THE KING OF THE MILL.

One summer evening, after supper, Monsieur La Rose, the village notary, came out upon the veranda of the Hotel Castor, his hat in his hand, his smoothly-shaven face ruddy and pleasant to look upon. Brabon, the drummer, who came up from Montreal to Saint Pyx occasionally on business, sat smoking quietly in a chair that was tilted against the wall.

"Good evening," said M. La Rose.

"Good evening, Monsieur le Notarie!" answered Brabon, indolently.

Then there followed a little spell of silence that was intensified by the clatter of distant cow bells.

Presently there appeared in the street, immediately before the hotel, a sort of living fantasy—a singular, dark-faced old man, who strode slowly past, clad in a loose robe of many bright colors. His eyes had the un-

A Singular, Dark-Faced Old Man, Clad in Loose Robes.

mistakable and restless look of the daft. On his head was a crown of buttons, silver, bone, pearl, presumably sewn together on cardboard, and making a headgear of remarkable brilliancy. Behind him walked a gray-haired, gray-eyed woman in ordinary garb. Her look was clear and steady. Her demeanor in every way sane. Yet though it was plain to see she was a commonplace, rustic woman, there was something august in her carriage, unaccountably so, perhaps, but as natural as the studied pose of the other was constrained and unnatural. Her eyes were set fairly upon the fantastical figure before her with a meek, patient look and an evident interest beyond his ludicrous pomp and preoccupation.

It was not surprising, then, to the notary that this apparition, emphasized in the magic atmosphere of the summer twilight, should have made Brabon cry out with astonishment:

"Allons! What is this monsieur? I have been in St. Pyx many times before, but I declare this is new!"

"A very pathetic affair it is, Brabon," said the notary, taking a chair and looking at his watch, to be assured he had time to tell the tale before going for his customary evening chat with M. Le Cure in the presbytery rose garden.

"There is a tale?"

"Well, as you will—a history, nothing absorbing, but very human, very touching. Old Cesaire Moisson, a man with a large family, a thrifty, sober, God-fearing man, once owned the mill by the River of Angels—"

"Yes, I see it from here—the stuat, white building near the cluster of willows yonder."

"Exactly. Well, he was a man with a considerable family, I said—did I not?—and when the epidemic of small pox occurred in the village—that was many years ago, monsieur—poor Moisson's family was attacked, and one after another, his wife and children, passed away, and he himself, indeed, till there was only left his son Zephrin, whom you saw go by a moment since—"

"It left him so—the small pox?"

"No. He was not at home when the epidemic occurred; he was at college. Old Cesaire managed to put by enough silver to educate the lad—the brightest of his brood—and M. Le Cure also contributed, for he had hopes that Zephrin would become a priest."

"Then, I presume, the shock of the great calamity unbalanced the young man's mind?"

"That may be pretty true, monsieur, though for a long time after the affair he was thought to be perfectly sound mentally. Well, Zephrin was obliged to leave college and take up the business of the mill—a lonely task it must have been for one who had tasted the sweets of knowledge. Then every dusty timber of the mill must have seemed to him like a ghost of the happy days when the place was brimming with laughter and good cheer.

"He was not liked by the villagers on account of his silent and arrogant manner; he was unlike any other miller who had ever been known. When the inhabitants came with their grists he received them with the grand air of a seigneur of the old days, who, amid his courtly entourage, received the feifs of his dependents. 'It's like that always,' grumbled the crones; 'poor parents fill their children's minds with foolish notions of greatness!' Poor old Cesaire himself—rest to his bones—was not like this peacock. Cesaire knew his place bon vieux! A miller is a miller, if his head be crammed with Latin or flour dust!'

"Every one pitied Zephrin, of course, on account of his great bereavement, and the business of the mill suffered no great retrogression in consequence of his singular demeanor. This exclusiveness, this hauteur, however, was taken lightly by the young folk of the village, and often of a summer's evening, like this one, for instance, they passed by the mill crying up at Zephrin, who invariably pored over his books in the little dormer window, 'Behold the king of the mill!' Then, with gestures of mock gravity, 'Think of him mighty empire of rats!'"

"Quite so," said Barbon, "they taunted him into insanity with these gibes. The crown! the robes! I see now how they came!"

"Indirectly these taunts may have affected his mind, monsieur. His curious attire and mien are obviously suggestive of the fact; but it is my opinion his sad derangement is only partly due to them.

"Night after night the little dormer window of the mill was light till dawn; yet the earliest comer did not fail to find Zephrin up and about. No one could understand, for no another light save the miller's might be found in all Saint Pyx, not even at the presbytery, after 10 o'clock. At length the tongues of the gossips began to wag. It went abroad that he was closeted each night with the Old Man—the evil one—debating upon the sale of his soul for riches and power to satisfy his sinful pride. Again, others said it was not Zephrin's light at all; but only the glowing of the ghosts of his family who came to entertain him. Indeed, taken all in all, the miller was become a fearsome individual and the neighborhood of the mill a place to be shunned after dark, unless one had no fear in his heart. If by any unfortunate concurrence of sorceries a person should chance to meet a fire-fly while passing the mill, no plunging of steel into wood might save him from the evil spirits. Even to bless himself and utter pious invocation, perhaps, might not avail!

"In the midst of Zephrin't ill-repute a singular thing occurred. He was known to have fallen into conversation with a customer. It was this way: Colette Dion came often to the mill with the grist of her mother—a poor widow with thirteen children, of whom Colette was the eldest. One day when she came down along the dandelion-dotted pathway leading to the mill, with her mother's grist in a bag upon her head, Zephrin watched her with much interest. If common report may be believed, she was certainly, in those days, a picture not to be blinked casually. She had the figure of a nymph and a face, for all it was commonplace at points, something unusually fine for a villager. But the step, the carriage; it remains to this day, as we have seen, monsieur, dignified, distinguished, majestic! At first glance, it is said, there was some remarkable resemblance between Colotte and Zephrin—and who can tell? It may have been some vague suggestion of congeniality—some thin ray, as from one distant planet to another which inspired the miller's interest.

"When, at length, she arrived at the door of the mill and deposited her burden beside it, said he:

"'You have a meaning step, p'tite, and a pretty one.'

"'True?' questioned Colette, with something finely scornful on her eloquent lips. She was piqued, let us believe, since he had not noticed her pretty face; for, though a woman may be conscious of her subtlest grace and charm, homage to the features is the thing—the real joy. Isn't it so, Brabon? 'Well,' said the miller, 'I doubt not there is more in your mind than the mere grinding of yonder grist, eh?'

"'It is my mind now,' said she. 'It was my step lately!'

"'It is the mind which regulates the step, p'tite. I always watch the step when I would know the mind,' he responded.

"Now, there is much in these fragments which reveal the clearness of Zephrin's mind at that period and also the real character of the man and the bent of his spirit. You see, it was the gesture, the carriage, the aspect, that interested him most. Why? We shall see. Though Colette, it may be presumed, did not realize the true significance of his words, she rememebered them—every one—and repeated them to her mother, who in turn told everything to the cure, Langlois, from whom I have the story. The girl confessed to her mother that she was much surprised regarding the ill-reputed miller. 'Monsieur Moisson—Zephrin,' she declared was not at all a weird man, but on the contrary, very sensible and good-natured. Yet her mother warned her she must be wary; such fine qualities oftentimes screened the worst souls. Colette, however, maintained stolidly not a word of the village gossip was true. 'Indeed,' said she, 'they say almost as naughty things of me because they think I am proud. And you know, mamma, I am not proud nor wicked.' So every time Colette fetched the grist to the mill she returned radiant and full of praise of the miller. At length one day he said to her, so she reported:

"'A seigneur?' ventured the miller. 'Higher.'

"'A governor?'

"'Nay, higher.'

"'A prince?'

"'Even higher.'

"'A king?'

"'Yes, a king.' Then, after a pretty pause: 'And that is thou, my dear king of the mill!'"

"Now he draws her hands across the door of the mill and kisses her fair head that is fallen against his breast—and that is all. Let us suppose they simply looked out in a day-dream, across the little River of Angels, to the pleasant daisied meadows and green fields about here.

"'Well,' says Zephrin to her very gravely and with a new, strange look in his eyes—a look that frightens her not a little.

"'They call me in contempt "the King of the Mill," but they shall bow before me yet as before a king. And indeed I shall wear the robes of a king and speak the noble words of a king, which I am getting by rote each night where they see my lamp burning in the dormer window. Hein! They shall sit like the rats whose emperor they say I am now, while I hold them in spell with the brave lines of Moliere Of Corneille! Of Racine!'

"The good St. Ann protect us! Who are they all?' cries Colette, now much perturbed. But the miller continues without noticing the interruption.

"'And I shall come to you then with my triumphs; in my fine royal robes of purple and gold and ermine; with my glorious jeweled crown. And I shall kiss your hand in homage to your beauty and lay these laurels, these triumphs at your feet, my queen! my Colette!'

"Just then appears a farmer with his grist and the happy, frightened girl flits away like a startled bird."

"Bon Dieu!" said Brabon. "I see. The stage was his vagary!"

"Yes," said the notary, bowing his head as before some great mystery. "At the college entertainments, while strutting through the plays of these great masters in the little hall, with its small stage and crude scenery; before the common village audiences, he first heard the siren voice of Art. And it is as a siren's voice to some, you know, Brabon. Eh bien! What is the difference? He is playing a role now—how tragic a role."

"But about Colette?" interrupted Brabon, with some impatience. The gentle sentimentality of the notary escaped, to an extent, the bluff, practical drummer.

"Ah! there is the ro'e—the role of beauty and distinction! Think of it! All along she has believed in him vaguely. From the day he had frightened her with his strange talk, seemingly so irrelevant to her happiness, her poor, small mind was filled with visions of mysterious greatness and joys to be in the future—much as are our visions of the life to come. He asked her to wait. She must never be the wife of a common miller, but of a great man, a man whom the whole worlr would applaud. •And so she waited; trusting, loving, believing in him infinitely; and even when her reason is fallen into decay—see the devotion! Each day, all these years, she goes to the mill and attends upon him, performing the household duties, conducting the business of the mill, detailing the work and instructing the men hired to do the milling. Thus has she cared for him as no one would care for a child, and in all, save the matter of this vagary, he is obedient to her slightest whim."

Brabon touched the notary's arm.

"See! They come again."

Once more the bizarre figure strolled past, followed by the woman. They had walked to the church where Colette was making a novena for Zephrin's recovery.

To look upon the notary one would suppose an angel passed, but there was on the face of the drummer only a look of perplexed incredulity.

When they were gone a little way the notary arose, looked at his watch and made as to set forth. Brabon detained him.

"One word, monsieur. They are married now?"

"Oh, no! That could not be," he answered with something like a sigh. "They are still courting and looking forward to a day of greatness and making ready for the wedding. Mon Dieu Brabon. That is love, eh?—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Because a Common Miller Could Never Win My Heart.

"'Colette, I am going to ask you something.'

"'If it is one thing I know what my answer will be,' she responded with much piquancy.

"'Well, if I should ask you to marry me?'

"'Then I should answer "No!"'

"'Why?' says the miller, his heart sinking to his boots, no doubt, but rising again very quickly when he catches the twinkle of mischief in her eyes.

"'Because a common miller could never win my heart,' says she coquettishly, yet with something truly dramatic in her pose. 'That is only for a great man.'

Accommodating.

"Of course I'm a friend of the workingman," said the aspiring politician.

"Then why don't you work occasionally?" asked one of his auditors.

"Oh, that's simple enough. I don't wish to crowd some more deserving man out of a job."—Philadelphia North American.

TELEPHONING IN THE ROCKIES.

Hard Labor Required in Placing the Wire and Establishing Communications.

Telephone construction in the Rocky Mountains is attended with a great deal of hardship. The line built from Leadville to Aspen several years ago is a case in point. It took two months to cover the entire length, forty-eight miles. In ordinary construction the poles would be set forty-two to the mile, but at certain points where sharp turns are necessary, the number sometimes increased to seventy-five to the mile. The members of the construction gang had to be expert as axmen as well as linemen, for when timber was encountered a path of 200 feet on each side of the line had to be cleared in order that wires might not be broken when trees were blown over by the terrific blasts which at times prevail in that region.

A great deal of the comparative slowness of the installation was owing to the inability of the workmen to labor in such a rarified atmosphere. At one point the wires were strung at an elevation of 12,000 feet above the level of the sea. In such an altitude the linemen soon became completely tired; after he has climbed two or three poles he has to take a rest to recuperate his energies. The preparation of the holes for poles, which would have been tedious in similar ground even in an ordinary atmosphere, was an especially slow and fatiguing operation. It was often necessary to blast a hole for the pole by the use of giant powder, and an ex-miner who had had an extensive experience with explosives, was assigned to the job.

The digging of one pole hole would sometimes occupy him a whole day, working honestly. Over 200 pounds of powder were used on the line for this purpose. When the continental divide was reached the poles had to be abandoned, and the wires placed in a cable, which was buried in a two-foot trench for a distance of 7,000 feet. The advisability of abandoning aerial construction at this point was demonstrated by the experience of the company that maintains the Leadville and Denver line. At one point on that line, Mosquito Pass, the poles were originally set seventy feet apart. As soon as the wires were covered with sleet they snapped, and the line was useless. Double the number of poles were then used, with the same result. The space between the poles was then reduced to twenty-five feet, but when the sleet came the line was swept down flat. Eventually an underground cable was laid for two and a half miles, and there has been no trouble since.—Denver Field and Farm.

SMALL GIRLS ARE POPULAR.

"Dear, You're So Tall," They Say, and the Man Is Vain.

The short girl has many advantages over the tall one. She has to go through life looking up and nothing is so becoming to eyes as that. Her lashes show more and so does her hair. There are curves of cheek, chin and throat that look their prettiest to a man who must look down to them.

A small girl is more easily held and more easily kissed. It is nicer to have to lift her face up by the chin, and it is more epicurean and satisfactory to reach down to the upturned lips.

It is comfortable when you hold a girl on your knee to have her head just come to your shoulder, instead of having to hang over—surplus, as it were. Everything about a small girl is likely to be a provocation—the unexpectedly tiny hand, the distracting morsels of feet, the little head, the little nose.

A small girl can be fascinating even in a temper, she can be delicious when she cries, she can be lovely when she pouts, and none of these moods sits well on a big woman. Then, too, the man in love is inclined to pet names, and he wants to call his girl "Birdy," whether she weighs 200 or not; yet he is not insensible to the appropriateness of the title when given to a real little thing.

A man likes to feel big, by comparison, at least. A really large man does not object to seeming almost a giant beside the girl of his heart, and it is almost necessary to the short man's vanity that he shall seem big to the little creature he is going to marry.

It is very fetching to have one's girl say: "Please, dear, my neck gets so tired—you're so tall." Don't you know what that means? Well, get a bit of a girl and you will find out. On the whole, the small girl has the best of it.—Kansas City Star.

THEIR LUCK WAS BAD.

So They Threw Away the Rabbit's Foot and Chinese Coin.

Two men were talking about luck at the corner of Baltimore and South streets recently. Neither of them had had a recent visitation of Dame Fortune, and in consequence both were loud in their denunciations of that fickle lady.

"I haven't had a good thing for three years," said one of them in a tone of deep disgust. "I have tried my best to overcome the hoodoo, but somehow I can't do it. I've tried every sort of mascot, but I can't get out of the rut. For two years I have carried a rabbit's foot, but it seems to have come from a Jonah Rabbit and not one of the regular kind. Darn this luck, anyhow."

The other man sympathized deeply, and told his own troubles in the same disgruntled style. He, too, had a mascot in the shape of a Chinese coin.

"They are all a snare and a delusion," he said, and his face looked more woebegone than ever. "Darn this luck, anyhow."

"Mascots are not what they are cracked up to be," assented the other. "I'm almost tempted to believe in Jonahs as the harbingers of good fortune. I'm going to get rid of this rabbit's foot at any rate."

"I am right with you," said the other. "Darn this luck, anyhow."

The rabbit's foot and the coin appeared from their pockets, and with a more hopeful manner than they had yet shown the two charms were tossed together in the middle of the streets, near the tracks of the city passenger railway. Then the two "hoodoed" men went down the street arm in arm.

"Darn this luck, anyhow," was the last thing heard as they disappeared in a doorway.—Baltimore Sun.

THAT HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT.

The house that Jack built is still standing, for this is a true story, as any one will find who will read the records of the County of Belmont, in the State of Ohio, where it is written almost as I have told it.

Jake Heatherington was an English miner's boy. Indeed he might have been called a miner himself, for from the day he was seven years old he had spent sixteen hours out of every twenty-four deep down in a coal mine. He had emigrated with his father from England and he had a mule. The mule's name was Jack. Jake said they mere partners. Jack was the sturdiest little mule in the Ohio valley. He was only three and one-half feet high, but he was as stout as oak, and Jake himself hadn't more pluck.

"It's All Because of You, Jack."

There was no load so heavy that Jack wouldn't do his best to draw it; there never was a hill he wouldn't pull up it; and as for being afraid of whistles and noise and crowds Jack simply gloried in them and always pushed into the thickest of every din. Jake had been all his life a lonely fellow, and every day that he worked with Jack he became happier. He fell into the habit of talking aloud to him as they went about, telling him how much coal they had taken out to-day and what they had sold it for, and he confided to him all his future plans. At night when the work was done Jake always smoked his pipe near Jack and planned the next day. As for the mule his affection for the man was something unheard of. It was only necessary to watch Jack's ears when Jake was near to know that his whole soul was wrapped up in his master. So devoted was he that he brayed with grief if Jake attempted to drive another animal, and if any one on the premises dared to harness or drive him he kicked and balked until the intruder was glad to give up the task. Every time that Jake saw his partner kick over a man who attempted to use him he confessed that it made him love Jack better. This was Jack's way of showing his affection, he said.

Jake and Jack had not been in business together long before it was evident that they were making a great deal of money. In an amazingly short time Jake paid the last dollar on his eight acres and was able to buy a much larger piece of coal land. "It's never been opened, but they felt sure there was coal there, and so it proved thousands upon thousands of tons of the richest, blackest coal that any one had ever seen on the Ohio river. The firm had made their fortune, but they never slacken their speed. To be sure Jake dropped his pick and shovel, for now he had to superintend men, and build houses and wharves and steamers. Jack, too, no longer drew loads of coal, his one and only load was Jake. They had bought the finest little cart that had ever been seen in the valley, and together trotted from mine to mine and from wharf to wharf looking after their business, and as they rode Jake counted up in a loud voice to Jack their earnings. This he found very convenient, for he could no more read and write and cipher than the mule. It helped him greatly to add up aloud to Jack, he said.

As the firm grew richer and richer Jake found that people treated him with a respect which sometimes was very troublesome From New Orleans and Pittsburg and Cincinnati and even from New York came bankers and steamboat builders and capitalists and tried to persuade him to invest his money in their enterprise. "I'll have to talk it over with Jack," he always said, and though the men did not always know who Jack was, they had to wait until the partners had had a ride together and thought the matter over. It was wonderful how few mistakes they made in spite of all the flattery and persuasion of the fine gentlemen from the cities. The truth was Jake and Jack both had a great deal of good sense and when they made up their minds nothing could budge them. Of course as he was so rich Jake's neighbors thought he ought to marry and so he did at last. He was very fond of his wife and bought her gowns and jewels, but Jack had his heart. Everybody said that, even Mrs. Jake herself.

After the two had been in partnership about twenty-five years Jake concluded to build a house. As he was the richest man in the valley he decided he must have the finest house, but before he had said anything to his wife about his project he told his partner. "It's you as has done it, Jack," he said, tears of gratitude in his eyes. "It's you as has done it. It'll be the house that Jack built an' nothin' else."

The house was begun and during the months it was building Jake went every day to see it. Often his friends and rich visitors went with him and always he said, "Yes, sir, it's a fine un', but the credit's to Jack. He's built it, sir," and so all up and down the river the new home come to be known, greatly to Jake's joy, as the "House that Jack built." But Jake was not satisfied with having his partner's name attached to his home, he wanted his dear face and tender eyes and great sympathetic ears in it, and so he had a splendid head of the mule carved in stone and put up as a keystone to the fine arched portal. Then he was content.

When at last the house was done Jake refused to take any one through it until after his partner had seen it. He made a great fete on the lawn and invited all his neighbors. Then in the presence of them all he led Jack from his stable across the lawn up the steps into the new house. From room to room went the two old friends, Jake leading the way and explaining lovingly all the conveniences and luxuries which henceforth he and his family were to enjoy. He always declared that Jack understood and enjoyed it all and long after he told how the mule rubbed his nose against the fine woodwork and peered into all the closets and kicked up his heels at the mirrors and cantered around the great drawing room and actually bounded up the broad staircase three steps at a time. "No one ever appreciated this house like Jack," declared Jake.

When the house was built Jack was already old for a mule. He was 30, in fact, but happily he still had a long term of years before him. No prince ever received more homage and lived in greater comfort than he in his last days. Jake himself cared for him;

Kicked Up His Heels at the Miners and Cantered Around the Room.

all because of you, Jack," he said to the mule, putting his arms around his neck. "I never could 'a done it without you." His business grew so fast now that he began to hire men, and to buy other mules, and even to send coal down the river on his own flatboats. Men looked on in astonishment at the way he grew rich, and when they spoke to him about it he would say modestly, "Yes, Jack and me's doing pretty good."

About five years after the partnership was formed Jake and Jack concluded they'd buy a third piece of land. It was a big piece which had

the whole community petted him, and often visitors from far away came to look on his white hairs. At last, when he was 40 years and 10 days old, Jack died. His death was the one great sorrow of Jake's life. The man buried his old friend under a favorite tree, and often he went there to sit by his grave. Every visitor was taken out to see the spot and to hear the tale of Jack's honorable life.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

Patti is singing again in London at the old price. It is about time to expect her here for another farewell tour.