

THE SEAMY SIDE OF HISTORY

(L'ENVERS DE L'HISTOIRE
CONTEMPORAINE)

by

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FIRST EPISODE

MADAME DE LA CHANTERIE

ONE fine September evening, in the year 1836, a man of about thirty was leaning over the parapet of the quay at a point whence the Seine may be surveyed up stream from the Jardin des Plantes to Notre-Dame, and down in grand perspective to the Louvre.

There is no such view elsewhere in the Capital of Ideas (Paris). You are standing, as it were, on the poop of a vessel that has grown to vast proportions. You may dream there of Paris from Roman times to the days of the Franks, from the Normans to the Burgundians, through the Middle Ages to the Valois, Henri IV., Napoleon, and Louis Philippe. There is some vestige or building of each period to bring it to mind. The dome of Sainte-Geneviève shelters the *Quartier Latin*. Behind you rises the magnificent east end of the Cathedral. The Hôtel de Ville speaks of all the revolutions, the Hôtel Dieu of all the miseries of Paris. After glancing at the splendours of the Louvre, take a few steps, and you can see the rags that hang out from the squalid crowd of houses that huddle between the Quai de la Tournele and the Hôtel Dieu; the authorities are, however, about to clear them away.

In 1836 this astonishing picture inculcated yet another lesson. Between the gentleman who leaned over the parapet and the cathedral, the deserted plot, known of old as le Terrain, was still strewn with the ruins of the Archbishop's palace. As we gaze there on so many suggestive objects, as the mind takes in the past and the present of the city of Paris, Religion seems to have established herself there that she might lay her hands on the sorrows on both sides of the river, from the Faubourg Saint-Antoine to the Faubourg Saint-Marceau.

It is to be hoped that these sublime harmonies may be completed by the construction of an Episcopal palace in a Gothic style to fill the place of the meaningless buildings that now stand between the Island, the Rue d'Arcole, and the Quai de la Cité.

This spot, the very heart of old Paris, is beyond anything deserted and melancholy. The waters of the Seine break against the wall with a loud noise, the Cathedral throws its shadow there at sunset. It is not strange that vast thoughts should brood there in a brainsick man. Attracted perhaps by an accordance between his own feelings at the moment and those to which such a varied prospect must give rise, the loiterer folded his hands over the parapet, lost in the twofold contemplation of Paris and of himself! The shadows spread, lights twinkled into being, and still he did not stir; carried on as he was by the flow of a mood of thought, big with the future, and made solemn by the past.

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‘You see how fond he is of his mother!’ Vanda went on.—‘Come and kiss me, dear rogue.—No, it is not your grandfather that you must thank, but Monsieur Godefroid; our kind neighbour promises to borrow one for me to-morrow morning.—What is it like, Monsieur?’

Godefroid, at a nod from the old man, gave a long description of the harmonium while enjoying the tea Auguste had made, which was of superior quality and delicious flavour.

At about half-past ten the visitor withdrew, quite overpowered by the frantic struggle maintained by the father and son, while admiring their heroism and the patience that enabled them, day after day, to play two equally exhausting parts.

‘Now,’ said Monsieur Bernard, accompanying him to his own door, ‘now you know the life I lead! At every hour I have to endure the alarms of a robber, on the alert for everything. One word, one look might kill my daughter. One toy removed from those she is accustomed to see about her would reveal everything to her, for mind sees through walls.’

‘Monsieur,’ said Godefroid, ‘on Monday Halpersohn will pronounce his opinion on your daughter, for he is at home again. I doubt whether science can restore her frame.’

‘Oh, I do not count upon it,’ said the old man with a sigh. ‘If they will only make her life endurable.—I trusted to your tact, Monsieur, and I want to thank you, for you understood.—Ah! the attack has come on!’ cried he, hearing a scream. ‘She has done too much—’

He pressed Godefroid’s hand and hurried away.

At eight next morning Godefroid knocked at the famous doctor’s door. He was shown up by the servant to a room on the first floor of the house, which he had had time to examine while the porter found the manservant.

Happily, Godefroid’s punctuality had saved him the vexation of waiting, as he had hoped it might. He was evidently the first-comer. He was led through a very plain anteroom into a large study, where he found an old man in a dressing-gown, smoking a long pipe. The dressing-gown, of black moreen, was shiny with wear, and dated from the time of the Polish dispersion.

‘What can I do to serve you?’ said the Jew, ‘for you are not ill?’

And he fixed Godefroid with a look that had all the sharp inquisitiveness of the Polish Jew, eyes which seem to have ears.

To Godefroid’s great surprise, Halpersohn was a man of fifty-six, with short bow-legs and a broad, powerful frame. There was an Oriental stamp about the man, and his face must in youth have been singularly handsome; the remains showed a marked Jewish nose, as long and as curved as a Damascus scimitar. His forehead was truly Polish, broad and lofty, wrinkled all over like crumpled paper, and recalling that of a Saint-Joseph by some old Italian master. His eyes were sea-green, set like a parrot’s in puckered grey lids, and expressive of cunning and avarice in the highest degree. His mouth, thin and

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straight, like a cut in his face, lent this sinister countenance a crowning touch of suspiciousness.

The pale, lean features—for Halpersohn was extraordinarily thin—were crowned by ill-kept grey hair, and graced by a very thick, long beard, black streaked with white, that hid half his face, so that only the forehead and eyes, the cheek-bones, nose, and lips were visible.

This man, a friend of the agitator Lelewel, wore a black velvet cap that came down in a point on his forehead and showed off its mellow hue, worthy of Rembrandt's brush.

The doctor, who subsequently became equally famous for his talents and his avarice, startled Godefroid by his question, and the young man asked himself, 'Can he take me for a thief?'

The reply to the question was evident on the doctor's table and chimney-piece. Godefroid had fancied himself the first-comer—he was the last. His patients had laid very handsome sums on the table and shelf, for Godefroid saw piles of twenty and forty franc pieces and two thousand-franc notes. Was all this the fruit of a single morning? He greatly doubted it, and he suspected an ingenious trick. The infallible but money-loving doctor perhaps tried thus to encourage his patients' liberality, and to make his rich clients believe that he was given bank-notes as if they were curl-papers.

Moïse Halpersohn was no doubt largely paid, for he cured his patients, and cured them of those very complaints which the profession gave up in despair. It is very little known in Western Europe that the Slav nations possess a store of medical secrets. They have a number of sovereign remedies derived from their intercourse with the Chinese, the Persians, the Cossacks, the Turks, and the Tartars. Some peasant women, regarded as witches, have been known to cure hydrophobia completely in Poland with the juice of certain plants. There is among those nations a great mass of uncodified information as to the effects of certain plants and the powdered bark of trees, which is handed down from family to family, and miraculous cures are effected there.

Halpersohn, who for five or six years was regarded as a charlatan, with his powders and mixtures, had the innate instinct of a great healer. Not only was he learned, he had observed with great care, and had travelled all over Germany, Russia, Persia, and Turkey, where he had picked up much traditional lore; and as he was learned in chemistry, he became a living encyclopedia of the secrets preserved by 'the good women,' as they were called, the midwives and 'wise women' of every country whither he had followed his father, a wandering trader.

It must not be supposed that the scene in *Richard in Palestine*, in which Saladin cures the King of is pure fiction. Halpersohn has a little silk bag, which he soaks in water till it is faintly coloured, and certain fevers yield to this infusion taken by the patient. The virtues residing in plants are infinitely various, according to him, and the most terrible maladies admit of cure. He, however, like his brother physicians,

pauses sometimes before the incomprehensible. Halpersohn admires the invention of homoeopathy, less for its medical system than for its therapeutics; he was at that time in correspondence with Hedenius of Dresden, Chelius of Heidelberg, and the other famous Germans, but keeping his own hand dark though it was full of discoveries. He would have no pupils.

The setting of this figure, which might have stepped out of a picture by Rembrandt, was quite in harmony with it. The study, hung with green flock paper, was poorly furnished with a green divan. The carpet, also of moss green, showed the thread. A large armchair covered with black leather, for the patients, stood near the window, which was hung with green curtains. The doctor's seat was a study-chair with arms, in the Roman style, of mahogany with a green leather seat. Besides the chimney-piece and the long table at which he wrote, there was in the middle of the wall opposite the fireplace a common iron chest supporting a clock of Vienna granite, on which stood a bronze group of Love sporting with Death, the gift of a famous German sculptor whom Halpersohn had, no doubt, cured. A tazza between two candlesticks was all the ornament of the chimney-shelf. Two bracket shelves, one at each end of the divan, served to place trays on, and Godefroid noted that there were silver bowls on them, water-bottles, and table-napkins.

This simplicity, verging on bareness, struck Godefroid, who took everything in at a glance, and he recovered his presence of mind.

'I am perfectly well, Monsieur. I have not come to consult you myself, but on behalf of a lady whom you ought long since to have seen—a lady living on the Boulevard du Mont-Parnasse.'

'Oh yes, that lady has sent her son to me several times. Well, Monsieur, tell her to come to see me.'

'Tell her to come!' cried Godefroid indignantly. 'Why, Monsieur, she cannot be lifted from her bed to a sofa; she has to be raised by straps.'

'You are not a doctor?'' asked the Jew, with a singular grimace which made his face look even more wicked.

'If Baron de Nucingen sent to tell you that he was ill and to ask you to visit him, would you reply, "Tell him to come to me"?''

'I should go to him,' said the Jew drily, as he spat into a Dutch spittoon made of mahogany and filled with sand.

'You would go to him,' Godefroid said mildly, 'because the Baron has two millions a year, and—'

'Nothing else has to do with the matter. I should go.'

'Very well, Monsieur, you may come and see the lady on the Boulevard du Mont-Parnasse for the same reason. Though I have not such a fortune as the Baron de Nucingen, I am here to tell you that you can name your own price for the cure, or, if you fail, for your care of her. I am prepared to pay you in advance. But how is it, Monsieur, that you, a Polish exile, a communist, I believe, will make no sacrifice

for the sake of Poland? For this lady is the grand-daughter of General Tarlovski, Prince Poniatowski's friend—'

'Monsieur, you came to ask me to prescribe for this lady, and not to give me your advice. In Poland I am a Pole; in Paris a Parisian. Every one does good in his own way, and you may believe me when I tell you that the greed attributed to me has its good reasons. The money I accumulate has its uses; it is sacred. I sell health; rich persons can pay for it, and I make them buy it. The poor have their physicians.—If I had no aim in view, I should not practise medicine.—I live soberly, and I spend my time in rushing from one to another; I am by nature lazy, and I used to be a gambler. You may draw your own conclusions, young man!—You are not old enough to judge the aged!'

Godefroid kept silence.

'You live with the granddaughter of the foolhardy soldier who had no courage but for fighting, and who betrayed his country to Catherine II.?'

'Yes, Monsieur.'

'Then be at home on Monday at three o'clock,' said he, laying down his pipe and taking up his note-book, in which he wrote a few words. 'When I call, you will please to pay me two hundred francs; then, if I undertake to cure her, you will give me a thousand crowns.—I have been told,' he went on, 'that the lady is shrunken as if she had fallen in the fire.'

'It is a case, Monsieur, if you will believe the first physicians of Paris, of nervous disease, with symptoms so strange that no one can imagine them who has not seen them.'

'Ah, yes, now I remember the details given me by that little fellow.—Till to-morrow, Monsieur.'

Godefroid left with a bow to this singular and extraordinary man. There was nothing about him to show or suggest a medical man, not even in that bare consulting-room, where the only article of furniture that was at all remarkable was the ponderous chest, made by Huret or Fichet.

Godefroid reached the Passage Vivienne in time to purchase a splendid harmonium before the shop was shut, and he despatched it forthwith to Monsieur Bernard, whose address he gave.

Then he went to the Rue Chanoinesse, passing along the Quai des Augustins, where he hoped still to find a bookseller's shop open; he was, in fact, so fortunate, and had a long conversation on the cost of law-books, with the clerk in charge.

He found Madame de la Chanterie and her friends just come in from high mass, and he answered her first inquiring glance with a significant shake.

'And our dear Father Alain is not with you?' said he.

'He will not be here this Sunday,' replied Madame de la Chanterie. 'You will not find him here till this day week, unless you go to the place where you know you can meet him.'

‘Madame,’ said Godefroid, in an undertone, ‘you know I am less afraid of him than of these gentlemen, and I intended to confess to him.’

‘And I?’

‘Oh, you—I will tell you everything, for I have many things to say to you. As a beginning, I have come upon the most extraordinary case of destitution, the strangest union of poverty and luxury, and figures of a sublimity which outdoes the inventions of our most admired romancers.’

‘Nature, and especially moral nature, is always as far above art as God is above His creatures. But come,’ said Madame de la Chanterie, ‘and tell me all about your expedition into the unknown lands where you made your first venture.’

Monsieur Nicolas and Monsieur Joseph—for the Abbé de Vèze had remained for a few minutes at Notre-Dame—left Madame de la Chanterie alone with Godefroid; and he, fresh from the emotions he had gone through the day before, related every detail with the intensity, the gesticulation, and the eagerness that come of the first impression produced by such a scene and its accessories of men and things. He had a success too; for Madame de la Chanterie, calm and gentle as she was, and accustomed to look into gulfs of suffering, shed tears.

‘You did right,’ said she, ‘to send the harmonium.’

‘I wish I could have done much more,’ replied Godefroid, ‘since this is the first family through whom I have known the pleasures of charity; I want to secure to this noble old man the chief part of the profits on his great work. I do not know whether you have enough confidence in me to enable me to undertake such a business. From the information I have gained, it would cost about nine thousand francs to bring out an edition of fifteen hundred copies, and their lowest selling value would be twenty-four thousand francs. As we must, in the first instance, pay off the three thousand and odd francs that have been advanced on the manuscript, we should have to risk twelve thousand francs.’

‘Oh, Madame! if you could but imagine how bitterly, as I made my way hither from the Quai des Augustins, I rued having so foolishly wasted my little fortune. The Genius of Charity appeared to me, as it were, and filled me with the ardour of a neophyte; I desire to renounce the world, to live the life of these gentlemen, and to be worthy of you. Many a time during the past two days have I blessed the chance that brought me to your house. I will obey you in every particular till you judge me worthy to join the brotherhood.’

‘Well,’ said Madame de la Chanterie very seriously, after a few minutes of reflection, ‘listen to me, I have important things to say to you. You have been fascinated, my dear boy, by the poetry of misfortune. Yes, misfortune often has a poetry of its own; for, to me, poetry is a certain exaltation of feeling, and suffering is feeling. We live so much through suffering!’

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‘Yes, Madame, I was captured by the demon of curiosity. How could I help it! I have not yet acquired the habit of seeing into the heart of these unfortunate lives, and I cannot set out with the calm resolution of your three pious soldiers of the Lord. But I may tell you, it was not till I had quelled this incitement that I devoted myself to your work.’

‘Listen, my very dear son,’ said Madame de la Chanterie, saying the words with a saintly sweetness which deeply touched Godefroid, ‘we have forbidden ourselves absolutely—and this is no exaggeration, for we do not allow ourselves even to think of what is forbidden—we have forbidden ourselves ever to embark in a speculation. To print a book for sale, and looking for a return, is business, and any transaction of that kind would involve us in the difficulties of trade. To be sure, it looks in this case very feasible, and even necessary. Do you suppose that it is the first instance of the kind that has come before us? Twenty times, a hundred times, we have seen how a family, a concern, could be saved. But, then, what should we have become in undertaking matters of this kind? We should be simply a trading firm. To be a sleeping partner with the unfortunate is not work; it is only helping misfortune to work. In a few days you may meet with even harder cases than this; will you do the same thing? You would be overwhelmed.’

‘Remember, for one thing, that the house of Mongenod, for a year past, has ceased to keep our accounts. Quite half of your time will be taken up by keeping our books. There are, at this time, nearly two thousand persons in our debt in Paris; and of those who may repay us, at any rate, it is necessary that we should check the amounts they owe us. We never sue—we wait. We calculate that half of the money given out is lost. The other half sometimes returns doubled.’

‘Now, suppose this lawyer were to die, the twelve thousand francs would be badly invested! But if his daughter recovers, if his grandson does well, if he one day gets another appointment—then, if he has any sense of honour, he will remember the debt, and return the funds of the poor with interest. Do you know that more than one family, raised from poverty and started by us on the road to fortune by considerable loans without interest, has saved for the poor and returned us sums of double and sometimes treble the amount?’

‘This is our only form of speculation.’

‘In the first place, as to this case which interests you, and ought to interest you, consider that the sale of the lawyer’s book depends on its merits; have you read it? Then, even if the work is excellent, how many excellent books have remained two or three years without achieving the success they deserved. How many a wreath is laid on a tomb! And, as I know, publishers have ways of driving bargains and taking their charges, which make the business one of the most risky and the most difficult to disentangle of all in Paris. Monsieur Nicolas can tell you about these difficulties, inherent in the nature of book-

making. So, you see, we are prudent; we have ample experience of every kind of misery, as of every branch of trade, for we have long been studying Paris. The Mongenods give us much help; they are a light to our path, and through them we know that the Bank of France is always suspicious of the book-trade, though it is a noble trade—but it is badly conducted.

‘As to the four thousand francs needed to save this noble family from the horrors of indigence, I will give you the money; for the poor boy and his grandfather must be fed and decently dressed.—There are sorrows, miseries, wounds, which we bind up at once without inquiring who it is that we are helping; religion, honour, character, are not inquired into; but as soon as it is a case of lending the money belonging to the poor to assist the unfortunate under the more active form of industry or trade, then we require some guarantee, and are as rigid as the money-lenders. So, for all beyond this immediate relief, be satisfied with finding the most honest publisher for the old man’s book. This is a matter for Monsieur Nicolas. He is acquainted with lawyers and professors and authors of works in jurisprudence; next Saturday he will, no doubt, be prepared with some good advice for you.

‘Be easy; the difficulty will be got over if possible. At the same time, it might be well if Monsieur Nicolas could read the magistrate’s book; if you can persuade him to lend it.’

Godefroid was amazed at this woman’s sound sense, for he had believed her to be animated solely by the spirit of charity. He knelt on one knee and kissed one of her beautiful hands, saying—

‘Then you are Reason too!’

‘In our work we have to be everything,’ said she, with the peculiar cheerfulness of a true saint.

There was a brief silence, broken by Godefroid, who exclaimed—

‘Two thousand debtors, did you say, Madame? Two thousand accounts! It is tremendous!’

‘Two thousand accounts, which may lead, as I have told you, to our being repaid from the delicate honour of the borrowers. But there are three thousand more—families who will never make us any return but in thanks. Thus, as I have told you, we feel that it is necessary to keep books; and if your secrecy is above suspicion, you will be our financial oracle. We ought to keep a day-book, a ledger, a book of current expenses, and a cash-book. Of course, we have receipts, notes of hand, but it takes a great deal of time to look for them—Here come the gentlemen.’

Godefroid, at first serious and thoughtful, took little part in the conversation; he was bewildered by the revelation Madame de Chanterie had just imparted to him in a way which showed that she meant it to be the reward of his zeal.

‘Two thousand families indebted to us!’ said he to himself. ‘Why, if they all cost as much as Monsieur Bernard will cost us, we must have millions sown broadcast in Paris!’

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This reflection was one of the last promptings of the worldly spirit which was fast dying out in Godefroid. As he thought the matter over, he understood that the united fortunes of Madame de la Chanterie, of Messieurs Alain, Nicolas, Joseph, and Judge Popinot, with the gifts collected by the Abbé de Vèze, and the loans from the Mongenods, must have produced a considerable capital; also, that in twelve or fifteen years this capital, with the interest paid on it by those who had shown their gratitude, must have increased like a snowball, since the charitable holders took nothing from it. By degrees he began to see clearly how the immense affair was managed, and his wish to co-operate was increased.

At nine o'clock he was about to return on foot to the Boulevard du Mont-Parnasse; but Madame de la Chanterie, distrustful of so lonely a neighbourhood, insisted on his taking a cab. As he got out of the vehicle, though the shutters were so closely fastened that not a gleam of light was visible, Godefroid heard the sounds of the instrument; and Auguste, who, no doubt, was watching for Godefroid's return, half opened the door on the landing, and said—

'Mamma would very much like to see you, and my grandfather begs you will take a cup of tea.'

Godefroid went in and found the invalid transfigured by the pleasure of the music; her face beamed and her eyes sparkled like diamonds.

'I ought to have waited for you, to let you hear the first chords; but I flew at this little organ as a hungry man rushes on a banquet. But you have a soul to understand me, and I know I am forgiven.'

Vanda made a sign to her son, who placed himself where he could press the pedal that supplied the interior of the instrument with wind; and, with her eyes raised to heaven like Saint Cecilia, the invalid, whose hands had for a time recovered their strength and agility, performed some variations on the prayer in *Mosé* which her son had bought for her. She had composed them in a few hours. Godefroid discerned in her a talent identical with that of Chopin. It was a soul manifesting itself by divine sounds in which sweet melancholy predominated.

Monsieur Bernard greeted Godefroid with a look expressing a sentiment long since in abeyance. If the tears had not been for ever dried up in the old man scorched by so many fierce sorrows, his eyes would at this moment have been wet.

The old lawyer was fingering his snuff-box and gazing at his daughter with unutterable rapture.

'To-morrow, Madame,' said Godefroid, when the music had ceased, 'your fate will be sealed, for I have good news for you. The famous Halpersohn will come at three o'clock.—And he has promised,' he added in Monsieur Bernard's ear, 'to tell me the truth.'

The old man rose, and taking Godefroid by the hand, led him

into a corner of the room near the fireplace. He was trembling.

‘What a night lies before me! It is the final sentence!’ said he in a whisper. ‘My daughter will be cured or condemned!’

‘Take courage,’ said Godefroid, ‘and after tea come to my rooms.’

‘Cease playing, my child,’ said Monsieur Bernard; ‘you will bring on an attack. Such an expenditure of strength will be followed by a reaction.’

He made Auguste remove the instrument, and brought his daughter her cup of tea with the coaxing ways of a nurse who wants to anticipate the impatience of a baby.

‘And what is this doctor like?’ asked she, already diverted by the prospect of seeing a stranger.

Vanda, like all prisoners, was consumed by curiosity. When the physical symptoms of her complaint gave her some respite, they seemed to develop in her mind, and then she had the strangest whims and violent caprices. She wanted to see Rossini, and cried because her father, who could, she imagined, do everything, assured her he could not bring him.

Godefroid gave her a minute description of the Jewish physician and his consulting-room, for she knew nothing of the steps taken by her father. Monsieur Bernard had enjoined silence on his grandson as to his visits to Halpersohn; he had so much feared to excite hopes which might not be realised. Vanda seemed to hang on the words that fell from Godefroid’s lips; she was spellbound and almost crazy, so ardent did her desire become to see the strange Pole.

‘Poland has produced many singular and mysterious figures,’ said the old lawyer. ‘Just now, for instance, besides this doctor there is Höéné Vronski the mathematician and seer, Mickievicz the poet, the inspired Tovianski, and Chopin with his superhuman talent. Great national agitations always produce these crippled giants.’

‘Oh, my dear papa, what a man you are! if you were to write down all that we hear you say simply to entertain me, you would make a fortune! For, would you believe me, Monsieur, my kind old father invents tales for me when I have no more novels to read, and so sends me to sleep. His voice lulls me, and he often soothes my pain with his cleverness. Who will ever repay him?—Auguste, my dear boy, you ought to kiss your grandfather’s footprints for me.’

The youth looked at his mother with his fine eyes full of tears; and that look, overflowing with long repressed compassion, was a poem in itself. Godefroid rose, took Auguste’s hand, and pressed it warmly.

‘God has given you two angels for your companions, Madame!’ he exclaimed.

‘Indeed I know it. And I blame myself for so often provoking them. Come, dear Auguste, and kiss your mother. He is a son, Monsieur, of whom any mother would be proud. He is as good as gold, candid—a soul without sin; but a rather too impassioned creature, like

his mamma. God has nailed me to my bed to preserve me perhaps from the follies women commit—when they have too much heart!’ she ended with a smile.

Godefroid smiled in reply and bowed good-night.

‘Good-night, Monsieur; and be sure to thank your friend, for he has made a poor cripple very happy.’

‘Monsieur,’ said Godefroid when he was in his rooms, alone with Monsieur Bernard, who had followed him, ‘I think I may promise you that you shall not be robbed by those three sharpers. I can get the required sum, but you must place the papers proving the loan in my hands. If I am to do anything more, you should allow me to have your book—not to read myself, for I am not learned enough to judge of it, but to be read by an old lawyer I know, a man of unimpeachable integrity, who will undertake, according to the character of the work, to find a respectable firm with whom you may deal on equitable terms.—On this, however, I do not insist.

‘Meanwhile, here are five hundred francs,’ he went on, offering a note to the astonished lawyer, ‘to supply your more pressing wants. I ask for no receipt; you will be indebted on no evidence but that of your conscience, and your conscience may lie silent till you have to some extent recovered yourself.—I will settle with Halpersohn.’

‘But who are you?’ asked the old man, sinking on to a chair.

‘I,’ replied Godefroid, ‘am nobody; but I serve certain powerful persons to whom your necessities are now made known, and who take an interest in you.—Ask no more.’

‘And what motive can these persons have—?’

‘Religion, Monsieur,’ replied Godefroid.

‘Is it possible?—Religion!’

‘Yes, the Catholic, Apostolic, Roman religion.’

‘Then you are of the Order of Jesus?’

‘No, Monsieur,’ said Godefroid. ‘Be perfectly easy. No one has any design on you beyond that of helping you and restoring your family to comfort.’

‘Can philanthropy then wear any guise but that of vanity?’

‘Nay, Monsieur, do not insult holy Catholic Charity, the virtue described by Saint Paul!’ cried Godefroid eagerly.

At this reply Monsieur Bernard began to stride up and down the room.

‘I accept!’ he suddenly said. ‘And I have but one way of showing my gratitude—that is, by intrusting you with my work. The notes and quotations are unnecessary to a lawyer; and I have, as I told you, two months’ work before me yet in copying them out.—To-morrow then,’ and he shook hands with Godefroid.

‘Can I have effected a conversion?’ thought Godefroid, truck by the new expression he saw on the old man’s face as he had last spoken.

Next day, at three o’clock, a hackney coach stopped at the door,

and out of it stepped Halpersohn, buried in a vast bearskin coat. The cold had increased in the course of the night, and the thermometer stood at ten degrees below freezing.

The Jewish doctor narrowly though furtively examined the room in which his visitor of yesterday received him, and Godefroid detected a gleam of suspicion sparkling in his eye like the point of a dagger. This swift flash of doubt gave Godefroid an internal chill; he began to think that this man would be merciless in his money dealings; and it is so natural to think of genius as allied to goodness, that this gave him an impulse of disgust.

‘Monsieur,’ said he, ‘I perceive that the plainness of my lodgings arouses your uneasiness; so you will not be surprised at my manner of proceeding. Here are your two hundred francs, and here, you see, are three notes for a thousand francs each’—and he drew out the notes which Madame de la Chanterie had given him to redeem Monsieur Bernard’s manuscript. ‘If you have any further doubts as to my solvency, I may refer you, as a guarantee for the carrying out of my pledge, to Messrs. Mongenod the bankers, Rue de la Victoire.’

‘I know them,’ said Halpersohn, slipping the ten gold pieces into his pocket.

‘And he will go there!’ thought Godefroid.

‘And where does the sick lady live?’ asked the doctor, rising, as a man who knows the value of time.

‘Come this way, Monsieur,’ said Godefroid, going first to show him the way.

The Jew cast a shrewd and scrutinising glance on the rooms he went through, for he had the eye of a spy; and he was able to see the misery of poverty through the door into Monsieur Bernard’s bedroom, for, unluckily, Monsieur Bernard had just been putting on the dress in which he always showed himself to his daughter, and in his haste to admit his visitors he left the door of his kennel ajar.

He bowed with dignity to Halpersohn, and softly opened his daughter’s bedroom door.

‘Vanda, my dear, here is the doctor,’ he said.

He stood aside to let Halpersohn pass, still wrapped in his furs.

The Jew was surprised at the splendour of this room, which in this part of the town seemed anomalous; but his astonishment was of no long duration, for he had often seen in the houses of German and Polish Jews a similar discrepancy between the display of extreme penury and concealed wealth. While walking from the door to the bed he never took his eyes off the sufferer; and when he stood by her side, he said to her in Polish—

‘Are you a Pole?’

‘I am not; my mother was.’

‘Whom did your grandfather, General Tarlovski, marry?’

‘A Pole.’

‘Of what province?’

“A Sobolevska of Pinsk.”

‘Good.—And this gentleman is your father?’

‘Yes, Monsieur.’

‘Monsieur,’ said Halpersohn, ‘is your wife—’

‘She is dead,’ replied Monsieur Bernard.

‘Was she excessively fair?’ said Halpersohn, with some impatience at the interruption.

‘Here is a portrait of her,’ replied Monsieur Bernard, taking down a handsome frame containing several good miniatures.

Halpersohn was feeling the invalid’s head and hair, while he looked at the portrait of Vanda Tarloavska *née* Comtesse Sobolevska.

‘Tell me the symptoms of the patient’s illness? And he seated himself in the armchair, gazing steadily at Vanda during twenty minutes, while the father and daughter spoke by turns.

‘And how old is the lady?’

‘Eight-and-thirty.’

‘Very good!’ he said as he rose. ‘Well, I undertake to cure her. I cannot promise to give her the use of her legs, but she can be cured. Only, she must be placed in a private hospital in my part of the town.’

‘But, Monsieur, my daughter cannot be moved—’

‘I will answer for her life,’ said Halpersohn sententiously. ‘But I answer for her only on those conditions.—Do you know she will exchange her present symptoms for another horrible form of disease, which will last for a year perhaps, or six months at the very least?—You can come to see her, as you are her father.’

‘And it is certain?’ asked Monsieur Bernard.

‘Certain,’ repeated the Jew. ‘Your daughter has a vicious humour, a national disorder, in her blood, and it must be brought out. When you bring her, carry her to the Rue Basse-Saint-Pierre at Chaillot—Dr. Halpersohn’s private hospital.’

‘But how?’

‘On a stretcher, as the sick people are always carried to a hospital.’

‘But it will kill her to be moved.’

‘No.’

‘And Halpersohn, as he spoke this curt *No*, was at the door, where Godefroid met him on the landing.

The Jew, who was suffocating with heat, said in his ear—

‘The charge will be fifteen francs a day, besides the thousand crowns; three months paid in advance.’

‘Very good, Monsieur.—And,’ asked Godefroid, standing on the step of the cab into which the doctor had hurried, ‘you answer for the cure?’

‘Positively,’ said the Pole. ‘Are you in love with the lady?’

‘No,’ said Godefroid.

‘You must not repeat what I am about to tell you, for I am saying it only to prove to you that I am sure of the cure; but if you say anything about it, you will be the death of the woman—’

Godefroid replied only by a gesture.

‘For seventeen years she has been suffering from the disease known as *Plica Polonica*, which can produce all these torments; I have seen the most dreadful cases. Now I am the only man living who knows how to bring out the *Plica* in such a form as to be curable, for not every one gets over it. You see, Monsieur, that I am really very liberal. If this were some great lady—a Baronne de Nucingen or any other wife or daughter of some modern Croesus—I should get a hundred—two hundred thousand francs for this cure—whatever I might like to ask!—However, that is a minor misfortune.’

‘And moving her?’

‘Oh, she will seem to be dying, but she will not die of it! She may live a hundred years when once she is cured.—Now, Jacques, quick—Rue Monsieur, and make haste!’ said he to the driver.

He left Godefroid standing in the street, where he gazed in bewilderment after the retreating cab.

‘Who on earth is that queer-looking man dressed in bearskin?’ asked Madame Vauthier, whom nothing could escape. ‘Is it true, as the hackney coachman said, that he is the most famous doctor in Paris?’

‘And what can that matter to you, Mother Vauthier?’

‘Oh, not at all,’ said she with a sour face.

‘You made a great mistake in not siding with me,’ said Godefroid, as he slowly went into the house. ‘You would have done better than by sticking to Monsieur Barbet and Monsieur Metivier; you will get nothing out of them.’

‘And am I on their side?’ retorted she with a shrug. ‘Monsieur Barbet is my landlord, that is all.’

It took two days to persuade Monsieur Bernard to part from his daughter and carry her to Chaillot. Godefroid and the old lawyer walked all the way, one on each side of the stretcher, screened in with striped blue-and-white ticking, on which the precious patient lay, almost tied down to the mattress, so greatly did her father fear the convulsions of a nervous attack. However, having set out at three o’clock, the procession reached the private hospital at five, when it was dusk. Godefroid paid the four hundred and fifty francs demanded for the three months’ board, and took a receipt for it; then, when he went down to pay the two porters, Monsieur Bernard joined him and took from under the mattress a very voluminous sealed packet, which he handed to Godefroid.

‘One of these men will fetch you a cab,’ said he, ‘for you cannot carry those four volumes very far. This is my book; place it in my censor’s hands; I will leave it with him for a week. I shall remain at least a week in this neighbourhood, for I cannot abandon my daughter to her fate. I know my grandson; he can mind the house, especially with you to help him; and I commend him to your care. If I were myself what once I was, I would ask you my critic’s name; for if he

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was once a magistrate, there were few whom I did not know—'

'It is no mystery,' said Godefroid, interrupting Monsieur Bernard. 'Since you show such entire confidence in me, I may tell you that the reader is the President Lecamus de Tresnes.'

'Oh, of the Supreme Court in Paris. Take it—by all means. He is one of the noblest men of our time. He and the late Judge Popinot, the judge of the Lower Court, were lawyers worthy of the best days of the old Parlements. All my fears, if I had any, must vanish.—And where does he live? I should like to go and thank him when he has taken so much trouble.'

'You will find him in the Rue Chanoinesse, under the name of Monsieur Nicolas. I am just going there.—But your agreement with those rascals?'

'Auguste will give it you,' said the old man, going back into the hospital.

A cab was found on the Quai de Billy and brought by one of the men; Godefroid got in and stimulated the driver by the promise of drink money if he drove quickly to the Rue Chanoinesse, where he intended to dine.

Half an hour after Vanda's removal, three men, dressed in black, were let in by Madame Vauthier at the door in the Rue Notre-Dame des Champs, where they had been waiting, no doubt, till the coast should be clear. They went upstairs under the guidance of the Judas in petticoats, and gently knocked at Monsieur Bernard's door. As it happened to be a Thursday, the young collegian was at home. He opened the door, and three men slipped like shadows into the outer room.

'What do you want, gentlemen?' asked the youth.

'This is Monsieur Bernard's—that is to say, Monsieur le Baron—?'

'But what do you want here?'

'Oh, you know that pretty well, young man, for your grandfather has just gone off with a closed litter, I am told.—Well, that does not surprise us; he shows his wisdom. I am a bailiff, and I have come to seize everything here. On Monday last you were summoned to pay three thousand francs and the expenses to Monsieur Metivier, under penalty of imprisonment; and as a man who has grown onions knows the smell of chives, the debtor has taken the key of the fields rather than wait for that of the lock-up. However, if we cannot secure him, we can get a wing or a leg of his gorgeous furniture—for we know all about it, young man, and we are going to make an official report.'

'Here are some stamped papers that your grandpapa would never take,' said the Widow Vauthier, shoving three writs into Auguste's hand.

'Stay here, Ma'am; we will put you in possession. The law gives you forty sous a day; it is not to be sneezed at.

'Ah, ha! Then I shall see what there is in the grand bedroom!'

cried Madame Vauthier.

‘You shall not go into my mother’s room!’ cried the lad in a fury, as he flung himself between the door and the three men in black.

On a sign from their leader, the two men and a lawyer’s clerk who came in seized Auguste.

‘No resistance, young man; you are not master here. We shall draw up a charge, and you will spend the night in the lock-up.’

At this dreadful threat, Auguste melted into tears.

‘Oh, what a mercy,’ cried he, ‘that mamma is gone! This would have killed her!’

The men and the bailiff now held a sort of council with the Widow Vauthier. Auguste understood, though they talked in a low voice, that what they chiefly wanted was to seize his grandfather’s manuscripts, so he opened the bedroom door.

‘Walk in then, gentlemen,’ said he, ‘but spoil nothing. You will be paid to-morrow morning. Then, still in tears, he went into his own squalid room, snatched up all his grandfather’s notes, and stuffed them into the stove, where he knew that there was not a spark of fire.

The thing was done so promptly, that the bailiff, though he was keen and cunning, and worthy of his employers Barbet and Metivier, found the boy in tears on a chair when he rushed into the room, having concluded that the manuscripts would not be in the anteroom. Though books and manuscripts may not legally be seized for debt, the lien signed by the old lawyer in this case justified the proceeding. Still, it would have been easy to find means of delaying the distraint, as Monsieur Bernard would certainly have known. Hence the necessity for acting with cunning.

The Widow Vauthier had been an invaluable ally to her landlord by failing to serve his notices on her lodger; her plan was to throw them on him when entering at the heels of the officers of justice; or, if necessary, to declare to Monsieur Bernard that she had supposed them to be intended for the two writers who had been absent for two days.

The inventory of the goods took above an hour to make out, for the bailiff would omit nothing, and regarded the value as sufficient to pay off the debts.

As soon as the officers were gone, the poor youth took the writs and hurried away to find his grandfather at Halpersohn’s hospital; for, as the bailiff assured him that Madame Vauthier was responsible for everything under heavy penalties, he could leave the place without fear.

The idea of his grandfather’s being taken to prison for debt drove the poor boy absolutely mad—mad in the way in which the young are mad; that is to say, a victim to the dangerous and fatal excitement in which every energy of youth is in a ferment and may lead to the worst as to the most heroic actions.

When poor Auguste reached the Rue Basse-Saint-Pierre, the

doorkeeper told him that he did not know what had become of the father of the patient brought in at five o'clock, but that by Monsieur Halpersohn's orders no one—not even her father—was to be allowed to see the lady for a week, or it might endanger her life.

This reply put a climax to Auguste's desperation. He went back again to the Boulevard du Mont-Parnasse, revolving the most extravagant schemes as he went. He got home by about half-past eight, almost starving, so exhausted by hunger and grief, that he accepted when Madame Vauthier invited him to share her supper, consisting of a stew of mutton and potatoes. The poor boy dropped half dead into a chair in the dreadful woman's room.

Encouraged by the old woman's coaxing and insinuating words, he answered a few cunningly arranged questions about Godefroid, and gave her to understand that it was he who would pay off his grandfather's debts on the morrow, and that to him they owed the improvement that had taken place in their prospects during the past week. The widow listened to all this with an affectation of doubt, plying Auguste with a few glasses of wine.

At ten o'clock the wheels of a cab were heard to stop in front of the house, and the woman exclaimed—

'Oh, there is Monsieur Godefroid!'

Auguste took the key of his rooms and went upstairs to see the kind friend of the family; but he found Godefroid so entirely unlike himself, that he hesitated to speak till the thought of his grandfather's danger spurred the generous youth.

This is what had happened in the Rue Chanoinesse, and had caused Godefroid's stern expression of countenance.

The neophyte, arriving in good time, had found Madame de la Chanterie and her adherents in the drawing-room, and he had taken Monsieur Nicolas aside to deliver to him the *Spirit of the Modern Laws*. Monsieur Nicolas at once carried the sealed parcel to his room and came down to dinner. Then, after chatting during the first part of the evening, he went up again, intending to begin reading the work.

Godefroid was greatly surprised when, a few minutes after, Manon came from the old judge to beg him to go up to speak with him. Following Manon, he was led to Monsieur Nicolas's room; but he could pay no attention to its details, so greatly was he startled by the evident distress of a man usually so placid and firm.

'Did you know,' said Monsieur Nicolas, quite the Judge again, 'the name of the author of this work?'

'Monsieur Bernard,' said Godefroid. 'I know him only by that name. I did not open the parcel—'

'True,' said Monsieur Nicolas. 'I broke the seals myself.—And you made no inquiry as to his previous history?'

'No. I know that he married for love the daughter of General Tarlovski, that his daughter is named Vanda after her mother, and his grandson Auguste. And the portrait I saw of Monsieur Bernard is, I

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believe, in the dress of a Presiding Judge—a red gown.’

‘Look here!’ said Monsieur Nicolas, and held out the title of the work in Auguste’s handwriting, and in the following form:—

THE SPIRIT
OF THE MODERN LAWS
BY
M. BERNARD-JEAN-BAPTISTE MACLOUD
BARON BOURLAC

Formerly Attorney-Général to the High Court of Justice at Rouen
Commander of the Legion of Honour.

‘Oh! The man who condemned Madame, her daughter, and the Chevalier du Vissard!’ said Godefroid in a choked voice.

His knees gave way, and the neophyte dropped on to a chair.

‘What a beginning!’ he murmured.

‘This, my dear Godefroid, is a business that comes home to us all. You have done your part; we must deal with it now! I beg you to do nothing further of any kind; go and fetch whatever you left in your rooms; and not a word!—In fact, absolute silence. Tell Baron Bourlac to apply to me. Between this and then, we shall have decided how it will be best to act in such circumstances.’

Godefroid went downstairs, called a hackney cab, and hurried back to the Boulevard du Mont-Parnasse, filled with horror as he thought of the examination and trials at Caen, of the hideous drama that ended on the scaffold, and of Madame de la Chanterie’s sojourn in Bicêtre. He understood the neglect into which this lawyer, almost a second Fouquier-Tinville, had fallen in his old age, and the reasons why he so carefully concealed his name.

‘I hope Monsieur Nicolas will take some terrible revenge for poor Madame de la Chanterie!’

He had just thought out this not very Christian wish, when he saw Auguste.

‘What do you want of me?’ asked Godefroid.

‘My dear sir, a misfortune has befallen us which is turning my brain! Some scoundrels have been here to take possession of everything belonging to my mother, and they are hunting for my grandfather to put him into prison. But it is not by reason of these disasters that I turn to you for help,’ said the lad with Roman pride; ‘it is to beg you to do me such a service as you would do to a condemned criminal—’

‘Speak,’ said Godefroid.

‘They wanted to get hold of my grandfather’s manuscripts; and as I believe he placed the work in your hands, I want to beg you to take the notes, for the woman will not allow me to remove a thing.—Put them with the volumes, and then—’

‘Very well,’ said Godefroid, ‘make haste and fetch them.’

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While the lad went off, to return immediately, Godefroid reflected that the poor boy was guilty of no crime, that he must not break his heart by telling him about his grandfather, or the desertion which was the punishment in his sad old age of the passions of his political career; he took the packet not unkindly.

‘What is your mother’s name?’ he asked.

‘My mother, Monsieur, is the *Baronne de Mergi*. My father was the son of the *Presiding Judge of the Supreme Court at Rouen*.’

‘Ah!’ said Godefroid, ‘so your grandfather married his daughter to the son of the famous *Judge Mergi*?’

‘Yes, Monsieur.’

‘Leave me, my little friend,’ said Godefroid.

He went out on to the landing with the young *Baron de Mergi*, and called *Madame Vauthier*.

‘*Mother Vauthier*,’ said he, ‘you can relet my rooms; I am never coming back again.’

And he went down to the cab.

‘Have you intrusted anything to that gentleman?’ asked the widow of *Auguste*.

‘Yes,’ said the lad.

‘You’re a pretty fool. He is one of your enemies’ agents. He has been at the bottom of it all, you may be sure. It is proof enough that the trick has turned out all right that he never means to come back. He told me I could let his rooms.’

Auguste flew out, and down the boulevard, running after the cab, and at last succeeded in stopping it by his shouts and cries.

‘What is it?’ asked Godefroid.

‘My grandfather’s manuscripts?’

‘Tell him to apply for them to *Monsieur Nicolas*.’

The lad took this reply as the cruel jest of a thief who has no shame left; he sat down in the snow as he saw the cab set off again at a brisk trot.

He rose in a fever of fierce energy and went home to bed, worn out with rushing about Paris, and quite heartbroken.

Next morning, *Auguste de Mergi* awoke to find himself alone in the rooms where yesterday his mother and his grandfather had been with him, and he went through all the miseries of his position, of which he fully understood the extent. The utter desertion of the place, hitherto so amply filled, where every minute had brought with it a duty and an occupation, was so painful to him, that he went down to ask the *Widow Vauthier* whether his grandfather had come in during the night or early morning; for he himself had slept very late, and he supposed that if the *Baron Bourlac* had come home the woman would have warned him against his pursuers. She replied, with a sneer, that he must know full well where to look for his grandfather; for if he had not come in, it was evident that he had taken up his abode in the ‘*Chateau de Clichy*.’ This impudent irony from the

woman who, the day before, had cajoled him so effectually, again drove the poor boy to frenzy, and he flew to the private hospital in the Rue Basse-Saint-Pierre, in despair, as he thought of his grandfather in prison.

Baron Boulrac had hung about all night in front of the hospital which he was forbidden to enter, or close to the house of Doctor Halpersohn, whom he naturally wished to call to account for this conduct. The doctor did not get home till two in the morning. The old man, who, at half-past one, had been at the doctor's door, had just gone off to walk in the Champs-Élysées, and when he returned at half-past two the gatekeeper told him that Monsieur Halpersohn was now in bed and asleep, and was on no account to be disturbed.

Here, alone, at half-past two in the morning, the unhappy father, in utter despair, paced the quay, and under the trees, loaded with frost, of the side-walks of the Cours-la-Reine, waiting for the day.

At nine o'clock he presented himself at the doctor's, and asked him why he thus kept his daughter under lock and key.

'Monsieur,' said Halpersohn, 'I yesterday made myself answerable for your daughter's recovery; and at this moment I am responsible for her life, and you must understand that in such a case I must have sovereign authority. I may tell you that your daughter yesterday took a remedy which will give her the *Plica*. that till the disease is brought out the lady must remain invisible. I will not allow myself to lose my patient or you to lose your daughter by exposing her to any excitement, any error of treatment; if you really insist on seeing her, I shall demand a consultation of three medical men to protect myself against any responsibility, as the patient might die.'

The old man, exhausted with fatigue, had dropped on to a chair; he quickly rose, however, saying—

'Forgive me, Monsieur; I have spent the night in mortal anguish, for you cannot imagine how much I love my daughter, whom I have nursed for fifteen years between life and death, and this week of waiting is torture to me!'

The Baron left Halpersohn's study, tottering like a drunken man, the doctor giving him his arm to the top of the stairs.

About an hour later, he saw Auguste de Mergi walk into his room. On questioning the lodge-keeper of the private hospital, the poor lad had just heard that the father of the lady admitted the day before had called again in the evening, had asked for her, and had spoken of going early in the day to Doctor Halpersohn, who, no doubt, would know something about him. At the moment when Auguste de Mergi appeared in the doctor's room, Halpersohn was breakfasting off a cup of chocolate and a glass of water, all on a small round table; he did not disturb himself for the youth, but went on soaking his strip of bread in the chocolate; for he ate nothing but a roll, cut into four with an accuracy that argued some skill as an operator. Halpersohn had,

in fact, practised surgery in the course of his travels.

‘Well, young man,’ said he as Vanda’s son came in, ‘you too have come to require me to account for your mother?’

‘Yes, Monsieur,’ said Auguste.

The young fellow had come forward as far as the large table, and his eye was immediately caught by several bank-notes lying among the little piles of gold pieces. In the position in which the unhappy boy found himself, the temptation was stronger than his principles, well grounded as they were. He saw before him the means of rescuing his grandfather, and saving the fruits of twenty years’ labour imperilled by avaricious speculators. He fell. The fascination was as swift as thought, and justified itself by an idea of self-immolation that smiled on the boy. He said to himself—

‘I shall be done for, but I shall save my mother and my grandfather.’

Under this stress of antagonism between his reason and the impulse to crime, he acquired, as madmen do, a strange and fleeting dexterity, and instead of asking after his grandfather, he listened and agreed to all the doctor was saying.

Halpersohn, like all acute observers, had understood the whole past history of the father, the daughter, and her son. He had scented or guessed the facts which Madame de Mergi’s conversation had confirmed, and he felt in consequence a sort of benevolence towards his new clients;—as to respect or admiration, he was incapable of them.

‘Well, my dear boy,’ said he familiarly, ‘I am keeping your mother to restore her to you young, handsome, and in good health. Hers is one of those rare diseases which doctors find very interesting; and besides, she is, through her mother, a fellow-countrywoman of mine. You and your grandfather must be brave enough to live without seeing her for a fortnight, and Madame—?’

‘La Baronne de Mergi.’

‘If she is a Baroness, you are Baron—?’ asked Halpersohn.

At this moment the theft was effected. While the doctor was looking at his bread, heavy with chocolate, Auguste snatched up four folded notes, and had slipped them into his trousers pocket, affecting to keep his hand there out of sheer embarrassment.

‘Yes, Monsieur, I am a Baron. So too is my grandfather; he was public prosecutor at the time of the Restoration.’

‘You blush, young man. You need not blush because you are a Baron and poor—it is a very common case.’

‘And who told you, Monsieur, that we are poor?’

‘Well, your grandfather told me that he had spent the night in the Champs-Élysées; and though I know no palace where there is so fine a vault overhead as that which was glittering at two o’clock this morning, it was cold, I can tell you, in the palace where your grandfather was taking his airing. A man does not go to the *Hôtel de la Belle-Etoile* by preference.’

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de la Chanterie has saved, if I cannot win her forgiveness. Gentlemen, I will remain kneeling on the square of Notre-Dame till she has spoken one word!—I will wait for her there!—I will kiss the print of her feet; I will find tears to soften her heart—I who have been dried up like a straw by seeing my daughter's sufferings'

The door of Madame de la Chanterie's room was opened, the Abbé de Vèze came through like a shade, and said to Monsieur Joseph—

'That voice is killing Madame.'

'What! she is there! She has passed there!' cried Bourlac.

He fell on his knees, kissed the floor, and melted into tears, crying in a heart-rending tone—

'In the name of Jesus who died on the Cross, forgive! forgive! For my child has suffered a thousand deaths!'

The old man collapsed so entirely that the spectators believed he was dead.

At this moment Madame de la Chanterie appeared like a spectre in the doorway, leaning, half fainting, against the side-post.

'In the name of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette, whom I see on the scaffold, of Madame Elizabeth, of my daughter, and of yours—in the name of Jesus, I forgive you.'

As he heard the words, the old man looked up and said—

'Thus are the angels avenged!'

Monsieur Joseph and Monsieur Nicolas helped him to his feet, and led him out to the courtyard; Godefroid went to call a coach; and when they heard the rattle of wheels, Monsieur Nicolas said as he helped the old man into it—

'Come, no more, Monsieur, or you will kill the mother too. The power of God is infinite, but human nature has its limits.'

That day Godefroid joined the Order of the Brethren of Consolation.

VIERZCHOVNIA, UKRAINE, *December* 1847.