did not return, and Saturday, instead of going to sleep, lit a great bonfire upon the highest point of the island.

I wished to remain near him, but he ordered me to go to bed. Before daybreak I rose and joined him. He paced to and fro with long strides, feeding the red flames of his signal-fire, stopping from time to time to listen. We heard nothing but the low murmurs of the sea, sometimes a sullen roar from the shoals, a sound of wings and of birds which the light had disturbed in their nests in the cliff, and which flew in circles blindly above our beacon.

A white light lit the eastern sky.

"Surely something has happened to him; it is day-break," said poor Saturday. "Let us take the boat, called Gossman, and go to the island of Cranes."

The island of Cranes is a mass of granite rock which is only inhabited by sea-birds. We took the boat, as the man said, and had soon explored the whole of the little island, but found no trace of M. de Bihorel or his shallop.

At Port-Dieu every one was excited, for in spite of his oddities M. de Bihorel was dearly loved, and his disappearance was inexplicable.

"He has been drowned," said some.

"Then we should have found the boat," said others.

"Where would the current have driven it or the body?" people asked.

As for Saturday, he said nothing; but every day he paced the shore. When the tide ebbed, he followed the retreating waters, searching every uncovered rock, every shallow, every crevice. He extended his explorations for six leagues on either side of Port-Dieu. He did not speak. I never heard him mention the name of M. de Bihorel; only when he met a fisherman coming home from sea, he would cry out,

"Any news?"

And the fisher, understanding all he meant, would say,

"No news."

Then, if he detected a tear in my eyes, he would pat my head, and say, "You are a good boy—a very good boy."

Five days after the strange absence of M. de Bihorel there came from Lower Normandy to the Granite Glove a M. de la Berryaise. He was the nephew and only relation of our dear old gentleman.

After we had given a lengthy account of M. de Bihorel's departure, and all that had been said and done, he hired twelve fishermen of Port-Dieu and ordered a thorough exploration of the coast.

The search lasted three days. The evening of the

third day the men came back, saying that all further effort was useless, for that M. de Bihorel was surely dead, and boat and body must somehow have been swept out to the open sea.

"What do you know?" cried Saturday, furiously. "How dare you say he is dead? He is not drowned. On the contrary, he has probably gone to England, and I have no doubt but he will be home to-morrow."

No one answered his reproaches. All respected his great love and sorrow, but no one shared his opinion.

The next day M. de la Berryaise called us to him, Saturday and me, and told us that as sole heir he took possession of the Granite Glove. We need remain there no longer, for he meant to shut the place up, and a farmer in the vicinity would take care of the livestock until the legal time came to sell it.

Saturday was so suffocated with grief and rage that he could only utter a few indistinct words. Then at last, turning to me, he said, "Pack up your bag, and let us leave here immediately."

As we left the island we met M. de la Berryaise upon the shore. Saturday marched up to him. "Sir," said he, "you may be perhaps as his heir doing right in the eyes of the law, but not in my eyes—not in the eyes of a bluff old tar."

It had been arranged that Saturday should accept the hospitality of my mother until he knew what he

would do with himself, but the poor fellow did not tarry with us long.

Every morning he went along the coast, continuing his search. This he did for three weeks. Then he told us one evening that next day he should set out on his travels. Maybe he would go to England.

“Do you not know that the sea never keeps anything?” he said. “It always casts up its prey. Therefore if it has not cast out to us my master, it is because it never had him.”

My mother tried to reason with him, but he would say nothing further.

I went with him upon a little cutter on which he set forth on his journey.

As I sadly bade him good-bye, he said, “You are a good boy. You shall some day go back to Granite Glove and feed the black cow with salt. She loves you well.”





CHAPTER VI.

I HAD an uncle of Kalbris blood of whom I have not yet spoken, and who had preferred the land to the sea. He was an auctioneer at the town of Dol, and passed for rich.

My mother, not knowing what to do with me after the loss of M. de Bihorel, feeling that I needed to learn some business and to have some one to govern me, wrote to this uncle for advice. A month after her letter he arrived at Port-Dieu.

"I did not answer your letter," he said, "because I meant to come here; and money is too hard to earn to be wasted paying postage. I did not come sooner because I waited for a chance. I found a market-man

who brought me five leagues for twelve cents. I footed it the rest of the journey."

As may be guessed from this language, my uncle Simon was, to say the least of it, an economical man. He soon gave another evidence of that disposition. When he had heard all the particulars of our situation, he said,

"There! I see how it is: you do not want that boy to go to sea. You are right, my sister-in-law. Sea-going wins a dog's pay; one never grows rich at it. You would prefer for him to follow the line of life indicated for him by old Sunday, eh? But, save the mark, you don't expect me to help you at it?"

"Brother-in-law, I have never asked for your money," said my mother, with gentle pride.

"Oh, as to money, I haven't any. People say I am rich, but they are mistaken. I owe more debts than I am worth. I have been obliged to buy a home, and that has about ruined me."

"Our minister has explained to me," said my mother, "that the services my husband rendered the state as a marine will enable my son to enter a government college free of charge."

"And who will pay his travelling expenses? Not I. And his clothes? count them. I have no time, and I will not go to worrying the few influential people whom I know. I may need help from them for

myself some day. No, no; I can tell you a better game than that. The Brothers Leheu promised to take care of the boy if his father got drowned, and now it is their duty to pay his expenses."

"They now make no offers of the kind," said my mother.

"I don't care; I shall speak to them myself."

Here my mother was about to object, but my uncle went on obstinately:

"That is all a false delicacy. We only ask what it is their duty to do. The shame is theirs that they leave you to ask it, not yours that you are forced to request a favor. Do you see that?"

My poor mother was forced to yield to a step against which she protested. Her pride, her right of choice for me, availed nothing. My uncle was a man resolved to have his own way.

"You know," he said, in concluding the matter, "that I cannot derange my own affairs for the sake of helping you. When I take the trouble to come here, the least you can do is to accept my advice."

He was a man who never lost time.

"As for you," he said, turning to me, "come with me immediately to the house of M. Leheu; we will see them both in the office. You may look if they are there; I will wait in the street. You can let me know when both are in, and we will enter. I know their

s *

manners. If we see them separately, the one whom we see will commence to promise everything, *provided his brother approves*, and the brother who is absent, no matter which it is, never approves of anything. It is their style of doing business, but I'll get the better of the rascals."

As they were both in the office, we entered, and I assisted at a strange scene, of which the least details remain in my memory. The brothers appeared struck with my looks, for I opened their door with a defiant manner. Instinctively I felt that it was dishonoring my noble father thus to demand help on account of his dying agonies; and filled with intense shame, I blushed to the eyes.

While listening to the proposition which my uncle deliberately and clearly set forth, the two brothers showed all the evidences of profound astonishment, and twisted on their chairs as if they sat upon thorns.

"Support him while at college?" cried the youngest.

"At college?" shrieked the elder.

"We, the Leheu Brothers?" they screamed together.

"My Goodness! did you not freely promise to adopt him?" demanded my uncle.

"Adopt him, I?" said the elder.

"Adopt him, you?" shouted the younger.

"Adopt him, we?" they roared in concert.

Then began a confused and deafening dispute

ROMAIN KALBRIS.

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Each response of the younger brother was exactly repeated by the elder, only in a ten times higher voice. One exclaimed, the other yelled.

In the midst of all this uproar my uncle did not permit himself to speak; but when finally the two brothers repeated in chorus, "We already do more than we promised. We give his mother a day's work every week," he smiled a little dry smile which, falling on their turbulence, strangely produced an immediate calm.

Finally, as for the fifth or sixth time they renewed that line of argument, he made a little motion of impatience. He said, coolly :

"Upon my word, one would think that you were ruined—the most completely ruined of any people I ever saw. You give—you give— To hear you, one would imagine that you gave your whole fortune; and you give—what do you give? Why, a day's work! What do you pay for work? Ten cents and board. Do you pay his mother one copper more than any other workwoman?"

"We pay the usual price," said the youngest, with an air of righteous satisfaction, "and we are disposed—we, I say, yes, we—are sometimes quite willing, if asked, to pay a little *over* the ordinary rates if it would be just to other workpeople. When you say Kalbris died to save our fortune, you strain a point.

He died to save men, sailors like himself, who might have swum ashore for all he knew. You know very well that is none of our business; it is the affair of the government, and you should go to the state purse for payment for those who risk their lives as a mere matter of heroism. Ah, well; it is all one. When that boy is grown up, if he knows how to work and comes to us, why, we will give him just as much work as he wants at the usual rate of wages. Will we not, Jerome?"

"Work!" said the elder; "yes, as much as he wants."

That was all the satisfaction my uncle could get from these two.

"Look at the gentlemen!" he cried as we went out.

I expected to hear a long-continued explosion of rage, but he proceeded:

"Behold the admirable gentlemen! Let them serve you for an example. They know how to say *no*. Lay that word up in your memory. It is better than a bank. It will serve you as well as them. It is a sure means of keeping what one has gained."

My uncle then preserved silence, being nearly stupefied at finding some one harder than himself.

Finding that the purse of the Brothers Leheu was not to be open to supply my wants, my uncle proposed to my mother that I should go home with him. He said he needed a clerk, assistant, errand-boy, all in one.

I was too young for the place; but if I came for my board during the first years, and was indentured to him for five years, I would in the end make up to him for my early deficiencies. Moreover, he remembered that I was his nephew, and he wanted to do something for the family.

Alas! this was all. Here ended my mother's ambitious dreams of educating me. But here she saw a means of keeping me from being a sailor, and so, after much reluctance, my mother consented, and I set out with my uncle—a sad departure. I wept; my mother wept even more than I did. My uncle, unable to sympathize with either of us, rudely tore us asunder.

The appearance of Dol, which is assuredly picturesque and attractive to an ordinary tourist, made upon me the first melancholy impression which I had ever received from natural objects.

It was night when we arrived there, and an icy rain was falling. Having left Port-Dieu in the morning in a carrier's cart which went to the village of Cancale, we were set down some five or six leagues from the city of Dol, and we were forced to make the rest of the journey on foot, across great marshy plains cut up by ditches full of water. My uncle strode on before; I followed him with difficulty, still overcome by the memory of that mournful parting. Besides my sorrow, I was oppressed by a hunger which made

me tremble; but as my uncle, during all that long journey, had not spoken of stopping to eat, I did not dare to mention it. Finally, we perceived the lights of the city; and after having traversed two or three deserted streets, my uncle stopped before a mansion in front of which was a large porch resting on heavy stone pillars. He took out a key and unlocked a door; I stepped forward to enter, but he checked me—the opening of this door was not finished. He took a second key, and used it; then a third key, which was of enormous size. The hinges turned with a loud grating noise which I have since heard used in theatres to signal the opening of dungeon doors. The undoing of so many locks awed me. At home we had only a wooden latch with a string. At M. de Bihorel's we had merely a button. Why did my uncle take all these precautions?

He shut the door as he had opened it. Then he told me to take his hand, that he might lead me in the darkness across two halls which appeared to me very large, and which echoed to our footsteps like a deserted church. The house was filled with a strange heavy smell which I soon learned to know. It was that of old parchments and piles of damp paper. The atmosphere was laden with the woes and cares of men and of broken households.

He lit a candle, and I saw that we were in a sort

of kitchen, but it was so encumbered with furniture, sideboards, dressers, old chairs, black oak tables and stoves that I could scarcely see floor or walls.

Despite its disagreeable appearance, I could have jumped for joy, for here at last was a chance to get warm and find something to eat.

“What! do you wish me to light a fire?” said my uncle—“*a fire?*”

He spoke in a voice so wrathful that I dared not say I was half frozen, though my teeth chattered in my head.

“We will have supper and get to bed,” he remarked. He went to a cupboard, and took a roll of bread and cut off two slices. On each he laid a small morsel of cheese. He gave me one, laid his own on the table, and carefully replacing the roll and the cheese-paper, locked them up.

I do not know how a prisoner feels when he hears the key grate in the lock as he is shut in from liberty and happiness, but I hope he does not feel much worse than I did when I heard that cupboard locked. It was evident that it would be useless for me to ask for more bread, though I could have eaten half a dozen slices such as my uncle had bestowed upon me.

At the same moment three lean cats sprang into the kitchen, and ran to rub against my uncle's knees.

This gave me a ray of hope. The cats had come for their supper; and if the cupboard were opened, I would have a chance to get one more fragment of food. My uncle did not disturb himself.

"The wretches are thirsty," he said. "It is bad to leave them without drink." Therefore he gave them a dish of water.

"As I shall leave you frequently in charge of the house," he said, "I want you always to recollect to give my cats plenty of water to drink."

"And their food?"

"There are plenty of rats, mice and roaches if they will catch them. If you stuff them with food, you make them lazy, and they become too fat."

Our supper being speedily finished, my uncle told me that he would show me to the room where I should sleep.

The encumbrances which I had noticed in the kitchen were multiplied above stairs. Well was it that the room was unusually large. It was with difficulty that one could force a passage. On every hand were piled bureaus, wardrobes, fire-irons, clocks, statues and vases in wood and stone, brackets, stands, pier-tables, pottery and ornaments of the most singular and diverse forms, and dozens of articles of which I did not know the name. Upon the walls hung pictures, curtains, mirrors, swords, helmets, robes;

and in the flickering, uncertain light their wavering shadows increased for me their mysterious and weird appearance.

What in the world did my uncle do with this immense collection of movables?

This question puzzled me, and I found no reply to it, for it was only after some time that I learned that to the business of auctioneer he added another much more lucrative.

Going from Port-Dieu in his early youth, he had entered the employ of a pawnbroker in Paris, where he remained twenty-one years. He left ostensibly to be auctioneer of Dol, but in reality his work as crier only covered up a more profitable trade in second-hand goods, pawned articles and antiquities and curiosities of every variety. Going everywhere to be present at sales, he had a rare chance to make good bargains, and knew better than most people how to profit by them. Under cover of a fictitious name he knocked down goods to himself at low prices, and secured every treasure of art or fashionable knickknack which came in his way. These he sold at enormous profits to great merchants in Paris with whom he carried on a lively trade. Thus it was that his house from cellar to garret was made a regular magazine of antiques and of second-hand furnishings.

As every room in that old house seemed to have

been built for giants, the bedroom in which my uncle established me was immense; yet it was so well filled with his properties that he had to show me the bed and how to climb into it. Upon the walls were tapestries woven with life-size figures; upon shelves were stuffed animals—a cormorant, a crocodile, a gray eagle with wide-spread wings; in a corner, behind a box which hid the legs, stood a full suit of armor, surmounted by a helmet, which looked as if it held a living warrior.

“Are you afraid?” asked my uncle, seeing me staring.

I dared not admit it, so I said I was cold.

“Ah, well, move about quickly. I am going to take away the light. You can tumble into bed without a candle.”

I jumped into bed, but hardly had he shut the door when I shrieked after him. He returned. He came to the bed and glared at me :

“Never call after me again, you little fool, or you and I will have trouble.”

During the next half hour I remained hidden under the damp bedclothes, shivering with fear, cold and hungry. Then, finally, forced to subdue my emotions, I found a little courage and raised my head, opening my eyes.

The storm had ceased; the night had grown clear.

Through two high windows the moonlight fell into the room and divided it apparently into three apartments, two light, one dark. The wind was blowing; the windows rattled in their leaden frames, and little clouds continually drifted over the face of the moon. I kept my eyes long fixed on that bright orb. I believe I would have gazed on it all night, for it seemed to me in my misery like a lighthouse to a sailor. I could not be lost while it shone. But the moon rose toward the zenith, and finally as I watched it disappeared above the edge of the window. I shut my eyes, but could still see plainly every angle of the room, every fragment of marble. Some irresistible attraction seemed to bind my thoughts to my singular surroundings, and with my eyes closed I seemed to see quite as plainly as if they were open.

All at once a gust of wind blew through the house, the windows creaked, the tapestry waved, a man embroidered in scarlet shook a yellow sword, the crocodile danced clumsily, the eagle fluttered his wings, monstrous shadows ran along the floor, while the warrior hung up along the wall shook in his armor. I wished to cry out, to extend my arms, to entreat the warrior to defend me from that frightful red man, but I could neither speak nor move. I thought I was about to die.

When I came to myself, my uncle had me by

the arm, and it was broad daylight. My first look was for the red man. He hung immovable on the tapestry.

"You will have to learn to wake yourself up early in the mornings, my lad," said my uncle. "Now, up and be lively, for I have work to do, and I must set out to it."

My uncle had that wonderful activity which one so frequently sees in little people. He had received the abundant energy of all the Kalbris, and in him it had only a microscopic body to animate, and it really seemed as if he would fly to pieces.

He rose every day at four o'clock. He went down to his office and worked furiously until the hour when his business people arrived, about eight or nine in the morning. This work of his four or five hours—lists, prices, bills of sale—it was my business to copy.

Hardly had my uncle set out when I left the task he had set me, for since my first waking I had been filled with only one idea—the red man of the tapestry. I was sure that if the next night this man could get loose from the wall I should surely die of terror. When I thought of his frowning brow and yellow sword, the sweat rolled down my face.

I searched the house for a hammer and nails. When I had found them—and that was not difficult, for my uncle had often to use them to set in order

furniture which had arrived in bad condition—I hastened to my bedroom.

I went right to the red man. He wore the most inoffensive air in the world, and remained perfectly tranquil in the midst of the tapestry. I did not allow myself to be deceived by that hypocritical tranquillity, and with sounding blows of the hammer I nailed him to the wall. The warrior made an effort to stir in his armor, but it was full sunlight; the hour of phantoms was gone by. I hit him a good blow on his breastplate, and by a gesture I gave the crocodile to understand that if he did not mind his manners I would serve him in the same style.

This done, and my conscience being calmed, as I had resisted a desire for vengeance which had possessed me to drive a nail through the red man's neck, I returned to the office, and finished my copying before the return of my excellent uncle.

He showed himself satisfied, and kindly told me that whenever I had got through with my task in his absence I might for a recreation set myself to dusting and polishing the furniture with a piece of cloth and a cake of wax.

Well, here was a change from the happy, improving, honest, careful life I had led with my good M. de Bihorel! I, however, applied myself heartily to the work which my uncle set me for fourteen hours

each day, but I could not accustom myself to the meagre nourishment which he furnished. The roll of bread locked up in the cupboard was not an accident—it was the rule; and at every meal I was forced to content myself with the single slice which my uncle cut for me.

The fourth or fifth day, frantic with hunger, I grew bold. I reached out my hand as he was closing the door of the closet. My gesture was so eloquent that my uncle understood it.

“You want a second slice?” he said, continuing his locking up. “You do well to ask that. From this day out I will give you a roll expressly for yourself. During the day, when you are hungry, you will be able to help yourself.”

I was so grateful I could have hugged him, but he went on to say, calmly,

“Only if you eat too much one day, you must eat less the next, because the loaf is to last you a week. I have a rule about food, as about everything. It is poor policy to pamper the appetite, and at your age children’s eyes are bigger than their stomachs. Twelve ounces of food a day is nearly what they give in the hospitals. That will be your allowance. It is enough for some men, and it ought to be enough for you. If it is not enough, it is because you are a

glutton, and I will not encourage you in any evil ways."

I was very anxious to know what twelve ounces looked like. I got the dictionary, but the account of the number of grains in an ounce did not make the matter any clearer. The dictionary gave no help to eyes or appetite. I was starving.

Before I left home my mother had given me a fifty-cent piece. This I took to a baker who lived opposite, and asked him for twelve ounces of bread. After long explanations he sold me three-quarters of a pound.

One-quarter less than one pound was the amount of food so generously offered me by my uncle.

In ten minutes, although an hour had not passed since what was called my dinner, I devoured this bread. Therefore at tea-time I was less famished.

"I know well," said my uncle, mistaking that for discretion which was simply lessened hunger as I cut the bread, "that what I told you to-day would restrain your greed. It is the same everywhere. We save what is our own, waste what belongs to another. Thus it will be with you in eating, and I am sorry to see it. When you begin to have money in your hands, you will hold on to it."

I had forty-five cents, but I did not keep them long. In a fortnight they had been spent to supple-

ment the twelve ounces of daily food. My regularity in going after my small supply of bread as soon as my uncle was gone out attracted the attention of the baker.

"My man and I," he said, "do not know how to write, and we are obliged every Saturday to give a written bill to one of our customers. If you wish to help us, I will pay you in two raised cakes, which you may choose for yourself on Monday morning."

He made me this offer the very day my money gave out. Thus Providence watched over my forlorn condition, in answer to my mother's prayers. You may judge if I did not accept with eagerness this proposition. I would rather have had bread than the two cakes, but was loath to say so, for the baker who dealt with me did not supply my uncle, who got his bread from the country a cent cheaper, and I could not endure to tell any one how famished I was. There seemed something disagreeable in starvation. I might have known that he would not despise my misery.

Why did not a portion of bread which my uncle said supported men suffice for me? It was because in prisons and in hospitals soup, meat and beans are added to the bread, while with us it was almost the sole article of food; for the rest we only had a few odds and ends, of which the best was a red

herring, which was sometimes added to our dinner. When my uncle was there, we divided the herring between us. When he was off on his journeys, he always ordered me to save half the herring for next day.

To sum up all in a word, what I suffered with hunger in those unhappy days can never be told.

Next to our house was a little court separated by a hedge from the nearest dwelling. This property was inhabited by a M. Bouhour, who, having neither wife nor children, had a passion for animals. Among these animals the one which held the first place in his affection was a magnificent dog from the Pyrenees, with snow-white hair and a red nose, that they called Pataud.

As it was unhealthy for Pataud to be shut up in the house, they had built him a cunning rustic cottage, made of tree trunks, draped with climbing shrubs, and set against the hedge which divided our yard from M. Bouhour's.

As it was also unhealthy for this dog to eat at his master's table, because the variety and richness of the food stimulated his appetite, and over-eating gave him a disease of the skin, they fed him twice a day in his own little house, and one of the articles of food brought him in an elegant porcelain basin was—*milk soup*.

Like all other animals who keep quiet, Pataud had a fickle, dainty appetite, easily satisfied; and generally, if he breakfasted well, he would not eat his dinner, and if he ate a good dinner, he scorned his breakfast.

Through gaps in the hedge, I, wandering in our barren court, saw slices of white bread floating disregarded in Pataud's overflowing basin of delicious milk soup, while the dog slept lazily, having eaten all that he could.

There was a hole in the hedge, and Pataud sometimes walked through it into our yard. As the dog had a reputation for ferocity, and it was not altogether undeserved, my uncle never dared drive him out, and ventured no unpleasant conduct in the stately brute's presence. Indeed, my uncle rather valued his presence as an unpaid watchman, who might guard against possible robbers.

Despite Pataud's high temper, we were soon the best of friends; and whenever I entered the yard, he leaped out to play with me.

One day he carried my cap into his house, and would not bring it back. I gathered up my courage, and crawled through the break in the hedge in search of my property. The bowl of soup was in its usual place, full to the brim with good creamy milk. It was Saturday night. My loaf had not sufficed for



KNEELING, I PUT MY MOUTH TO THE BRIMMING BASIN AND
DRANK GREEDILY.

my eating all the week, and there only remained for my next meal a crust about the size of a common potato. I was so hungry that a dull pain gnawed in my chest. I could not resist the sight of food. Kneeling, I put my mouth to the brimming basin and drank greedily, while Pataud sat by wagging his tail.

Brave beast! He was in those dreary days my only friend. Thereafter each evening he came, and putting his beautiful rosy nose into my hand, led me to his quarters to share his supper, and each instant as I drank he gave me a caressing pat, while his great brown eyes regarded me tenderly. Such a singular friendship and confidence sprang up between us that to this day I think he felt my hunger and loneliness, and was as conscious of his protection to me as I was grateful for it.

But whither did this life tend?

Pataud would not be always with me to supply my wants, and most likely as time passed on I should have been insensibly dragged into evil ways, and into deeds which I should have blushed here to relate. The spring-time came, the season when M. Bonhour took his establishment into the country; he departed, taking the dog with him, and I was left doubly alone, having no companion but my uncle, who gave me no love, no friendship, nothing in the world but the nig-

gantly portion of food which barely served to whet the appetite of a hearty and growing boy.

Those were sad days. I had often long hours unoccupied when I was left to keep the house alone. With nothing to do in the sombre office, I sat thinking of my mother, happily unconscious of my troubles and hopeful of my future. It was too far for her to come and see me—she depended on daily labor for her bread. I often longed to write to her to relieve my sad thoughts, but a letter from Dol to Port-Dieu cost six cents; and then, besides the fact that I could get no money to prepay the postage, I remembered that she by a whole day's toil earned only ten cents and her board, and so, though I often poured out my sad heart to her in letters, I ended by tearing them up on account of the expense of sending them. Times were very hard for the poor when I was young.

I tried to content myself with watching for some friendly market-carrier who would bring me news of her, and take a letter for me without charge. The supply of nourishment which for weeks had awaited me at the hospitable mansion of the dog Pataud had prevented my feeling for a time the dire exigencies of my position. When he was gone, deprived of food and playmate, the days dragged on, until each one seemed a year long.

Now, while my uncle's loaf was shut in a cupboard, under lock and key, my loaf lay in an open drawer. This did not appear noteworthy to me, because there were only us two in the house. Still, I thought my bread vanished faster than I ate it. Chance confirmed my dire suspicions. I happened to go unheard into the kitchen just as my uncle, my *rich* uncle, was cutting a slice off my poor stale loaf and stuffing it into his mouth. A whirlwind of passion swept over me. I flung back the door by which I had come. Indignation gave me a courage of which hitherto I had not been capable, for I greatly feared the man :

"Uncle, what are you doing? That is my loaf!"

"Don't think I cut it for myself," he said, with the utmost deliberation. "It is for the white cat. She has kittens, and surely you don't want them to perish of famine. Never forget, Romain, that it is your duty to be kind to animals."

I never had in the least loved or respected my uncle. I had smothered an aversion to him. Now it blazed forth. He was a hypocrite, a liar, a thief, a cruel tyrant. I hated myself for being his nephew. How came he of the free, generous, jovial Kalbris blood? How dared he call himself my father's brother?

The whole root of this man's badness was his avarice. Well is it written, "The love of money is

the root of all evil." His greed for gain made him harsh, indifferent to privations, careless of the woes of others, sensible only to the possession of gold, dishonest, unquiet, unhappy, wretched over every cent he spent, tormented by fear of approaching old age, when he could neither defend his possessions nor add to them. To-day the memory of his queer, stingy ways has a ludicrous as well as a wicked side, and I frequently burst into a laugh at recalling what in their time were bitter facts of personal experience.

In those times I had all the honest indignation of boyhood at injustice, and all things presented to me their tragic side. We have to grow somewhat old before we can see the comical in what hurts us.

My uncle was, as may be guessed, almost perfectly indifferent in his dress and personal appearance. He could go both dirty and ragged without any shame. Therefore I was much amazed one morning to find him given over to brushing, blacking, washing and polishing himself and his garments, and practicing airs and graces before a huge mirror in the vestibule. He put his hat on his head, cocked it on one side, took it off and rubbed it, regarded it, examined his looks in it, retired backward, bowed low, pressed forward and smirked repeatedly. What was the queerest part of the affair was that he brushed his hat two ways—from top to bottom. It was a high-crowned beaver hat,

and he laid half the hair down perfectly smooth and shining, then he rubbed the other half up from bottom to top, and left it standing bristling absurdly. I made up my mind that he had become crazy, for of all things that beaver hat was his particular care and delight. He always wiped it reverentially with an old silk rag; and if he went out with it when it was damp, he always pinned a brown paper over it carefully, to absorb the moisture and protect the fur. Likewise he never put it on without a band of paper laid inside around his head to protect his hat from sweat or the outlines of his hair.

This band of paper often clung so closely to his head that when he removed his hat to bow—for he was servile in his politeness to all—the paper stuck ridiculously to his head, making a droll crown, at the sight of which all the small boys in the street went into fits of merriment. I would also observe that these urchins were extremely particular to do their laughing out of reach of his walking-stick.

“Come, nephew,” he said to me, seeing that I eyed all his motions closely. “What do you think of my hat?”

I thought all sorts of things, but at that moment could not venture to express any one of them, so I said, cautiously,

“I think it is exceedingly well preserved.”

“That is not what I ask you. Does it look as if I were in mourning? Does the lower half, where I have rubbed the beaver up, look as if it had a crape band around it? That is what I am aiming at, stupid. See here, nephew. Our friend Jerome, at Cancale, has just died, and I am forced to go to his funeral. It is quite bad enough for me to pay a quarter of a dollar of fare to get to Cancale without having to lay out money on a mourning hat-band. Crape would only do me once; if somebody died every day, it would be another matter, but none of my friends may be buried again for years. Besides that, I am not such a fool as to go into mourning for a stupid who died so poor that he had nothing to leave after paying his debts.”

Never was a laugh so painfully checked as the one in which I ached to indulge. I had never seen this Jerome who was dead; I only knew that he was a man who had always been unhappy, who was older than Uncle Simon, and had been his playmate in childhood, his comrade in youth, until the growing cares of life had driven them asunder. I went back to my office-work stupefied with wonder. I had gained from my mother and M. de Bihorel chivalric notions upon family ties, the loyalty of friendship and the memory of early love.

Where was there in my uncle a trace of generous

feeling? Not even death or an open grave could make him for one instant humane.

My ideas on these subjects were not the only ones which were disturbed by this daily contact with my uncle. Not that he cared enough for me to give me any direct lessons either good or bad, but his hideous example was for ever before me.

Auctioneers in Normandy are the confidants and witnesses of many sorrows. To that profession my uncle joined that of usurer, pawnbroker, unlicensed banker; and the collection of woes and anxieties which passed through his office was singularly complete. In the office he and I sat at the same table face to face; thus I assisted at all his interviews with his customers. If he was transacting any very weighty affairs, he dismissed me to the garret to polish old furniture.

Never did I see him yield to a prayer for money, though besought never so pitifully for a few days' grace before he should foreclose a mortgage, distrain for rent or sell pawned goods. Tears, supplications, the most touching reasons, found him harder than a rock; he remained as placidly indifferent as if he were absolutely deaf. When he began to be weary of entreaties, he would draw out his watch and lay it before him on the table, saying:

"I have no more time to lose, my dear friend. It

is quite enough to be daily losing my money. If you have yet anything worth while to say which it will pay me to hear, I am at your service. If I must listen to you, consider, I charge for my time a dollar an hour. It is now five minutes before twelve ; proceed, if you will talk on my terms."

Poor women wept and supplicated. I have seen great men fall on their knees in their distress, begging time, only time to pay what they owed—a week, a month, ten days, even ten hours. This they entreated. But it would take too long to recount all which I witnessed. It is enough that I tell you this only to make you understand fully the character of my uncle Simon and the sentiments with which he filled my soul. I had been brought up in a nobler school. But I was so young that, while I thought him wicked and cruel, I did not comprehend the ruin and misery of his victims. A child still, the woes of my fellow-creatures passed from my mind when they vanished from before my sight. A child's philosophy is that everything will be got along with somehow by grown people. Neither was I old enough to understand the frauds and roguery of which my uncle was guilty. The first time when I clearly perceived his dishonesty I paid dearly for my knowledge, as I shall now proceed to show you.

He had purchased at a low valuation an ancient landed property, which he found he could sell to advantage if it were renovated and set in order. Therefore he got men to work, and each Saturday night there came to the office a troop of laborers and artisans to be paid for their week's work.

One Saturday I saw a master-mason come in. He appeared surprised to find me in the office alone, because my uncle had charged him to come in at that hour to have his bill settled. Therefore he sat down to wait for him.

One hour went by, two hours, and yet my uncle did not come; four hours, and yet he remained absent. Still the master-mason waited anxiously. Finally, at eight in the evening, in walked my uncle. He cried out:

"Hoity toity! is this you, M. Refarin? Very sorry, but business, you know."

My uncle had a manner which I have since seen used by other people—that of endeavoring to make themselves seem of importance when they appear simply ridiculous. Now, instead of attending to M. Refarin, he turned to me, pompously questioning me as to what had passed during his absence, read the letters which had come for him, examined some newly-arrived bargains, and then, when he had given a good half

hour to such performances, turned to the master-mason, who still waited in stony silence, saying,

“Well, my good fellow, what do you want?”

“You know you promised me to settle my bill?”

“True, I did, but I’m sorry to say I haven’t the money.”

“Sir, to-morrow is my pay day, and I have a bill of two hundred and fifty dollars to settle at the house of your partner, and he presses me for it. See, sir, six months ago you promised me faithfully that to-day I should have this money. Sir, I relied on your word. Don’t fail me now.”

“My word! What word?” interrupted my uncle. “Did I say to you, ‘I give you my word of honor that I will pay you on Saturday’? No, I didn’t. Then what word do you invoke? A word? A mere nothing. I said, ‘Come Saturday; I will pay you.’ What Saturday, pray? See you now, M. Refarin, there are words and words; don’t forget that wisdom.”

“Sir, I don’t understand you. Pardon me. I am but a poor simple man. Sir, when I say I will pay Saturday, I pay. *I keep my word.*”

“And suppose you don’t have the money?”

“When I promise, I see to it that I am able to fulfil. I think, sir, you are merely joking with me,

but this affair is serious. Your partner in the other house has my word. I owe him, and he'll press me for the money."

Refarin then set himself to explain his position. He had borrowed money, fully trusting to the promised and overdue payment of my uncle. If he did not pay next day, on Monday he would be seized and put in prison. His wife was ill, very low. Such anxiety and trouble would kill her.

To all this painful story my uncle only replied,

"No money, my dear fellow—no money. Do you want me to fly to the moon for the sake of paying you? Sue me, if you like, but lawsuits cost money and take time; and if you choose that way of getting your cash, it will take you a year."

Now, four or five days before this I had been present at an interview between my uncle and his partner in trade. I had heard this partner explain the case, and my uncle advised him to push matters to extremity and seize the master-mason's property, as they could make it of more value to them than the debt. More than this, my uncle was the real creditor, for he had furnished his partner the money which had been lent to M. Refarin to use in his business. Without understanding all the merits of the case, it seemed to me that even at the risk of offending my uncle I ought to come to the aid of this poor man. His sick

wife might die. I thought of my mother, and her tender heart stirred in me.

So just as my uncle repeated for the tenth time, "I tell you I have no money. If I had one dollar you should have it," I cried out in a loud voice,

"Uncle, you have it. Some money was paid in to me to-day while you were out."

"What are you doing, my little Romain?" said my uncle, glibly, coming near me.

He privately seized my arm, and pinched it black and blue.

"The child is half witted, and lies besides," he said, calmly, to M. Refarin.

This man, who had not seen the pinch and the kick with which my uncle had favored me, thought he was trying to escape from the subject in hand. Therefore he at once led back to business so very important to him, saying,

"Then, sir, you see you have the money."

My exasperation was at its height.

"See it, see it!" I screamed, pulling some bank-notes out of a drawer and displaying them.

The two men at the same moment sprang toward my hand, but my uncle, more active than the mason, grasped the roll of notes.

"Hark you, Refarin," he said, after a few moments' silence; "I want to do for you all that I possi-

bly can, and to prove to you that these are not idle words, but outpourings of honor and loyalty, I make you this offer. Behold; here are seven hundred dollars which I have just this day received to pay with them a sacred debt. I shall be dishonest if I do not pay it to-morrow. But I will risk my reputation. I will give it to you, though I cannot possibly raise another cent in time to pay any other bill. I sacrifice myself to your needs, Refarin. Say no more. Sit down and write me a receipt in full for your bill."

At the first moment Refarin looked as if he were ready to fall on my uncle's neck and thank him, because he had not been so wicked as he at first had intended, but common sense spoke amid excited feeling. Said Refarin,

"A receipt in full? Sir, do you not know that my bill is one thousand dollars?"

"Ah, well?"

"And you offer me seven hundred, sir? Thank you, kind employer; they will do me much good—save me from difficulty. I take them, and I will give you a receipt for so much on account."

My uncle would not yield. If he then and there paid the seven hundred dollars, he would get a receipt in full for a bill of one thousand. Not to get any money that very day would be ruin to poor Refarin—

death to his wife. Refarin argued, explained, implored, but all to no purpose. He had to agree to these terms.

"The notes," he said, angrily.

"Here they are," said my uncle, amiably.

Then the master-mason, rising, put on his hat. "M. de Kalbris," he said, firmly, "I prefer an honest poverty, such as mine, to money made as you make yours. Your wealth is accursed."

"That is merely a matter of taste," said my uncle. Then, smiling most cheerfully, he conducted M. Refarin to the door, and with many bows bade him a cordial good-evening.

Scarcely had he closed the door upon the master-mason than the expression of his countenance changed; and without giving me time to say a word or defend myself, he gave me a terrible blow which laid me prostrate on the floor.

"Between us two," said he, "I am sure you spoke of that money just for spite, knowing well I did not wish you to do so, you abominable young profligate."

The blow hurt me cruelly, but it did not daunt me; all I thought of was to revenge myself for insult and injury.

"It is true. I did know you did not wish the money mentioned," I said, wrathfully.

He sprang at me like a tiger, but I prevented the

new attack, for I jumped behind the table, and pulling it toward the wall, kept it between us. Seeing that I had escaped from his hands, his fury so increased that he seized a great quarto dictionary and hurled it at my head; I fell to the floor. In my fall my head struck the corner of the table, and I became insensible. In some moments I revived a little, understood my situation and slowly struggled to my feet.

I supported myself against the wall, and the blood, flowing freely from my wounded temple, ran over my shirt and coat. My uncle just glared at me, without offering me any help or expressing any sorrow.

"Go wash yourself, you vile magpie," he growled, "and consider what you have got for mixing your prate in my affairs. If you ever meddle again in my business, I'll kill you."

"Sir, I wish to leave your house."

"And where would you go?"

"Home to my mother," I said, in a choked voice.

"Oh, indeed, indeed! Well, you won't go there. You were bound to me for five years, and I mean to keep you. If your mother helps you off, she will have to pay the legal forfeit for aiding runaway apprentices. Oh, I want to go home to my mother! mammy, mammy, mammy! Oh, I want to go home to my mammy! You great baby!"



CHAPTER VII.

IHAD been for a long time tormented by an idea which recurred to me every time that I was hungry, or that my uncle had treated me too roughly—that is to say, every day.

My thought was to escape from Dol and go to Havre to take ship. During the hours of my uncle's absence from the office I had frequently amused myself by tracing my prospective journey upon a great chart of Normandy which hung in the hall. Lacking a compass, I had fashioned myself one of wood, and I had measured the distances as M. de Bihorel had taught me to do. My route would be

this: From Dol, going to Pontorson, I would sleep at Avranches. From Avranches I would go to Villedieu, Villers-Bocage, Caen, Dozule, Pont-l'Évêque, Honfleur. It would be more than an eight-day walk. If I could get together twenty cents—only twenty cents—I would at least be sure not to die of hunger on the road. But how could I amass such a capital as twenty cents? I had always hesitated in view of this impossibility.

The dictionary matter decided me. Shut up in my room, after having bathed my head under the pump in the yard, and thus having stanchèd the flow of blood, I saw no longer any difficulties; nothing was so bad as to stay where I was.

The blackberries had commenced to grow ripe along the hedges, there were eggs in the birds' nests by the woods, fortunate people had found pennies lying in the dust of the highways, and, moreover, why was I not likely to meet some market-man who would kindly give me a ride in his cart, or even grant me a morsel of bread as payment for driving his horses while he slept? Such things had happened. I had read of them, heard of them, seen them.

At Havre I did not doubt that I could find plenty of captains who would take me on their ships as a cabin-boy. Once at sea, there would follow a lucky voyage, and I would at once be a sailor. Then I

would return home. I would go royally to Port-Dieu. I would enter our little house, clasp my mother in my arms and press into her hands all my pay.

But suppose we were shipwrecked?

All the better. We were of course to be wrecked on a deserted island, and I would have parrots, find savages, and imitate thee, O Robinson Crusoe!

Thinking thus, I was no longer conscious of the pain in my head, and forgot that I had had no dinner.

Every Sunday morning it was my uncle's habit to start off early to inspect and gloat over his new property, and he did not return from the estate until late in the evening. Therefore I was sure that from the Saturday night when we had our quarrel until the following Monday morning I should not see him, and by setting off immediately I could get thirty-six hours' start of any pursuit he might undertake. But how could I get out of the house? The doors were double-locked, the keys in Uncle Simon's pocket. I decided that I would jump from my window to the yard, and then creep through the gap in the hedge by Pataud's house. Once in the garden of M. de Bouhour, I could easily get to the fields.

It was in my bed that I discussed and arranged my



HE DREW NEAR AND HELD THE LIGHT TO MY HEAD.

plan, only waiting to execute it until my uncle was abed and asleep.

Soon I heard him enter his room. Then almost immediately it seemed to me that he was coming up to the second story, taking care to make no noise. What! did he suspect my plot, and was he watching me? He stopped at my door, and warily opened it. With my face turned toward the wall, and my nose hidden in the covers, I lay perfectly still, but between half-shut lids I saw his shadow on the wall and noted the trembling of his hand, which he held before the candle to shield the flame from my eyes. He stole gently near my bed, scarcely breathing.

I feigned a profound sleep. I knew that he was disturbed about me, that he drew near and held the light to my head, and that with the tips of his fingers he carefully parted the locks of hair which covered the wound on my brow. Then he muttered to himself, "That will do no harm." After this he stole out as he had come.

Such an act, such a mark of interest, would once have sufficed to melt my heart and change my purpose, but now it was too late. In fancy I had smelt the salt breezes of the beloved sea, I had heard the rattle of cordage, I had opened the tantalizing portals of the unknown.

An hour after the departure of my uncle, when I

thought that he was sound asleep, I rose and began my preparations for my exodus. They were small enough; I had only to tie in a handkerchief two shirts and a pair of stockings.

I hesitated whether to wear a thin cloth Sunday-suit—my especial pride—but a ray of good sense unexpectedly illumined my benighted little soul, and I took instead a stout jacket and a pair of gray cloth pantaloons; then, my shoes in hand, I stole out of my room. Scarcely had I shut my door than an amazing idea possessed me; I returned. While the moon was not full, the night was not very dark, and my eyes, accustomed to obscurity, could easily distinguish objects. I put a chair on my bed; and climbing thereupon, I was able to reach the crocodile, which hung from the ceiling; with my knife I cut the cord which held it; and catching it in my arms, I scrambled down, laid it at its length in my bed, and put my little white cotton nightcap on its head; then I tucked it neatly in, and pulled the bed clothes over it.

I pictured to myself the figure my uncle would make on Monday morning when he came, enraged at my sloth, to call me, and would find in my place a crocodile. I laughed until I cried, while like a simpleton I wondered if he would think the crocodile had revived and eaten me up. This bit of pleasantry was all my effort at revenge.

It is astonishing what valor four walls with a roof above them confer upon one. When I found myself in the garden of M. de Bonhour, after having happily scrambled down from my window upon a shed and thence to the ground, I did not feel in the least like laughing. I looked suspiciously all around me; the trees seemed in the night to have assumed strange forms; between the masses of foliage were great black hollows from which I longed yet feared to turn my eyes; a light breeze passed over the branches, and the leaves rustled with terrible sounds; without realizing what I did, I crawled into the little rustic house of my loved and lost Pataud. Poor Pataud! If he had been there, I would have had one friend, and need not have run away.

I had always believed that I was brave, but now I felt my knees shaking, my teeth chattering in my head, and I was ashamed. But I argued upon my emotions: if I was really afraid, my only resource was to get back into my uncle's house. I sprang out of my hiding-place and walked up to a dark-leaved rustling tree. It was my oracle; it seemed to say to me, "Do not be afraid to go your way; nothing will harm you. There is no sound but the stir of leaves and the chirp of birds which have their nests among the trees."

I took courage. I flung my bundle over the wall

which divided the garden from the open country ; then, boy like, I crawled and struggled up until I sat on the top of the wall. I looked far out across the fields ; they lay in peace ; not a creature stirred upon them. They were quite deserted ; I heard no sound ; my spirits rose. Morning would dawn after a while. I slid to the road upon the outer side.

Picking up my little parcel, I ran for more than an hour without once stopping, for I knew if I paused and gave myself time to look about and think, I should be ready to die of fear. At last breath failed me. I was in the midst of broad fields traversed by a ditch or canal which, by its drainage, turns the once swamp into a plain, carrying the water to the sea. It was haying-time, and through a white mist slowly rolling up from the moist ground I saw the haystacks which bordered the road. Without changing the general direction of my course, I crossed into the field from the highway and burrowed under the hay. I was certain of being more than two leagues from the city, and I felt as if I had got to the end of the world. At last I began to breathe easily.

Overcome by divers emotions, weakened by my wound, enfeebled by hunger, I nestled down under the sweet-scented hay, yet warm from the bright sun which had blazed on it all day. There I slept, lulled by the strident song of millions of houseless crickets,

who in the ditches and along the close-worn plain kept up their discordant plaint the live-long summer night. I slept soundly—too soundly for my good in such unhealthy quarters.

The cold aroused me. The humid chill of early dawning penetrated to my very bones. I ached and shivered as I slept. I opened my eyes; the stars were paling. Great white rays of light pierced the shadows of the night, and over the prairie trailed a cloud of mist which rolled itself and rose like columns of smoke.

My clothes were as wet as if they had been dipped in water; for while the hay had at first warmed me, it had from its looseness permitted the heavy dews to fall upon me, and now I was chilled to the heart.

But more painful than the cold was a sense of sickness which overcame me. In the evening I had been sad and lonely, grieved and disappointed; in the morning I suffered from what is worse—an unquiet conscience. While my body had slept my soul had had time to regain power, and now the voice which God puts in every heart to guide us spoke loudly. The shipwreck, the deserted isle, the glories of the new Crusoe, no longer seemed to me so agreeable as home. Suppose the runaway should return no more; suppose I should never again see my dear mother. What if she died while I was away? My eyes filled

with tears at the thought ; and despite the cold, I remained sitting motionless on the haycock, my head resting on my hands.

When I finally rose up, my plans were all changed. I would go at once to Port-Dieu, and I would not set out for Havre until I had seen my good mother.

I could reach my home at evening ; and concealing myself in the garret, I could remain all night and go off in the morning without any one suspecting that I had been there. I could see her if she might not see me or speak to me. It seemed to me that if I could thus look upon her, and carry with me the memory of her face, the fault which I should commit in leaving her would be less great.

In those days the laws concerning apprenticeship were very stringent. I knew my uncle would seek for me, and it was needful that my mother should be absolutely clear of all participation in my escape, if she was to be free from the imposition of a fine.

I picked up my parcel. I had twelve leagues to travel, and it behooved me to lose no time. Day would soon dawn. Already I heard the voices of the birds fluttering in their nests and increased the whirr of insects.

It was necessary for me to walk briskly, and as I

thus exercised I grew less sad ; the chill and pain in my limbs passed away. The rosy flush of morning lighted all the sky ; the east glowed in beauty. As the shadows fled the dismal ideas which tormented me passed away, and all the exaggerations of my feelings departed with the vanishing night.

The mantle of mist which hung over the plain collected over the canal ; white, fleecy clouds seemed to divide from it and drift low in the sky. Long streams of yellow light and flashes of crimson flame blazed up to the horizon. A gentle breeze sprang up and toyed among the moist branches of the trees along my path. Herbs and flowers seemed to wake up into a new life and beauty. They swayed and nodded on their stems as if saluting each other. The darksome night had performed its mission and was gone. Skies, birds, flowers, lost boy, all were glad of the golden day.

While I lived with M. de Bihorel I had often seen the sun rise, and had never paid much attention to it, but now, as if by my emancipation I had become one of the masters of the earth, I condescended to take pleasure in the beauty of the spectacle.

The new-made lord of creation did not delay to find that if Nature had gratifications for his eyes she offered nothing for his stomach. Flowers were everywhere, fruits nowhere. I had perhaps done

wrong in leaving the matter of food to mere hazard.

After having walked some hours the matter of doubt became a certainty. Mother Nature was as niggard as my uncle Simon, and was leaving me to starve.

In the fields there was absolutely nothing to eat. On the contrary, the villages seemed full of food. As I went through these little Norman hamlets I saw preparations for the Sunday family dinner. Upon the tables of the cottagers were joints of meat; from the baker's ran the boys with big brown loaves, and the women carried home pots of soup and basins of baked beans. Crisp fritters gave forth a goodly smell of hot butter. When I saw these things, I fairly grew faint with longing.

Whenever an unhappy creditor had complained to my uncle that he was stared in the face by famine, my uncle had never failed to tell him,

"Pooh, pooh! Tighten your belt; that will cure you."

I wonder if those who do not scruple to make this recommendation ever tried their own remedy? for in my extremity I followed the often-heard advice, and drew tight the buckle of my waist-strap. The leather hurt my flesh. I breathed with difficulty. I was warmer, and none the less faint.

I thought that if I could only cease to think of that terrible hunger I should suffer less, therefore I began to sing. Some people who were passing, going to church, looked curiously at a poor little vagabond who went on singing softly, a bundle in his hand and on his head the bloody mark of a recent blow, while tears stood in his eyes.

My songs did not last me long. Nature would not be repressed; and now to hunger was added thirst, but that I easily satisfied. Across my path ran plenty of little rivers, all making, like myself, for the sea.

Finding a clear pool, I knelt down, and putting my mouth into the water, drank greedily, thinking wrongly that, provided my stomach were full, liquid or solid, food or water, it did not matter; I would no longer be hungry.

I remembered that once I had had a fever for four or five days, and that then I only drank and never ate anything.

A quarter of an hour after my big drink I was drenched with sweat. This was caused by my weakness and the quantities of water I drank while walking under the hot sun. A great languor seized me; my courage failed; I staggered to a tree, and sank down in the shadow.

I did not realize how weak I was. My ears caught

every sound. All I saw was in a strange red light. I was near a village, and I noticed the striking of clocks and the ringing of church-bells. Alas, I thought, of what avail is it to be near human beings when I have not a penny to spend at the baker's?

Then I noticed that the peasants going to and fro gazed on me and whispered to each other. I must move on, or they would begin to question me—would have me arrested and returned to my uncle. The thought was agony. Better a thousand deaths!

When rest and the coolness of the shade had restored me a little strength, I set forth on my way once more. The pebbles in the road were cruelly sharp, the rays of the sun were scorching. I knew that if I pushed on as I had since morning I should presently fall, without power to rise; therefore I resolved not to walk over half a mile without stopping to rest, and every time I grew faint I would sit down at once without forcing myself farther.

As I thus toiled on, three lines of a little hymn which I had learned to repeat to M. de Bihorel came into my mind with a persistency which wearied me. The words ran thus :

“Shall God his children leave without his care?
See, to the birds he gives their dwellings fair,
And in his bounty doth all nature share.”

It seemed to me that I had been forgotten, the one poor creature lost to the divine sight—less than the birds which darted from bough to bough uttering joyous cries.

For a long while I mechanically repeated this little verse in a sort of music, a kind of dead march of my hope, rather than an echo of my confidence. Thus I entered into a wood—the first which I had yet found. Suddenly my eyes were attracted toward a bank covered with yellowish leaves, among which little points of crimson burned like coals among the herbage. Strawberries! They were really strawberries. I forgot my fatigue. With one leap I cleared a ditch which intervened. The slope was laden with large berries, exactly as if it had been a carefully-cultivated garden-bed. Under the trees and through the grass grew the fruit, until all the ground seemed covered with a red carpet. I have since eaten strawberries larger and more beautiful, never any which tasted so good as those. They gave me strength, happiness, hope. I felt able to travel through the world.

“Shall God his children leave without his care?”

Wood strawberries are not very satisfying, and it took me a long while to appease my hunger. When I had eaten enough for present necessity, I set myself to get a little provision for my journey.

I wished to gather enough to trade somewhere for a morsel of bread. A crust of sweet bread was my dream. But time pressed. It was past mid-day, and I was yet six leagues from Port-Dieu, and I knew that to my weary legs they would be very long, slow leagues indeed. I lined my handkerchief with oak leaves, and filled it with what fruit I dared pause to pick, then I struck out on the highway, much refreshed and more courageous by far than when I had left it.

Weariness, however, overcame me; instead of going half a league without resting, I was obliged to stop every quarter of a mile.

My feebleness and fatigue were probably evident, for as I sat resting a market-carrier drove along with his cart, walking himself at the head of his horses; he stopped to take a look at me, and then said,

“Well, my young man, you are just about fagged out; isn’t that a right guess?”

“I am some tired, sir.”

“That is plain to be seen. Are you going far, my lad?”

“About five leagues yet.”

“Well, if you are going in the direction of Port-Dieu, I am going that way, and will give you a lift.”

It was a decisive moment. I plucked up what strength and courage I had left, saying,

“Sir, I have no money to pay for a ride; but if you

will take some strawberries in pay for a ride, I will give you what I have picked;" and I opened my leaf-lined handkerchief.

"So, so! they look very good. Come, then, youngster," he said, changing his tone when he found that despite my decent clothes I was penniless, "you may ride all the same, for you look very tired. As to the berries, you can trade them off at the inn in Beau-Moulin; and as pay for your ride, you may buy me a glass of grog with the change."

My poor strawberries! They gave me six cents for them at the hotel of Beau-Moulin, though my carrier vowed that was sheer robbery, and that I ought to have more, the fruit was so out of season and rare.

"Now," said he, when our journey together was ended, "haul out your six cents, and let us each have a glass of grog."

I was too badly off to be timid; I spoke up: "Please, sir, I would much rather have bread than grog, if you will allow me."

"Tut, tut! Never refuse a good drink when you can get it, my hearty. If you are really hungry, why, I'll treat in my turn, and I will buy bread for your share—a big biscuit."

"Yes, but if you please, sir, I'm so awfully hungry that I'd like to have my share in bread both treats."

The man laughed, but looked compassionate.

“Poor wretch! come in,” he said, kindly.

Happy was I. I gave him the three-cent glass of drink for which he had bargained, but I got myself a small roll, to which, in his turn, he added the promised biscuit. I felt wonderfully refreshed. I was now only a mile from Port-Dieu, and in place of getting into the village at dark, thanks to my jolly carrier, I entered about four o’clock—the hour when my mother and her neighbors were at afternoon church-service. I entered the house without being seen by any one, and took my measures to hide in the one little attic room, unused since my departure from that dear and humble dwelling. I found the place just as I had left it—just as it had been since my revered father’s death—full of his nets and his fisherman’s clothes, full yet of the odor of the salt sea, and of codfish and mackerel. My love and sorrow overwhelmed me. My father’s son was an outcast. I dared not make myself known in my own home, fearing the consequences of it to my poor mother. Did she become the accomplice of my escape, she might, by my uncle’s spite, lose even the poor shelter and the tiny garden-plot which she possessed. I clasped the nets in my arms; I kissed them, sobbing. Then I gathered some of them into a heap; and disposing others like a curtain to hide me, thus made my bed.

At least, I would sleep at home near my mother. I

had chosen my resting-place near an opening in the floor, where the chimney came up from the room below. I hung my nets in such a way that without any perceptible change in their usual arrangement they concealed me, while they gave me opportunity to look down the opening and see, unseen, my mother, while she prepared her evening meal at the fireplace. I had not considered my fatigue. Hardly had I seated myself to await my mother's arrival from church when I fell asleep, and only after a long interval did I rouse, and then at the sound of voices. I had slept soundly; it was now night. My mother was kneeling on the hearth, blowing the firebrands into a flame; near her, my aunt, one of her sisters, sat in the chimney-corner. My aunt was speaking:

"So you really mean to go on Saturday next?"

"Yes. I am so worried; and if I can see with my eyes how my child is, I will be at rest. I have had letters, and he does not complain, but I know well he is not happy."

"If I had been in your place, I would not have apprenticed him to his uncle Simon."

"What, then, would you have done? Let him go to sea?"

"Well, why not?"

"Why not? Where, then, my sister, is your eldest son? Where are our brothers? Where our cousin

Fortune? Where is my poor dear man? Where is the husband of our sister Fanny? Look about you, and see who remains. Oh, the sea! It is a monster which has devoured our beloved ones."

"Any way, I fear the sea less than I do Simon. Let me tell you there is nothing in nature so cruel as a man whose god is money."

"It is that thought which keeps me awake of nights. How much my poor little son may have to endure before he becomes a man! The Brothers Leheu spoke of Simon the other day. They say he is worth seventy-five thousand dollars. Every one knows that such a huge fortune as that could not have been honestly made in his line of life. What wickedness he may teach my son! Ah, if my Romain had not been bound to him for five years! and he has only been gone nine months. But I had no one to advise or help me, and Simon insisted."

"Well, can you not get him away now?"

"If I took him back, Simon would be angry, and press the letter of the law. I find that if I brought him home I must pay an indemnity, and you know I have not a penny unless I sell our home. But for my son I would do that, only I don't know what to do with him if I get him back. He must have restraint, business, support, and how can I give them him,

working hard all day for ten cents and board, and no one to help me?"

My aunt shook her head and wiped her eyes.

"So the first and best thing to do will be to go and see him. I shall work hard this week, and set out afoot Saturday morning."

"Well, so you had better. Friday evening I will bring you a pot of my best butter. You must take it to Romain, with my love. I don't believe the child is very well fed."

My mother's fire was kindled. My aunt went home. Mother set herself to prepare her supper. As the steam of the potatoes boiling with bacon recalled to me old times when I went to school, and also ran away from school, and I remembered my simple plentiful meals sitting by my kind parent, I felt famished, heartbroken.

My mother sat down to the table, and her face was turned toward me, fully revealed in the light of the candle. She did not eat long nor with relish. She often paused, and at one moment turned to the door and listened, as if expecting to hear somebody coming up the walk. Then, again, she looked at the places where my father and I had been wont to sit, and her eyes swam in tears.

Poor dear mamma! I can see her yet; her touching picture is engraved on my memory. Watching,

I seemed to read all her loving, patient, sorrowful heart. There had been hours—and I am glad they were few—when I had forgotten her, but she had never turned her thoughts from me, her absent son. Longer yet was to be thy dreary watch, my mother! My eyes lingered on that good face, so sad and so sweet. Of me she thought, of me she sighed. I was not three paces from her, held enchained by my terrible resolution, in which good and evil contended. My duty would have been to throw myself in her arms, tell her all and bravely abide by her decision. God would have then raised up friends to aid us. This I did not realize, because I was bent on going to sea, and I knew my mother would hinder it. Self-will lay at the bottom of what I strove to call self-sacrifice. But I had many lessons to learn.

With her habitual order and propriety, my mother put everything in its place, washed her cup, set back the table, and then, in preparation for her night's rest, she knelt to pray.

How often at the same time and in the same place had she and I bowed down together, beseeching that God would return my absent father safely to his home!

Hearing from my mother's lips the fervent words which she had often uttered before, I knelt upon my couch of fishing-nets and softly joined her supplica-

tions. But now it was not my father's name which issued from my mother's lips. Him she had yielded to Heaven in behalf of humanity. It was my name which formed the burden of her prayers.

My good genius urged me to spring from my hiding-place and throw myself at my mother's feet. I hesitated obstinately, and by my hesitation I was lost.





CHAPTER VIII.

I CRIED myself to sleep. My slumber was less tranquil under the maternal roof than it had been the night before on the prairies of Dol.

Before dawn I was roused by the beating of the sea against the cliff, and with great care to make no noise I crawled out of a trap-door in the roof, and made my escape.

The tide began to ebb at four o'clock, and when I reached the shore, the flow was at its full; therefore I knew that daylight would soon appear, and I did not wish to be seen by any early-rising neighbor.

In my plan for my travels I had not pro-

vided for a great difficulty—the difficulty of tearing one's self away from one's birthplace. Nature was strong in my heart; for reaching the little hedge which divided our plot of ground from the public common, I stayed my steps, and in spite of myself returned. My heart beat as if it would burst.

In our hen-house a rooster, my pet bird, woke up with a clarion crow, and all the dogs in the neighborhood suddenly barked in chorus. In the next yard a big bull-dog heard my stealthy steps, and as he growled his doubts I heard the clank of his chain in his efforts to leap into our garden.

Morning began to dawn, and the stars paled before a band of yellow light along the horizon. The summit of the cliff was luminous, the little house lay in shadow.

My childhood from my earliest hour of consciousness returned to me, and passed as in a panorama before my eyes—nights when I was weary and sick, and to still my crying my good father had carried me in his arms up and down our bedroom, singing,

“The swallows skim along the sea ;
Babe, they bring good news to thee.
Tirra lirra, tirra lirra, la !”

I recalled the first living bird which I had caught—a sand-peep which had a broken wing, and learned to

eat out of my hand—the anxious vigils of my mother when my father was away at sea, and my prayers by her side when she and I trembled at the rising gale. The anxieties, the miseries, which I had seen that dear old soul suffer, I, by my secret departure, was about to cause her to endure with added poignancy. Oh, was it not a crime to leave her?

The lantern in the lighthouse was extinguished, the waters shone under the gray sky. Above the village chimneys columns of yellow smoke curled straight into the air, and a noise of wooden shoes clattering along floors and sidewalks came up to me as I stood in a recess of the cliff.

Thus, upon a jutting rock, hidden from observation by a tangle of vines and brush, I lived my additional hour of grace; doubtful, impatient and unhappy, discontented and desolate.

The spirit of adventure, the vague hope of in some way making my fortune without being chargeable to any one, my natural disposition, the unknown dangers of return to my uncle, seemed to drive me from home to the sea; while my youth, my timidity, my awakened conscience, above all, the thought of my mother, were strong chains to bind me to home.

From a cathedral not very far off a chime of bells rang the “Angelus.” The call to prayer had not ceased to sound when my mother opened the door

and appeared at the gate, ready to go to her day's toil. Was she going to work in the village or in the town higher up along the shore—that is to say, to a place inhabited not by fishers, but by farmers and tradesmen?

If she went to the village, she would go down the cliff-path, and thus be farther from me at every step. If, on the contrary, she went to the inland town, she would come up along the path I had taken—would turn the jutting rock and be close upon the place where I was sitting. I had a distressful moment, for I did not know what I wanted to do, to go or to remain. It was well that on this Monday morning she worked in the village, and therefore she slowly walked out of my sight, and I was spared the great temptation of flying to her arms.

When the gate swung to behind her, I rose upon tip-toe to follow her with my eyes. I could see nothing but her white muslin bonnet, which appeared above the hedge.

The sun rose above the cliff, and now the house lay in the full light; under the brilliant rays the green mosses which grew along the roof took a bright green color like velvet, spotted here and there by yellow sprigs of wall-flower.

The breeze ruffled the surface of the sea, and bore to me from the waters an invigorating saltness which

I even now seem to snuff as I write. I breathed, rejoicing, my native air. It came to my lips full of health, and I drank courage in every vein.

But I would not yield to my emotions. I resolved not to be conquered by my yearnings toward home.

To save myself from Dol and the horrors of life with Uncle Simon for four years to come, I must tear myself from my mother and my birthplace. At this thought I began to run, and only rested when I was fairly out of breath.

This violent exercise served to drive away my doubts. One does not think well when one is very actively engaged. Quiet brings consideration.

When I paused, I began to reflect. I had at last set out—that was well. It was now needful that I should arrive somewhere, do something. Ah, there was the difficulty.

I sat down under a fence. The adjacent fields were deserted, and there was no danger of my being surprised. Far off I saw on the edge of the cliff a custom-house officer on duty, whose image was darkly outlined against the luminous zone of the sunrise.

The result of my reflections was that instead of following the public highway I took my journey along the borders of the sea.

My two days' experience had taught me that high-

ways of travel do not offer unbought hospitality, and that a traveller with an empty pocket is sadly suspected in the busy ways of men. Such an one should look for help among those whose poverty has taught them sympathy. My great anxiety, of course, was to obtain nourishment on my journey. A remark of M. de Bihorel came often into my mind: "The sea is for all men a more bountiful nurse than the land." This, coming into my memory, taught me to look to the sea-beach for supply of my wants; oysters and muscles would be there in plenty. At the idea of oysters, I confess that my appetite was excited, it had been so long since I had eaten any; what a feast I would now have!

I started on my way. How many leagues were there between me and Havre, where I could find a ship? Very many it appeared to me, but what difference did that make? A trip along the level sands seemed to me a glorious holiday. However, I dared not seek the beach at once, for fear of meeting some of the people of Port-Dieu who would recognize me and put Uncle Simon on my track. Consequently, I followed the high road above the cliffs for three or four leagues, and after that took courage to go down upon the sands to look for my dinner or breakfast, or whatever it might be called.

I found no oysters, and was obliged to content my-

self with the muscles which covered the rocks. My hunger being appeased, I should have proceeded upon my way, but old habits were strong upon me, and I was so happy to once more look upon the ocean that I began to amuse myself by running up and down the moist sands and searching in the crevices of the rock for hid treasures. I was free to laugh, dance and sing. What a difference between this and my imprisonment at Dol! Decidedly, it was most entertaining to travel.

A broken bit of pine board which I found wedged between two boulders of granite gave me extreme pleasure. I could now rig up a boat. With my knife I shaped it something like a ship, narrowing it to a point. I cut a hole and fixed in it a mast. For cordage I had some split osiers which I pulled from the side of a little stream which trickled down to the sea. I then set another mast, and to this attached my handkerchief for a sail. I had now a most magnificent frigate, to which I gave the name of my mother, and then, the tide being low and the water calm as a mirror, I rolled my trowsers up above the knees, slung my shoes and stockings over my arm, and wading along at the edge of the sea, drew my ship after me in the water.

Evening surprised me in this play. It was needful to look up a shelter for the night. I chose a little



I DREW MY SHIP AFTER ME IN THE WATER.

grotto near the sea, but high up above water-mark. It had been ground out of the rock by the beating of tremendous waves in equinoctial storms. Hither I brought armfuls of dry seaweed collected from the highest part of the beach, and of this I made my bed. It was not a palace, but it was better than the marshes of Dol. I was sheltered from cold, and also assured against surprise. I had a good ear, and I was surrounded on three sides by solid rock walls. The open side fronted the sea, and was in the steep side of the cliff.

From my grotto I could see the familiar beam of the lighthouse. It seemed to me both protector and companion, and secured me against loneliness. I slept so sweetly that the night passed like a moment. I dreamed of sailing in my frigate far into fairy-land. After being shipwrecked on a charming island, where loaves of bread and juicy cutlets hung from the limbs of all the trees like apples and pears, I was elected king by a tribe of complaisant savages. I then sent a canoe for my mother, who came to me at once, and was crowned queen. Seated in a flower-decked arbor, we drank bowls of sweet new cider, and all our dutiful subjects shouted for joy, crying, "The king drinks! The queen drinks!"

Hunger aroused me by day dawn. I felt cold and

faint. The bountiful sea had swept ashore a provision of muscles, and I set myself to eating. But the more I ate, the more I wanted. My breakfast certainly lasted for two hours, and then it ended because I was weary of the labor of gathering and cracking open the shells. I began to tell myself that a piece of bread with the muscles would be a very satisfying thing, but the ocean does not afford baked bread.

Pray, reader, do not conclude, because I am always speaking of bread, always of hunger and of food, that I was a contemptible glutton. I had simply the royal appetite of a healthy and growing child, and the question of eating, in the condition into which I had now for months been unfortunately thrown, was the capital question of my life, and was becoming very distressing. Those who know of hunger only by an agreeable sensation of appetite, when a good dinner has been delayed an hour beyond its time, cannot understand me, but there are those who, after long months of privation and of half nourishment, have been compelled to go for days without food, and they will appreciate the liveliness of my memories of these distresses.

If the shore where I spent the night had afforded oysters, I would perhaps have lingered there some time, for it pleased me by the facilities afforded for sailing my ship—I would have been disturbed by

nobody, and then the grotto, the lighthouse, pleased me—but hunger drove me on, for perhaps farther along I should find something more nutritious than muscles.

I dismantled my ship, put the sail in my pocket, abandoned my little cave, but, as every judicious traveller should do, I gave it a name before leaving it—"The King's Grotto."

All the way along the cliffs, which I was now obliged to take, as there was no sandbeach for a while, I was tormented by that one idea of bread, and the longed-for food came at the moment when my need was the greatest. I came to a river so deep that I was forced to wade it, going up to my shoulders in the water. I took off my clothes, rolled them up and carried them on my head. This cold bath increased my weakness, my limbs almost failed me, and I foresaw trouble.

In this feeble state I drew near a hamlet which occupied a little plain on the border of the sea. I resolved to go through it, trusting that I would not meet any one whom I knew. Reaching an open square near the church, I was not able to resist the temptation of stopping to gaze in at the windows of a baker's shop.

Inside lay numbers of great brown and white loaves, and from the door came a delightful odor of

bread and cakes. I stood in open-mouthed admiration before that spectacle, wondering if the intense longing in my eyes would not suffice to drag the loaves from the shelves and put them into my mouth, when I heard a great noise around me in the square—a confusion of shouts, a clatter of wooden shoes, and all the usual uproar of children set free from school.

Was it because I was a stranger? Was it because I looked feeble and starved and odd? Very likely; for with my ship under my arm, my parcel in my hand, my dusty shoes, and hair rough and tangled under my cap, I had the air of an absurd little straggler; any way, they crowded around me as soon as they saw me. The first-comers called the tardy ones, and I had soon around me a circle of youngsters who examined me as if I had been a wild beast. My frigate, or rather the bit of wood which I honored with that high-sounding title, seemed to astonish them greatly. They whispered together:

“Hey, Joseph, what is that under his arm?”

“Don’t you see it is a bit of board?”

“No, it is something to play music on.”

“Music, you goose! he has not a white mouse.”

A white mouse! They took me, then, for a strolling Savoyard. My pride was wounded. “It is a frigate,” said I, with dignity; and I made some steps forward to get out of the crowd.

"A frigate! Well, that is jolly. Ho! look, look at the sailor."

I was abashed at these shouts, every one about me laughing and joking. I wanted to get from the centre of the group, but behind me a little rascal, the hardiest of the band, seized hold of my frigate, and at the same moment my cap was snatched by another and flung into the air. I cuffed the nearest boys to make them get out of my way; I caught my cap as it fell, and crowded it upon my head. I doubled up my fists to revenge or defend myself. Just then the church-bells broke into a sweet carol, and all the children rushed to the porch, crying out as they carried me with them, "See, see, a baptism!"

The father and mother came out of the church, and scarcely had they crossed the door-stone when the father, an elegant gentleman, took a big purse from a servant behind him and flung among us lads a handful of coin. There was at once a grand rough-and-tumble scramble among the children, but before we could get up from the ground the gentleman threw out more coppers. He also cast among us handfuls of candies, and on the pavement near me rolled and rebounded some great two-penny pieces. I leaped upon them. As I knelt grasping them a new scattering began, and I had the wonderful happiness to get the biggest coin of all, a ten-cent piece,

under my hand. Although this money had not been one second on the walk, the boys about me saw it, and flung themselves on me in a fury, yelling,

“He is not of our town; it isn’t fair!”

They trampled on my hands to make me open them, and I, though so weak, held firmly, in my despair screaming lustily.

Happily, the gentleman had not emptied his purse, and my tyrants left me to get a chance at the new distribution. I made good my escape. I had twelve cents, and I fled into the baker’s shop and made him cut me a thick slice of bread. Never was music so sweet as the sound of that knife crunching through that crust. Eagerly cramming my mouth, I made haste to flee from that village. All my thoughts of vengeance were gone; I had but one wish—to escape from the clutches of my foes. I walked for about two hours, when I found an old and abandoned coast-guard house, where I thought to pass the night.

I had often heard the saying that riches drive away sleep; it was realized for me.

With some armfuls of dried grass I made for myself an excellent bed, but upon it I slept very poorly, tormented to know what I should do with that precious money. I had to pay three cents for a loaf of bread for my supper, and there yet remained to me nine cents. Would it be best for me to live

three days upon my little capital? or ought I to invest it in some articles which I might use in obtaining food for the remainder of my journey? This double question distracted me all night.

If I had recently had a vessel of some kind in which to cook my fish, I need not have gone so hungry—I could have eaten crabs, shrimps and lobsters; and if I had owned a net only as big as my handkerchief, I could have caught in the shallows as many prawns as I wanted.

Finally, in the morning, I resolved that at the first village which lay in my way I would buy a box of matches for a penny and a fishing-line for three cents; with my remaining fivpence I would get a tin pot to cook my food in. I must confess, however, that the thought which induced me to make this wise decision was not a very wise one—it was the glory and joy of owning a complete store-bought fishing-line.

This line would be so long that I could throw away the split osiers, and rig out my frigate with ropes of real cord, and there would be enough string left to make, as I knew how, a little square net. In those days three cents would buy a hook and any amount of good string.

I began, then, by buying the cord, and next the matches; but when I came to the tin pot, there was trouble, for the cheapest cost fifteen cents. Happily,

I spied one in a corner so bent and dingy that it had been cast aside as rubbish. I asked the shopman what he would sell it for. He told me that as a mere matter of kindness I might have it for five cents.

That day I got over less ground than on any day of my trip, for as soon as I had found a good place I sat down, whittled out a knitting-needle and a reel, and proceeded to make a little net. I had been used to this work from childhood, and it was to me a mere pastime. For my dinner I had the happiness of eating some shrimps caught in this net and cooked in sea-water over a little fire of twigs which I collected from the hedges.

But all good fortune could not come at once. I had made my fire under an overhanging rock, and the wind carried up the smoke in little whirls, which attracted the attention of a coast-guard on his beat above. I saw him bending over the edge of the cliff to see whence the smoke came. Then he departed without speaking to me; but at evening, when I was rambling about looking for a place to sleep, I again attracted his attention, and I thought that he looked at me with a very strange air. No wonder I was an object of curiosity, with my boat on my shoulder, my pot hanging to a stick, my net with its long handle and my little bundle in my hand. I knew quite well

that my appearance was not such as to inspire confidence. Already, as I passed through villages or met countrymen on the highway, I had been narrowly looked at. They had watched me, and the only reason why they did not question had been that I quickened my pace.

Suppose the coast-guard should ask what I was doing there—should arrest me? This fear caused me, in hope of escaping him, to turn from the shore and take myself into the fields by the first path I found. Coast-guards could not leave the cliffs, and therefore I was safe from his clutches.

But if in the fields I had not the patrol to fear, I also had not their abandoned huts to sleep in, and I was now obliged to lie down in the open air. What made it worse was that I could not see a single tree. There was nothing to break the monotony of the plain but some haystacks, which afar off lifted their black cones against the sunset.

It was evident that I must once more pass the night in such a manner as on the marshes of Dol, and that had been bad enough. But I had better fortune. Some rakes and pitchforks had been left lying by the hay. These I leaned against the stacks and spread hay over them, making a sloping roof to shelter me from the dew. I then spread under this some bundles of seed clover, and thus I was well and

warmly sheltered from the dampness in a little perfumed nest.

The fear of being surprised by the farmers made me set out in the freshness of early morning, when the first bird cries had aroused me. I was still terribly drowsy. My very legs seemed asleep, but it was so essential that I should not be captured that I staggered on, napping as I walked. It was not, as you may divine, my appetite, but opportunity, which fixed the hours for my meals. I depended much on the tide. I was only able to breakfast or dine when the sea was low and I could catch fish. So, as it was high tide about eight o'clock, I was not able to eat until noon, and then I was obliged to content myself with crabs, which I trapped on the wet sand. Therefore, that I might not be again exposed to such an abstinence, I resolved always to have provisions in advance; and my lunch finished, I began industriously to fish for shrimps. I took a great number of the kind the people in Paris call the bouquet, also three plaice, very fine ones, and a sole.

As I strolled along the shore, looking for a secluded spot where I could cook some fish, I met a lady who walked with a little girl on either side of her and taught them to seek for shells in the sand with a pointed stick.

“Well, my boy,” she cried, stopping me, “have you had good luck?”

She had snow-white hair curled on each side of her face, a tall figure, great kindly eyes and a sweet, motherly voice. It was four days since I had heard a kind word. The little girls were blondes, and very pretty. They danced around me, looking at my trophies, and I did not fear to stop and speak to them.

“Yes, madame,” I said, stopping and opening my tin pot, in which the shrimps were lying in a little water.

“My child, perhaps you would be willing to sell your fish?” said the lady.

Guess if I did not prick up my ears at that proposition. A dozen loaves of bread danced before my eyes, and I snuffed a sudden odor of fried meat.

“How much do you ask for them?” she said.

“Ten cents,” said I, at a venture, having never sold anything.

“Ten cents! Why, boy, the shrimps alone are worth twenty-five. You do not seem to know the price of your merchandise. You are not, then, a fisher?”

“No, madame,” I said, blushing.

“Oh, then you are just fishing and picnicking

for amusement. Suppose, then, that you sell me the shrimps and the large fish for eighty cents?"

She held out to me two forty-cent pieces. I was so astounded at the magnificence of the payment that I could not open my lips.

"Come, my child, take it," she said, smiling. "I trust that with it you will buy yourself something useful and entertaining."

So she put the eighty cents in my hand, while one of the little girls emptied my shrimps into a little pail she had brought for her shells, and the other took the plaice and the sole, strung together on a green twig. Eighty cents! Scarcely had my patrons turned their backs when I executed a wild dance upon the sand. Eighty cents! This was the tune to which I frolicked.

Scarcely a quarter of a mile off the roofs of a village showed themselves against the sky. Thither I hastened, resolved to buy a good big loaf. I had no fear now of the constable. If anybody questioned me, I could display my money, and prove that I was no low-lived stroller, but a gentleman of means. I had eighty cents. I could say, "Let me go. I am rich, you see. I am able to support myself."

I met neither coast-guard nor constable, and in entering the town I could not find a baker. I walked twice the whole length of the street and found an eat-

ing-house, a grocery and a tavern, but no bakery. It was needful, however, to get bread. My money rattled in my pocket, and I was desperately anxious to spend it. I was no longer timid, as in other days. The mistress of the inn was standing in her doorway, and I ventured to ask her where the baker lived.

"We have none in this town," she replied.

"Then, madame, would you please sell me a loaf of bread?"

"We do not sell bread, but I can get you a good dinner if you are hungry," she answered.

From the open door came to me the smell of fried cabbage. I heard the soup bubbling in the kettle. My hunger could not resist it:

"What must I pay for a dinner, madame?"

"For soup, fried meat, bread and cabbage, thirty cents, and with the rest you will have a mug of sweet cider."

It was terribly dear—almost half my fortune; but if she had said fifty cents, I must have accepted it. She led me into a hall, set before me a small table and put on it a round loaf of bread. It was that bread which entirely overcame me. The bacon was good; and instead of eating it with knife and fork, I spread the slices on pieces of bread, making sandwiches, which I appreciated chiefly for their thickness. The first mouthful whetted my appetite for the second,

and that for the third, it was so good. The loaf diminished wonderfully. I cut a fourth round, vowing in my heart that it should be the last; but enormous as it was, when it was finished there remained yet a little bacon, so I returned to the loaf for another cut. I thought I was alone in the hall, but a confused noise, as of some one laughing, and half-stifled words, made me turn towards the door, behind which was an elevated passage-way and a staircase. On this the tavern-keeper, his wife and a maid-servant were staring at me and laughing convulsively.

Never in my life was I so confused. The three came into the room.

"Has the gentleman dined well?" demanded the man, with a mock reverence. Then they burst forth into another laugh.

I was in haste to fly from them. My money was in two forty-cent pieces. I offered one to the landlady. She pocketed it, saying,

"We charge *a man* thirty cents for his meal, but an *ogre* forty." So she gave me no change. Half my money gone, and to-morrow I would be hungry again! I made my way out of the door, when they called me back: "Take care of a fit of apoplexy. Do not walk too quickly; it will be dangerous after over-feeding."

Despite the warning, in my mortification I ran like a thief; and not until I had put a long distance be-

tween these cruel creatures and myself did I slacken my pace.

I was, indeed, ashamed of having spent so much of my means on a single repast, but physically I was very much better for it.

I had not known such feelings of energy and strength for months. Having had plenty to eat, carrying forty cents in my pocket, a clear sky overhead, the world all before me, I went forward cheerily. These forty cents, well saved, would furnish me food for many days. I concluded, therefore, to leave the long route by the coast and strike across the country, across the department of Calvados, in the course of travel I had long ago marked out for myself.

One difficulty only disturbed me: whereabouts was I? I had passed through many villages and two large towns, but had not found out their names. Along the highway would have been guide-boards and milestones to inform me, but I had kept to the sea border, and had seen nothing like sign-posts. I dared not ask information; that would attract attention to me as a vagrant, and I might be arrested. I remembered clearly, as I had studied it on the map, the shape of the department of La Manche, and I knew that it lay lengthwise by the sea. Therefore, if I would cross it laterally, I must turn to the east; but would that route bring me to Isigny or Vire? At

Isigny I would be on the coast by the fisheries, and find, perhaps, a vessel on which I could ship, but at Vire I would be far inland, with my forty cents expended and no means of replenishing my purse.

The question was a serious one, and I pondered it long. At length I decided to try the eastern course, and at the first highway I turned about and put my back to the sea. My hope was to find milestones before it was too late to retrieve an error.

It was not long before I saw one, and read, "Quetteville, three miles." I had, then, three miles to go, and at Quetteville I should be able to satisfy myself. At the entrance to Quetteville I found on a corner of a high stone wall an inscription painted in white letters on a blue ground, and read, "Department of Highways, No. 9. From Quetteville to Galianière, five miles." Now, I did not remember ever having seen either of these places on any map of the department of La Manche. I had never heard these two names mentioned. Where in the world was I? Could it be possible that I was lost?

I went through the town; and when I had got far enough off not to fear the eyes of the inquisitive, I seated myself to think. I rested on a beautiful piece of stonework often found in France—a calvary. This is a cross and a little altar at its foot. It was erected where four ways met, at the most elevated place on

the road. The steps of the calvary were of granite, and perched on the highest I could get a wide view of great woody plains, with here and there the spire of a stone church rising above the green, and beyond all the line of the sea, which mingled with the blue of the sky. I had walked since morning. The sun was very hot. As I still tarried to consider what way I should take, I fell asleep.

When I awoke, I was conscious of a pair of eyes fixed intently on mine, and a voice saying to me,

“Don’t stir.”

Very naturally I obeyed by springing to my feet, and looked from side to side as if I would fly from a foe. The voice, which had first spoken in gentle tones, was now very impatient:

“I tell you, youngster, don’t stir. I am just in the midst of an unusually good study. If you’ll lie down again just as you were, and shut your eyes, I’ll give you ten cents.”

I dropped back upon the step. The speaker was not like a constable, and seemed to have no wish to arrest me. He was a splendid young man, dressed in a Spanish hat and a suit of gray velvet. He was sitting on a pile of stones, and had a frame lying on his knees. I saw he was taking my portrait—a tired boy lying asleep at the foot of a wayside cross—and he

seemed well pleased with his work. As I lay down he said, pleasantly,

“You needn’t shut your mouth, my lad. What do they call this place here?”

“I don’t know, sir.”

“Ah, then you don’t belong in this vicinity. May I ask if you are a tinker or a peddler of tin pots?”

I could not restrain a hearty laugh.

“What under the sun are you laughing at? If you are not a tinker, what is the meaning of that battered kettle you carry on your shoulder?”

Questions had begun already. But this gentleman had the air of the man of the world, a royal good fellow, not a sneaking inquisitor, and I felt greatly attracted to him, so I was not afraid to reply. I told him the truth:

“Sir, I am going to Havre. This pot serves me to cook my fish, and my net to catch them. I have been eight days on my journey, and I have now forty cents in my pocket.”

“And you are not afraid of being murdered when you confide to a stranger like myself that you carry about that immense sum in coin? Oh, stupid boy, did you never hear of highwaymen, brigands, robbers?”

I laughed again, merrily.

He continued the conversation, and before I knew it I had told him how I had set out and how I had lived on my journey.

“Ah, well, lad,” he said, “you are certainly a curiosity. You began by playing the fool in running away from your mother, but you have conducted yourself very fairly since. I love lads of your stripe. Would you like it if we were friends? Look here; what I propose to you is this. I also am going to Havre, but I am not hurrying myself. I will get there perhaps in a month. That will, however, depend on the country I travel, for where I find fine scenery I shall stop to draw. If there is nothing worth sketching, I shall pass on more rapidly. Would you like to come with me? You shall carry my bag, which lies yonder, and I will pay for your food and lodging.”

The next day I told my new master all my history as you have read it.

“What an old scamp your uncle was!” he said as I finished my story. “What say you? Let us go to Dol, and I will proclaim his villainy from every wall of the city. I will cry, ‘Look at Simon Kalbris, who left his nephew to perish of famine!’ Five days from the hour I begin at him he will be forced to leave the city. No? You do not wish to go there and punish him? You had rather keep clear of him? You are

merciful and sensible. But there is one thing in your history which appears important to me. You wish to be a sailor. You have, it appears, a genius for that vocation. Still, it seems to me that, while it is not my business to dispute your preferences, you are choosing a very dreary, fatiguing, ill-paid life. It looks in my eyes all dangers and nothing else. You are now attracted by the heroic and adventuresome side; and although you are very young, you may be right to choose for yourself. Certainly nothing could be worse than the dog's life you led at your uncle's. But let me tell you, young man, you have done one very wrong thing: you are distressing your mother terribly by this unexplained absence. It must now be eight days since your uncle advised her of your disappearance, and can you imagine what anxiety and agony she has since then endured on your behalf? Without doubt she believes that you are dead, and that she is alone in the world. Come, sir, unlock my satchel and hand me my portfolio. I shall now make you write to your mother, while I make a sketch of your old mill. You shall tell your mother all that you have told me—of Simon's cruelty and wickedness, your secret stay in her house, your adventures and good fortune. You may then say to her that by chance—yes, you may say by a *happy* chance—you have met a landscape painter named Lucien Hardel, which

painter will take you to Havre, and will recommend you to a friend of his who is a shipbuilder, who will help you to embark upon a good ship in a decent position. Go on now; and when you have finished your letter, let me hear what you have had the heart to write."

M. Lucien Hardel was right. I wrote to my mother a letter, which I fairly drenched with my tears, confiding to her all my story. This greatly relieved my conscience.

Oh, those were beautiful days of my wandering life, the days I spent with Lucien Hardel, the genial painter.

We wandered on and on without troubling ourselves as to the journey. Sometimes we tarried nearly all day under a tree where there was some view which he wished to sketch; at other times we strode along all day without delaying any. I carried his travelling-satchel, which was not very heavy, and I bore it strapped on my back like a knapsack, yet often he kindly insisted on carrying it a while to give me a rest.

Each morning he sent me to buy provisions for our noonday luncheon—bread, hard-boiled eggs, slices of cold ham and a bottle of sweet wine, which we mingled with water. We thus dined in state in the thick shade of some tree, and in the evening we got our

supper at the inn where we might happen to put up for the night. Then we did not have a repast of crabs, shrimps or muscles, but good hot soup. We did not have piles of damp hay for a bed, but a nice couch with white curtains in a clean, cosy room, where one might undress and go to bed in comfortable style.

My new friend was surprised not to find me an ignorant country boy. The year and more I had spent with M. de Bihorel had afforded me knowledge which often surprised the artist. I knew a deal about trees and flowers, the ways and names of birds and insects, and an infinite variety of curious facts which people do not usually get hold of. We did not pass much time without speaking, and there was in M. Hardel a readiness to hear, a kindness and a cheerfulness, which set me entirely at ease and made him a most charming companion.

Going on thus, without any great attention to our route, we arrived at the suburbs of Mortain. This place was not on our direct course to Havre, but I did not distress myself about that, because I now felt sure of getting there safely and being put on a good vessel.

I had fixed my mind on making a voyage on one of the many fast-sailing packets which run to Brazil,

so that it mattered little to me whether I gained or lost time.

The country about Mortain is, I will not say the most Norman, but the most picturesque in all Normandy. Pine forests, crags and precipices, sharply-outlined hills, sombre gorges, everywhere foaming torrents rushing along ravines and falling in cascades, and, finally, a verdure of a freshness and an intensity of green which is marvellous and attracts to it many painters, who have not to look far for studies for the most enchanting of pictures.

Without making any plan, we travelled in a circle of which Mortain was the centre, and of which the extreme diameter went as far as Domfront, Sourdeval, Saint Hilaire and Teilleul. While M. Hardel worked, I fished for trout, or caught crawfish in the rock fissures for our supper. I was too happy. Such happiness could not last for the truant. There was before me yet a longer period of the suffering which ill-doing and unfilial conduct is sure to bring in its train.

One morning we were seated side by side near a mountain stream, busy with our avocations, when we saw a soldier coming toward us. From afar there was something grotesque in his appearance, and it was plain that he had been enlisted neither for his height, dignity, nor elegance of demeanor.

Quick to notice in men or things all which pertained to the development of his art, M. Hardel bade me take a good look at the fellow; and at the same time, on the margin of the picture which he was painting, he roughly but most correctly sketched the peculiarities of the soldier's appearance.

The man approached us; and seeing that we regarded him closely, he pressed down his hat on his red, bushy hair, took in a threatening way his sword from its sheath and struck an attitude of ludicrous pomposity. The pencil, moving swiftly on the paper, followed the soldier's movements and produced a caricature which caused me to laugh uproariously.

That puzzled the soldier, who stepped up to us.

"Pardon! excuse me," he said; "but you gaze at me so closely that I want to see what you are writing."

"Ah, well, my soldier," said Lucien Hardel, placing the picture in his folio, "you cannot have a look at it. If I stared at you, you also stared at me, so we are quits."

"You are mistaken," said the man; "what I claim to see is your passport; it is my duty and my business to demand it of you, since you are travelling along the grand highways."

Without replying to the soldier, whose manner was offensive, Lucien Hardel turned to me, saying,

"Romain, take from my satchel my passport—you

will find it in my tobacco-pouch—and present it politely to this agreeable gentleman.”

Then he addressed the soldier :

“I would out of respect to your position present you, also, with a piece of money, but in travelling, as you know, people are not always very flush of coin, and cannot do as they wish. It is precisely for that reason that Romain appears in your honorable presence without gloves; but as you wear none yourself, as I remarked before, we are quits.”

The soldier now comprehended that this very polite harangue to which he had listened with great pleasure was a burlesque. He flushed, bit his lips, crushed his cap on tighter, then, to recover himself, began to read :

“We, etc., request the authorities, civil and military, to permit to pass and freely to travel M.—Hum, hum, hum! M. Lucien. Lu—Lu—Lucien Har—Hardel, profession of—of—” Here he stopped, embarrassed; then took courage: “Profession of paint—painter, landscape painter.” Then he mumbled something more, and handed me back the passport.

“That is well,” he said, majestically.

Then, just as he turned his back to leave us, Lucien Hardel, inspired by some evil genius, stopped him.

“Pardon me, sir; you have passed the essential

point which is in my passport—the thing for which I paid fifty cents without a murmur.”

“What is it?”

“That you owe me aid and protection.”

“Well, what of that?”

“Well, would you tell me in what quality I am permitted to travel along the highway?”

“In the quality mentioned in your passport.”

“Then, in the quality of a travelling painter?”

“Certainly, since that is your business.”

“If you please, then, would you tell me what is permitted and what is prohibited to my profession?”

“Oh, indeed, you should know yourself. So you expect me to teach you your trade?”

“My trade? No. But that of a travelling painter. You see, understand me, in the view of the police, I am a landscape painter?”

“Oh dear, yes!”

“Very good. Suppose, a couple of miles from here, I meet one of your sort; he demands my passport; maybe I am eating my dinner or doing something else not laid down as landscape painting, and he arrests me?”

“Necessarily.”

“You see it makes it needful for me to know *exactly* what, in my business of landscape painter, I may do, what I may not.”

Great drops of sweat flowed down the face of the poor guard. He saw that he was being made fun of, and he began to think that he had said or done something foolish. Then his wrath rose :

“Do you expect to go on interfering with the authorities in this way, you with the long beard? Come, sir, this is not to the purpose ; what is your profession, or what is not your profession ? It is not clear in your own mind ; and if it is not clear to you, you cannot expect it to be so to anybody else. Since you need so much information, you must come with me to the mayor ; you can explain yourself to him. As to that fellow”—he pointed at me—“he is not mentioned in the passport, and it is needful that we find out all about him. Travel ahead, sirs.”

“Then, in the quality of a landscape painter, you do arrest me ?”

“I arrest you because I do, and it is not worth while to talk further with you about it. I have said, as a military guard on duty, March on, and I hope you understand that.”

“Very well ; let us march. If the mayor is a man like yourself, it will be worth some trouble to have a look at him. Come, Romain, pick up the satchel and let us go. Soldier !”

“What do you want now ?”

“Tie my hands and draw out your sword. Carry

it bare. If I am to be arrested, I mean to have it done in style. I demand a first-class arrest."

I was far from sharing my patron's gayety. I saw that he had much better have held his peace—that it is dangerous to try to vex the most humble; they may be able to turn upon you. "And the mayor will find out who the boy is," the soldier had said. That word rang in my ears. The nimble-tongued Lucien would in mere bravado tell my story, but evidently it would be the magistrate's legal duty to restore the runaway apprentice to Uncle Simon, at Dol. Lucien walked before, his hands behind him, singing,

"Oh, the poor prisoner,
Pray give him his dinner!"

The guard followed him at arm's length, and I came after, four or five paces behind. After going half a mile we turned toward the village, and our way lay through a little wood. It happened that the road was straight, and that nobody was in sight; scarcely had we gone a hundred steps into the wood, when, yielding to the inspiration of my terrors, my mind was suddenly made up. "It is better to run all risks alone," I said to myself, "than to risk being discovered and sent back to Dol under arrest."

I had not buckled the satchel to my shoulders, but carried it in my hand. I lagged a little in my pace



I SPRANG OVER THE STUMPS AND TORE ONWARD.

to be the better out of hearing ; then I dropped the bag to the earth, and cleared at a bound the ditch by the roadside. The noise of these motions attracted the soldier ; he ran back, but already I was in the woods.

“Stop !” he shouted.

“Don’t be afraid !” cried Lucien Hardel ; “come back. This will only turn out a good joke.”

I only screamed my explanation :

“My uncle ! Good-bye, good-bye.”

I sprang over stumps and tore onward. Would he follow me ? Would he not follow me ? I ran straight forward, not daring to take time to look behind. I was heedless of the branches which whipped against me, of the thorns which tore me. I went on so wildly that I saw nothing which I should have seen, and suddenly the ground gave way under my feet, and I rolled to the bottom of a great pit. I lay quiet for some seconds—not that I was wounded, but I was in an inextricable tangle of bushes and weeds and vines so dense that I could not see the sky. The instinct of an animal hunted by hounds governed me. Cowering close to the earth, I shrunk myself as small as possible, dared not move, only lay listening. I heard nothing but the twitter of birds which I had alarmed and the rattle of loose earth which my fall had shaken and scattered among the bram-

bles; grain by grain it fell gently like an immense hour-glass.

After some minutes, when I was certain that no one pursued me, I began to reflect on my unfortunate position. This is how I reasoned: Lucien Hardel might be imprisoned by the mayor, and then our soldier and his companions would be despatched to look for me. If I did not wish to be captured, I had better start off in a hurry to gain an advance. It never occurred to my guilt-burdened heart that the mayor would dismiss Lucien Hardel with apologies to him and reproof to the soldier, and that Lucien, being at liberty, would seek for me, that we might resume our journey toward Havre.

I was in a state of mind where only extreme measures present themselves, since they only accord with an excited and overstrained frame of spirit. To escape being taken by the soldiers, examined by the court and remanded to Dol, I believe I would have walked through fire.

Without doubt my heart begged ten thousand pardons of Lucien Hardel for having abandoned him in this way; yet, after all, I remembered that it was to his absurd jesting and teasing that we were indebted for this fright and detention.



CHAPTER IX.

TWO hours later I reached the outskirts of Sourdeval, but for fear of attracting attention I did not go through the city, but turned to the left, that I might enter the road leading to Vire. The long walk had quieted my excitement, but I was by no means secured against the great troubles on the way to Honfleur. I had now no longer my useful tin kettle; my little parcel had been dropped with Hardel's bag at Mortain, and in the midst of the fields I walked, finding myself in the same position which I occupied at the hour of my setting out. Hunger had not yet annoyed me, for I had dined

heartily with Lucien, but I should return to that old experience before long.

Add to this that the soldier guards were now scattered everywhere, with almost unlimited power for making arrests, and you will see that I did not travel in a very pleasant frame of mind; besides this, I missed my recent companion, and as I pursued my way, to my terrified eyes every countryman's cotton cap became a tri-colored cockade. Before I had gone three miles I had more than ten times left the main road to lurk in some by-path until somebody got past me. In jumping a ditch on one of these escapades I heard a clear jingling in my pocket, as if money were rattling there. I searched myself, therefore, while crouching under a hedge, and found six pennies, and, what was yet more valuable, two forty-cent pieces. At Mortain I had been sent by M. Hardel to buy him some tobacco, and here was the change out of a dollar. Ought I to keep it? But how could I return it? I vowed within myself to refund the eighty-six cents whenever fortune blessed me with an opportunity. At Havre, perhaps.

So frequent had been of late the changes of my fate that nothing now astonished me. After some moments of reflection, and of holding counsel with myself, I fixed on a plan as follows: I would continue my journey on foot, and I would sleep in the

fields or woods, but I would not stint myself of food lest I should become weak. I would not refuse myself necessary nourishment. It was dark when I got to Vire, and I resolved to press on through the city, walking while it was cold and damp, that I might sleep in the warmth of daytime. As I went out of Vire, instead of taking the road to Villers-Bocage, I got into that leading to Conde-sur-Noireau, and it was only when I reached a place called Chenedollé that I saw my mistake. I had been so careful a student of my geography that I seemed to carry all the French maps in my head. Therefore I knew that by way of Harcourt I could reach Caen. I did not torment myself with my mistake, but slept profoundly in the shelter of a great stack of cabbages. Two or three hundred paces from my resting-place I saw a shepherd's hut in the middle of a sheep-yard; the breeze bore to me the warm smell of the flocks, and gave me a secure feeling, as if I were not alone in the wide plains, while I could hear the bark of dogs chained inside the folds, who now and then made known their consciousness of my presence. When I had recounted to Lucien Hardel all my adventures by the seashore, he had said that he looked upon it as a miracle that I had escaped fevers caused by the night dampness and the morning cold. Now under my pile of cabbage-stalks I was aroused by the

chill of daybreak, and I rose. It was yet scarcely light, but already a saffron tint lit the tree tops. The horizon from east to west was gold-colored; in the zenith the stars burned feebly in a pale azure sky, while all around me trailed a great black veil, out of which great folds of gray vapor writhed themselves like serpents and slid off into the valleys. The dust in the highways was moistened as by a shower, and upon the bushes and on the tips of the branches the little birds swayed, chirping and pruning their feathers, shaking from them the dews of night.

I continued my journey for two days, in which nothing particular happened to me, but of course, as may be supposed, I did not march on from morning until evening without stopping. Toward noon I looked for a favorable spot, and slept some hours to make up for what I traveled at night to escape danger from dews and observation.

The third day after leaving Harcourt I reached a great forest called the "Cinglais Woods;" although it was quite early in the day, the heat was so great and stifling that I did not wait until noon to take my mid-day sleep.

I thought I had never been so warm; the earth burned my feet, and I cast myself under the trees, hoping to find a little refreshment, but in vain. Even in the depth of the wood, as on the great route,

the air was furnace-like. Not a leaf stirred, not a bird whistled; such a strange stillness pervaded all things that one would have believed that the fairy of silence had passed through the wood, touching with her wand skies, earth, plants, animals and winds, and had laid herself down to sleep. Only the gnats had escaped the universal spell. They darted through the shadows, and danced on the slanting shafts of sunlight, and whirled and darted up and down as if the fiery heat were their natural element, and by it they renewed their life and vigor.

Hardly had I seated myself under a tree when I fell asleep, my head resting on my arms. I was roused by a sharp pain in my neck. I put up my hand, and captured a big yellow ant; at the same time I felt a sting in my leg, and another on my side, then an infinite number of bites all over my body. I undressed quickly, and searched and shook my clothes, full of these horrible ants. I got rid of any number of them, but that did not help the poisonous bites already given me. Like mosquitoes, they had left their venom in my blood, for I was half wild with the burning and itching. The more I scratched and rubbed, the worse I felt, and in about an hour I was spotted with blood, where my nails had taken off the skin. I tried to get out of the woods, thinking that there would be more air and I should suffer less, but the road lengthened

on interminably, trees still on every side, and the temperature that of a furnace. Finally, looking down a bank, I spied a little river before me, which wound in the midst of a clump of trees. In ten minutes I reached its banks, disrobed promptly, and plunged in for a glorious bath.

The banks were fresh and green as one could find in lovely Normandy. Farther on, the waters turned the wheels of a mill, of which one could hear the monotonous tic-tac, tic-tac, droning through the distance. The stream flowed gently among masses of reeds which swayed gracefully to the motion of the current, and the water, clear as crystal, showed plainly its bed of yellow sand, varied here and there by little mossy stones. Growing in the shallows, a mass of flags and water-lilies rustled in the sunlight, and in the shadow of their broad leaves darted dragon flies and blue-bottles, humming and quivering. Among streamers of water-roses and tangles of cress, through wreaths of aconite blossoms and the shimmering coils of gold thread, went rainbow butterflies on dainty wings; terrified by the noise of my plunge into the water, a flock of pigeons rose from the bank and lighted on the willow trees which overhung the brink, and there they sat, turning their pretty heads from side to side, their brilliant necks glittering in the sun. Soon reassured, they settled down at the water's edge,

and dipping their heads into the stream, sprinkled and dressed their feathers, while farther off some kingfishers and swallows, more timid, flew up and down, not daring to draw too near; when they flashed across a streak of sunlight, their plumage shone like turquoise, dazzling the eyes.

I remained a long while sporting in the water; its freshness and the sense of cleanliness and coolness was most delicious. I was like one struck by a blow when a harsh voice suddenly addressed me, coming from the very spot where I had left my clothes:

"Ah, you thief! I catch you bathing, do I? Well and good this time; you may look for your clothes at the mayor's office."

My clothes! Was he taking my clothes to the mayor's office? Every rag of apparel which I possessed? What! carry off my garments, and leave me naked in the stream? I could scarce believe my ears.

Stupefied, I stared at the speaker. He was a little man, coarse and fat, and from the bank he shook a walking-stick at me. In the middle of his breast, upon his gray woollen blouse, burned a little oval plate of brass, furbished until it shone like gold.

The little man did not lose time. He proceeded to make good his threat. He stooped, rolled my poor wardrobe into a bundle pell mell, and lifted himself up. I shrieked, "Sir, sir, mister!"

"Yell away," he retorted. "Look for your clothes at the mayor's office."

I desired to leap from the water to pursue him, to seize hold of him, to wrest my lost possessions from his grasp. But the fear of that yellow badge was on me, and the shame of my nudity held me back. He was a policeman—a man who carries a sword, and can conduct his victims to jail. Suppose he seized and questioned me; what could I say? I am thankful that I never knew how to lie glibly.

The bundle was tied together; he slung it by his cane over his shoulder; and shaking his head threateningly at me, he shouted!

"Explain yourself to the mayor, little villain!" He was gone.

I remained so perplexed that I forgot to make the needful movements to keep myself afloat, and sank to the bottom like a stone. Why not die? Naked, homeless, penniless, what hope was there for me?

But the love of life asserted itself in my young heart. I rose to the surface, struck out for shore, and as soon as I gained the bank, for pure shame I hid myself in a clump of rushes, their long flexible leaves clinging closely about me, and I had at least a covering from passers-by or pursuers.

It did not take long consideration to show me the horrors of my state. How *could* I go to the mayor

to look for my clothes? Where was the mayor? Of course in the village, and how could I go there or into the streets without even a shirt?

Here I need not play Robinson Crusoe, for I was in very truth worse off than that famous adventurer. There never was so lively an affair as mine printed in a book.

Since I fled from Dol I had never been so helpless, so wretched, so mortified. All my other troubles dwindled into insignificance before this. I had been unhappy and discouraged often; now I was absolutely in despair.

I believed myself utterly lost, without hope, without any way of escape, without help; all my fortitude forsook me, and I groaned, heartbroken.

I wept a long while, drearily; insensibly the chill of the water crept over me, and I shivered dreadfully. A little way from me the bright sunshine fell upon a space of yellow sand, and the bushes near it were dry. I stole thither and rubbed my shivering body with dry hot sand until I was warm, but such was my horror of being seen by somebody that I returned to my reeds. However, the cold drove me back, and at last I changed my hiding-place.

Along the higher bank above the sand fell a drapery of dark leaves, long grasses and rank weeds, and under these I withdrew myself, pulling them over me like a

curtain, and crouching in a hollow under the upper edge of the brook.

The sun gradually warmed me, and I came back to the wants of life. I was so hungry, and, alas! with my clothes the policeman had carried off my little sum of money.

Thus several hours rolled by, and no means of escape suggested itself to me. From time to time I heard the steps of passers-by on the road above me, but of what use was it to hail them?—I could not crawl out before any one in my present state. How should I ever be able to leave this concealment?

After a time the idea might have come to me to weave a garb of dock leaves, mulleins and long grass. I cannot tell; I did not think of it then.

The sun was slowly setting; night was coming on—not a beautiful starry night such as I had spent under the shelter of a haystack, protected by my clothes, having eaten a supper; but no—a dark night, to be spent cowering naked against the cold earth. I grew nearly wild; running and flying before my eyes seemed to pass horrible phantoms, creatures of the darkness, skeleton forms, surmounted by soldier caps and wearing police badges, stretching out huge claws to grasp me.

An hour before dark I heard along the road a great noise of wagons which appeared to follow one another

closely. Presently the sounds ceased; the cavalcade of whatever kind it was rested just above my hiding-place. From my concealment I was not able to see the road, but from the clank of chains and sound of voices I concluded people were unharnessing their horses. Then came roarings and growlings and strange noises, such as I never heard in my life—sounds more shrill than the neighing of a horse, louder than the bray of an ass; and the birds who were seeking their nests seemed terrified by the cries, and flew wildly hither and thither. A great rat leaped across my legs and took refuge in its hole, against the entrance of which I was lying.

It grew dark. I heard steps on the earth above me and sound of voices. I was not mistaken.

“I have a chicken,” said the voice.

“Where did you catch it?”

“On the road. I tied a stone to a string and whirled it around its neck; it was choked without giving a cry.”

“Then let us cook it.”

“And if old Cabriole sees us, he’ll clap it into his own pot, and give us nothing but a whack on the head.”

This charming dialogue by no means encouraged me, but for that very reason it filled me with the audacity of despair, and I dared speak as I would not

to decent people. I reached my two hands to the edge of the road, dragging up my head between the overhanging dock-leaves, so that I could see over the field.

The two speakers whose harsh, rough voices I had taken for those of men were boys of about my own age. This emboldened me. I hesitated a little. Then my resolution was taken.

"If you please," said I.

They started and looked all about, seeing no one, for my head was almost hidden by leaves, surprised and terrified also. The dishonest are always cowards ; they know not whether to advance or retreat.

"Oh, look at that head !" cried one, seeing me.

"It's a ghost," blubbered the other.

"Oh, you dunce ! it's a live boy."

At the same moment I heard from the distance a loud voice bawling,

"Come, you miscreants ! we want you to gather grass for the horses."

I looked and saw in line three long wagons painted red and yellow ; it was a caravan of travelling mountebanks.

"Cabriole, Cabriole," called the two boys.

"What do you want ?"

"There's a savage, a wild boy ; come, look !"

Cabriole advanced slowly.

"Honor-bright, we ain't doing no fooling."

"Where is your savage?"

"Hiding in the weeds, yonder."

They all three came near me together, and all began to shriek with laughter.

"What language does your savage speak?" demanded the man they called Cabriole.

"French, if you'll believe it," said the boys.

"French, sir, if you please," said I.

I then told them my recent adventure. I was travelling; I stopped to bathe, and a policeman had carried off my clothes. I had been naked since early morning—was cold, hungry and terribly mortified. They all laughed and shouted, the boys fairly rolling on the ground in an ecstacy of glee at an adventure which appeared much more charming to them than to me.

Finally Cabriole recovered himself.

"Buttons," said he to one of the boys, "go and bring us a pair of trowsers and a shirt."

In less than two minutes Master Buttons had come back, and I lost no time in getting into the garments. I leaped upon the bank.

"Now," said Cabriole, "let us go and see the master."

He led me toward the first wagon; I mounted it by some little wooden steps. Near a brazier over which

boiled a meat stew I saw a little dry, withered old man, and near him a woman so tall, so huge, such a mountain of humanity, that she terrified me.

It was needful for me again to relate that portion of my story which I had just told, and again a chorus of wild laughter broke forth.

"So you're going to take ship at Havre?" said the little man.

"Yes, sir."

"And how do you mean to pay me for that shirt and pair of trowsers?"

I waited a moment in distress, then I took courage, and said, "Sir, if you choose, I will do as much work for you as will pay for them."

"And what do you know how to do? Can you drop your bones out of joint for a show?"

"I cannot."

"Can you swallow a sword?"

"No, sir."

"Can you play the trumpet, the drum or the tambourine?"

"None of them."

"Well, what on earth do you know? It seems to me, my lad, that your education has been singularly neglected."

"Stupid, ignorant child!" said the fat woman, with a sigh like a porpoise; "he is like all the world. He

knows nothing, and yet talks of travelling with a show."

She examined me from head to foot, shook her shoulders, and so shook the whole van, and then she closed her eyes in utter scorn of my debasement.

Then she looked toward me, groaning in tones like distant thunder:

"Oh, if you were only a monster of some sort!"

"As, for instance, if he had but two heads or three arms," said the little man.

"But he is made like everybody else. What a horrid shame!" said Cabriole.

"Do you know how to curry horses?" demanded the little man.

"Yes, sir, I can try to do that," I answered.

"Very good. That ends the matter. From this day out, you are engaged as hostler in the menagerie of the Count de Lapolade, celebrated, I beg leave to say, by the beauty of its animals, and by the courage of the illustrious Diélette—Diélette, our adopted daughter. Yonder is Cabriole; he will show you what you shall do, where you shall sleep and how you shall eat. In one hour you may come back here for supper. By that time the stew will be cooked."

I was not in a position to choose for myself. Lapolade owned the clothes I wore, and I could not go naked to Havre,

I was not able to make any difficulty or offer objections. Indeed, in my extremity, I very thankfully accepted the strange resource offered me. I should have clothes, supper, a bed. This, after my recent disasters, savored of paradise.





CHAPTER X.

BEHOLD me now a mountebank, or, to speak with less vanity, the hostler of the caravan of his lordship the Count de Lapolade!

My patron was not, as one would have every right to imagine, a bogus Count. He had his parchments, which he willingly exhibited on all grand occasions, which gave him the right to bear his high-sounding title. After a life troubled by all vices and by all evil passions he had fallen thus far. To put the finishing touch to his misfortunes, he had in an hour of drunken degradation married the immense woman, the giantess, who had been pleased so to de-

spise me. Celebrated through all the fairs in Europe as the "*Big Bordelaise*," though in truth she had been born in Auvergne, she had in her youth occupied the high position of a phenomenon or "female colossus." Her portrait on placards represented her as clad in rose-colored gauze, delicately poised on a gray cloud, her monstrous legs resplendent in white silk stockings. Another picture showed her in a blue velvet spencer, a bouquet in her hand, making bows to a grenadier as huge as herself, with an inscription in gold letters, "I weigh six hundred pounds." She had by her exhibitions gained quite a sum of money, which tempted Lapolade. This man had no fortune but his talent *for begging*. No one could resist his amiable, importunate and endless pertinacity. His reputation equalled that of Mangin and De Turquetin. The "*Big Bordelaise*" and himself had been partners in a show; and having married, the beautiful couple had bought a menagerie, which during its first years had rivalled in celebrity that of Huguet of Massilia.

But the qualities which had made Lapolade's fortune ended by costing him dear. His limber tongue loved hearers, and with his boon companions he fell into drunkenness and gluttony.

His principal wild beast, badly fed and cared for, had died; others had been seized and sold for debt;

and at the time when I entered the caravan it was composed of an old lion, two hyenas, a big snake, a learned horse, which by day dragged a wagon and at night appeared upon the stage as an actor.

At supper I made the acquaintance of the members of this mountebank company.

Besides Count de Lapolade and his big wife were Cabriole, the clown, Buttons, the other boy whom I had already seen, and was called "Thread," two Germans, one of whom played the clarionette, and was named Hermann, while Carlos, the other, played the tambourine; lastly, the illustrious Diélette, a little girl of twelve, of a frail, nervous appearance and great blue pensive eyes.

Although entering the company as a simple servant, I was received at the table with all of these famous personages.

The word *table*, perhaps, does not exactly designate the thing which for the time being served us in that capacity. It was a large, long pine box which occupied the middle of one of the vans. It served a triple purpose. Within they kept the gala costumes of the company; at meal-times it was the table, and at night it held the mattress which was Diélette's bed. Beside this box were placed two others, making seats for the company, for only Monsieur Lapolade and his Countess were honored with chairs.

For the rest, the inside of the van looked very well, and had quite a stylish air, being ornamented and curtained. Indeed, many lodging-houses at Paris have not such a nice eating-room. A glass door with two panels opened at the back, two little windows were decked with red damask, and some prints were hung between them.

At supper I was again questioned as to my history, and told what I had before rehearsed, mentioning neither my mother, my uncle nor my native town.

When I came to the incident of the soldier who arrested Lucien Hardel, Diélette declared I was a dunce, and that in my place she would have been much amused, and have gone with them as a good joke. The two musicians applauded her remarks, not in words, for they never spoke, but by three united shouts of genuine Bavarian laughter.

After supper there yet remained some hours of light.

"Come, my children," said Count Lapolade, "let us profit by the remaining day to put ourselves out of joint a little. We should always exercise our muscles."

He placed himself on the steps of the van, and Diélette brought him his pipe filled and lighted, while the boys, Buttons and Thread, placed upon the grass by the roadside a little covered box. Then Thread pulled off his blouse, lifted the cover, got into

the box, drawing down his head as if he wanted to break it off; he then had himself shut up in the box, where he disappeared.

I was amazed, for the box looked so small that I would not have put a child in it.

Then it became Buttons' turn, but with all his efforts he could not hide himself in the box, and from the wagon-steps Lapolade hit him a vigorous blow with a long stick, crying,

"You have eaten too much. To-morrow I will put you on short rations."

Then he turned to me:

"Come, it is now your turn."

I made several steps backward to get out of the reach of his stick, and asked, "Must I get in there?"

"Not yet, my lad; show us only what you know how to do. Jump yon ditch for me."

It was large and deep, but I was used to such games, and I jumped two feet farther than was needful.

Lapolade appeared much pleased, and vowed that I was born for a rope-dancer.

The first van belonged to the owners of the menagerie, the second to the wild beasts, the third served as a store-room for food and needful articles, and a sleeping-place for the other members of the company.

As there was no bed provided for me, they gave me

two bundles of straw, and I lay down upon them. Although my bed was better than I had had the preceding night, I remained a long while without sleeping. The lights were put out, the noises ceased; soon there was a profound silence, broken only by the stir of the horses tethered to the wagons as the beasts stopped at intervals to nip at the grass. Now and then in the adjacent van I heard the whistling breath of the lion, as if in the silence and darkness of the night he recalled the depths of his African jungles with a sigh, and now and again I heard him lash his sides with his tail as if a ray of courage inspired him; he despised his captive state and longed for liberty.

He was in a strong cage. I was in the open air. One moment I thought of profiting by my opportunity, and speeding on my way. But the clothes I wore belonged to Lapolade, and I did not wish to be a thief. Then I had promised to serve my new master, and conscience held me to my word. After all, he could not possibly be worse than my uncle, and the day when I had worked enough to pay for my clothes and board I would be free.

The caravan journeyed on to Falaise, to the Guibray fair; there, for the first time, I saw Diélette enter into the cage of the lion, and I heard Lapolade make a speech.



THERE, FOR THE FIRST TIME, I SAW DIÉLETTE ENTER INTO THE
CAGE OF THE LION.

The costumes had been taken from the chests. Diélette, laying aside her plain garb, wore a robe of silver tissue spangled with gilt; on her head was a crown of roses.

My comrades, Buttons and Thread, were in red tights; the two Germans were costumed like Polish lancers, with plumes that hung over their eyes. For me, they had blacked me like a negro, my arms to the shoulders, my head to my breast. I represented an African slave, brought with the lion from the desert, and I was warned not to utter one word of French. To every question addressed me I was to answer only by a broad grin, showing all my teeth. My poor mother herself would not have recognized me.

This was exactly what Lapolade would have desired, for he did not know but in the crowd might be some of my previous acquaintances, and he had already made up his mind to keep me.

For two hours we made a great parade to draw the attention of the crowd. Cabriole had finished his antics; Diélette danced a reel with Buttons; then Lapolade appeared on the stage in his most magnificent attire.

Around us was a great crowd. My eyes were fairly dazzled by the numbers of white cotton bonnets, the headgear of all the Normans about us. The general, Lapolade, made a gesture. The music ceased. Then

he turned to me, holding out a cigar which he had half smoked, saying,

“Keep it going for me while I speak.”

I stared at it, amazed, when I was cuffed from behind by Cabriole, who shouted :

“He is a Hottentot ! The general offers him a cigar, and he don’t know enough to smoke it.”

The public deigned to think this a very fine joke, and applauded it enthusiastically.

I had never smoked. I did not even know that you should blow the smoke out of your mouth. But there was no time for explanations. With one hand Cabriole grasped my shoulders, with the other he pulled up my nose, and so forced my mouth open, and Lapolade thrust his cigar between my teeth. Certainly my horrified grimaces were very comical, for the country folks laughed, holding their sides.

The general raised his cocked-hat, and bowed low ; silence at once reigned around us.

“You see before you, my friends, the celebrated Count de Lapolade.

“What, that Lapolade ? That charlatan in the dress of a general ? The same, it is he. And why, you ask, does a man so illustrious dress himself in a style so ridiculous ? Oh, it is to please you, my lords, for to tell the truth, if at home and alone you are sen-

sible and honest men, when you get together in a crowd you cannot help being fools."

There was a movement of impatience in the crowd, and some grumbling tones.

Lapolade, without losing his self-possession, took his cigar from me and smoked a few whiffs; then to my disgust and utter despair he again thrust it between my lips.

"Halloo! below there," he said, "that man with the crumpled cap, and the one with the red nose, what are you mumbling at? Is it because I told you that at home you were honest men and added a little hint about a fool? I—well, I forgive you; I was wrong. At home, if you like it better, you are clowns, and here you are scamps."

The crowd shouted with joy, because two were singled out as the butt of his wit.

When the noise subsided, he began again:

"Then, if I were not disguised as a general, in place of standing before me with open mouths and eyes as round as saucers to stare at me, you would all be going indifferently on your way. But I understand human nature, and know of what follies it is composed. Therefore I have been to Germany to look for these two musicians, eminent in their art, whom you see before you; Master Thread, of whose renown you have surely heard, and the accomplished Buttons,

whom you behold on this stage. Moreover, I have the wonderful Cabriole, of whom it is needless for me to speak, after all that he has said for himself. Now that you are gathered together, you begin to wonder, 'What is the Count Lapolade going to show us?' Come, now, Messrs. Musicians, a little lively music."

This speech, which he varied according to the number, class and country of his hearers, I can repeat to you word for word. I heard it often enough, and remember it perfectly. Thus often we find absurd nothings lodged firmly in our minds, when graver matters are quite forgotten.

It is well when we recall nothing worse than the Count's nonsense.

However, on this first day of exhibition, I heard nothing clearly; the cigar smoke had sickened me vilely, and I was in a state of dreaminess and half stupor when I went into the exhibition ring. Following the part which had been allotted me, I should have opened the cages the instant Diélette approached them.

I saw her come to me as if across a sort of cloud; in one hand she held a wand, the other hand she kissed to the lookers-on.

In their cages the hyenas paced with swift, cat-like steps. The lion appeared to sleep in his own den, resting his head on his paws.

"Open the door, slave!" said Diélette to me.

She entered. The lion did not move. Then with her little fair hands she took hold of his ears and pulled with all her strength to make him lift up his head. He still did not stir. She became impatient, and hit him with her gilt wand on his shoulder. As if he had been possessed by a demon, he raised himself on his fore feet and uttered a roar so terrific and deep-mouthed that my knees trembled under me. Fear added to the distress which the tobacco smoke had occasioned; my heart failed, and half senseless I fell to the ground.

Lapolade was a man quick to take advantage of every incident.

"Behold," he cried, "the ferocity of that brute! His roar alone causes a child of his native Africa to faint with fright."

My illness was evidently so real and so unpremeditated that it was evident that it was not a scene prepared in advance, and the audience greeted it with shouts of applause, while Cabriole carried me in his arms and laid me on a pile of horse-trappings behind the vans.

During all the remainder of the exhibition I remained there, horribly sick, unable to make a movement, conscious of what passed around me, recogniz-

ing the roars of the lion, the cries of the hyenas and the applause of the crowd.

Then I heard the people dispersing, and some moments afterward I felt some one take me by the hand.

It was Diélette, and she held a glass of water. "Take this and drink," she said; "it is sugar water. You are very stupid to get frightened on my account, but, all the same, I see you are a good boy, not like these other ones."

These were the first words she had spoken to me since I entered the company, and this mark of notice and sympathy comforted me. I felt less alone. Thread and Buttons were a pair of little scapegraces who would desire only to do me every harm in their power; I was thankful to find a companion.

The next day I wished to express to her my gratitude; she merely turned her back, and would not listen to me, nor did she give me a word or look of regard. There was, then, an end of my visions of friendship. I had also gotten enough of a life where kicks were showered freely upon me, and I thought that by currying horses and cleaning cages all day, and playing the negro by night, I had more than earned the gray flannel shirt and the shabby pantaloons which had been given me. I concluded to quit the caravan and get to Havre. My poor mother! Did I leave the shelter of your honest roof to range the country with

mountebanks? Oh, if she could see me! Oh, if she knew the truth!

The season advanced; the nights were becoming cold; the days would before long be rainy; it would soon be impossible to sleep in the open field under the chilly stars. It was needful to hasten, and the rather that after leaving Guibray, where we were, we should turn toward the Loire, and thus be going farther from Havre.

However, as I did not wish to venture until I had taken precautions, I made provision of all the crusts I could save, and I employed my spare time in fashioning myself some shoes out of old boot-legs. My plan was well marked out; the first night that the caravan would be on the road again I would fly.

The day fixed for our departure came. I was hidden, working on my shoes, when Diélette surprised me.

"You wish to save yourself," she whispered.

I made a sign as if to interrupt her.

"For these eight days I have watched you," she said. "You have a store of bread in a box under the hay; you do not lay up crusts for nothing. But do not fear that I shall betray you. No, I wish to escape with you."

"What! abandon your father?" I said, in the earnest voice of one who knew by bitter experience how bad it was to abandon parents.

"My father!" she retorted. "These people are not my parents. But somebody will see us here. Go wait for me behind the stone wall yonder, and I will presently join you. If you are a good boy, I will help you, and you will help me."

I remained over two hours, strolling along the ditches, without seeing her, and I began to think she was deceiving me, when she suddenly appeared.

"Come, let us hide in the hazel bushes," she said; "it is necessary that no one should think I speak with you, or we may be suspected."

I followed her; and when we were hidden in the thick bushes, seated on a pile of dry leaves and well concealed from all eyes, she began to talk:

"I suppose it is right for me to tell you my story."

Although we were of about the same age, Diélette had in speaking to me a tone of authority such as a grown person might use to a child; and I could not understand how, being so self-assured, she needed any aid from a little dunce like myself.

I felt for her a very lively sympathy; and as, moreover, she was mistress of my secret intentions, I could not refuse to play the part of her confidant.

"Lapolade is not my father," she said; "I don't know who my father was; he died while I was only a baby. My mother kept a thread and needle shop in Paris. She lived in a street near some market-

house. I do not remember my mother's name any more than I remember the name of the street we lived in. All that I recall is that she was a beautiful young woman with long fair hair—so long that when my brother and I played in her bed in the morning we were able to hide ourselves under it. She loved us very much; she always hugged and kissed us; she never struck us. My brother was a little larger than I was, and his name was Eugene. Many coaches passed through our street; in the morning there were on the walks piles of cabbages, beets, carrots and beans of all kinds. When we sat on the doorsill, we saw opposite us a high church with a beautiful gilt clock; above that was a little tower, and on the tower two big black arrows which all the day whirled about in the wind. I mentioned this last year to a dancer in the Masson troupe, which came here from Paris, and he told me that was the church of Saint Eustache, and that the black arrows were the weather-cock.

“As my mother was busy in the store all day, she hardly ever went out to walk with us; we were taken out by a clerk. One day in summer, when it was very warm, the streets were full of dust, and the girl took us to a woody park. This park was near the barrier of Trone, and you have heard them speak of it since you have been here with us. I don't know why my

brother was not out with me, but it happened he was kept at home.

"I saw for the first time a troupe of mountebanks, and they amused me very much. I wanted to go into one of the vans, but the girl had no money, and I had only four cents, which had been given me to spend in cakes.

"She took the four pennies and paid our way into a side-show."

"And what is a side-show?" I demanded.

"What a stupid! Don't know what a side-show is! Then what ever *do* you know? Why, child, it is a show where they exhibit a phenomenon—a female colossus, or a learned pig, or some other queer thing.

"In this show there were two pigs in one pen. I do not know how it was, but my girl began whispering to a man in this show. He looked at me closely, and said I was very pretty. He went out with us, and took us to a little ale-house where there was a small, dark room with nobody in it. I was very tired and hot, and while these two drank ale and sugar I went to sleep.

"When I woke up it was almost night, and the girl was gone. I asked the man where she was. He replied we would go and find her. He carried me out. All the world seemed to be near the park. The vans and stalls were illuminated, and the musicians

were playing. He put me down, took my hand and walked so fast that I lost my breath.

"Soon we left the crowd; we were in a wide road bordered on each side by trees. There were no gas-lights, and only here and there a house.

"I began to be terribly afraid. I dragged so wearily that the man asked if I were tired, and offered to carry me. When I was in his arms, I began to scream. Some soldiers were passing and stopped. 'Why do you cry?' he asked. 'I am taking you to your mamma.'

"I wanted to walk again, and the road seemed to grow longer and longer, and was all changed; we passed by great dark walls, and through a big gate where were soldiers for sentinels. We entered a wood which looked as if it never would end. Fear overcame me; I stopped.

"'You had better trot on, you vile little pest, or you and I will fall out,' said the man in a loud angry tone.

"Nobody was passing; I was tired out; I began to cry loudly. You understand? I was not yet five years old, I was timid, and I thought of my pretty mamma.

"I don't know how long I walked, only I was very tired, when we saw the lights of a village, and entered a place on the edge of a wood where were some me-

nagerie vans ; into one of these we climbed. We were received by a woman who had no legs, and was drinking brandy.

"The man whispered to her, and both stared at me. Then the woman said,

" 'You fool ! she has a mark on her cheek.'

"The mark was a little red rose, where now you see a small scar.

" 'Confound it !' cried the man, and disappeared.

"Fear seized me, and I screamed 'Mother !'

" 'She will come to-morrow morning, my little treasure,' said the woman ; 'the best thing you can do now is to go to sleep.'

" 'Perhaps she is hungry,' said the man, thrusting his head into the wagon.

" 'Oh, well, I am just going to give you something nice, little angel.'

"It was now that I found out that the woman had no legs, for she moved, half rolling, half dragged by her hands. That amazed me, and made me feel worse than ever. But as she gave me very nice things to eat, I began to feel better.

" 'The little beauty ! The perfect lady !' said the woman, seeing that I ate heartily. 'She won't be hard to feed !'

"She did not know that her sweetmeats were to me a

treat prohibited at home, as my mother considered them bad for my health.

“‘Now go to sleep,’ she said, when I was done eating.

“She drew aside a curtain from one end of the van, and showed two beds. I thought it so funny to sleep in a wagon, that I slept excellently.

“When I woke up, my bed seemed to be moving, and I thought I was dreaming. I heard a noise of wheels and chains. Above my bed was a little square window. I climbed up there to look out; the trees seemed to be walking by, and afar off I could see a field and a river. I knew that my room and my bed were indeed moving; memory returned. I began to scream, ‘Mamma! mamma!’ A coarse voice which I did not know replied from behind a curtain:

“‘Hush! We are going to her.’

“But I was the more afraid, and screamed yet louder.

“Then a man whom I had not yet seen entered the wagon. He was very tall, and his head, covered with a policeman’s cap, touched the top of the van.

“‘If you scream, I will kill you,’ he said.

“As you may believe, I shrieked yet louder, but he rushed at me with extended hands. I thought he was about to strangle me, and I buried my head in my pillow.

“When he had left the wagon, I looked for my

clothes ; but not finding them, and afraid to speak, I remained in bed. The wagon rolled on and on, sometimes on the paved road, sometimes on country roads. Finally the legless woman came to me.

“ ‘Mamma ! where is my mamma ?’ I demanded.

“ ‘Soon, soon, my little duck,’ she replied, so softly that I felt cheered.

“ ‘I want to get up.’

“ ‘That is just what you shall do, lovey. Here, see your clothes.’ She held out a black gown.

“ ‘That is not my frock.’

“ ‘It is the one which you must wear.’ I longed to fly into a rage, to tear the gown, to cry for my mother, to jump from the wagon, but the legless woman fixed on me such a look that I could not disobey her. When I was dressed in that wretched frock, the van stopped, and the legless woman made me get out. We were in a great plain, and all around us as far as we could see were green fields. The man in the police cap had lit a fire by the road, and from three poles tied together at the top he had hung a pot. I was very hungry, and was pleased to hear the pot boil. The man took the legless woman in his arms and set her by the side of the fire.

“ ‘That mark !’ she cried, looking at me.

“ ‘Hold ! that is true ; we shall remove it.’

“ ‘Then this cruel villain took me between his knees,

holding me tight. He passed his left arm firmly about me, holding down my hands, and braced his shoulder against my back. Then the woman grasped my head in her hands as in a vice, and the man, with a little sharp knife, cut the red-rose mark off my cheek.

"The blood, flowing down, filled my mouth and covered my dress. I thought he was about to murder me; and uttering piercing cries, I bit his wrist fiercely. Without troubling himself with my distress, he put on my cheek something which burned much, but which checked the flow of blood.

" 'Let her go now,' said the woman.

"She thought I would run, but instead I flew at her, and beat her in the face with all my little strength.

"I think that in return she would have choked me to death, but the man took me from her and shut me up in the van. I continued the journey without getting anything to eat. All day I was alone, and at night, the moment they opened the wagon, I demanded my mother.

" 'She is dead,' said the woman.

"I considered a moment, and then retorted:

" 'She is not dead! You tell a lie!'

"She began to laugh, which only enraged me. For three weeks or a month I remained with the legless woman and the man in the cap. They thought to

conquer me, as people conquer wild beasts, by hunger. But they could not do it. To get something to eat I obeyed them a moment. The instant I had eaten I did as I liked. The woman saw plainly that I never would forgive the cut on my face, and I heard her say once she was afraid of me. She believed I was able to cut her with a knife in return.

“We at last reached a strange country. I find since that it was a part of Germany. I could not understand the language, and there were many rivers. Finding that they could do nothing with me, they sold me to a blind man who was no more blind than you are, but who made believe blind to beg. Every day he stood on a bridge to beg. Luckily, he had a dog, and at evening, at his lodgings, I could play with the dog. If it had not been for this, I would have died of vexation.

“I had no inclination to beg; and as I would not follow people, entreating and weeping, I got many blows from the man’s cane every day. Tired at last of beating me, the blind man sold me to some singers. They were a strolling party, and I was to collect the coppers while they played.

“Why, we went to every country. I have seen England, and even America. When it was cold, we went in wagons; when it was warmer, we walked; when we reached the sea, we took ship.

“When we returned to France, the musicians sold me to Lapolade. He bought me for a rope-dancer, and while I was learning I fed the wild beasts. At that time we had three lions. One of them was very ferocious, but he became very gentle to me; and when I fed him, he licked my hands. One day, being angry because I could not execute some of the dancing steps, Lapolade beat me, and I screamed as loudly as I could. He was before the cage of my lion, and the beast got angry at seeing me beaten; he flew at the bars, thrust out his paw, took Lapolade by the shoulder and held him fast. Lapolade tried to save himself, but the lion’s claws were in his flesh, and gripped him well. If a man had not run up with an iron rod, Lapolade might have been killed.

“He was sick two months, but he had gained the idea of making me enter the cages. ‘Since the lions are your friends,’ said madame to me, ‘they will not eat you; that big one will defend you from the others.’

“Well, I liked that better than rope-dancing, and since that day, as the circulars have it, ‘The illustrious Diélette conquers by her charms the wild beasts of the jungle.’ Lapolade is a stupid with his beasts of the jungle; they are as mild as dogs. Ah, if my big lion, poor Rongaud, were not dead, you would see. I could lead them all three into one cage. I could strike the other two with my wand; and when

they growled, I could say to Rongaud, 'Defend me!' and he would get before me and face them with horrible roars, at which everybody trembled. Then I would make believe to faint, and he would lick my hands and whine. They would open the cage door, and he would carry me to it in his teeth, holding my clothes. If you could have seen it, you would have applauded like the rest. The people threw me bouquets, cakes and money, and all the ladies kissed me.

"I was so successful that Lapolade made up his mind to exhibit in Paris. I was overjoyed. At Paris I would run away and find my mother. But just as we were starting, Rongaud fell ill. It was winter, and he was so cold that he shivered all the while. Ah, what care I took of him! I covered him with blankets and fed him. But, nevertheless, he died in spite of me. Never was I so miserable. They thought I too would die. The caravan could not go to Paris, and I could not find my mother. I have since tried to escape, but could not. I have no confidence in Thread and Buttons; they are bad boys. You are not a mountebank by trade; will you not help me to find my poor mother? Oh, you will see how she will rejoice and thank you."

Paris was far from Hayre. In return I told Diélette my story.

"Ah, well, pray take me to Paris. Then my mother will pay your fare to Havre—will take you there and look for a ship."

I tried to show Diélette how hard it was to travel on the highways—how difficult to get food or lodging.

"I have fourteen shillings and eight cents saved up," she said. "That will buy us food. We will sleep out of doors. I will not be afraid if you are near me."

This mark of confidence made me very proud, and decided me to consent. At any rate, Diélette was a little body who would have her own way, and no one could refuse, she had a fashion of looking at one so beseechingly with her great blue eyes, which were both daring and timid in their expression. She looked at once frank and experienced, mild and resolute, and would endure neither refusal nor contradiction.

It was then decided that at Orleans we would abandon the caravan. "Until then," she said, "I will not speak to you before people. You are a good boy—I trust you; but you are too good to outwit people, and you must leave me to do that."

She made a little grimace, knowing that I did not relish her compliment.

"Shake hands," she said, frankly. "It is just be-

cause you are a good boy and not able to deceive that I have told you my story and trust you enough to go with you in search of my mother."

Then Diélette ran back to the caravan.





CHAPTER XI.

SATURDAY was the day for our caravan to set out. The streets were full of country people ; and as I crossed the public square to get to the wagons, I saw Thread and Buttons stopping before Turquetin, a famous juggler, then very young, and just appearing before the public.

A bad gymnast, Buttons was quite remarkable for his sleight-of-hand performances, and his great delight was to practice juggling before a gaping group of country folks. When I saw him among the crowd around Turquetin, I concluded that he was there to amuse himself, and I stopped to find out what new

trick he would invent, only, as more than once by his pranks he had got into a scuffle, I prudently kept at a distance.

Soon I was enlightened.

This was the play-day of these two lads, and they were spending it in stealing handkerchiefs and snuff-boxes from the crowd. Naturally the most dexterous, Buttons was doing the pocket-picking. Thread stood by; and when Buttons passed him a snuff-box he filled it with ground coffee, and when he got a handkerchief he sprinkled snuff all over it, and these things Buttons promiscuously restored to various pockets, the crowd being so delighted with Turquetin that they could see nothing else, and standing like lay-figures to be dealt with as these boys saw fit.

Already many people had taken out their doctored pocket-handkerchiefs and had gone into a frenzy of sneezing, to the intense delight of these two companions in mischief, who laughed and chuckled to themselves. Already others had snuffed pinches from their tobacco-boxes, and had then glared at the contents in perfect amazement. The scene was so deliciously comic that I longed to have a part in the fun.

But just as I was tempted to join the boys a policeman came up behind Buttons, at the very nick of time, when that rascal's hand was in an old gentleman's pocket. The officer seized him by the nape of

the neck. There was a great stir in the crowd, a rumor of trouble, and then Thread also was arrested.

Without stopping to see more, lest the evil genius of these boys should lead them to implicate me out of spite, I slipped out of the crowd; and trembling at my narrow escape, I hastened to rejoin our encampment, where I related what had happened to the boys at their lively little game.

An hour after, two officers arrived to make a search in our wagons. They found nothing, for my two companions did not make a business of pocket-picking, and never had stolen anything but eatables, which they had at once devoured.

However, that hand in the pocket and two handkerchiefs which Thread was holding were so against them that they took them off to prison. The explanations of Lapolade, as he tried to persuade the magistrates that this was only the freak of a pair of funny, harmless boys, served only to convince the justices that their dexterity was very suspicious; and for fear of being implicated as their accomplice or instructor, the Count dared say no more. The police is never very amiable to travelling shows; and if any crime is committed in a county in which they are travelling, they are always the first ones accused. It is not thought needful to prove that they are guilty, but it is laid upon them to prove that they are innocent.

Thread and Buttons, thus caught with their hands in other people's pockets, could not make it clear to the legal mind that they had play and not theft in view, and they were condemned to stay in the house of correction until they had become of age.

It was decided by Lapolade, in order to fill the void made in his company by their absence, that poor I should replace them both. At this proposition from the worthy Count I stoutly rebelled. I had no vocation for dislocating my joints or shutting myself up in boxes of a quarter my size.

"It is not a question of boxes," he said, pulling my hair, which was the act the nearest a caress which he could perform. "My dear, smart lad, you are as supple as an elder withe; you will do admirably as a vaulter and tumbler."

I was to make my first appearance at the fair at Alençon. Unhappily for me, that town was not far off, and I had very little time to become proficient in my new business; so, although my performances were of a light, easy kind, they occasioned an accident which miserably delayed the flight of Diélette and myself. It was on a Sunday, the wretched Lapolade's best show-day; we began performing at noon, and kept on without a minute's rest until evening. The weary musicians were scarcely able to blow their in-

struments. Lapolade was so hoarse he could no longer harangue the mob; the lion was so cross he would not rise; and when Diélette shook her wand at him, he rolled at her most pitifully his languid eyes.

As for myself, I was nearly dead with fatigue. I was hungry; I was thirsty; I could hardly move my stiff arms and legs. At eleven o'clock at night there was still a big crowd around us, and Lapolade resolved to give a last exhibition to secure their fees.

"I know what pleases the public taste," he said, in an elegant speech. "We are weary, but we feel it our duty to gratify you, my lords, even if we die of fatigue. We have full gratification now for your curiosity. Come in, come in, one and all. Enter."

He began the spectacle with my performances. These consisted of perilous leaps across the backs of four running horses, and of somersaults turned at the end of a pole held by Cabriole. I did pretty well in my jumps, and the public applauded. When Cabriole took the rod, I was tempted to say that I really could not do anything more, but Lapolade fixed on me his most ferocious glare. I was also ashamed to give up. The crowd excited me; and summoning all my strength, I sprung upon Cabriole's shoulders and ran out on the pole easily.

Cabriole was, like the rest of us, tired and weak. At the moment when with all the might of his arms he should have held the pole straight and steady, I felt it veer and quiver; my blood grew cold; I shook and fell forward, stretching out my arms.

The crowd gave a cry. I fell heavily on the ground, striking upon a stone pavement, from a height of six feet. I was somewhat bruised, and felt a violent pain in my shoulder. I heard also a little snap in it. I lifted myself up and endeavored to salute the crowd around the area, who looked at me anxiously, but I could not move my right arm.

They saw I was hurt; everybody called out to me; I grew faint from severe pain in my shoulder.

"There is nothing the matter," said Lapolade; "the exhibition will proceed as usual."

"He will not be able to do this," said Cabriole, raising his arms above his head. "But he is not dead yet, so let all the people go to bed contentedly."

This stupid speech was much cheered. Truly, for six weeks I was not able to lift my two arms in the gesture indicated by Cabriole, because I had broken my shoulder-blade.

A caravan has very little dependence on doctors. They attend to or neglect their sick as pleases them. Lapolade himself bandaged my shoulder when the exhibition was ended, and for sole internal remedy he

sent me to bed with nothing to eat. I slept alone in the van with the cages of the wild beasts. I lay on my beggarly bed two hours without being able to sleep. A burning thirst consumed me; I tossed and turned without being able to get an easy position for my aching shoulder, when at last I heard the wagon door open gently.

"It is I," said Diélette, in a low voice. "Are you asleep, Romain?"

"No," I said, crossly.

She came toward my bed, and bending over me gently caressed my face with her soft little hand. "You suffer all this on my account," she said, gently. "Will you forgive me, Romain?"

"I don't see what you had to do with it," I said.

"If it had not been for waiting for me and delaying to reach Orleans that we might get in the road to Paris, you would have been gone before this, and would not have fallen to-day."

Through the bars of the van window came the moonlight upon Diélette's pretty face, and I saw tears pouring over her cheeks. I tried to act bravely, so I replied,

"Oh, that is nothing; it was just my clumsiness."

I tried to move my wounded arm, but the effort was too torturing, and I gave a groan.

"There! you see how you are hurt—for me, for

me!" and with a swift movement she drew up her sleeve.

"See, look, feel there," she said, eagerly.

"What? What is it?"

"This; here, let me show you." She softly took my hand and laid it on her arm. I felt blood there.

"When I found you had broken your shoulder, I scratched and bit my arm as hard as I could," said this wild, curious, untrained little creature. "I would not be well and unhurt when my friend was in so much suffering on my account."

She spoke with a savage energy, and her eyes glittered in the moonlight like diamonds; what she said and had done was sufficiently absurd and ridiculous, but in my feeble state it overcame me, and I sobbed.

"Oh, you dunce!" she cried, divining my emotion; "you have done a deal more for me. But see. I did something better than bite myself. I have brought you a bunch of raisins from Lapolade's store-box. Are you not very hungry, Romain?"

"I am thirsty, but the raisins will be very good."

She stole off to get me a cup of water, in all her motions making no more noise than a shadow.

When she came back, she gave me the water and had a soft pillow for my head. "It is necessary for you to sleep," she said. "You must get well, so that we can escape. The very day that you are well enough



SHE SOFTLY TOOK MY HAND AND LAID IT ON HER ARM.

to travel we will set off, no matter where we are. You shall not get on that horrid pole again, to kill yourself. That is not the sort of life you are fit for."

"But suppose Lapolade makes me try it before I get well?"

"He make you! Ho! I'll make my lion eat him as if he were a sheep. It would not be hard. Open the cage, hit him one cut, point at Lapolade—a spring, crack! his teeth would be through him."

She turned to go, then, standing in the open door of the wagon, she waved me a sign of friendship, saying, "Sleep!"

It seemed as if my shoulder hurt me less. I found a position to lie comfortably in, and I fell asleep, while sadly thinking of my mother; heartsick, but not quite despairing.

This was a most disastrous accident; it so hindered our flight that it would bring us fatally near the stormy season of winter. I had hardly been able to sleep out of doors during the fine nights of summer, but in November, when the nights would be long and cold, with perhaps plenty of rain and snow, what then? Ah, indeed, what then?

Diélette tended me unceasingly. She fed the animals and took all my tasks. She showed more impatience about my illness than I did; and when I said sometimes that it would be prudent to defer

our journey until spring, she resisted the idea vehemently.

"If you stay with them," she said, "you will be dead by spring-time. Lapolade is bound to teach you the trapeze, and you will not be able to do it. Besides that, we go farther from Paris every day, and by spring we may be in the south of France."

These reasons convinced me, and we began our secret preparations. Every day Diélette put me through certain exercises. She made me rest my shoulder against the side of the van and then lift my arm as far as I could, and with her knife she made a mark each day to show what progress I made in using my lame shoulder. Thus day by day we followed the progress of the cure.

From Alençon we had come to Vendôme, and from Vendôme to Blois; from Blois we should go to Tours, where I was to resume my gymnastic exercises. It was then decided by Diélette that at Blois we should leave the caravan, and by way of Orleans should go toward Paris. She gave me some money at Vendôme, and I bought an old map of France. With a pin from the harness I made a compass, and with this I had calculated the distance from Blois to Paris; it was forty leagues. We were now well on in the month of November, when the days are only ten hours long. Diélette had never been much accustomed to walking;

would she be able to stand trips of six leagues? (A French league is about three miles.) Diélette said bravely that she could travel eighteen miles a day, but I much doubted it. At the very best, it would be a week's trip; luckily, in view of going, this girl had hoarded her savings, and she now had ten francs (about two dollars). Our provisions were laid up, my shoes were finished, and she had had an opportunity of secretly buying and hiding on my bed an old horse-blanket, which we expected would be of great use to us at night.

Being thus ready, we only waited the perfect cure of my arm before setting out. By our calculations and the steady progress showed by the marks on the van, we expected our time to go would be about the end of our stay at Blois, but a rebellion of old Mouton, the big lion, who was usually very quiet, once more hindered us.

One evening two Englishmen, who had loudly applauded Diélette, approached her when the crowd left our exhibition, and demanded that the girl should again begin her performances for their especial benefit. They offered a good price, as a big dinner seemed to have made them generous, and Lapolade greedily accepted their proposition. Diélette therefore re-entered the cage.

"The charming child!" cried one.

"How very brave!" added the other, and they began to clap their hands.

I think a feeling of vanity and jealousy stirred up Lapolade, for he exclaimed that if she were able to be so tranquil and amusing with the lion, it was because of the education which he himself had given her in the art of training and governing wild beasts.

"You!" cried the younger of the two Englishmen, a pretty young fellow with a red-and-white complexion and merry smiles; "pooh! you are a regular braggart; I can see that with half an eye. You dare not enter that cage!"

"Ten dollars to one that you dare not go in," said the other Englishman to Lapolade.

"I take it up," cried the Count, hotly.

"Very good. But the little girl must come out, and you must go in alone," said the young man.

Without doubt it requires very great courage to enter a den of lions, or even the cage of one.

"Give me your wand," said Lapolade to Diélette.

"Remember," interposed the elder Englishman, "that the little girl is to come out, and not go in again while you are there."

"I remember," said Lapolade, shortly.

We all stood around, Cabriole, Madame Lapolade, the musicians and myself, whose duty it was to open the cage door.

Lapolade took off his general's uniform.

"If that lion knows anything," said the young Englishman, "he won't touch him; he is too tough a morsel even for a lion's teeth."

Thus they jested and laughed at our noble patron, which pleased us all mightily.

Wise was Mouton, our big lion, surely—quite wise enough to remember the many ugly knocks on paws and nose which Lapolade had given him through the bars of his cage.

The beast began to tremble when Lapolade walked into his cage with rod uplifted.

This attitude of the brute encouraged the master; he believed that he held control of the old lion, and he struck him a sharp blow to make him rise up.

But the blow of the wand was not like the fierce knocks with an iron bar which had often been given to Mouton by Lapolade, and suddenly the old lion saw that he had his enemy in his power. The light of courage blazed in the eyes of the cowering beast; he sprang up, roaring, and before Lapolade understood what was coming he hurled himself upon him, prostrating the unhappy Count, and lying upon his nearly breathless body.

Lapolade fainted under the two huge paws, the nails of which were buried in his bleeding flesh, while

the lion rolled him under his stomach with a hoarse growl.

"I'm dead!" cried Lapolade as he fell.

Crouched upon his victim, the lion glared at us through the bars, his eyes darting flames, his tail lashing his sides, which resounded like a drum.

Cabriole seized an iron bar and struck blow after blow at the lion through the cage, but he never stirred from his prey.

Then one of the Englishmen took a revolver from his pocket and held it to the lion's ear, which nearly touched the bar of the cage.

With a quick motion Madame Lapolade grasped his arm, crying out,

"Don't, don't! you'll kill the lion."

"Hallo! she cares more for the safety of the beast than for her husband," said the man, and added some words in his own language. By this time the cries had attracted Diélette; she ran toward the cage. One of the bars had been arranged to afford her a place of exit if at any time she was in danger. The place left for her slight figure did not afford any chance for the lion's escape. By this place she entered the cage behind the enraged Mouton, who did not see her. She had no wand, but she courageously seized him by the mane. He turned so quickly that he threw her against the bars; but on seeing who it

was, he drew back his paw, already extended to seize a foe, and releasing Lapolade himself, he walked off into a corner.

Lapolade was not dead, but so bruised and terrified that he seemed lifeless, and it was needful to lift him out of the cage. However, this could be done safely, and I opened the door, for Diélette now stood before the lion. She left the cage, walking backward. The lion had trodden on her foot, and she had a swollen ankle which kept her in a chair for eight days. Meantime, Lapolade kept his bed, half killed, wounded and bleeding from his hurts.

Finally, after about two weeks, she told me she was able to walk as well as ever, and therefore the moment was come for the execution of our project. Kept a prisoner by his wounds, Lapolade would not be able to follow us ; we had every chance of escape.





CHAPTER XII.

IT was now the third of November, but the autumn was unusually fine. If we hastened, we had a good hope of reaching Paris before the setting in of bad weather.

Our plan, long discussed, had been thus definitely settled. As I was never watched, I was to first leave our encampment, carrying our baggage. This consisted of a little bag of dried crusts, the horse-blanket, a bottle, my new shoes, a little bundle of clothes of Diélette's which she had hidden under my bed, and a tin pail. Then, when the Lapolades were asleep, Dié-

lette herself was to rise, steal out of the van and join me at a designated tree on the highway.

I reached our rendezvous as the clock struck eleven. Diélette did not come till midnight. I had begun to despair, thinking she had been detected, when I heard her light step on the road, and she was at my side. As she came into the light of a street lamp, I saw she had on the large red cape which she wore to cover her gay dresses on her way to the stage for exhibition. She was quite out of breath, and exclaimed,

“I thought I should never escape. Lapolade groaned like a seal, and would not go to sleep. Then I went to say ‘good-bye’ to Mouton. Poor dear Mouton! he will die of vexation. Have you got everything?”

This was not the moment to make an inventory of our effects, and I told her that as we might be pursued and captured, our first business was to get as far out of reach as possible.

“Good!” she said; “but before starting, give me your hand, Romain.”

“What for?”

“That we may solemnly promise to be true to each other, and to live or die together. Are you not willing to do that?”

“Certainly I am.”

"Then give me your hand and say these words :
'We will aid one another in life or death.'"

"Life or death!" She gave me her hand, and I fairly trembled at the earnestness and intensity of feeling she put in those three words.

A mysterious silence reigned in the sleeping city. We heard nothing but the plash of a fountain, the rustle of the leaves in the gentle breeze and the creaking of certain street lamps over our heads. We saw no motion but their quivering shadows upon the pavement in the moonlight.

"Come, let us go bravely," said Diélette, going on before me carrying her little bundle of clothes. We made haste to leave the town, and before long were in the open fields. Then as I looked closely at Diélette she seemed to be carrying something under her cape. I wondered what it was, and finally asked her. "It is my mignonette," she replied, drawing back her large cape and showing me her treasure. It was in a little pot covered with gilt paper. She had always cultivated this little flower with affection. She had kept it in the window of the van, and it had often seemed to comfort her under Lapolade's exactions and tyrannies.

However, I disapproved of such an encumbrance, and said, crossly, "How do you suppose we can carry that thing along?"

"How could I leave it, Romain? It would die. It is bad enough to desert poor Mouton. Do you know I was tempted to bring him too? I know from his looks that the poor brute suspected something when I bade him good-bye."

The idea of our bringing old Mouton looked very funny to me. Would she have tied the big lion to a string and led him like a dog after her? I began to laugh.

Diélette now insisted upon carrying half the baggage, and I had a good deal of trouble to make the poor child understand that she had as much as was right.

Without being cold, the night was fresh, and the skies were gleaming with stars. All over the fields the trees stood darkly against the cloudless blue, and we heard no whirr of insects, no chirp of birds, such as enlivens a summer's night. Now and then as we passed a dwelling we heard a dog bark after us, and the neighboring dogs caught up the chorus; so that the barking of these guardians of the farm seemed like the call and answer of sentinels at their posts.

In order to get out of the way of Lapolade if he ordered a pursuit of us, it was needful for us to walk all night. I was afraid that Diélette could not do this, but she bravely refused to say she was tired before morning. We went through many sleeping

villages, and at last were fifteen miles from Blois. A yellow ray darted up the skies before us; the cocks crowed for daybreak from every hen-roost; in the houses we saw lights moving; then smoke curled up from the chimneys, and some laborers with a slow step passed us on their way to work.

"Now," said Diélette, "let us rest ourselves. I am no longer afraid."

"You have been afraid, then?" I said.

"Yes, indeed; ever since we left Blois."

"Of what?"

"Of the silence—I never like such quiet—of the darkness of the night, and of these long shadows which wave and double themselves, and make one jump, and set the heart beating too fast."

Day dawned fully while we made our breakfast on our dry crusts. It was a gray, damp day, and showed us a wide plain naked of all verdure, divided by leafless hedges, while here and there, among clumps of half-bare trees, we saw by the columns of yellow smoke where dwelling-houses lay. Fields newly ploughed succeeded to fields lately reaped, and nowhere could we see fruit or greenness. Flocks of crows flew croaking over head, divided themselves into little bands, and settling on the fields, searched after stray grains of corn or new-sown seed, while others, looking for worms, followed after the plough as it cut its furrow.

Having rested, eaten, and then got water from a little rivulet, we thought it best to walk on, and spurred by fear of Lapolade and hope of Paris, succeeded in making six miles more. Then we were completely overpowered by fatigue. Diélette was so exhausted that the instant we stopped she fell asleep, and slept for five hours without stirring.

My great anxiety had been to know how we should get along during the nights. I had had my experience of sleeping under the stars, and I was by no means easy at the thought of trying it during the cold nights of November. So when we again set out, we made up our minds that without regard to distance, whether it was short or long, we should stop when we had found a first-rate shelter. This we found under a high stone wall surrounding a park. This shielded us from the wind, and against it was heaped up a large pile of dry branches. It was four o'clock in the afternoon when we found this place, and after our early nap we had walked since midday.

I concluded at once to make arrangements for the night. Going into the adjacent wood, I brought armfuls of dry leaves and piled them for a bed under our arbor of branches. These branches I fixed firmly into the earth, and then hung our blanket over them to keep off the chilly dew. Thus we had a soft, dry couch and a tent. Diélette was very well satisfied

with my work. It was, she said, such a droll little hut; it would be nice to live in a week, if we were not on such an important journey. Ah, if we only had some butter for our dry crusts, and a little pot of soup! Why, if she had the butter we could make a pot of soup with water and bread over a little fire.

Thus she prattled cheerfully, but we made our supper, as we had our breakfast, of crusts alone, and we were thankful to have enough of them.

We sat in our tent talking of our mothers and of meeting them once more until it began to grow dusk. When the red sunlight ceased to glow like coals through the trees, when the birds grew silent in the trees overhead and the great shadows filled the road, we leaned back against the pile of leaves and tried to sleep. Then Diélette seemed more timid.

"Romain, are you asleep?" she whispered.

"Pretty nearly."

"Won't you try to keep awake until I get asleep? I won't be so afraid if you are awake, and I shall not keep rousing myself listening for dreadful noises."

We were not badly sheltered by our blanket tent, but through some holes in it I could see the clear shining of the stars as I lay trying to be wakeful that the frightened child might fall asleep first. It was hard work; Diélette was very nervous, and startled at each falling leaf. At last weariness overcame her,

and she slept. Rejoiced that my vigils were ended, I was soon in dreamland. I had good reason to fear the cold. Before morning we were both awake.

"Are you cold?" demanded Diélette. "I am half frozen."

We could not help ourselves. We had done our best in the way of a shelter. There was nothing to be added to our covering, and we must sleep until daylight, so that we could resume our journey. Between frost and fatigue, we were cramped in every limb. I strove to sleep, but it was impossible. I was aching terribly. I shivered as in an ague fit. All about us I heard a queer snapping and cracking sound, as if ten million insects leaped and ran among twigs and dead leaves.

"Do you hear that?" whispered Diélette.

Although I wanted to reassure her, I could not say "No." I did hear it, and did not know what it was. I wanted to be brave, as the protector of my companion. I was not thirteen, neither was she; "But a boy of thirteen should fear nothing," I said to myself. For a half hour we lay listening, and not daring to move. I heard Diélette's teeth chatter, and our bed of leaves shook and rustled with our trembling, while still that same cracking and snapping continued. The continuance and sameness of the noise restored my courage. It was made by neither man nor beast.

If it had been, it would have varied at times. I was determined to see what it was. I lifted up a corner of the blanket. The white moonlight showed me that all about us was in the same state as on the preceding evening. Emboldened, I put my hand upon the leaves outside; they snapped. I knew now what had alarmed us: it was the frost. This comforted but did not warm us. On the contrary, with the approach of morning, it got colder and colder. Suddenly I heard Diélette jump up.

"What are you doing?" I demanded.

"Getting my mignonette. It will freeze and be killed."

She took the pot in her arms and wrapped her cape over it that it might be warmed.

"I wonder what time it is?" she said. "Is it morning, or only midnight?"

The moon was setting, but I did not know what was the hour of its going down. It became quite impossible to stay under our arbor. We crept close together, piled the leaves over us, rubbed our hands, but got so cold we could not speak. We decided to go on our way. One thing was certain—walking would be warmer than keeping still. We then proceeded to break up our encampment and to load ourselves with our baggage. Diélette, to keep her mignonette from freezing, held it under her cape, and this not

only fully occupied one of her arms, but made it stiff. I proposed to leave the plant ; but as she at once flew into a rage and told me I was a "heartless creature," I dared say no more. We were therefore once more on the road in the frosty night.

The journey had begun very badly, yet I dared not burden poor Diélette with my fears. She travelled on courageously, animated by the hope of finding her mother, and always had a gay word to cheer me, no matter what our troubles were.

We had walked about an hour when we heard the cocks crowing, and began to please ourselves with the thought that it would soon be day. Active exercise had warmed us, and we began to chat about the fears and troubles of the night, deriding each other for lack of resolution. After a little disputing we agreed that I was braver than Diélette, but that she was wiser than I.

For fear that if Lapolade pursued us he would follow the road to Paris, thinking that we would go that way, we had set off from Blois on the route to Chartres, that being, as I thought by study of the map, not a very great distance out of our way, and taking us still toward Paris.

One evening we passed through Chateaudun. The day had been delightfully mild, but the night closed in cold, and we resolved to lodge at a little wayside

inn. This would be a heavy burden on our finances, but would be preferable to perishing with cold.

"When we are out of money," said Diélette, "we will sing through the villages, and earn some more that way."

She said this so bravely, with such confidence in her own powers, that she reassured me.

But it is not very easy to get money by singing, as we soon found—not nearly so easy as to spend it.

Four miles beyond Chateaudun we asked for lodgings at a tavern. They charged us twenty cents each. This was bad enough, but in addition they asked endless questions: Who were we? Where were we going? What for?

Fortunately, we had prepared a little tale in answer. We belonged to a strolling caravan, and were going to Chartres to find a place for it. The elder members of the company would follow us next day or the day after that.

Neither Diélette nor I enjoyed telling untruths; we seemed forced to fabricate something, and it mortified us greatly. We blushed as we spoke.

From Chateaudun to Chartres there is only a great wide plain where one finds neither houses nor hamlets. By going into by-roads you can reach villages, but the highway leads through a desolation like the plain of Sodom.



BUT IT IS NOT VERY EASY TO GET MONEY BY SINGING, AS WE
SOON FOUND.

Reaching Bonneval, a large town, we flattered ourselves that we should make our fortune by our singing, but we only earned three cents.

I did not recognize as generosity a basin of water which one bearded gentleman threw on my head, nor the pursuit of a dog which tore Diélette's cape, having been set on us by a butcher. This seemed a hard way to treat a poor little pair of singers.

"If I wore a mask and you played on the flute," said Diélette, "we would make lots of money. People want something queer or comic, and they won't give coppers to anything commonplace."

Diélette had a most amazing patience and endurance; she grew angry at neither cruelty nor scorn; she lived in the anticipation of meeting her mother, and with that in view she pressed bravely on.

By good luck we did not have to pay for our lodging the fourth night of our travels. They received us kindly at a farmhouse, and let us sleep in the sheepfold, where it was quite warm. This was, therefore, the most fortunate night of our trip. The next morning, just as we set out, the farmer's wife mounted her tilt-cart to go to Chartres. She had pity on the weary air of poor Diélette, and offered her a ride. Diélette refused, looking at me with so expressive an air that the woman understood her thoughts, and said there was room for both of us.

Travelling thus, sometimes sleeping at a farm, sometimes by a brick-kiln and sometimes at an inn, and always walking as fast and far as we could, we got finally to a little hamlet called Bièvre, about nine miles from Paris.

It was stormy; we had not a cent; Diélette's shoes were in tatters; she had a blistered foot, from which she suffered terribly at every step. Each time that we rested it seemed harder to go on when we rose, and we were so weary that it seemed as if we had weights of lead tied to our feet. All this journey Diélette had not complained, and was every morning the first one to set out. We could not sleep at an inn, as we had no money, but at Saclay we found a kind carrier who allowed us to lodge in his wagon.

"It is necessary to start very early to-morrow," said Diélette. "It is a holiday, and I must get home in time to keep it with my mother, and I shall give her my mignonette. I carried it all this way that I might have something to offer her."

That poor mignonette! It was leafless, yellow and dry, but there was still a little life near its root, and one new sprig testified what it had been in its glory.

We started at daybreak, when our friendly carrier came to harness his horses.

Until now the weather had, for the time of year, been wonderfully favorable to us. The nights had

been cold, but the days dry and clear. Now, as we crept out of the wagon, we found that the cold had become much more intense. The sky was cloudy ; not a star shone, and to the east, in place of the beautiful red tints of dawning day which we had been accustomed to see since the beginning of our journey, were dark-gray clouds. Besides this, there was a sharp north wind which whirled the dead leaves about, while it swept fiercely against us, as if disputing our way.

Diélette had great trouble to keep her cape over her flower-pot. Day came, but dull and stormy.

"The sun is not going to shine," said Diélette. "So much the better ; there will be less light to show our dirty rags." She found consolation in all things.

"Don't fear the dirt," I said, grimly ; "you may be sure there'll be storm enough to wash us and our clothes before we reach Paris." I thought it would rain, but instead of that it snowed. First little flakes came d wn, swept about by the wind, then big flakes, and bigger still. The air seemed soon to be solid snow, and it beat in our faces until we were nearly blind. We had hardly gone three miles of the six which remained to us ; the woods on each side of the road were thick and dark ; and as, in spite of our impatience, it was quite impossible for us to travel on in that wild storm, we tried to find shelter under the trees. There was not a house in sight.

Above a ditch was a hedge with dead leaves here and there sticking to the branches. We took some brushwood and brushed away some of the snow from under the hedge, and crept into this shelter, wrapped together in our blankets. The hedge protected us pretty well for a long time, but the swiftly-falling snow covered the ground deeply, and rested on the branches above us, and piled high on every side.

Our clothes were thin and torn. I saw Diélette grow blue and numb; her teeth chattered; she shook; she clung close to me, but I was too cold to warm her. The snow, which sifted into my neck and shoes, melted, and ran over me in little icy streams. I was as wet as if I had been dragged through a river.

For about two hours we kept under the hedge before the wind fell sufficiently to permit us to go on. Then the snow had ceased falling, and went drifting about in the wind, rolled into long banks or whirled into pyramids.

All this while Diélette had clung to her mignonette; she clasped it to her, sheltered under her cape, but the snow, which insinuated itself everywhere, penetrated to it. When she saw the flakes lying on the earth of the pot, she wished to hand her treasure to me.

"What do you want me to do with it?" I asked.

"Take care of it—save it, please, Romain."

It vexed me to see her take so much trouble for

this poor plant, and I said, crossly, shrugging my shoulders and pointing to her fingers, which were numb and red from holding the pot,

“Look at these. You had much better tell me to fling the thing away.”

We were in that miserable, painful state of mind and body where quarrels are readily stirred up; we exchanged some angry words—the first which had passed between us; then, each falling into a sullen silence, we sat staring straight before us at the falling snow. Presently I felt her chilly little hand pulling at mine, and she said, mournfully,

“Where do you want me to throw it?”

“Don’t you see that it is dead, Diélette? The leaves are all black and stiff.”

She said nothing, but tears filled her eyes. Then she whispered, with pathos,

“Oh, my mamma, I will now have nothing to bring you.”

“There! let us keep it,” I cried, overcome by her sorrow. “Give it to me; I will carry it. Indeed, I would like to do so.”

By this time the wind had fallen. The snow was deep, and scattered flakes yet descended. The snow near us came up to our knees, and the longer we waited, the worse it would be. The storm-king seemed inclined to cover us with his white blanket.

Then he would never give us back to life. We would see no more summers. Again the verse of the hymn droned in my tired head :

“ Shall God his children leave without his care ? ”

All the warm-weather birds were off to the tropics ; the robins had homes somewhere, and food ; the snow-birds were provided with warm jackets ; all the young leaves slept in snug varnished cradles. It was warm deep in the earth, where next spring's blossoms waited. Only Diélette and I were houseless and hungry and freezing, and God must have forgotten us, his two poor strays.

The coming good was so far off that we got no glimpse of it. We could not guess whither we were led on this painful way. We were wretched and despairing, and still my song droned on in my head and old names revived before me. I was getting drowsy, and would soon have been asleep—a fatal slumber. Diélette was also very still. Conscious of our danger, I roused myself and her :

“ Diélette, see how the limbs of the trees bend under the snow. It may come down on us like an avalanche and bury us. Then don't you think there must be forty pounds' weight on this blanket ? I feel as if I were dead all over, don't you ? Suppose we do die here.”

"Then I won't see my mother after all," cried Diélette; "and we have come so far, and she has cried over me for seven years. Oh, let us go on, Romain. Just one trial more. If we can get three miles farther, we will be at the city, and there the snow will not be so deep. I believe it is most done snowing, any way."

We struggled to our feet, and hand in hand fought our way to the main road, going knee-deep in snow. As far as we could see there was neither wagon nor wayfarer in the road. Some ravens perched on the topmost branches of the snowy trees with harsh cries seemed to mock our toils and pains.

Having passed through a small village, we reached the brow of a high hill, and before us we saw a great cloud of smoke hanging low over the plain, and the wall and towers of an immense city which lay a black mass between two white snow-covered hills. A confused hum and roar came to us, something like the murmur of the sea.

"It is Paris!" screamed Diélette.

At once we felt less cold, less hungry, less tired. Our goal was before us.

We now saw carriages and wagons on the road converging to the city. But alas! we were not yet at Paris. When we had descended the hill, the brilliant capital had vanished out of sight on the lengthening

plain. Then thirst, starvation, cold and hunger returned upon us.

We shook and trembled with every step, and our wet clothes steamed upon our bodies. The snow melted on all the roads, and instead we had deep black mire. Carriages passed by in a constant stream; houses succeeded to houses lining the roads, and the plain was cut up into parks and pleasure-gardens. In spite of her energy, Diélette was obliged to stop; sweat poured over her face; she was very faint. I brushed off the snow from the steps of a house, and she sat down.

"Ask somebody how far off we are now," she gasped to me.

I called to a man passing in a cart.

"Whereabouts are you going?" he asked.

"To the great market-place, the Halle," I said.

"Ah, well, it will take you about an hour and a half—fully that; it is across the city."

"I never shall be able to do it," sobbed Diélette, hearing this answer.

She grew very pale, closed her eyes and breathed feebly.

I tried to arouse her, but she shook her head, and only wanted to lie on the doorstep.

I spoke to her of her mother. She must not give up, when less than two hours would restore her to her

home.

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This recalled her to herself. She allowed me to help her up, and we again pressed on our way. Diélette said,

“Ah, you will see how glad my mother will be, and how she will thank you, Romain. We will have hot soup and plenty of cakes, and I shall go to bed and sleep eight days without ever getting up. Then I will be rested.”

At the barrier I asked the way to the Halle, and they told us to take the right hand to the river. The streets of Paris were more icy and snowy than the main road. Some people stopped to look at us two forlorn creatures. Among the crowd of carriages, hacks, hucksters, peddlers, street-sweepers and business-people we two looked like a pair of lost birds.

Diélette had recalled strength and hope, and clasping my hand, walked on quite rapidly. Arrived at the Seine, they sent us to Pont-Neuf; and then, going to the right, we came in sight of Saint Eustache church. When we saw the great gilt clock and vane I felt Diélette trembling and leaning on me for support.

“The clock!” she cried. “See, the clock!”

It was not a cry of joy.

"I see the clock, Diélette, but no houses opposite."
We were in front of the church-tower.

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"We are mistaken," she said; "this cannot be Saint Eustache."

I asked a passer-by what it was; he said, "Saint Eustache."

Diélette stood with staring eyes, unable to utter a word, completely paralyzed.

"Let us search in all the streets which are near the clock," I said to her.

She allowed me to lead her, but she had not now the energy and hope which had lately conquered her feebleness.

She did not recognize any of the streets.

Opposite the church was a square where the houses had been torn down and the workmen were busy building stores.

"It was there," she sobbed, wildly—"it was there I lived, and my house and my mother and my brother are gone!"

"Let us ask somebody."

"What shall we ask? I forget the name of the street and the name of my mother, but I would remember the house if I could see it; and it is gone."

It was a blow such as stronger hearts and bodies could not have sustained; so many fatigues, so many

trials, as we had borne in the strength of our hope.

We sat down on the church-porch. We looked at each other, stupefied, terrified; the crowd about

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church and markets so dense that we could not get through it. Several people stopped and gazed at us, two wretched bundles of rags as we were making such a pitiable spectacle on the steps of the gorgeous cathedral.

Stronger physically than Diélette, and far less cruelly wounded in my best hopes and affections, I was the first to recover my wits and remember that we must do something. Taking her by the arm, I led her into a great basement where were piles of vegetables of all sorts. There were in a corner some empty baskets, and I made her sit down on them.

She permitted me to lead her about as if she were an idiot. I found nothing to say to her. Her stony silence terrified me, she looked so deathly; there was not a tinge of red on her lips, and her whole body quivered.

"Are you sick?" I faltered.

"Ah, mamma, mamma!" she cried, and great tears rolled slowly over her white cheeks.

About us in this market-place was a continual noise and stir—cries of hawkers, calls for errand-boys and change, a tumult and bustle which deafened us.

But amid all this excitement the spectacle of two

children so beggarly and famished, one of whom wept ceaselessly and the other was in an agony of sympathy, awoke some curiosity.

"What are you doing here?" demanded a fat market-woman, leaving her stall to see us.

"We are resting," I replied, faintly.

"Nobody rests here," she said, bluffly.

Without an answer, I took Diélette by the hand to lead her away. But where could I take her? I had no idea. But the poor child looked so pitiful, so heartbroken, so almost dying, that the fat woman pitied her, and said to me,

"Just see how weary and sick she is! Are you not ashamed to make her walk like that?"

Then questions followed questions, and I was obliged to tell her why we were there—that is to say, that we had come a long way to look for Diélette's mother, and that the house was torn down.

"Ah, my Goodness! what a history!" cried the woman, when I had finished; and hearing her exclamations, other market-people came running up and began to ask questions also.

"Then you don't know the name of her poor mother, nor of the street, nor anything more?" said a woman, when I had again concluded my tale. "Say, all of you, have you heard of a thread and needle mer-

chant who used to live in one of those houses."

There was then a confusion of questions and answers, but nothing exact could be made out. Eight years was a long while, and many changes had taken

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place. The streets had been altered and houses rebuilt for some time; the block now demolished had been in process of destruction a year. There were hundreds of such shopkeepers in Paris, and which one was Diélette's mother? Where could she now be found? Where ought she to be looked for, and how? All was chaos.

During all this talk, Diélette sat speechless, paler every moment, if possible, and shaking as if with a palsy.

"Don't you see the little girl is freezing?" cried one of the women. "Come, my darling child, to my stall. I have a brazier of coals there to warm you."

She took us into her shop, and two or three women followed us, while the others returned to their business, discussing our story.

Our friend did not content herself with warming us; she brought us two bowls of soup; and when we were dry and warm, and cheered a little, she put twenty cents in my hand.

It was a great deal for a person to give, but how little was it for us in our terrible emergency! Where should we go? What should we do? As for me, I

could go on to Havre from Paris and seek a ship, but there was Diélette. To what an extremity was she reduced ! She knew the full misery of our position, for as we left the market together she said,

“Where are we going?”

The church was before us, and once more the snow was flying through the air.

“We will go into the church,” I replied.

We entered the open church. It was very beautiful, but, what was better, it was warm. All was silent ; now and then some one looked in for a moment, entered a pew and then departed. We sat down in a corner.

Diélette bowed her head. I heard her whisper, “O God, help us, help us !”

“Listen, Diélette,” I said, putting my head down beside hers. “Since you cannot find your mother, let us go and find mine.”

“What, to Port-Dieu?”

“Yes. You can never go back to old Lapolade. You have had more than enough of the caravan, I know. There is nothing left you but to go to my mother. You can help her work ; you will be company for her, and not so much trouble as a boy like me. She will teach you her business. Then she will give me her blessing, and I will go to sea, and I will earn money

for you both. You will see that my mother will love you dearly ; and if you are with her, she will worry less about me. If she is sick, you can take care of her. Yes, we must go to Port-Dieu to my mother, Diélette, and the sooner the better."

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Diélette seemed much comforted by this proposition ; she raised her head, and agreed to what I said with an eagerness which showed how fully she had realized the horrors of her lonely position. She made only one objection :

"I'm afraid your mother won't want me."

"Why not?"

"Because—because I have been a menagerie-girl, and everybody hates them."

"And I have been a menagerie-boy, but she will not hate me."

"That is not the same thing ; you are her own," she replied, mournfully.

It is one thing to know what to do, the next thing is to do it. Our future looked well enough, provided we got to Port-Dieu ; but the present ?

I did not realize the distance between Paris and Port-Dieu. I only knew it was very great.

At Montrouge, before we entered Paris, in our weariness and eagerness to finish our wanderings I had thrown away all our encumbering baggage,

everything but my map, which was in my jacket pocket. Spreading it out in the pew, I studied it some time, and saw that in leaving Paris we should take the street along the Seine. That was the first thing to know; by and by I should find out the rest of the way.

But how could we make that journey? We had no shoes but tatters, scarcely clothes enough to cover our bodies, and only twenty cents of money. How could we endure any more fatigue, especially Diélette, who each instant appeared ready to faint? One moment she grew pale as snow, the next her face glowed like fire, and the trembling never ceased. How could we pass the night out-doors in the storm? In the morning, in full daylight, with hope so strong in our hearts, we had nearly perished; what could we do now in night and hopelessness?

“Are you able to travel?” I asked Diélette.

“I don’t know. Coming here I started strong and well, and I seemed to see my own pretty mamma standing before me. That led me on—gave me heart. I cannot see your mother in that way, Romain.”

“What are you doing here?” asked a voice behind us, and we both started up.

Our map was spread on the seat; we were whispering earnestly. It was quite evident to the sexton

that we had not come in to say our prayers. He said, roughly,

“Get out of this quickly.”

We rose and walked out before him, and he grumbled between his teeth at our ragged appearance.

There was no snow falling, but an icy wind blew sharply. We hurried along the street by which we

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had come. Diélette could scarcely drag herself forward. But I was excited, driven on by need, and had been much strengthened by the warmth and the bowl of soup. I did not feel my weariness. We walked some ten minutes, when she stopped.

“I can do no more,” she said, feebly. “See how I tremble; I am nearly fainting; I am deathly sick; my breast hurts me; I am going to die, Romain.”

She sat down upon a doorstep, but after some moments rose, took my hand and came on again. We reached the Seine, and turned to the right. The quays were hidden under masses of snow, and the whiteness of the bank made the river look nearly black. Passers-by wrapped in warm cloaks strode on rapidly. Some boys were playing with their sleds in the streets.

“Is it far?” whispered Diélette.

“To where?”

“Where we are to sleep.”

"I cannot tell ; let us walk on bravely."

"But I cannot walk on. Stop, Romain. Leave me—leave me to die here. Lead me into that corner, and let me die."

I put my arm about her. I wanted to get her out of Paris. I thought that, once more in the country, I could find an empty house, a lime-kiln, an inn, a barn, some place of shelter ; but in the busy, hard-hearted

city every one passed us coldly, and if we entreated aid, would arrest us. Whenever we had passed a policeman, he had looked at us so severely that I felt that he was our chief enemy.

Therefore we traveled on for a quarter of an hour perhaps, but we did not seem to make any advance. We were yet in the city ; big houses, high walls and policemen everywhere. The walls seemed never to end. They had on top of them sentinels, sentry-boxes and trees whitened with snow.

Diélette no longer supported herself. To tell the truth, I nearly carried her, and without my arm around her she would have fallen at once. Despite the cold, the sweat poured over my forehead from weariness and distress. I knew that the child had reached the limit of her strength. She was very ill, and what would become of us ?

Diélette let go of me, and dropped herself upon the

movement

pavement.

"That is the end of it all," she said, feebly.

I strove to drag her up. She got on her knees, and then fell over.

I sat down by her, raised her head and begged her to rise. We must go on; we would be arrested and separated.

She was perfectly helpless, and answered nothing. Indeed, she did not hear me. Her dry, hot hands

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burned mine as I clasped them; they seemed the only living part of her; they were like red coals.

After some minutes, terror overwhelmed me. Nobody passed. I got up and looked about. I could see nothing but the river, the wall and the snowy street. I screamed in Diélette's ears; I shook her; I strove to lift her up and carry her. I got her in my arms, and staggered on some steps, when I was forced to stop. I could not carry her.

She slipped from me to the earth. I sat down and held her head. This was indeed the end of all; she was dying alone with me in the cold night. Certainly in this climax of our misery she was yet conscious, for as I leaned moaning over her she patted my hand tenderly with her little cold fingers. The gentle action broke my heart; I wept wildly.

I hoped, however, that with consciousness her strength might return, and we could go on somewhere;

but she lay motionless, her eyes closed, and as she reclined against me, if it had not been for a tremulous motion of her body, I should have believed her dead.

One or two people passed us; looked surprised to see us sitting on the snowy pave, and went their way, regardless of our sufferings.

It was needful to do something, and I resolved to beseech help from the next one who approached us.

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The next person was a policeman. I called him, and he demanded what we were doing there.

I replied that my little sister was sick, and we were unable to go on.

Then he began to question me, and I told him what I had made up my mind to answer to every one—that we were going to our mother at Port-Dieu, on the seacoast, that we had travelled alone more than ten days. When I said that, he opened his eyes in astonishment.

“Come,” he said; “this poor child will die here; let us take her into the station-house.”

But Diélette was not able to stir. When I prayed her to rise, she made no sign of consciousness. The policeman spoke to her, but she did not understand him.

He then took her up in his arms, and bade me follow him. We hurried along the snowy road for about

low him. We hurried along the snowy road for about five minutes; then he came up to some other policemen, and related to them where he had found us and what I told him.

One of the new-comers took Diélette to carry, and presently we were at the station-house, a large building with a great red lantern swinging at the gate.

In a hall about a red-hot stove were many policemen lounging and chatting, and seeming very comfortable.



HE THEN TOOK HER UP IN HIS ARMS, AND BADE ME FOLLOW
HIM.

As Diélette was unable to speak, they questioned me, and I stuck to what I had said in the first place.

They had laid the poor child on a lounge, and were now looking curiously at her wan face.

"I believe she is dead," said one of them.

"No, not yet; but she is precious near it, I can tell you," said another.

"The only thing to be done is to carry her quickly to the general hospital," added the chief officer. "And as for you," he said, turning to me, "what are you to do? Have you any means of subsistence?"

I stared at him, dazed by my miseries.

"Say, boy, have you any money?"

"Sir, I have twenty cents."

"Very good. You had better use it in getting a lodging; for if you are found as a vagrant in the streets, you will most likely be arrested."

They then laid Diélette on a litter, covered her well with blankets, drew the curtains over her, and two men were ordered to carry her to the hospital.

My agony at this sight was unspeakable; she seemed dead, and about to be buried, my poor Diélette! Could she not go to my mother to get some love and comfort, now that her own mamma was doubly lost?

I longed to snatch her from her bearers, but what could I do for her? Then I thought how the policeman had threatened to arrest me if I should be found

in the streets. Nevertheless, I must follow, to see where they carried Diélette.

I ran and caught hold of the men, begging permission to go with them to the hospital. To this they agreed.

We had a long walk, during which we crossed the Seine; finally they stopped in a large square, where on one side I saw a very beautiful church and on the other a huge stone building full of doors and windows. The porter permitted me to enter with the others. A gentleman dressed in black then opened the curtains of the litter. I pressed forward to see if Diélette were dead; my heart nearly ceased beating in my agony of suspense, but she was living; her face was as red as a rose.

The stranger spoke to her very gently. I stepped forward and replied for her, as she continued insensible.

Thus for the third time I had this history of our ten days' wanderings to relate.

"Very well," said the house-surgeon, for such he was. "Cold, wet, fatigue, starvation, have done it; she has the pneumonia; no wonder. God help the child!"

He wrote some words on a slip of paper, and gave an order to the bearers. We then began another journey. The snow was slippery, and the bearers

often stumbled, and sometimes stopped to rest. When they did so, I went to the litter and spoke to Diélette; sometimes she replied in a choked, feeble voice, sometimes she seemed not to hear.

We went a long way this time; I was so tired I thought the distance doubly great. Then we came to a quiet street, where there were fewer passers-by, to a smaller house with less doors and windows. The place looked gloomy enough. It was, however, a children's hospital. Some men in white aprons met us, took us into the hall, called for a nurse and gave an order. The policemen at once left with the litter. Diélette lay on a lounge. We saw that the hour of parting had come. She looked at me, her cheeks and eyes bright with fever.

"Do not leave me," she said, beseechingly.

I could only think of Diélette and her desolation. She lay on the lounge entreating me to stay with her.

"I will never desert you," I sobbed.

She could only thank me with a look, but what a world of feeling was in that look!

They lifted her up to carry her off. I screamed after her: "I will stay in Paris! I will visit you!"

Then I stood stupidly, half dead, without offering to leave or knowing where to go.

The porter came to me and told me that I must go out.

“When shall I be able to see her?” I asked.

“Why, on Sundays and Wednesdays, they allow the friends to visit the children.”

He was in no mood to prolong discussion on this cold night; he thrust me out, and the door was locked. The lights were lit in the streets and houses; every one had a home but me. Last night I had Diélette; now I had no one.

The first question with me was where I should sleep; as to how I should live in Paris while I waited for Diélette to get well, I could consider that on the morrow. Of course I must so live and wait, and I must earn a little store of money, that I could get her food and conveyance for our journey to Port-Dieu.

I no longer felt that I must have a well-arranged plan, all precautions taken against disaster. I had tried it, and everything had gone wrong. I had got in the habit of misery, if one may so speak, and this habit renders one careless of the future.

Although now occupied with but one idea—the question of shelter—I found no solution for it. I knew no one in that great and splendid city. There were thousands there, as wretched as myself, who at that very hour knew neither where they should sup nor sleep. Brought up in the country, I had in mind only a country boy's resorts—a farm-house, a stable, a hay-rick—and none of these could be found in the

quarter where I was wandering. I saw nothing but walls and houses, houses and walls.

I had turned to the right in leaving the hospital; and looking for the name of the street, I read on a corner house "Sèvres street," and found myself presently on a broad avenue planted with large trees.

Whither would this lead me? But it mattered very little; I had no more object in going one way than another. I strolled on very slowly; I was too worn out to move quickly, and I had no spur to action. My shoeless feet, which had been in snow since morning, were as insensible as if they were dead.

On the other side of the avenue were some children sliding, and I mechanically stopped to look at them.

Among those who passed before me I saw, to my amazement, a familiar face.

It was that of a lad called Biboché. I had seen him at Falaise, where he had belonged to the troop of a showman named Vignali. Their caravan had been pitched beside Lapolade's for some weeks, and Biboché and I had sometimes played and chatted together.

As I was the only spectator of this sledding game, the boy looked at me and recognized me. He ran up pleasantly:

"Halloo! What are you doing in Paris, Romain? Is your menagerie come in? If it has, I shall go see Diélette and her lion."

I told him that I had run away from Lapolade, that I had only been in the city since morning, and that I was much troubled to find food and a lodging. I said not a word about Diélette, and ended by asking him if he thought that the troupe he was in would engage me for a time, for I was desperate.

“Oh yes, surely they will be glad to get you, if you are a good zigger ; are you a good zigger?”

Now, what a zigger was I could not tell—it was an entirely new word to me ; but being in a great strait, I vaguely responded that no doubt in a little time I could be as good a zigger as anybody.

This reply seemed to please Biboché mightily.

“Then toddle along,” he said, gayly.

“And the manager?”

“Is the innocent putting on airs?” said Biboché. “It is I who engage you ; you are now of our troupe, and I will teach you ‘zigging.’”

Now, this was speaking to me in an unknown tongue. A plain fisher-boy, carefully brought up, I could not understand why my frank questions were laughable, or what the trade of “zigging” might be. I concluded the strange phrases were usual to Paris, and I did not wish to appear too ignorant of city ways. I was greatly astonished to see Biboché, who was only twelve years old and about as big as a ferret, acting as the leader of a troupe.

“Are you cold?” said Biboche, seeing how I shook. “Never mind, boy. I’ll soon warm you up.”

He took me to a little shop, where he made me drink a cup of hot cider mulled with butter and spice.

“Now, young man, you are enough waked up to travel on to your supper,” he cried, airily.

In place of going toward the heart of the city, which lay at our right, we turned to the left, and walked a great distance in unfrequented streets where the houses had not only a poverty-struck but a villainous appearance.

Biboche saw my surprise.

“Did you think I was going to offer you my hospitality in the Tuileries?” he exclaimed, mockingly.

Indeed, it was far from a palace where he conducted me; he led me into a broad field. Night had fallen, but not blackly; a gray light showed that we were among embankments and ruins. It was a strange place truly. At the mouth of an excavation Biboche stopped.

“Here we are,” he said, in a lower tone. “Give me your hand, and take care that you don’t fall.”

We went into a sort of cavern; we made some turns in a way cut out among rocks, and entered a subterranean gallery. Biboche took from his pocket

an end of a candle and lit it. I was yet more astonished.

"A minute more, and we'll be there," he said.

Almost immediately I perceived a red light which shone from the end of the cavern. It was a brazier of charcoal, and near it sat a boy about my companion's age.

"Anybody round?" asked Biboché.

"No."

"That's good. Here is a friend of mine. Look him up a pair of shoes; he's badly off."

The boy jumped up and disappeared. Presently he returned with an armful of shoes. It looked as if I were in a shoemaker's shop.

"Choose," said Biboché, in a lordly way. "Help yourself to boots, my hearty; don't be afraid to take your pick—you're welcome; nobody will charge you a cent for them."

The boy had also a handful of warm woollen socks, and it would be hard to tell what a strange luxury it was to have my sore, bleeding, almost lifeless feet covered by the soft warm hose and encased in a pair of strong and easy-fitting boots.

I had just dressed my feet thus when two more lads came in; then a third; then a fourth; then others—nine in all. Biboché introduced me loftily to

all: "It is a friend of mine. I knew him in our show. He'll make a good zigger. I'll go bail for Romain. Now, all of you fellows, what have you been doing to-day?"

Each of them emptied his pockets on the floor before the brazier.

Some of their pockets seemed immensely large; one had a quantity of ham, another a couple of bottles. One boy put down a little flask with a silver stopper.

There was through the group a general outcry at this; some laughed, some jested.

"It is nice enough," said Biboche; "let him have it to drink out of."

They then all sat down beside the brazier, not upon chairs, but simply on the floor of beaten earth.

Biboche seemed to do the honors of their supper, and with elaborate hospitality served me first. It had been a great while since I had sat down to so abundant a meal—not indeed since I left my good and ever-regretted home in the house of my dear M. de Bihorel had I shared in such a festivity. After the fried ham they brought out a cold turkey, and after the turkey a big butter-cake. I was so famished that I ate enormously, to the intense admiration of the eleven boys.

"Lucky dog!" cried Biboche, expressing the satis-

faction of all the rest ; “we like to get boys who will lay into things like that !”

The hearty eating and the warmth of the cavern, added to my extreme weariness, made me exceedingly drowsy.

“You are sleepy,” said Biboché, seeing my eyes constantly closing in spite of myself. “Don’t stay awake any longer. I’m sorry I haven’t a flowing bowl and a hot night-cap to taper off with, but I dare say you’ll sleep well all the same.”

I did not think a flowing bowl or a hot night-cap would make my rest any sweeter. I supposed they were customs of the city unknown to a provincial.

“A glass of grog, and good-night !” cried Biboché. I refused the grog, which astonished all my comrades, but I said good-night promptly, and asked where I should sleep.

“I’m going to show you,” said Biboché.

He lit a candle at the brazier, and passing before me, entered a side gallery running from the hall where we had supped.

He showed me a pile of straw covered with several woollen blankets, and looking to me very inviting.

“Sleep well,” he said ; “to-morrow we will do our talking.”

Then he left me, carrying the candle.

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I did not feel quite comfortable in the silence and darkness of that unknown cave, which echoed to Biboché's departing steps; besides, I was anxious to understand the pursuits of my new comrades. Innocent as I was, those full pockets, the ham, the drinking-flask, looked to me very suspicious. But I was overwhelmed by fatigue, and in spite of uneasiness, in spite of absolute fear, I was scarcely wrapped in my warm blankets when I fell asleep.

"We will do our talking to-morrow," Biboché had said; and to-morrow would, therefore, explain all my doubts.

I had a good shelter; I had eaten well; my travels had been long and hard; so I slumbered well, for all the noise of the band of lads, who yet ate and drank, and sung and laughed, a few feet from me.

Biboché awoke me the next morning. If he had not done so, I would doubtless have slept twenty-four hours.

"Up now!" he cried. "Here's your toggery; put it on, old fellow!"

I had rejoiced to undress myself and fling by my dirty rags when I went to bed the night before. I now put on the clothes which Biboché flung on my straw bed. They consisted of a strong woollen jacket

and pantaloons and a good soft woollen shirt.

A pale light struggled from the top of the cave,

where there was an aperture; day had hard work to illuminate that den.

"My good friend," said the easy Biboche as I proceeded with my dressing, "I have thought of you, and behold I have found you. You are a mere novice in our trade, ain't you?"

"Most likely."

"I am sure of it. Now, if you expect without serving an apprenticeship to work as we fellows do, you'll come to grief double-quick. Therefore I mean to put you with a gay boy who will teach you how properly to handle the ropes. Do you twig me, Romain?"

Despite my desire to uphold my credit, and not to show too great an ignorance of Parisian life and phraseology, I really was forced to confess that I did not know what he meant by "twigging" him. I must understand that at the outset.

"Oh, come, now, *are* you in earnest?" asked Biboche, staring curiously at me.

"Yes."

"My Goodness! But come, we will get our grub, and I'll take you to a friend's house after that."

I followed him. The brazier was burnt out, and there was no trace of last night's festivities. The day shone brighter, as we were nearer the opening of the cave, and I saw that the roof was supported by two

pillars of earth and rock, and a great pile of stone lay between them.

From a cupboard cut in the side wall Biboche took out a bottle, a loaf and a ham-bone.

"Eat a crust," he said, "and drink the health of your new patron; you shall be a ratter."

The decisive moment had come. I took my courage in my hands. "Do not mock me or deceive me, I beg you," I said. "You know I am not a Paris boy, and I do not know what you mean by being a *ratter*."

This question and my manner so delighted Master Biboche that he laughed until he had nearly strangled himself. When he got a little over his gayety he demanded: "But are they really such innocents in the country as not to know what a ratter is? Why, my daisy, a ratter is a jackal—that's what a ratter is; otherwise, he is a lad like you and I, small, quick and cunning. You know, most likely, that many merchants shut their shop doors and leave the store empty when they go into the room behind it to eat their dinners?"

Now, I really could not understand what connection there was between these two ideas, so I replied that I did not know anything about the merchants shutting up their shops.

"They shut them with a little low bar," said Biboche, passing me the wine-bottle, which he had half

emptied ; "that bar is fast to a spring which rings a bell. If any one enters the door, the bell sounds, and the shopkeeper, who is tranquilly eating his dinner, comes to see who is there. Now do you see what a ratter is for?"

"Not at all, unless he takes the place of the bell."

Biboche got so much more merry over this that he leaped in the air, slapped his legs, turned somersaults and chuckled a long while. When he had finished this exhibition, he caught me and cuffed my ears.

"If you keep on, my hearty," he cried, "you will surely be the death of me. Instead of taking the place of the bell, the ratter is to keep it quiet. The bar is on a half door. This, of course, *customers* enter, but the ratter leaps over it gently. He thus makes no noise. The merchant suspects nothing; the ratter to save trouble helps himself, and hands what he gets out to his patron outside. Then the outside fellow gives the ratter his hand, he jumps the door again, and they are both off. The shopman never knows where his things are. The patron keeps his eye out for police; and if customers come in they think the ratter has rung the bell and is waiting to be served. The merchant meantime hears the customer ring, and he thinks two buyers come in together, and the ratter asks the price of something, and goes off."

I was struck with terror:

“Why, that is stealing!”

“What of that?”

“But are you, you then, a thief?”

“Well, why not? What are you, you fool?”

I stood silent. I now knew Biboché's way of life, and I saw that I had in my fear of seeming ignorant led him to think that I understood and would share it. No wonder that he now called me a fool. I had been one, indeed. It was needful to speak clearly:

“Hark you: if you have counted on me for such work, you have deceived yourself.”

Now he did not laugh, but fell into a furious rage. I had deceived him on purpose, and I was going out to denounce him to the police. This was his cry.

“No, no!” he shouted, “you shall not denounce me. You shall never leave here for that.”

“I am going away at once,” I cried.

Before I could say more he flew on me like a tiger. But though he was the more swift and supple, I was larger and far stronger. The struggle was not a long one, for after the first moment of surprise, when he was able to throw me down, I had recovered myself, and presently had him on the floor and knelt upon him.

“Are you going to let me go out?” I asked.

"You will betray me."

"No, not a word."

"Swear it."

"I solemnly swear it. I won't betray you, for you have been kind to me, and I came among you on a misunderstanding."

I rose and let him get up.

"You know that you are a fool—a true fool," he stormed, in a passion. "You will see if you can live by your honesty. Steal and thrive, be honest and starve; that's it. If you had not met me last night, to-day you would have been dead. You have here eaten stolen ham; you have drunk stolen wine; you warmed yourself at a stolen fire; you slept in a stolen bed; you are warm, and your feet are not mortified and ready for amputation, all because I gave you stolen clothes and shoes. If you don't die of cold when you leave here, it will be because you wear stolen goods."

Ah, these good warm, delightful woollen clothes! I could wear them no longer.

"Will you let me take a candle?" I asked.

"What for?"

"To go and put on my own clothes."

"Humbug!" he cried. "I don't reproach you with those clothes. I don't charge you for them. I give them to you. Keep them."

"Yes, I know you mean to give them, but, all the same, I cannot keep them."

He followed me into the gallery where I had passed the night. I laid off the suit he had given me, and took my damp rags. They did not feel very agreeably, I can tell you; and when I tried to tie on my old shoes, I found that one of them was entirely without a sole.

Biboche looked at me silently. I made haste with my movements, for in all my misery God helped me to be quite honest. Then Biboche spoke gently :

"If ever there was a fool, my lad, you are one; but that which you do proves you in earnest, and you see it touches me here." He struck himself upon the breast. "Say, is it worth while to be honest?"

"Try it yourself, and see," I retorted.

"It is too late. I can't go back to that," he said.

"If you are arrested and condemned, what will your mother say?" I asked.

"My mother? Ah, if I had one! Don't talk to me of that."

I was about to interrupt him, but he went on: "Don't preach; let me alone. I'm content, only I don't want you to go away like that. It hurts my feelings to see you. As you will not wear clothes which you call stolen, will you have those which I wore at Fa-laïse? I paid well for them, I can tell you, and by

good luck they were too big for me. Take them and welcome, to please me."

I replied that I would be glad to have them.

"Very good," he replied, much consoled; "let us go out together. I will give them to you."

We returned to the city as we had left it the previous night; he led me to a little house, situated near the barrier, and conducting me to an upper room, took from a closet a vest and a pair of trowsers which I had often seen him wear at Falaise. He also gave me a pair of good shoes.

"Now, good-bye," he said, when I was dressed; "if you meet any of the fellows you saw last night, keep out of their way, and don't recognize them."

It was now about ten o'clock, and I had all day wherein to find a sleeping-place for the night.

The day was clear; I was warmly clad and well shod; moreover, I had eaten heartily. I had but one trouble, and that was not a small one—where to find a sleeping-place in Paris.

I was not able to go to see Diélette, for this was not a visiting-day at the hospital.

I began to walk straight on; perhaps chance would aid me in some way.

But after two hours I had found nothing, imagined nothing, and had gone through many queer localities. Then I bethought me that it was better to try and



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EMPLOY ME.

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help myself than to go on at this haphazard rate. "God helps those who help themselves," M. de Biherel had told me.

Then I took my course toward the Seine. My intention was to go to the Halle; perhaps there the brave woman who had given me twenty cents would find me some work, or at least could tell me where to look for it.

However, this woman did not remember me in the stout clothes of Biboché; and when I had recalled to her who I was, she asked me what I had done with my sister. I then told her all that had happened to us on the previous afternoon, and I saw that she was much moved. I told her that I would not leave Diélette; that I meant to wait in the city until she was well, but that it was needful for me to work, and I did not know what to go at; that I had thought—I had hoped—

"You thought you'd come to Granny Berceau," she said, interrupting me, "and you did very well, my lad. That flatters me; you thought me kind; I am glad of it. I knew you read in my looks that I was not a woman to let two poor children die in the streets. I am not rich, sure enough, but I can use my head and my hands."

She called two or three of her neighbors and they

took counsel what to do with me and how to employ

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me; and this was a troublesome question, for in that market-place it is not the custom to employ children. Finally, after a long discussion, wherein they subjected me to some ten cross-examinations, and had found out that I could read and write, they unanimously decided that I should be employed as clerk for the market-crier, if he could find me a place.

All that I know about getting the position is that next morning I was installed behind a desk belonging to the fish-crier, and I was set to copying little bills and notices. Nothing could have been easier; I wrote legibly and rapidly. When Madame Berceau came to see if the crier were satisfied with my work, he told her I did very well indeed, and that I could have thirty cents each work-day. That was not a fortune, but as good Madame Berceau let me sleep on the floor of her own little room, it more than supplied my wants. Diélette had been taken into the hospital on Monday, so on this Wednesday I waited with great impatience for my duty at the crier's to be over, that I might hasten to Sèvres street.

They gave me at the market a full load of oranges for her, and I went with my pockets full. Anxieties possessed me, and I trembled as I waited the opening of the gates. Was she living? Alas! was she dead?

They pointed me to the third ward, and in my impatience I began to run, but a nurse stopped me, say-

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ing that if I made the least noise I should be sent out at once. I then walked on tiptoe.

Diélette was living, and already better. Never shall I forget the expression of her eyes when she saw me.

"I knew well that you would come," she said, "if you had not died of cold."

She made me tell her all that had happened to me since our separation. When I told her about Biboché, she said,

"That is right; you are a good boy, my brother."

She had never called me her brother before.

"You may kiss me for that," she said, turning her face gently on the pillow.

When she found that I was staying with Madame Berceau, she said, "Oh the good, brave woman!" Then I began to question her.

She had been very sick, delirious and unconscious with fever, but they thought she was now getting better, and there was a nurse who was very kind to her.

"But, all the same, I want to get away," she said in a low voice. "I am afraid. Last night there was a little girl died here in the next bed to me; and when they put her in the coffin, I fainted."

Diélette, however, deceived herself in her hope of soon leaving the hospital. She had been so exhausted

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by privation, and was so ill, that her convalescence was very slow. She was two months at the hospital.

However, that was for us rather a happy time. She learned to love better those who took care of her, and both nurses and physicians were charmed by her winning ways and her lovely face. They all knew our history, and the interest she inspired was bestowed also in some measure on me. When I went Sundays and Wednesdays to the hospital, they received me like a friend.

Finally she was pronounced cured, and her bill of dismissal was signed. The doctor and nurses told us that they had made arrangements which would save us from returning on foot to Port-Dieu. They had found a nurse's wagon going from the city, and the driver would take us to Vire; at Vire he would pay for our places in the stage to Port-Dieu. They had taken up a little collection in the hospital, and had got five dollars and a half, which was more than enough for travelling expenses.

For myself, during these two months, in view of our journey, which I had not expected to find made so easy, I had carefully saved up every penny I could squeeze out of my earnings, and I had on hand five

dollars and a quarter.

What a difference, then, between our beggarly entrance to Paris two months before and our departure!

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Surely we had found that God does not leave his children to lack his care. The good Mme. Berceau insisted on going with us to the wagon, and she loaded us with all manner of eatables.

The wagon for nurses is not a very luxurious conveyance. It is a long canvas-covered van, with two seats running down the sides like an ambulance, and plenty of hay lying in the bottom; but we thought it splendid.

It was now the end of January. The weather was not very cold, and travelling was agreeable. We were both of us well and hardy, and we had plenty of good food along with the wet-nurses who were taking their babies back to the country from Paris. When the children screamed too loud or were being dressed, Diélette and I left the wagon and cheerily trudged on foot for a while.

At Vire the carrier paid our passage in the stage-coach, and that set us down about three miles from Port-Dieu. Three miles from my mother! It was on Monday, and just seven months from the day when I had left home.

We walked on some steps without speaking, for we were both much embarrassed. Diélette broke the

silence first, saying,

“Walk more slowly, Romain; I wish to talk with you.”

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The ice was broken.

“I also have something to say to you,” I replied. “Look; here is a letter for you to give my poor mamma. Take it, Diélette.”

“And why a letter?” said she, softly; “why are you not coming with me yourself? Why do you not take me to your mother’s? How do you know she will want me? If she sends me away, what will become of me?”

“Do not talk like that. You do not know my mother. She send you away? never!”

“Yes, I do know her; nevertheless, you do not know that she will forgive me for letting you run away again when you are so nearly home? Will she think that I begged and prayed you to remain at home? What! can you come with me so far, and not go in to give your mother one kiss? Do you call that goodness, or natural affection, or duty, such conduct? Oh, shame!”

“It is just that which I explain to my mother in this letter. I say to her that I know very well that if I stop to see her I will not be able to get away to Havre to take ship; but if I stay at home, I must be

arrested as a runaway apprentice and taken back to my uncle; and I had far rather die. To go to my mother will only get her into trouble, and make her pay a fine which will eat up her little home, or it will

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send me to be the slave of that bad old man. There was a written contract made by a lawyer, and my uncle is not the man to give up his rights."

"But your mother might find some way of saving you," urged Diélette, weeping.

"If my mother saves me from my uncle, it will only be by the payment of all her little property. I would not be so mean as to rob her in that way. But if I run off, and she can make oath that she has neither seen nor helped me, she will be free of trouble on my account. Then, when I am grown up and come home, Uncle Simon cannot lay a finger on me, and I will have pockets full of money for my mother and you, and you shall live like ladies. Until then you will love her, obey her, wait on her, work with her—for us both, Diélette."

"But why cannot your uncle get hold of you when you get back?"

"Because I shall enter the marine service, like my dear father, and a mariner inscribed in that way belongs to government, and government is stronger than my uncle. I have thought it all out, Diélette. Do

as I tell you ; promise me that."

"Well ! as for myself, I don't know anything about governments or Uncle Simons, or all that. I only know that for a boy to run away without his mother's blessing is very wrong. I feel it to be wrong."

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I was not sufficiently easy in my own conscience to have any one say to me the very thing which I had said to myself a hundred times. I cried in a rage,

"It is wrong?"

"Yes, it is wrong," she replied, firmly. "And if your mother accuses you of not loving and honoring her, I cannot defend you, for I agree with her."

I walked beside the little maid for some minutes without speaking. I was distressed, ashamed, half ready to yield. I said,

"Have I ever acted wrongly to you, Diélette?"

"No, no, never !" she replied, eagerly.

"Do you think I can be wicked to other people?"

She looked at me earnestly.

"Tell me."

"No, I don't think you can."

"Do you think really that I do not love my mother? do you believe I mean to make her suffer?"

She had hoped that she had convinced me, but she saw that I was defending myself against her charges.

She did not answer, so I continued :

“Ah, well, if you have a little gratitude to me for faithfulness to you, if you think that I am not a wicked boy, do not speak to me as you have done. Perhaps you might persuade me to remain, and I know that that would be the worst for us all.”

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She did not add a single word, and we went on in silence ; we were greatly disturbed.

I had chosen a by-path where we met no one. We went on until we reached a ditch which served as a limit to our walk in that direction. I could now from the high point of land where we stood see Port-Dieu, and I said to Diçlette, pointing out the well-remembered cot on the side of the cliff,

“There, under those rocks, in the middle of that little garden, is the home where I have lived so happily, and which I do love so much.”

She knew my earnestness, for my voice was broken by tears.

“Romain !” she cried.

I did not pretend to misunderstand all the entreaty her tones put in that one word.

“You will go down there,” I said, firmly. “You will enter the house ; she is there, for I see a window open. You will say, ‘Here, madame, is a letter from Romain, your son.’ Then you will find when she has read it that she will welcome you warmly for my

sake. Then say to her, 'In six months, your son, being entered as a marine under government, will be able to come home safely to see you. He will also write you from Havre in a few weeks.' Good-bye, Diélette."

I was about to leave her, but she grasped my arm :

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"Don't leave me! don't! See how you make me cry, Romain!"

She wrung her hands.

I returned: "Do you want to ruin me? Diélette, let me go. Come, I will send by you a kiss to my mother. Take courage and carry it to her."

I put my arms around her neck and kissed her cheek, which was wet with tears.

I knew that every instant was dangerous; I might be recognized and arrested. If I would save myself from four years of slavery at Uncle Simon's, I must hurry from Port-Dieu. I therefore unclasped Diélette's hands from my arm and began to run.

Diélette, thus deserted, went forward as I had directed. As soon as she was out of sight I returned, took a side path, climbed the rocks, and, hidden by bushes and crags, gained a spot where I could see her enter my mother's door. I beheld her go in. She remained a long time. I saw nothing of either of them, and I began to imagine trouble. My anxiety

increased greatly. Suppose strangers were there? suppose, like Diélette's mother, mine were gone—lost, dead?

At the instant when this agonizing thought entered my mind, and I was on the point of rushing down the cliff and wildly demanding news of my mother, Dié-

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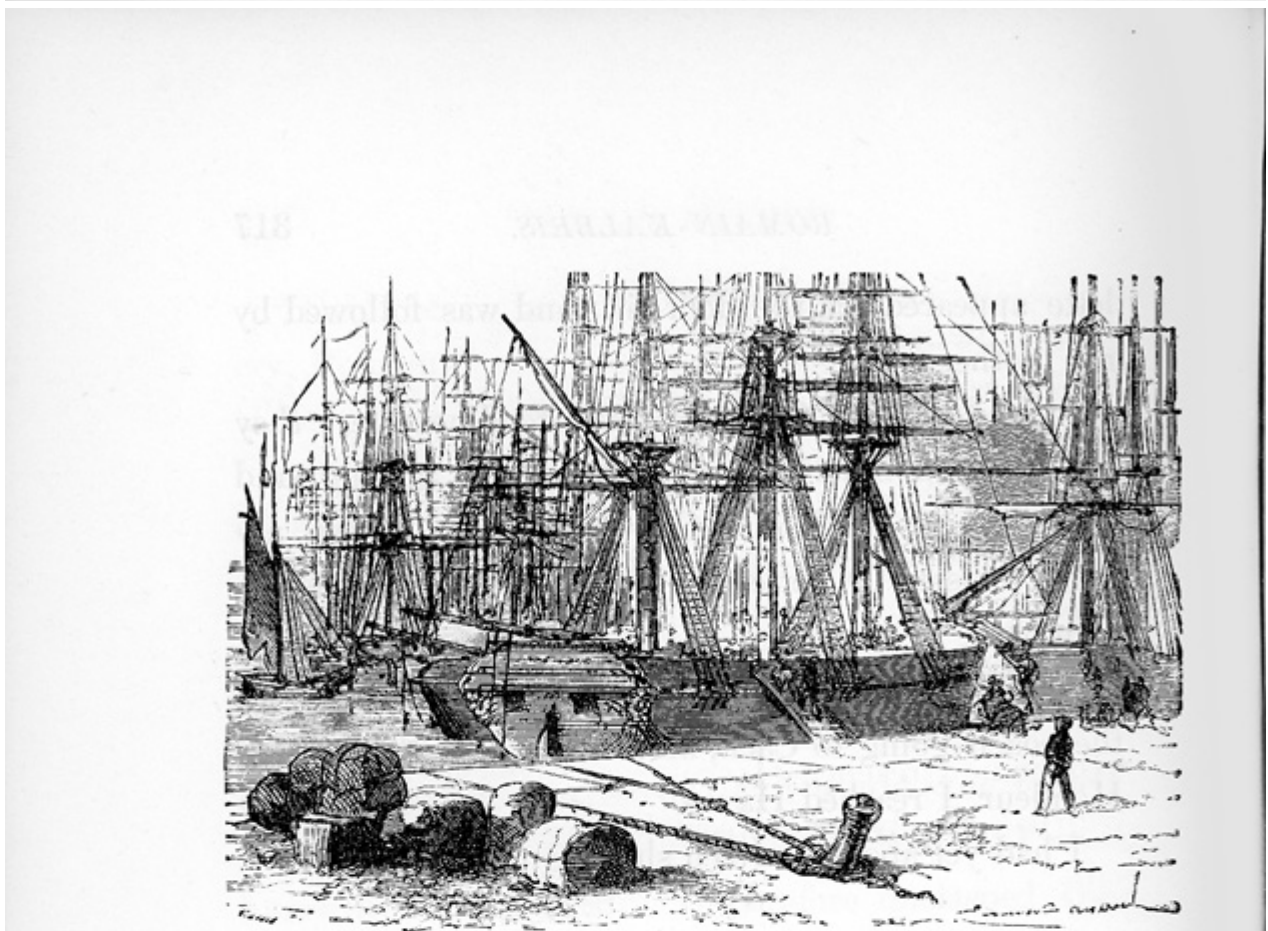
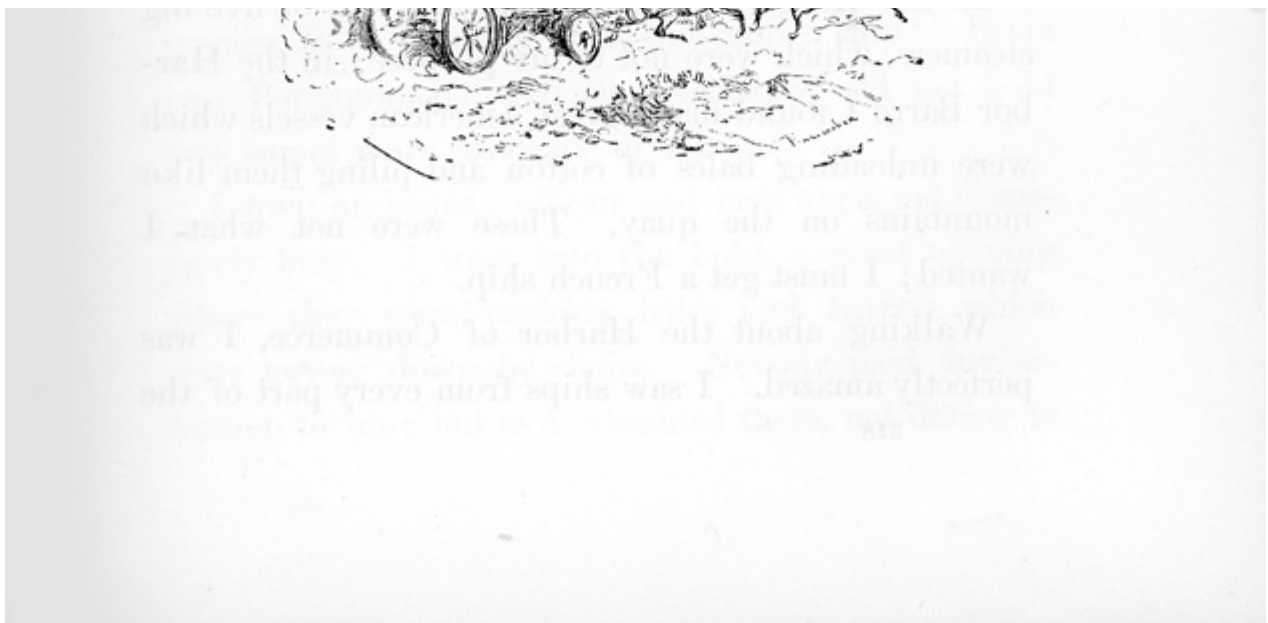
lette appeared on the door-sill, and was followed by my mother.

She was then living. Diélette stood near her; they clasped each other's hands; they stood talking, and wiping their eyes as if they both wept. Then my mother kissed Diélette, and they went into the house together.

Three hours later I clambered into a back seat of the coach going to Caen, and in two days, by way of Honfleur, I reached Havre.

I had yet about fourteen shillings in my purse.





CHAPTER XIII.

I HAD believed that I had only to present myself on board of a ship to be at once engaged. Scarcely had I arrived at Havre when I hastened to the quay to make my choice.

In the King's Harbor I saw only four or five big

steamers, which were not to my purpose; in the Harbor Barre I found many great American vessels which were unloading bales of cotton and piling them like mountains on the quay. These were not what I wanted; I must get a French ship.

Walking about the Harbor of Commerce, I was perfectly amazed. I saw ships from every part of the

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world—ships of all kinds, big and little; there was a perfect forest of masts, garlanded with flags, cordage, furled sails and floating streamers. It seemed to me far more beautiful than Paris.

There were some ships which exhaled an odor of sugar and fruits which made my mouth water; others smelled of pepper and cinnamon. Everywhere men were at work discharging cargoes; some coolies were carrying huge bags of coffee, and seemed to listen with a melancholy air to the rollicking songs of the sailors.

Among the ships which in all their equipments particularly attracted me was one painted white, with a broad blue band above her water-mark. She was a cleanly-built three-master, and on a board hung in the shrouds was painted the information, "Loading for Bahia and Pernambuco. The Morning Star, Captain Frigard, leaves immediately."

Oh, who would not desire to make such a beautiful voyage in a splendid white-and-azure ship? Bahia and Pernambuco! All the geography did not hold two names more seductive to me.

I went on board; officers and men appeared desperately busy. I went into the hold, a great opening where they were packing bales and barrels which were swung down by chains. Nobody paid any attention to me; but as I remained there, not daring to

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venture too near a gentleman who was making lists of the loading as it arrived, and whom I supposed to be the captain, I endeavored to attract his attention inoffensively.

"Get out of the way, you there!" he cried to me.

"Sir, I want to speak to you," I said, approaching him. So I made my request to be received as a cabin-boy on the Morning Star.

He did not deign a reply, shook his busy head, and coolly pointed to the gangway.

"But, sir—" I began.

He motioned more decisively with his hand, and I, not daring to insist, went out humbly, and, truth to say, somewhat disquieted by his refusal.

Suppose nobody should want me? I was not in a situation to give up easily. I went a little farther. Without doubt the Morning Star was too beautiful a ship for poor me; so I chose a black brig of a rusty

appearance fitting out for Tampico, and called the Congress. They simply said they did not want any one. The third time, in place of speaking to the captain, I addressed the first sailor I found. He shrugged his shoulders, and all the word I could get from him was that I was a droll little youngster. Finally, upon a schooner starting for the African coast, the captain of which was of a rough, unpleasing appearance, I found a vacancy. He said he

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would take me; but when he found that I had no father to sign my contract, that I was not enrolled as a mariner, that I had not even a bundle for my outfit, I was ordered to "get off his ship a sight quicker than I had got on it, if I didn't want to be kicked off."

My affairs looked dismal enough, and I began to get discouraged. Suppose, after all, I should have to return to Port-Dieu? If I could have gone there to be with my mother and Diélette, it would have been joy truly. But ever before me loomed the threatening vision of my uncle Simon. I recalled the contract which bound me to his service; I could not fulfil it. Therefore I continued my search.

In wandering around the circuit of the harbor I had come to the entrance. The tide began to rise, and already some fishing-vessels were spreading out

to sea. I went on the jetty to see this class of vessels. It was a long time since I had witnessed such a spectacle. It recalled old times and home, the swelling tide, the white sails, the fishers outward bound. The magnificent horizon held my delighted gaze, and ships from Caen, Rouen and Honfleur went and came. I saw the preparations of great ships for long voyages, heard friends saying farewell, saw handkerchiefs waved, listened to the shouts of the sailors: the creaking of ropes and pulleys, the mingling of sails, the

spreading and furling of clouds of canvas far and near,—all these made me forget my own wants and intentions.

I sat for some two hours on the edge of the pier, when suddenly some one came up and pulled my hair. Surprised, I turned and found myself facing one of the musicians of Lapolade's show, Hermann. "What! is Lapolade in Havre?" I screamed. I asked this question with such terror that Hermann did not at first reply, but stopped to laugh heartily. At length he sat down beside me and told me never to fear—that he also had left Lapolade, who was a great rascal. He (Hermann) was now on his way to join a brother who lived in the republic of Ecuador in South America. As to Lapolade, there was nothing to be feared from him; he had fallen heir to a

piece of family property, had sold the menagerie, and was living at his ease.

The menagerie was not much to sell, for fifteen days after our flight the old lion Mouton had died of grief and hunger. From the departure of Diélette the beast became cross and miserable; he refused his food, and showed an appetite only for Lapolade, toward whom he flew roaring whenever he saw him.

As Lapolade was not inclined to save the life of the old lion by becoming a meal for him, the poor brute died of starvation in a fortnight.

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Hermann asked me if I had got a ship. I told him what trouble I had to find any one to take me.

This man had been so long connected with a show that his mind was fertile in tricks and expedients.

"If you like," he said, "I will engage you on board as my brother."

"But my outfit?"

That was an impossibility; Hermann was no richer than myself. His passage had been paid in advance by his brother in Guayaquil, and we were not able with our united resources to pay my passage or get me a sailor's outfit.

It was necessary to give up that idea. To comfort me he asked me to dinner with him, and after dinner we went to the theatre, where one of his countrymen, a musician in the orchestra, gave us two seats.

They played a little comedy called "Open War," in which they carried off one of the actors locked up in a trunk.

"That's your ticket!" cried Hermann to me between the acts. "Let me explain to you a splendid idea which I have got."

His idea was to buy a big second-hand trunk, put me into it, carry it on board ship well corded, and then, when we should be well out at sea, he would let me out, and the captain, seeing the impossibility of putting me ashore, would, rather than fling me over-

board, permit me to work my passage. Then by taking hold well I should make friends, and by the end of the voyage could ship as a regular hand.

It was a foolhardy, wrong, senseless plot, but it attracted my adventurous disposition, and I agreed to it.

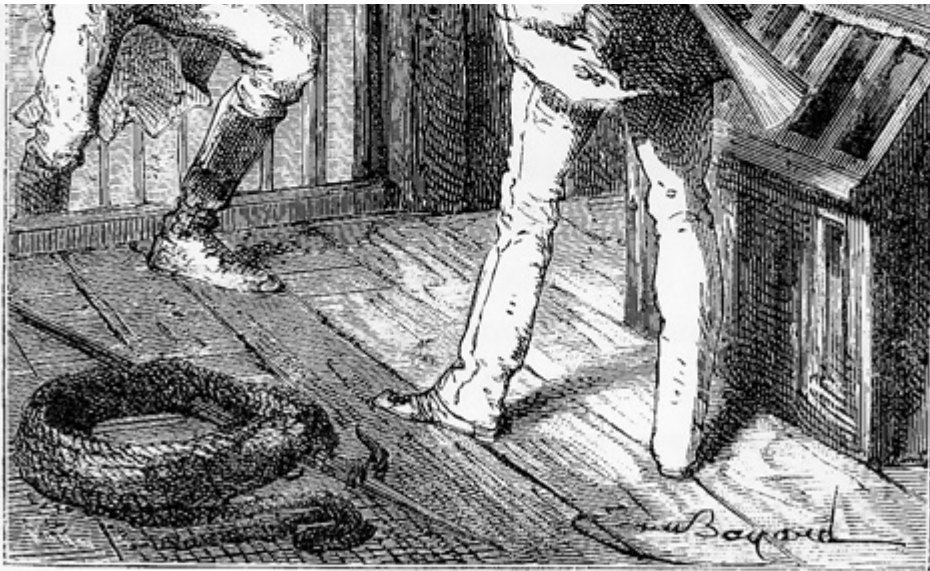
The next day we visited all the second-hand shops, and finally found for ten shillings a big trunk bound with iron and large enough to hold me.

Hermann took it home, where he had offered me his hospitality, and cut in it many small holes that I might have plenty of air. I got in it, and found that I could breathe freely, had room to turn on my side or shoulder, and could draw up my limbs without cramping them.

The ship in which Hermann had taken passage, left next day at full tide, which would be at two o'clock in the afternoon.

I occupied my spare time in visiting it. It was called the Oronoco, and I wrote a long letter to my mother, telling her that I was finally about to sail, that I begged her pardon for going without her consent, but that I hoped it would prove for the advantage of us all. In this letter I enclosed one for Diélette, telling her all that I had learned of Hermann, and begging her to be very loving and obedient to my mother and make up to her for my loss.





"WHAT IN CREATION IS THAT YOU ARE CARRYING?" BAWLED
THE CAPTAIN.

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About noon, therefore, Hermann put me in the chest, and gave me a large slice of bread.

“You will be hungry enough to eat, to-morrow,” he said, laughing.

I was to remain some twenty hours in the trunk, because if I came out while we were near Havre, the captain could put me on a tug or vessel running in, and have me taken back. When well out at sea there would be far less to be feared.

For many days the wind had blown strongly from the south, and there was every prospect that in twenty hours we should be far from land, below Cherbourg and fully out at sea.

We had put in the box a little pillow, and had fastened two loops of leather to the inside of the lid, into which I thrust my arms to balance myself while being carried. Hermann was to keep my head uppermost. He fitted a key to the two locks, buckled the straps tight and took me on his shoulders. He laughed so heartily that I jolted as if on a horse.

When we reached the Oronoco and went on board, our gayety was suddenly cut short.

"What in creation is that you are carrying?" bawled the captain, meeting Hermann, "Is it a house?"

"It is my luggage, sir."

"Luggage! It is ten times more than you are en-

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titled to. A small box is all you can take. Where would our lading be if people brought aboard boxes like that ark? The baggage-room is full."

It was this to which we had trusted. If I should be locked in with the other luggage, Hermann could not get to me, and I would be lost. Boxes would be piled on me, I should be set on my head, and then what chance of reaching Guayaquil? Since the baggage-room was full, this box must be set on deck or in Hermann's cabin, and then I would be all right.

But matters did not so easily arrange themselves. For a long while the captain refused to receive the trunk, and I felt sure that I must be carried back

ashore. Finally, he permitted my trunk to be set on the lower deck with some chests which had come at the last minute.

"We will heave anchor and be off," I heard a sailor say to Hermann. That was good news to me; the sooner we got out to sea, the sooner I should be able to leave my box.

Soon I heard the mooring cables fall into the sea; at the same time they seized hold of the capstan, and I heard above my head the measured footfalls of the sailors, timed to their song, as they got the vessel out of the dock. By the sound of their manœuvres I was able to follow them as clearly in my chest as if I had been on deck watching all that was done.

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By the sound of carriages and drays I knew when we were near the pier. The ship lay motionless for a few moments, and was then gently drawn forward. I knew that she was now in charge of the tug which would take her out of port. Then a gentle undulatory motion told me that we were near the mouth of the harbor. The motion became more decided; we were outside of the quays. The pulleys creaked—they were unfurling the sails; the ship lurched to one side—the tug had dropped her; the rudder groaned; we were fairly out at sea.

The deed was then done: the thought and object of

these months, my sea-life, had commenced. The moment so greatly desired, which I had purchased at the price of so many fatigues, and which I had expected to give me so great joy, found me sad, doubtful, regretting.

But it is true that my situation, locked up in a box, was not conducive to excess of gayety.

Perhaps, once out at sea, occupied by the motions of the sailors, seeing before me the boundless ocean and looking my farewells at the land, I would have been happy and relieved, and should have looked to the future elate and unfearing ; shut up between the four boards of an old trunk, I was only able to experience a growing terror.

I was roused amid my doleful reflections by three or

four brisk knocks on the side of my chest ; but as no one spoke, I dared not reply, fearing that instead of Hermann's signal it was only the accidental tap of a passing sailor.

But the blow being repeated, accompanied by a familiar whistle, I understood them, and responded with my knife-handle.

This wordless communication calmed my fears. After all, I was not abandoned. All my trouble would now be in passing a few more hours in a box, and then I could come out and have a broad sea and

the world before me.

The wind was fresh ; the ship, which presented the broadside to the waves, rolled terribly. Accustomed from infancy to going out in fishing-boats and to playing in boats that rocked at anchor, I had never been sea-sick, and believed myself above that weakness. What was my distress to find myself growing ill and faint ! I thought the sickness was caused by the confined air in my chest, for in spite of the numerous holes we had bored, the box was close and respiration was difficult. The air came in slowly, and had much more trouble in getting out. I was uncomfortably warm, and my misery increased. The nausea I felt when the ship reeled and plunged left me no doubt as to what was the matter, and I became greatly uneasy, for I had heard people in the paroxysms of

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that disorder sighing, groaning and quite delirious ; and suppose such became my state and some passing sailor heard me in the chest ? What would be done ? I had often heard that sleep was the best remedy for sea-sickness, and it was now the only cure at my disposal ; I took my aching head between my hands, and with all my energy tried to compose myself to slumber. For a long time my efforts were fruitless ; my bed was not soft enough to woo repose. Oh, if I had only thought to put in a little straw or a mat ! My thoughts followed the movements of the ship rising

thoughts followed the movements of the ship, rising and falling with her in the heavy seas, but at last drowsiness overcame me.

How long I had slept I cannot tell; I could measure nothing, for no light penetrated to my box; I was in an absolute darkness, wherein I could not divide night from day.

Still, so great was the silence which reigned through the ship that I concluded it was night, and I heard nothing but the wind in the rigging and the tread of the officer of the watch on the deck. The waves seemed to have increased; now and then they thundered against the vessel, and the sails snapped in the wind, which screamed like a demon among the shrouds. I thought there must be a storm coming.

Either the windiness of the night made the air in my box better, or I had grown accustomed to the roll-

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ing of the vessel, for I was no longer sea-sick, and speedily fell asleep again, lulled by that dear and solemn music of wind and wave which had soothed my ears so often in my mother's home under the cliff.

I was aroused at length by a fearful uproar, a crash which shook all the ship, followed by a beating and thrashing on the sea as if all the rigging had gone overboard and dragged in the water. The ropes beat against the timbers with a prodigious sound, and there was a cracking of wood all around me.

"Stop!" cried a voice in English.

"All hands on deck!" yelled a voice in French.

In the midst of the confusion of feet and voices I heard a sharp blowing, hissing sound which I knew was the escape of steam. We must have been run into by an English steamer, which now lay beside us, and our ship was on her side, for I felt my box tumble over with a huge pile of other baggage. Before I could realize my situation, or be thankful that I was not flung head downward, the sound of steam ceased. There was a new crashing; an increased clamor aboard, and almost immediately our ship righted herself. Had the English steamer sunk or had it made off?

I began to utter the wildest and most desperate shrieks that somebody should come and deliver me. Then I listened. There was a murmur of voices on deck, and a sound of hasty steps coming and going

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on all sides. The waves broke furiously against the side, and high overhead howled the tempest.

Were we sinking? Was Hermann going to leave me to go to the bottom locked in that chest?

I can never tell what a wild agony filled my heart. My blood grew cold; my hands were as wet with chilly sweat as if they had been dipped in water. Instinctively I strove to raise myself, but my head struck the cover of my trunk. I drew up my knees, and

with them and my hands strove with all my might to burst the chest open. Vain efforts. What could I do? The two locks were strong; the lid was joined with cross-pieces of oak. Nothing yielded a hair-breadth. I fell back dying of fear; I fainted.

Coming to myself, I yelled for Hermann, but a great tumult on deck drowned my voice even to my own ears. They were cutting down the wreck of the masts with axes.

And why did not Hermann come and release me? Far greater danger than discovery threatened me. Where was he? Was I forgotten?

While some of the crew labored to free the wreck, others worked at the pumps, and I heard the regular tic, tac, tic, tac, of the handles.

We were sinking. I pressed desperately against the lid of the chest; I fell back exhausted, helpless, devoured by grief, rage and fright.

"Hermann, Hermann!" I shrieked.

Still no answer, but the same ominous sounds above my head on the deck, and no movement or word on the side where my chest lay. My voice was smothered in that box; and if any cries of mine did get outside, they were lost in the tumult of the sea and storm.

Oh, had Hermann fallen overboard? Then no one

knew of me, and I was lost. He might have been swept off by a wave or crushed by a falling mast. What then? All my thoughts were for my own safety; perhaps he was living and also thinking only of himself, and leaving me to die locked up in a trunk.

Ah! all help was hopeless.

To await death with courage, to look it in the face deliberately and fearlessly, is not the part of a child. When one is free, or at least is able to defend one's self, the very struggle has something sustaining in it; but shut up as I was between four boards, scarcely able to turn or to breathe, this seemed to me a most monstrous and shocking manner of death.

I now pushed myself with fury against the ends of my prison, but they held firmly. I wished to scream again longer and louder, but my dry throat could utter no sound.

I don't know how a man might have endured such a situation; I was a child, and again I fainted.

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When I came to myself, after how long I do not know, I had a strange sensation. I thought I was dead and at the bottom of the sea, confined in my chest.

But the sounds on deck recalled me to consciousness of the reality. The crew pumped continually, and I still heard the sighing of the wind and the breaking of the waves. The ship rolled so that I was flung

from side to side like a pendulum. I recommenced my shouts, stopping to listen from time to time, hearing nothing but the increasing fury of the storm.

I felt strangled; I tore off my clothes. As I grasped my waistcoat one of my hands touched my knife. Hitherto I had forgotten it. It was a solid country knife, in a horn handle. The blade was sharp, large and strong.

So, now, no one came to my aid, and I might as well get about helping myself.

I opened my knife and fiercely attacked one of the locks. I did not touch the lock itself, lest I should break my knife, but I cut in the wood around it. That wood was hard beech, seasoned by twenty or thirty years of use; it was about as hard as the metal in my knife, and I cut it with immense difficulty.

I put so much zeal into my labor, that the sweat poured over me, the knife slipped in my fingers, and I was constantly obliged to stop and wipe my hands.

I made slow progress, for the rolling of the ship made my movements variable, and just when I would seek to cut with all my strength I would be whirled over on my side.

Finally, one lock was loosened, and I joyfully undertook the second. My knife was so heated that when I put the point in my mouth it burned my tongue.

The pumping had ceased, but there was still a noise overhead, and the steps were more rapid than ever. They were evidently working with great activity. At what? I could not guess. There were rolling sounds, as if they dragged something very heavy. Was it a big chest? Were they nearing a port? I had no time to listen or guess; all I must do was to work like a hero.

My knife was growing dull, and my toil increased. I used all my strength and skill, and did not rest a moment until my muscles became so cramped from the painful position I was forced to hold that I lost control of them for some little time.

During this rest I heard the uproar of the wind, the shock of waves and the groaning of the broken and doomed vessel.

My work occupied me another half hour; that was very long for me—longer than can be told. At last the second lock was loosened. I got on my hands

and knees and strained my back with all my force against the lid to lift it. The two locks were off, but the cover would not move. It was solidly fastened down by a rope over each end, which until that moment I had forgotten. I must therefore cut the rope. I thought at first that would be an easy task. I deceived myself, for though the lid was thin,

it was covered with leather with the hair on—horse's skin perhaps—and I had to cut through that before I could reach the rope.

Not allowing myself to be disheartened, I went again to work, and luckily I was now cutting with the grain of the wood.

Before long I got at the rope and divided it. I thought I was free!

Now the cover lifted a little, but not far, and then it fell shut. What was it that forced it down? Should I not be able to get out, after all?

The agony of this fear was so dreadful that I fell helplessly back in the bottom of the chest.

But I had made too hard a struggle to yield now. The trunk opened far enough for me to put my hand out. I therefore reached my arm through the aperture and felt all around, for it was night and I could see nothing but a pale-gray gleam. Seeking and feeling still, I found what was the obstacle to my escape. An enormous box had fallen partly upon my trunk

and held the lid down. It lay so as to hinder the cover from rising more than three inches. I found I could not shake it; it was too heavy, and besides, in my constrained position, I had very little strength to exert.

To get out at the top of my box was evidently hopeless. I asked myself, What now? I trembled with agony and impatience, and my blood seemed fairly boiling in my head.

Now that the trunk did not stifle my voice, there was some hope in screaming, and I redoubled my despairing cries. Then I heard something heavy fall into the water—a great rush and noise overhead. If I could hear other people, why could they not hear me? I cried out again. Then I heard another rolling sound, more voices, another crash into the sea, and now, oddly enough, the voices seemed to come out of the sea beneath me. And these cries and calls along the sea seemed moving about to the side where my chest was, and then slipping farther and farther away.

Ah! they would never hear me. If I would be saved I must save myself. I felt that there was nothing to encumber one end of my chest, and if I could cut that end out I should be at liberty.

To this labor I set myself with haste. The seams proved less solid than the locks; I was able to split beside the edge of the board that formed the end of

the trunk, and going with the grain I got on finely. I thus cut down the two edges, and then I braced myself and pressed my feet with all my strength against the wood. The bottom seam gave way where I had partly cut it, and in another instant I had my prison opened, and crawled out, free!

With what joy I flung up my arms and leaped into the air! Death was not half so bitter in freedom as shut up in a coffin like that. I gave a shout of triumph.

My box was down between decks. Guided by a thread of light, I directed my steps to the stairway, and climbing up I hit my head against the hatch. Luckily, it was not fastened. I raised it, and scrambled forth on the deck.

It was scarcely daylight, but my eyes had grown accustomed to darkness during my imprisonment in the chest, and I was able to discern objects on ship and sea. A dead silence of voices reigned everywhere; the stillness, except for the dash of waters, was complete. No man stood at the helm, no one trod the deck, no one handled the ropes; the crew had deserted the ship. I leaped on the cuddy-roof, and looked afar off, and perceived in the pale light of morning a black spot upon the sea; it was a sloop.

I shouted as loud as I could, but the vessel was too far off, and the waves were too rough for my feeble

voice to be heard. The winds flung it back in my face.

I was alone in a ship abandoned in the open sea, dismasted, filling with water; and yet so great had been my agony in that chest that these new woes and dangers seemed as nothing, and my heart was light and hopeful.

Looking about me, I saw that the steamer had struck the *Oronoco* amidships, and it was a wonder that she had not been cut in two. This would have happened only that the steamer had struck obliquely. In the shock she had broken the rigging of the mainmast and carried away the mizzen shrouds, and these two masts, left unsupported, exposed to the fury of the wind, had broken off like twigs. The foremast and the bowsprit alone remained, and of the sails all were gone but the jib and the topsail, torn into ribbons.

Day dawned. In the east the clouds brightened to yellow, and then flying along the horizon they darkened in the blackness of the middle sky. The ocean was white with foam as far as one could see, and had a most threatening appearance, lying in that baleful yellowish-gray light. The wind was less violent than it had been in the night, but it whistled dolefully around the dismantled vessel.

Since the crew had abandoned the ship, it was be-

cause they thought her case hopeless; and hopeless it most certainly looked. Delivered to the caprice of wind and wave, without sails or rudder, she rolled helplessly in the troughs of the sea, and every wave threatened to submerge her. I was forced to hold on with all my might to save myself from being washed overboard, and was already wet to the skin.

I wished to see what amount of damage had been done by the collision, and when I managed to look over the ship's side, I found that it was terribly torn. The question was, whether, thus broken, the *Oronoco* could keep afloat. How could I ascertain this? Evidently, her crew and captain thought that she could not, else they would have remained by her. How much water was there in the hold? I could not work the heavy pumps sufficiently to tell.

All my future lay in the question how long the ship could float in this miserable condition. She certainly would sink lower, but would she founder? If any part of her kept above water, I could cling to it, and some passing ship might take me off.

I had not yet lost all hope, and recalling my desperate situation and struggles in that trunk, and my amazing escape from it, I resolved to hope and strive, and to be courageous to the last. "Take heart, Romain," I said to myself; "you shall yet see your mother and Diélette."

I knew enough of navigation to understand that if the ship drifted ungoverned as she was now doing, she would most likely go to pieces, or capsize under the stroke of some great wave. I ought then to take the helm, without distressing myself particularly about the direction, and to try and use the staysail to aid the ship against the sea.

I had never steered anything but small vessels, and unconscious of the power with which I had to contend, as I seized the tiller-rope a great wave gave so violent a motion to the rudder that I was knocked over and thrown to a distance of several feet.

Happily, the long duration of the storm had given the crew time to make all fast and prepare for trouble. The whipstaff of the rudder had been furnished with the proper tackle to guide it without danger, and recovering myself, I renewed my efforts, able now to profit by experience. As I had no idea which way to steer, and did not know where I was, I made it my sole aim to have the wind at the stern.

My great hope was to meet a ship. So I braced the helm in the right position, and climbed to the poop-deck to scan the horizon at all points.

It seemed to me that the wind lulled constantly, and as day advanced the clouds broke away, showing patches of clear sky; the sea also calmed, though almost imperceptibly. My hope increased; I could



LEFT ALONE ON THE SINKING SHIP.

not be very far from land, and in this highway of the nations some ship must certainly come near me. For at least three hours I thus watched and hoped, dividing my attention between the rudder and the sky. The wind was now fallen to a gentle breeze, and the waves distressed the vessel much less, giving her time to rise and meet them, and greatly decreasing the danger of foundering. All at once I perceived a white point against the dark clouds which trailed along the horizon. The point grew; it was a ship; it was before the wind, moving in the same direction as my unhappy Oronoco.

I sprang to the helm to point my course toward the strange vessel, but she had all her canvas set, and flew like a bird over the water, while I had only one little miserable staysail, which offered about the size of a handkerchief to the wind.

For half an hour I saw the ship grow larger and larger until I could count her sails; but, alas! then she began to diminish; she was passing away. I ran to the ship's bell and rang it furiously, then mounted on the stump of the mainmast. I watched my fading hope, that white-sailed ship, grow less and less and less, and sink into the sea. I had been unseen and unheard, and was forsaken on that watery waste.

It was a cruel disappointment. For more than an hour I watched the ship disappear, and then sobbed

bitterly, finding myself alone in that dread immensity of sky and sea.

It was not enough that ships should pass; it was needful that they should see the *Oronoco*, and be willing to approach her.

It was not enough for me to hope and wait for aid. No, I must toil for it, prepare for it, win it for myself. I looked into the ship's color-chest, and chose the largest flag that I could find; then I fastened this to the top of the bell-beam, as that was the highest place which I could reach. To get to that was trouble enough, with my vessel rolling like a log in the water, and lurching every minute as if she meant to capsize. But I had been a climber from my babyhood, and up I went and fixed my signal of distress. Then I slid down, and proudly regarded the great streamer which floated out upon the wind. Ah! that would tell that here was a ship and a lone little mariner in sore distress.

Now that the storm was abating, my great anxiety was about the increase of water in the hold. Nothing indicated that it augmented; the ship seemed to lie no lower than when I first got on deck.

However, to neglect no means of escape, lest the *Oronoco* should sink, I prepared a raft of what planks and boxes I could find, and fitted a paddle, to be

able to get myself out of the maelstrom which would be formed by my foundering bark.

Having prepared thus for an emergency, I waited and watched.

It was now about noon, and for twenty-four hours of trouble and toil I had eaten nothing. It seemed years since Hermann carried me out of his lodgings, shaking with laughter. The steward's caboose had been swept away by the sea, and I concluded to go below to look for food.

But only after long hesitation did I take that step. Suppose the ship should go over while I was away from my raft? At last hunger overcame fear.

I went down the stairs. I had only taken two steps when I heard a growling. My hand had been on a door-latch, and my start opened it. I fell back trembling. A large animal leaped out, and sprang upon me with a violence that nearly overthrew me.

In a moment I understood all. This was the captain's cabin, and here was his dog, which he had forgotten. But, wonderful to say, this dog was my old ally *Pataud*! How he had changed hands, whether his master had been a passenger in this luckless *Oro-noco*, who could say? Here he was leaping on me with short, joyous barks, licking my face and hands, whining his curiosity—lovely, old white *Pataud* with the red nose!

Poor fellow! he had had his experience of storm and of being shut up in a box. He rushed by me and reached the deck. Then he took a long, defiant look, as if I had destroyed crew and captain; then his suspicions departed, and again he rubbed his head on me and licked my hand.

We were now, as before, sworn friends. He followed me closely; he seemed to understand our position, and even my raft. We went below together, for he, like myself, was starving. I found all that we needed—bread, cheese and cold meat. I was in too much of a hurry to be very particular. I grasped all I could carry of the first that came to hand, and hastened back on deck.

Only a step from death as I was, I ate ravenously. As for the dog seated beside me, he devoured all that I gave him.

I fed him as once he had fed me. When our meal was over he lay down at my feet, and looked at me with such loving eyes that I stooped down and hugged him.

In the captain's cabin I had seen a pair of pistols lying on a table. I thought I would get them and fire them if I saw a ship passing; they might attract attention to me.

The day passed on and not a sail appeared. The sea was almost calm, and the wind hardly moved my

flag. The Oronoco behaved very well, but with great terror I beheld the approach of night. But then I remembered that I might have been moving landward all day, and that night would, perhaps, show me a lighthouse toward which I could steer. With the flow of the tide I might be carried ashore, and I had only to keep Pataud near me, be close by my raft and stay awake. My fears of the Oronoco's sinking had in a great measure departed.

Night darkened swiftly. My hope was not realized. The stars one by one blazed out in heaven, but no lighthouse beckoned me to the shore.

When I went below for the pistols I had helped myself to a blanket and a berth-mattress. On these I established myself, fully resolved not to close my eyes once all night, but continue watching the horizon for sails or light.

I rested thus a long time, my eyes fixed on obscurity. Pataud lay close by me—he slept soundly; wind and wave fell asleep; and the ship had only a gentle rocking motion, which soothed me as a cradle does a babe. About ten or eleven o'clock the moon rose, and showed me the peaceful water mirroring the happy skies; all was calm and lovely, and insensibly calm took possession of my anxious heart, and I grew quieted and restful. The sleepy breathing of the dog near my arm somehow comforted me, and in spite of

my efforts and resolves to keep awake, I fell into a profound slumber. It was a gift from Heaven, though I knew it not.

But that intense quiet of the sea proved only the precursor of bad weather. Toward morning I was awakened by the freshness of the wind, and saw that the skies were clouded and the water was covered with white caps. I went to the helm and lashed it, so that my ship should still run before the wind, and I set my little canvas as well as I could ; for without knowing where I was, I still thought the breeze was in a good direction to take me to the coast of Normandy or Brittany.

In less than an hour the waves became so high that they broke over the half-submerged *Oronoco*, lying heavily in the water. She rose very badly to meet the surges, or rather she did not rise at all, but just fell into them helplessly, and was washed from one end to the other.

Under the force of the wind the foremast, already cracked, creaked ominously ; the shrouds and cordage were loose, and at each gust I feared that the mast would go overboard, and then I knew that the *Oronoco*, unable to endure the least strain, would capsize.

I could not take my eyes from the mast ; and thus gazing, I began to perceive a low, steady brown line

against the horizon beyond the bows. Despite my danger, I leaped upon the broken mainmast, looked long and intently, and assured of what I saw, screamed "Land! land!" in an ecstasy.

I flew to the helm and pointed my ship straight for shore. My knees shook under me, and by a singular effect of joy I sobbed and wept, shouting all the while, "Safe! safe! safe!"

The coast-line grew rapidly clearer. Would the ship reach it? Would the foremast hold good?

I passed a terrible hour in violent alternations of joy and despair, hope and fear, for the wind continually increased, and the mast continually threatened a downfall; every crack of that timber was a death-knell to my trembling heart.

Pataud, seated before me, never took his eyes from my face, and seemed to share all the variations of my feelings. He appeared to read the history of our progress in my looks.

The shore toward which the ship ran was low. A short distance from the coast-line the surface swelled gently into hills, but I saw neither harbors nor villages.

Of course my hope was not to run the half-swamped Oronoco into a port, even if one had lain right before me, for that would have been a task beyond my feeble powers, and even, I think, out of the power of grown sailors, if their ship had been in such wretched condi-

tion. All I hoped was to run the Oronoco aground somewhere, and then to save myself by swimming. Thus I sat watching uneasily my landward progress, and wondering if there were rocks on which the ship would go to pieces unexpectedly, or if the waves would get so high that I could not live when finally I cast myself into them. In a terrible state of doubt, I made ready for the last effort. I stripped myself to my pantaloons, and laid near me some bits of spars and board, that I might grasp them in a moment of extreme danger.

The shore was now clearly visible in all its details. I saw that the waves broke in a long line of foam along the shore. The tide was low.

Yet fifteen minutes; yet ten; yet five. Ah! my ship would now be aground; no time now to hesitate. Come, Pataud, in with us. Oh, mother! oh, Diélette!

As I prepared to leap, the ship settled forward heavily, I heard a loud crash, the bell rang untouched, the rudder-rope snapped like tow, the foremast wavered and fell overboard, and I was flung upon my face on the deck. The Oronoco had struck.

I scrambled up, but a second shock cast me down again; the ship broke from end to end with a great sound, and one half rolled over on the side.

I had no time to catch hold of anything; a great

wave swept over the wreck, and I was washed overboard by a flood of water.

When I struggled to the surface, I was already some feet from the ship toward the shore, and near me swam Pataud, who looked at me as if despairing. I shouted to him.

We were some two hundred feet from land. Ordinarily, I would not have minded a swim of that distance, but it was a terrible matter now in such mountains of water.

Without losing courage, I swam slowly, reserving my strength and taking my course to the shore, but in whirlpools of water and foam it was almost impossible to keep breath or to see my way; and besides, I was constantly swept back just as I made a little advance. I could hardly catch breath before the curling, foamy waves would break over me.

I saw no one on shore, and evidently I had no aid to look for. I would have perished had the wind been against me.

Presently, in the inflow of a wave, I touched bottom with my feet. I dug my toes into the sand, and threw myself forward. It was a decisive instant; the wave swept me on like a tangle of seaweed, and would in the same manner have dragged me back, but I clung to the sand with feet, knees and hands. I lost some ground in spite of my efforts, but the next

wave carried me farther upon the beach, only, alas! to carry me back in its reflux. I saw that I should be drowned if I continued this struggle, so I rose to the surface and swam with my head out of water. A means of safety of which my father had told me came to my mind. I got my knife from my pocket, opened it, held it prepared, blade downward, and swam slowly with the advancing wave toward land. When once more I touched the beach, I plunged my knife into the sand with all my weight, and held on by it. Aided by this simple means, I was able to resist the undertow of the returning wave; and gaining my feet, I ran up the beach. The succeeding wave only reached above my knees. I staggered some steps farther, and fell exhausted on the weed-strewn sand. I was safe, safe from drowning, but cold and fatigue had nearly destroyed me, and I lay insensible, for how long I cannot tell.

I had forgotten my poor Pataud in my fierce struggle. He had fought his own way through, and now found me in my distress. He recalled me to life by licking my hands and face.

I heard him howling over me; I looked up into his big kind eyes, and his snuff of delight seemed to say to me, "Take courage; the worst is over. We are ashore now."

I sat up upon the sand and began to rub my drip-



HE RECALLED ME TO LIFE BY LICKING MY HANDS AND FACE.

ping head and strive to squeeze the water from my clothes.

The howls of Pataud had attracted some men, who ran toward us; they were a market-crier and some country folks on their way to town.





CHAPTER XIV.

IT was to the east of Cape Levi and about fifteen miles from Cherbourg that the *Oronoco* had come ashore.

The countrymen who ran to my aid carried me in the cart to Fermanville, the nearest village, and took me to the house of the pastor of a little church.

This good man, who was the father of his people, and whom they all looked up to as the highest authority in their reach, received me with wonderful goodness and charity. The kind pastor was also the

physician of his poor congregation, and he kept in his house many simple remedies, knowing well how to use them. He was not, therefore, at a loss to know what to do for a half-drowned, dripping, exhausted and starving boy. I was speedily wrapped in hot blankets, had a mug of hot coffee poured down my throat, and was then put into a great soft bed. I mumbled some half-intelligible words about my dog, and fell asleep.

Pataud was rubbed and fed and given a mat by the kitchen fire. I don't know what use he made of his opportunities, but I had been so weakened by my succession of terrible adventures that I never opened my eyes for twenty hours. Indeed, I believe that I should have slept a hundred years, like the "Sleeping Beauty in the Wood," had not the commissioner of the marine and the insurance agent come to drag me from my blessed rest.

The news of the wreck of the *Oronoco*, her drifting ashore off Cape Levi, and of the boy and dog who had clung to her until she grounded, had spread. There was an office of the company which had insured her at Cherbourg, and I was sent for to tell the story of the disaster.

A clerk came in a light chaise to take me to Cherbourg. The good pastor fitted me out in a suit of clothes. Pataud was permitted to ride at our feet;

and being rested, clad, fed and generally comforted, I rolled along a smooth highway in great content.

Entering the office of the insurance company, I was brought before a number of imposing, busy-looking gentlemen much occupied with pens and paper, and was ordered to give an exact statement of all that had happened from the time the ship left Havre until the hour when the *Oronoco* divided in half off the rocks of Cape Levi.

I paused and considered. If I told the truth, I must begin by explaining how I had gone aboard in a trunk—and then? However, I never liked lying. I must tell the whole story now, come what would. I therefore made my statement. Not being able to get a berth on any ship in an ordinary way, determined to go to sea and at the end of my finances, a friend smuggled me on board as his baggage, and I detailed my experiences in the box, what I had felt, heard and done until I got out, and then what had occurred when I was the sole crew of a sinking ship.

The gentlemen, hearing this narrative, agreed to send me to Havre to the owners of the *Oronoco*. I was therefore embarked three days after as a passenger on the *Colibri*, and arrived at Havre in some twelve hours.

My history was already known. The newspapers had been full of my adventures; and knowing this

would be so, and having the fear of my uncle Simon before my eyes, I had withheld my real name and taken that of poor Hermann.

I was of course a subject of much curiosity, and when Pataud and I appeared in the cabin of the *Colibri* everybody began to say, "There he is, there he is!" and the gentlemen shook hands with me.

I learned at Havre that the crew of the *Oronoco* had not perished; they had been picked up by an English ship, and had been returned home by way of Southampton.

As to poor Hermann, he had been washed overboard, and not being able to swim, had drowned before aid could be extended to him. His death had happened in the storm before the collision. This explained why he had not come to relieve me from the trunk.

My narrative was, it appeared, a very grave testimony against the gruff captain of the *Oronoco*. The insurers said that he should not have abandoned the ship; that he might have saved her by proper efforts; that if a boy such as I could, unaided, guide her to land, a crew could have run her into a port. This occasioned such a discussion on all sides that for the time being it was the principal topic at Havre, and I was questioned on all hands.

They were then playing at the Havre theatre a

piece called "The Wreck of the Medusa," and the manager took it into his head that if he could get me into the play it would be vastly for his benefit, and he offered me all the profits of the first representation if I would go on the stage with Pataud.

I agreed. We were well advertised, and everybody crowded to the theatre. The house was crowded, and hundreds went away, unable to get seats. I had very little to say in my part; my business was to walk about as a cabin-boy. When I came on the stage, with Pataud at my heels as usual, the actors were forced to wait for the applause to cease before they could proceed with their parts. All opera-glasses were turned toward us. I began to believe that I was a very wonderful person, and Pataud seemed to feel quite as fine on his own account. The expectations of the manager were realized; his play was a success. My benefit-night brought me seventy-five dollars, and I played eight nights for him. He then gave me ten dollars more. With my eighty-five dollars—more money than I had ever before seen—I felt quite rich.

At Havre I found Lucien Hardel; I offered him the eighty cents which I had unwittingly carried off, but he laughed, and would not take it. His friend was away from the city, and he was about to leave himself, so he could not help me to a ship, but he took

ROMAIN KALBRIS.

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me to a hotel for a grand dinner, where I told him all that had happened to me since we parted ; and he found me a respectable lodging-place with a widow woman whom he had known for some time.

I resolved to use part of my wealth to buy me a sailor's outfit, and to put the rest in the bank until I returned from my voyage, and free as an enlisted seaman from the power of my uncle, could go to visit my mother in safety.

One would think that my late miseries would have cured me of my passion for the sea, but that love was born in me, and added to the terror of my uncle Simon, drove me to set out on a voyage.

Abandoned on the *Oronoco*, tossed by the tempest, flung half dead ashore, I avow that I had had some very miserable thoughts ; the delights of seafaring seemed small, and those who lay at home safe in their beds seemed much more to be envied than poor mariners fighting for their lives with the angry waves.

But once safe ashore, praised, petted and rewarded, the pains of sea-going looked less, its pleasures more. When I was once upon my feet, my fears seemed to flow away from me as the water dripped out of my clothes ; they vanished entirely in the sunshine of my good fortune at Havre. I loved my profession less than I had hoped, truly, but I saw no reason to abandon it ; besides, I did not now need to go begging for

a place as cabin-boy, but I had plenty of offers from owners and captains.

The proprietor of the *Oronoco* had engaged me to sail on another ship of his called the *Amazon*. This vessel, like the *Oronoco*, traded with South America, and was expected home from a voyage very soon. I was to sail in her when she again left port, and the money I made in the theatre would serve me very well when I bought the necessaries for my voyage. Meanwhile, I put most of it in the bank, got me some clothes and waited for the *Amazon*.

It never entered my silly head that as I had written my mother that I would sail in the *Oronoco* she might hear that the ship was lost, and believe me drowned. Nor did I consider that as my real name had been kept out of the newspapers she could not learn of my safety. So short had been the time since I wrote her that I did not consider it needful to write again; and besides, I did not like to render her uneasy by an account of my experiences of the dangers of the sea. Silly boy that I was, I meant to write when I could tell of a grand voyage, plenty of wages and a prospective visit home.

When I applied for lodgings where M. Hardel had recommended me, the widow said that there was plenty of room for me, but that she could not provide my meals on account of ill health. I had replied

that the meals would make no difference to me, for I could buy all the bread I wanted at the ^{*}baker's, and that was all I cared for. She therefore gave me a little back room, tidy and comfortable, and I bought my own simple provisions.

Her house was in a little back court near the quay of Casernes. The good woman showed me a maternal kindness, and encouraged me to sit in her room and talk with her. She took a great interest in all my plans, and gave me much good advice, so affectionately conveyed that it made a deep impression on me. I told her that she reminded me of my mother; while she said that I recalled to her her only child, a son a little older than myself, who was cabin-boy on the Amazon, the very vessel for which I was waiting. This dear, kind woman was indeed very sick. She was only able to leave her bed part of the day; her glazed eyes and the hectic color on her cheeks, as well as the fearful cough which tormented her day and night, showed that she was far gone in consumption. She was not an elderly woman—indeed, in age and appearance she was very like my own mother; and as I watched the swift progress of her disease, it filled me with a vague uneasiness. For the first time I saw it possible that my mamma might not live to be old and until I could support her, but that I might return from some voyage to find her gone and myself home-

less. These thoughts often kept me awake at night, and then the hollow cough of my dying hostess increased my alarm.

What rendered the analogy of position more singular was, that like my mother, this widow hated the sea, as her husband, a sailor, had been lost in a storm. She had not wished her son to be a mariner; and, alas! he had left her secretly, and the uneasiness she felt about him had done much to aggravate her disease. Ah, what seeds of misery might not my long absence and silence have sown for my dear mother and for me! My friend seemed to have but one hope—namely, that her son might return to receive her dying blessing and be ready to settle on shore, removed from the dangers and temptations of the ocean.

With what impatience she waited for him! Each time that I returned from the pier, where I went many times a day, she eagerly asked if the Amazon were in sight. The ship was unaccountably delayed; and meanwhile her mind so preyed on her feeble body that she grew rapidly worse, and could not lift her head from her pillow.

With her failing voice she would ask questions of the weather, of the look of the sea, if any news had been brought by passing vessels. The voyage from South America is long, uncertain and capricious, and the Amazon might come in to-day, to-morrow, in a

week—no one could tell; it might even be a month behindhand.

I had been in this unhappy woman's house about a fortnight when her disease took a very alarming turn. Her sister came in from the next door to nurse her, and I heard her ask the opinion of the doctor; he replied that she could live but a few days, and might die at any moment. I stole to her room every few moments, longing to do something for her, and looking in terror on her white, wasted face and sunken eyes. Her voice was now merely a whisper, and that whisper was ever of the Amazon and her absent son. She would hold her trembling hand toward me, gasping, "What kind of weather is it? Look for the ship. Will he come to-day? I fear he will never see me again."

I became possessed with a sort of fancy that this woman was my mother, that I was the absent son, and that I myself was some stranger looking on the pitiful scene. I could not separate the woes of this dying woman from my mother's experiences.

After the stormy weather in which the *Oronoco* had been cast away, we had a long season of calm. The beautiful weather continued in an unusual manner.

This calm would delay the Amazon; our hope was in a breeze from the south-west. Therefore,

when a dozen times in a day I returned from the pier and replied to her agonized look, "It is still calm, there is only a little breeze from the east," large tears would steal over her pallid cheeks, and she would whisper, "O God, be merciful to me, and let me see him before I die!"

Her sister and friends who waited on her endeavored to reassure her—encouraged her to hope for better health; "she might live many months," they told her. She only shook her head, saying,

"I am dying. I only want to live to give my poor lad my blessing."

At these scenes I could not refrain from weeping. It seemed to me as if my mother must meet just this fate, and I, her ungrateful son, would be her murderer. And you can see how hard was my heart and how great my terror of Uncle Simon that I still held fast my intentions.

All the sick woman's friends in their hearts despaired of her surviving until the Amazon made port. The invalid could neither eat nor speak, but still she *looked* her questions, and still I spent all my time going between the pier and her bedside.

One Friday morning I had been to see the shipping-lists, and came in at breakfast-time. A neighbor was standing in the doorway. She beckoned to me, whispering,

"The doctor is here."

"Ah! well?"

"He says she cannot live through the day."

I could not bear to enter her room and tell her, "No news of the Amazon." I thought I would pull off my shoes and steal quietly to my chamber; but her eager ear heard my lightest tread, and she motioned for me. They called me in. She looked her agonized question. My voice faltered,

"Oh, ma'am, it is still calm."

"No wind?" she gasped.

I shook my head.

"What ships?"

"Some fishing-vessels, boats from the Seine and a Lisbon steamer."

Just then her brother-in-law came in hastily, saying, "The Lisbon steamer is come."

"Yes," I said, "I told her that."

The woman looked at him indifferently at first, then more eagerly as she saw excitement in his air. "What? what?" she said.

"Well, there is some news. The steamer saw the Amazon off the isle of Seine; all well aboard; no losses."

The mother was lying on her bed, apparently at the point of death, but with sudden strength she lifted herself on her arm. Her eyes brightened, the color came

to her cheeks; she found herself able to speak. "How long, how long will it take them, from the isle of Seine?"

This was a hard question. Two days with moderate weather; six or eight days with an adverse wind. Twenty-four hours had been once the time with a strong breeze from exactly the right quarter.

She sent her brother-in-law for the doctor. While he was gone she lay as if in passionate prayer. When the physician came in, she said, "Sir, I *must* live until the Amazon gets in. The good Lord does not wish me to die until I have blessed and counselled my only son."

Her strength, her mind, her energy, had so wonderfully returned that the doctor looked on it almost as a miracle, and in every way endeavored to aid the reaction of nature. She took wine, food and medicine, and lay propped up on her pillow with her eager eyes turned to the door. She bade me keep by the dock, and fly to her with the first news. Here seemed to me a battle between death and the sea.

Would the son return or the mother die first? And still the strange impression that this was the experience of myself and my own mother hung over me.

Meanwhile, the poor woman demanded that her little room should be set in perfect order. Every-

thing must be made as neat and fine as possible for the exile's return. She ordered the windows open.

"The air will be too much for you," said her sister.

"Nothing can help or hurt me," she said; "I do not want my boy's last thought of me mingled with confusion and pain. Get some flowers to set on the shelf, and polish the windows."

I kept my watch, seeing no encouraging sign. In the great ports like Havre they have a set of signals advertising the coming ships. At the port of Hève they make signals which are repeated at Havre, and the names of the vessels are printed on a bulletin. I ran to this hourly, and swung like a pendulum between the court off quay Casernes and the office of the marine assurance company.

Evening came. There was no encouragement, no breeze to help the ship; but still the dying mother kept up her heart. She made us roll her bed near the window, that she might see the same stars that shone on her truant boy. While we were sleeping she would watch to know if the wind changed. In any less extremity I would have laughed at the idea of a strong wind springing up from the right quarter for the Amazon on such a clear, still, moonlight night, but there seemed some superhuman power in this mother's dying wish.

The sister sent me to bed, and watched by the invalid herself. I could not sleep; my conscience tormented me. My sympathy, my remorse and my fears for my distant mother kept me waking. At last I dozed, but was aroused by a sound which I had never before heard in that lodging—the rattling of my window-blind. I looked out into the clear moonlight night; the vane on the steeple had turned; there was a strong breeze, and it was from the right quarter. I hurried on my clothes and ran to the quay; already the sea was ruffled into waves which washed in long surges against the piers.

I questioned several sailors who were standing by the docks, and then flew home with my good news. Such a wind as this would bring in the Amazon before the evening tide.

“See!” said the dying woman; “I was right. I *knew* God would hear my prayer, and change the wind. I shall yet see my boy.”

Her sister told me that she had not slept all night, but had lain with her eyes fixed on the sky. We now raised her and gave her a portion of wine and beef-tea, and urged her to try and sleep, while I returned to my watch on the harbor.

I left her murmuring: “Poor John; poor John!” John was her son.

When I returned to her early in the morning, tell-

ling her that the wind was still favorable, she sent me out to buy bread, cakes and other provision for a nice supper.

"You cannot eat such things," said her sister.

"They are for my poor John," she replied.

She gave me a dollar, saying, "Get what is nice: boys fare hardly on shipboard."

The doctor, when he called, said he had never seen so sharp a struggle against death—that the woman lived on love and hope, but that he had no idea that she would hold out beyond the ebb of the evening tide.

When the offices were open, I ran to see if there were any news of the Amazon; there was none. Between eight o'clock in the morning and three in the afternoon I went twenty times to inquire, and at three the Amazon was reported in sight.

I rushed to carry home that joyous news. I found my friend much worse. She seemed perishing of her deferred hope. When I told her the ship was in sight, she again revived in an astonishing manner. Never before had I appreciated a mother's love.

"When will the tide be full?" she asked.

"At six," I replied.

"Ah! I must live until then. Give me a little wine." She swallowed it painfully.

Again I sped to the harbor and took my position

to watch. At four the ships in the offing began to arrive. The Amazon threw out her cable and made fast at five o'clock. I flew to the house; the brother-in-law hurried on board the ship.

"Is the ship in?" faltered the mother.

"She is in."

"Lift me up," she whispered. "Smooth my hair and my cap. Open the door to the stairs."

In less than ten minutes some one rushed along the court and tore up the stairway in headlong haste. It was the truant son. Tears poured over his boyish face. The dying mother lifted herself up and folded him to her bosom.

The sobs of the son, the weeping of the sister and myself mingled with the thankful prayers of that mother whose last wish God had granted.

She died at eleven o'clock, her hand holding fast to her boy and her eyes fixed on his face. She had found strength to comfort and advise him to the very last, and then died—suddenly as a lamp is blown out—at the falling of the tide.

That death, that mother's love for her son, that struggle with the last agony, that heart-break and despair, that boy's self-reproaches, accomplished in me what neither the entreaties and arguments of Diélette nor my misfortunes on the Oronoco had been able to effect. My mother might die heartbroken while I



THE DYING MOTHER LIFTED HERSELF UP, AND FOLDED HIM TO
HER BOSOM.

was gone. For the first time I realized that possibility.

I did not sleep that night. That thought, that fear and repentance, kept me in torment. In fifteen days the Amazon would sail. A ship started for Honfleur at five the next morning. The love of adventure and the fear of my uncle impelled me to keep my situation on the Amazon; the thought of my mother drew me as by chains to Port-Dieu.

After all, my uncle could not kill me. I was now big and strong, and could hold my own. My mother could send me things if I went back to him, and I had eighty dollars to keep me in food and clothes. If my mother did not want me to be a sailor, it was my duty to respect her wish. God had given her a right to dictate, and her love enforced that right doubly. No blessing could follow a truant son. Dare I run away, believing, as I did, that her loss would be my punishment? No, a thousand times no. I fell on my knees and begged God to spare her life, and I would return and obey her.

At four o'clock I made up my bundle, wrote a note to the owner of the Amazon asking him to secure another boy in my place, and to send my eighty dollars to me at Port-Dieu. I had a little money in my purse to pay my travelling expenses. At five o'clock I left Havre for Honfleur, and thirty-six hours after—that

is, about six the next day evening—I got in sight of Port-Dieu. I took the same path which I had followed with Diélette, but the season had advanced, and it seemed no longer the same. The grass was green and soft, flowers bloomed on every side, the trees were covered with young green leaves, violets scented the air, and the apple blossoms gave out their fragrance after a warm sunny day.

My heart grew light. I feared nothing. How exhilarating is a clear conscience! I was now on the right track. Oh, I would soon see my mother!

Arrived near our hedge, I hid behind a big rock. Soon Diélette ran out for some handkerchiefs which were drying on a line.

“Diélette!” I shouted.

She turned to the side where she heard my voice, but I was hidden by the hedge. I perceived then that she was dressed in deep mourning. A great agony filled my heart. Why in black? I shrieked “Mother!” in wild alarm; but that moment my mother appeared on the doorstep. But, wonderful to relate, behind the startled Diélette and my mother was some one with a long white beard. M. de Bihorel! He by my mother! Surely I saw two ghosts.

“Why, Diélette, what is the matter?” cried M. de Bihorel. He spoke—he was living; so was my mother. I conquered my trembling, broke through

the hedge and flew toward them. What words can write the joy of that hour?

When our excitement was a little calmed, it was needful for me to relate my adventures since leaving Diélette. I sat in our cottage with my arm about my mother and holding Diélette's hand. M. de Bihorel took his chair before us and beamed upon us with his long white beard.

My eagerness to know how the long-lost M. de Bihorel came to be there safe and sound winged my tongue; and getting through with my own history, I asked for his tale. It was very simple.

Returning from the Isle of Cranes his boat had upset. He climbed upon the bottom, and thus drifted out to sea on the ebb of tide. He was picked up by a three-mast ship going from Havre to San Francisco. The captain who saved him would not delay at any port to disembark him, and M. de Bihorel found himself, greatly against his will, making a voyage of five or six months to California, unless a passing ship could take him homeward sooner. Such a happy chance did not occur. At Cape Horn he despatched a letter by the box which shipmasters have established on Terra del Fuego, but that letter never reached France. Having arrived at San Francisco, he crossed the continent to New York, and had been at home about two months at the time of my return. Saturday was once

more with his master, the black cow was on the island again, and at the good man's castle the old mode of life was resumed.

I was no longer a sailor.

My uncle Flohy was dead ; it was for him that my mother and Diélette had that very day put on mourning, for news had come of his decease, and that he had left a large fortune which would enrich all of his heirs.

M. de Bihorel superintended my education. Diélette was sent to a good school, and my mother lived at ease in a fine house.

These adventures happened some years ago.

How Diélette profited by all her advantages you will see if you step into our house, where she is a very beautiful woman, and the very good mother of two children, a boy and a girl.

These children love M. de Bihorel greatly ; they call him their grandfather, and each day go with their mother to visit him at the Granite Glove.

Though I am not a sailor, I still deal with the sea, for of the thirty fishing-vessels which sail from Port-Dieu to Newfoundland six belong to me. Of course my mother lives in our house—we could not do without her ; but she loves so well the little home where she lived with my father that we keep it in perfect repair, and she goes and spends the day in it as often



DIÉLETTE BECAME THE VERY GOOD MOTHER OF TWO CHILDREN.

as she likes. We have in our house some beautiful paintings, the work of Lucien Hardel. He is a great friend of ours, and spends two months with us every summer. In spite of all his efforts, he has never been able to find a second guard to arrest him.

M. de Bihorel is well and happy. He is to-day eighty-two years old. Age has not weakened his health nor his mind; his tall form is somewhat bent, but his heart is as fresh and young and generous as ever. The trees which he planted cover the Granite Glove like a forest, and over the salt grass on the west side browse the same sort of little black cows and sheep and frolicsome goats.

Old Saturday seems just as vigorous as when he first distressed himself about what he should give me to eat, and avowed an intention to sugar my milk.

Sometimes, when we are in Granite Glove garden and the birds come whirling over our heads with their cries, he will say, "What are they talking about? conï, conï, conac, conac. Why, Romain, have you not learned the language of birds?"

Then at this wonderful joke he will laugh until he holds his sides; but if he sees M. de Bihorel, who has grown a little hard of hearing, looking sharply at us, he puts on a sober face, settles his woollen cap and remarks severely,

"Romain, though you are now a rich man, never

forget what love and respect you owe the master, who befriended you when you were a poor helpless boy."

He is right; may I never forget it. True, the fortune of my uncle Flohy would have reached me all the same; but would I have been able to use it rightly if I had not had this good old gentleman's lessons, his example, his care over my education, his advice? No; without them I might to-day have been a rich, gluttonous boor, or a vile, wretched old miser like my uncle Simon. The main thing with riches is to know how to use them. They are a great temptation and a snare to many.

It may be well to add a last word about my miserable uncle. The fortune left by his brother added to his possessions and his cares.

He entered into limitless speculations; his thirst for increased wealth became a wild fever.

But he speculated with men as sharp and relentless as himself, and he became so completely ruined that when every item of his possessions went under the hammer there was not enough to pay his debts. Thus God avenged the poor with whom he had dealt so cruelly.

At the time of this failure I had just come of age and received my property; and taking counsel with my mother and M. de Bihorel, I tried to relieve the old man.

But he could not believe that our cares were disinterested. We brought him to our house, and he made a terrible outcry, declaring that we were thieves and had robbed him.

We then took him lodgings and gave him a pension, but each time that it was paid he rushed off and gambled it away in a fierce effort to recover his wealth.

He spent every copper in play, and went half naked and nearly starved. We then hired a family to take care of him, to feed and clothe him comfortably, and did not allow him means of gambling. But he sold the clothes from his back, and following his old avarice, begrudged himself food, and hid the provisions that were supplied him until they became mouldy and putrid.

In the old age of Uncle Simon and of M. de Biherel what a contrast! The man who made money his god is the most unhappy of mortals, while the benevolent old gentleman who lived to do good, and who always carried out his harmless oddities for the benefit of some poor neighbor, whose generosity extended to man and beast, passes to his grave loved and honored and peaceful, his life growing ever brighter and better as he advances to the heavenly day.

Each year repeats to me the lesson taught me in so many hours of distress—that man's extremity is

God's opportunity ; that we are never so badly off that he cannot rescue us ; that he does not leave his children without his care, but that his blessing and favor come to us in the path of well-doing ; and that wrongdoing ever brings us a harvest of pain and disaster.



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