

# THE WANDERING JEW

BY EUGENE BUE.

## CHAPTER V.—Continued.

### ROSE AND BLANCHE

The orphans, with a cry of terror, threw themselves into each other's arms, while the dog rushed toward the window, barking furiously.

Pale, trembling, motionless with fright, clasping each other in a close embrace, the two sisters held their breath; in their extreme fear they dare not even cast their eyes in the direction of the window. The dog, with his forepaws resting on the sill, continued to bark with violence.

"Alas! what can it be?" murmured the orphans. "And Dagobert not here!"

"Hark!" cried Rose, suddenly seizing Blanche by the arm; "hark!—some one coming up the stairs!"

"Good Heaven! it does not sound like the tread of Dagobert. Do you not hear what heavy footsteps?"

"Quick! come, Spoilsport, and defend us!" cried the two sisters at once, in an agony of alarm.

The boards of the wooden staircase really creaked beneath the weight of unusually heavy footsteps, and a singular kind of rustling was heard along the thin partition that divided the chamber from the landing-place. Then a ponderous door, falling against the door of the passage, shook it violently; and the girls, at the very height of terror, looked at each other without the power to speak.

The door opened. It was Dagobert. At the sight of him Rose and Blanche joyfully exchanged kisses, as if they had just escaped from a great danger.

"What is the matter? why are you afraid?" asked the soldier in surprise.

"Oh, if you only knew!" said Rose, panting as she spoke, for both her own heart and her sister's beat with violence.

"If you knew what has just happened! We did not recognize your footsteps—they seemed so heavy—and then that noise behind the partition!"

"Little frightened doves that you are! I could not run up the stairs like a boy of fifteen, seeing that I carried my bed upon my back—a straw mattress that I have just flung down before your door, to sleep there as usual."

"Bless me! how foolish we must be, sister, not to have thought of that!" said Rose, looking at Blanche. And their pretty faces, which had together grown pale, together resumed their natural color.

"During this scene the dog, still resting against the window, did not cease barking a moment.

"What makes Spoilsport bark in that direction, my children?" said the soldier.

"We do not know. Two of our window-panes have just been broken. That is what first frightened us so much."

Without answering a word Dagobert flew to the window, opened it quickly, pushed back the shutter, and leaned out.

He saw nothing; it was a dark night. He listened; but heard only the moaning of the wind.

"Spoilsport," said he to his dog, pointing to the open window, "leap out, old fellow, and search!" The faithful animal took one mighty spring and disappeared out of the window, which was raised only about eight feet above the ground.

Dagobert, still leaning over, encouraged his dog with voice and gesture: "Search, old fellow, search! If there is any one there, pin him—your fangs are strong—and hold him fast till I come."

But Spoilsport found no one. They heard him go backward and forward, sniffing on every side, and now and then uttering a low cry like a hound at fault.

"There is no one, my good dog, that's clear, or you would have had him by the throat before this." Then, turning to the maidens, who listened to his words and watched his movements with uneasiness: "My girls," said he, "how were these panes broken? Did you not remark?"

"No, Dagobert; we were talking together when we heard a great crash, and then the glass fell into the room."

"It seemed to me," added Rose, "as if a shutter had struck suddenly against the window."

Dagobert examined the shutter, and observed a long movable hook, designed to fasten it on the inside.

"It blows hard," said he; "the wind must have swung round the shutter, and this hook broke the window. Yes, yes; that is it. What interest could anybody have to play such a sorry trick?" Then, speaking to Spoilsport, he asked: "Well, my good fellow, is there no one?"

The dog answered by a bark, which the soldier no doubt understood as a negative, for he continued: "Well, then, come back! Make the round—you will find some door open—you are never at a loss."

The animal followed this advice. After growling for a few seconds beneath the window, he set off at a gallop to make the circuit of the build-

ings, and come back by the courtyard.

"Be easy, my children," said the soldier, as he again drew near the orphans: "it was only wind."

"We were a good deal frightened," said Rose.

"I believe you. But now I think of it, this draft is likely to give you cold. And seeking to remedy this inconvenience, he took from a chair the reindeer pelisse, and suspended it from the spring-catch of the curtainless window, using the skirts to stop up as closely as possible the two openings made by the breaking of the panes.

"Thanks, Dagobert; how good you are! We were very uneasy at not seeing you."

"Yes, you were absent longer than usual. But what is the matter with you?" added Rose, only just then perceiving that his countenance was disturbed and pallid, for he was still under the painful influence of the brawl with Morok; "how pale you are!"

"Me, my pets? Oh, nothing."

"Yes, I assure you, your countenance is quite changed. Rose is right."

"I tell you there is nothing the matter," answered the soldier, not without some embarrassment, for he was little used to deceive; till, finding an excellent excuse for his emotion, he added: "If I do look at all uncomfortable, it is your fright that has made me so, for indeed it was my fault."

"Your fault!"

"Yes; for if I had not lost so much time at supper, I should have been here when the window was broken, and have spared you the fright."

"Anyhow, you are here now, and we will think no more of it."

"Why don't you sit down?"

"I will, my children, for we have to talk together," said Dagobert, as he drew a chair close to the head of the bed. "Now tell me, are you quite awake?" he added, trying to smile in order to reassure them. "Are those large eyes properly open?"

"Look, Dagobert!" cried the two girls, smiling in their turn, and opening their blue eyes to the utmost extent.

"Well, well," said the soldier; "they are yet far enough from shutting; besides, it is only nine o'clock."

"We also have something to tell, Dagobert," resumed Rose, after exchanging glances with her sister.

"Indeed!"

"A secret to tell you."

"A secret?"

"Yes, to be sure."—"Ah, and a very great secret!" added Rose, quite seriously.

"A secret which concerns us both," resumed Blanche.

"Faith! I should think so. What concerns the one always concerns the other. Are you not always, as the saying goes, 'two faces under one hood'?"

"Truly, how can it be otherwise, when you put our heads under the great hood of your pelisse?" said Rose, laughing.

"There they are again, mocking-birds. One never has the last word with them. Come, ladies, your secret, since a secret there is."

"Speak, sister," said Rose.

"No, miss; it is for you to speak. You are to day on duty, as eldest, and such an important thing as telling a secret like that which you talk of belongs of right to the elder sister. Come, I am listening to you," added the soldier, as he forced a smile, the better to conceal from the maidens how much he still felt the unpunished affronts of the brute-tamer.

It was Rose (who, as Dagobert said, was doing duty as eldest) that spoke for herself and for her sister.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SECRET.

"First of all, good Dagobert," said Rose, in a gracefully caressing manner, "as we are going to tell our secret—you must promise not to scold us."

"You will not scold your darlings, will you?" added Blanche, in a no less coaxing voice.

"Granted!" replied Dagobert, somewhat gravely; "particularly as I should not well know how to set about it—but why should I scold you?"

"Because we ought perhaps to have told you sooner what we are going to tell you."

"Listen, my children," said Dagobert sententially, after reflecting a moment on this case of conscience; "one of two things must be. Either you were right, or else you were wrong to hide this from me; if you were right, very well; if you were wrong, it is done; so let's say no more about it. Go on; I am all attention."

Completely reassured by this luminous decision, Rose resumed, while she exchanged a smile with her sister: "Only think, Dagobert; for two successive nights we have had a visitor."

"A visitor!" cried the soldier, drawing himself up suddenly in his chair.

"Yes, a charming visitor—he is so very fair."

"Fair!—the devil! cried Dagobert, with a start.

"Yes, fair—and with blue eyes," added Blanche.

"Blue eyes—blue devils!" and Dagobert again bounded on his seat.

"Yes, blue eyes—as long as that," resumed Rose, placing the tip of one forefinger about the middle of the other.

"Zounds! they might be long as that," said the veteran, indicating the whole length of his arm from the elbow.

"They might be as long as that, and it would have nothing to do with it. Fair, and with blue eyes. Pray, what may this mean, young ladies?" and Dagobert rose from his seat with a severe and painfully inquiet look.

"There, now, Dagobert, you have begun to scold us already!"

"Just at the very commencement," added Blanche.

"Commencement—what! is there to be a sequel, a finish?"

"A finish? we hope not," said Rose, laughing like mad.

"All we ask is, that it should last forever," added Blanche, sharing in the hilarity of her sister.

Dagobert looked gravely from one to the other of the two maidens, as if trying to guess this enigma; but when he saw their sweet, innocent faces gracefully animated by a frank, ingenious laugh, he reflected that they would not be so gay if they had any serious matter for self-reproach, and he felt pleased at seeing them so merry in the midst of their precarious position.

"Laugh on, my children," he said. "I like so much to see you laugh."

Then, thinking that was not precisely the way in which he ought to treat the singular confession of the young girls, he added, in a gruff voice: "Yes, I like to see you laugh—but not when you receive fair visitors with blue eyes, young ladies! Come acknowledge that I'm an old fool to listen to such nonsense—you are only making game of me."

"Nay, what we tell you is quite true."

"You know we never tell stories," added Rose.

"They are right—they never fib," said the soldier, in renewed perplexity. "But how the devil is such a visit possible? I sleep before your door—Spoilsport sleeps under your window—and all the blue eyes and fair locks in the world must come in by one of those ways—and, if they had tried it, the dog and I, who have both of us quick ears, would have received their visits after our fashion. But come, children, pray, speak to the purpose. Explain yourselves!"

The two sisters, who saw by the expression of Dagobert's countenance that he felt really uneasy, determined no longer to trifle with his kindness. They exchanged a glance, and Rose, taking in her little hand the coarse, broad palm of the veteran, said to him: "Come, do not plague yourself! We will tell you all about the visit of our friend Gabriel."

"There you are again! He has a name, then?"

"Certainly, he has a name. It is Gabriel."

"Is it not a pretty name, Dagobert? Oh, you will see and love, as we do, our beautiful Gabriel!"

"I'll love your beautiful Gabriel, will I?" said the veteran, shaking his head.

"Love your beautiful Gabriel?—that's as it may be. I must first know—"

Then, interrupting himself, he added: "It is queer. That reminds me of something."

"Of what, Dagobert?"

"Fifteen years ago, in the last letter that your father, on his return from France, brought me from my wife, she told me that, poor as she was, and with our little growing Agricola on her hands, she had taken in a poor deserted child, with the face of a cherub, and the name of Gabriel—and only a short time since I heard of him again."

"And from whom, then?"

"You shall know that by and by."

"Well, then, since you have a Gabriel of your own, there is the more reason that you should love ours."

"Yours! but who is yours? I am on thorns till you tell me."

"You know, Dagobert," resumed Rose, "that Blanche and I are accustomed to fall asleep, holding each other by the hand."

"Yes, yes; I have often seen you in your cradle. I was never tired of looking at you; it was so pretty."

"Well, then; two nights ago, we had just fallen asleep, when we beheld—"

"Oh, it was a dream!" cried Dagobert. "Since you were asleep, it was in a dream!"

"Certainly, in a dream—how else would you have it?"

"Pray let my sister go on with her tale!"

"Ah, well and good!" said the soldier with a sigh of satisfaction; "well and good! To be sure, I was tranquil enough in any case—because—but still—I like it better to be a dream. Continue, my little Rose."

"Once asleep, we both dreamed the same thing."

"What! both the same?"

"Yes, Dagobert; for the next morning when we awoke we related our two dreams to each other."

"And they were exactly alike."

"That's odd enough, my children; and what was this dream all about?"

"In our dream Blanche and I were seated together, when we saw enter a

beautiful angel, with a long white robe, fair locks, blue eyes, and so handsome and benign a countenance that we clasped our hands as if to pray to him.

Then he told us, in a soft voice, that he was called Gabriel; that our mother had sent him to be our guardian angel, and that he would never abandon us."

"And then," added Blanche, "he took us each by the hand, and, bending his fair face over us, looked at us for a long time in silence, with so much goodness—with so much goodness, that we could not withdraw our eyes from his."

"Yes," resumed Rose, "and his look seemed, by turns, to attract us, or to go to our hearts. At length, to our great sorrow, Gabriel quitted us, having told us that we should see him again the following night."

"And did he make his appearance?"

"Certainly. Judge with what impatience we waited the moment of sleep, to see if our friend would return and visit us in our slumbers."

"Humph!" said Dagobert, scratching his forehead; "this reminds me, young ladies, that you kept on rubbing your eyes last evening, and pretending to be half asleep. I wager, it was all to send me away the sooner and to get to your dream as fast as possible."

"Yes, Dagobert."

"The reason being, you could not say to me, as you would to Spoilsport: 'Lie down, Dagobert! Well—so your friend Gabriel came back?'"

"Yes, and this time he talked to us a great deal, and gave us, in the name of our mother, such touching, such noble counsels, that the next day Rose and I spent our whole time in recalling every word of our guardian angel—and his face, and his look—"

"This reminds me again, young ladies, that you were whispering all along the road this morning; and that when I spoke of white, you answered black."

"Yes, Dagobert; we were thinking of Gabriel."

"And, ever since, we love him as well as he loves us."

"But he is only one between both of you!"

"Was not our mother one between us?"

"And you, Dagobert—are you not also one for us both?"

"True, true! And yet, do you know, I shall finish by being jealous of that Gabriel!"

"You are our friend by day; he is our friend by night."

"Let's understand it clearly. If you talk of him all day and dream of him all night, what will there remain for me?"

"There will remain for you your two orphans, whom you love so much," said Rose.

"And who have only you left upon earth," added Blanche, in a caressing tone.

"Humph! humph! that's right, coax the old man over! Nay, believe me, my children," added the soldier tenderly, "I am quite satisfied with my lot. I can afford to let you have your Gabriel. I felt sure that Spoilsport and myself could take our rest in quiet."

After all, there is nothing so astonishing in what you tell me; your first dream struck your fancy, and you talked so much about it that you had a second; nor should I be surprised if you were to see this fine fellow a third time."

"Oh, Dagobert! do not make a jest of it! They are only dreams, but we think our mother sends them to us. Did she not tell us that orphan children were watched over by guardian angels? Well, Gabriel is our guardian angel; he will protect us, and he will protect you also."

"Very kind of him to think of me; but you see, my dear children, for the matter of defense, I prefer the dog; he is less fair than your angel, but he has better teeth, and that is more to be depended on."

"How provoking you are, Dagobert—always jesting!"

"It is true; you can laugh at everything."

"Yes, I am astonishingly gay; I laugh with my teeth shut, in the style of old Jovial. Come, children, don't scold me; I know I am wrong. The remembrance of your dear mother is mixed with this dream, and you do well to speak of it seriously. Besides," added he, with a grave air, "dreams will sometimes come true. In Spain, two of the Emperor's dragoons, comrades of mine, dreamed, the night before their death, that they would be poisoned by the monks—and so it happened. If you continue to dream of this fair angel Gabriel, it is—it is—why, it is, because you are amused by it; and, as you have none too many pleasures in the daytime, you may as well get an agreeable sleep at night. But now, my children, I have also much to tell you; it will concern your mother; promise me not to be sad."

"Be satisfied; when we think of her we are not sad, though serious."

"That is well. For fear of grieving you, I have always delayed the moment of telling what your poor mother would have confided to you as soon as you were no longer children. But she died before she had time to do so, and that which I have to tell broke her heart—as it nearly did mine. I put off this communication as long as I could, taking for pretext that I would say

nothing till we came to the field of battle where your father was made prisoner. That gave me time; but the moment is now come; I can shuffle it off no longer."

"We listen, Dagobert," responded the two maidens, with an attentive and melancholy air.

After a moment's silence, during which he appeared to reflect, the veteran thus addressed the young girls:

"Your father, General Simon, was the son of a workman, who remained a workman; for, notwithstanding all that the general could say or do, the old man was obstinate in not quitting his trade. He had a heart of gold and a head of iron, just like his son. You may suppose, my children, that when your father, who had enlisted as a private soldier, became a general and count of the empire, it was not without toll or without glory."

"A count of the empire? what is that, Dagobert?"

"Plummary—a title which the Emperor gave over and above the promotion, just for the sake of saying to the people, whom he loved because he was one of them: 'Here, children; you wish to play at nobility; you shall be nobles. You wish to play at royalty; you shall be kings. Take what you like—nothing is too good for you—enjoy yourselves!'"

"Kings!" said the two girls, joining their hands in admiration.

"Kings of the first water. Oh, he was no niggard of his crowns, our Emperor! I had a bed-fellow of mine, a brave soldier, who was afterward promoted to be king. This flattered us; for, if it was not one, it was the other. And so, at this game, your father became count; but, count or not, he was one of the best and bravest generals of the army."

"He was handsome, was he not, Dagobert?"—mother always said so.

"Oh, yes; indeed he was—but quite another thing from your fair guardian angel. Picture to yourself a fine, dark man, who looked splendid in his full uniform, and could put fire into the soldiers' hearts. With him to lead, we would have charged up into Heaven itself—that is, if Heaven had permitted it," added Dagobert, not wishing to wound in any way the religious beliefs of the orphans.

"And father was as good as he was brave, Dagobert?"

"Good, my children? Yes, I should say so. He could bend a horse shoe in his hand as you would bend a card, and the day he was taken prisoner he had cut down the Prussian artillerymen on their very cannon. With strength and courage like that, how could he be otherwise than good. It is then about nineteen years ago, not far from this place—on the spot I showed you before we arrived at the village—that the general, dangerously wounded, fell from his horse. I was following him at the time, and ran to his assistance. Five minutes after we were made prisoners—and by whom, think you?—by a Frenchman!"

"A Frenchman?"

"Yes, an eminent marquis, a colonel in the service of Russia," answered Dagobert, with bitterness. "And so, when the marquis advanced toward us, and said to the general: 'Surrender, sir, to a countryman!' 'A Frenchman who fights against France,' replied the general. 'Is no longer my countryman; he is a traitor, and I'd never surrender to a traitor!' And, wounded though he was, he dragged himself up to a Russian grenadier, and delivered him his saber, saying: 'I surrender to you, my brave fellow!' The marquis became pale with rage at it."

The orphans looked at each other with pride, and a rich crimson mantled their cheeks, as they exclaimed: "Oh, our brave father!"

"Ah, those children," said Dagobert, as he proudly twirled his moustache. "One sees they have soldier's blood in their veins! Well," he continued, "we were now prisoners. The general's last horse had been killed under him; and to perform the journey, he mounted Jovial, who had not been wounded that day. We arrived at Warsaw, and there it was that the general first saw your mother. She was called the Pearl of Warsaw; that is saying everything. Now he, who admired all that is good and beautiful, fell in love with her almost immediately; and she loved him in return; but her parents had promised her to another—and the other was the same."

Dagobert was unable to proceed. Rose uttered a piercing cry and pointed in terror to the window.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE TRAVELER.

Upon the cry of the young girl Dagobert rose abruptly.

"What is the matter, Rose?"

"There—there!" she said, pointing to the window. "I thought I saw a hand move the pelisse."

She had not concluded these words before Dagobert rushed to the window and opened it, tearing down the mantle which had been suspended from the fastening.

It was still dark night and the wind was blowing hard. The soldier listened, but could hear nothing.

Returning to fetch the lamp from the table, he shaded the flame with his hand and strove to throw the light outside. Still he saw nothing. Persuaded

that a gust of wind had disturbed and shaken the pelisse, and that Rose had been deceived by her own fears, he again shut the window.

"Be satisfied, children. The wind is very high; it is that which lifted the corner of the pelisse."

"Yet methought I saw plainly the fingers which had hold of it," said Rose, still trembling.

"I was looking at Dagobert," said Blanche, "and I saw nothing."

"There was nothing to see, my children: the thing is clear enough. The window is at least eight feet above the ground; none but a giant could reach it without a ladder. Now, had any one used a ladder, there would not have been time to remove it; for, as soon as Rose cried out, I ran to the window, and when I held out the light, I could see nothing."

"I must have been deceived," said Rose.

"You may be sure, sister, it was only the wind," added Blanche.

"Then I beg pardon for having disturbed you, my good Dagobert."

"Never mind," replied the soldier musingly; "I am only sorry that Spoilsport is not come back. He would have watched the window, and that would have quite tranquilized you. But he no doubt scented the stable of his comrade, Jovial, and will have called in to bid him good-night on the road. I have half a mind to go and fetch him."

"Oh, no, Dagobert; do not leave us alone," cried the maidens; "we are too much afraid."

"Well, the dog is not likely to remain away much longer, and I am sure we shall soon hear him scratching at the door, so we will continue our story," said Dagobert, as he again seated himself near the head of the bed, but this time with his face toward the window.

"Now the general was prisoner at Warsaw," continued he, "and in love with your mother, whom they wished to marry to another. In 1814, we learned the finish of the war, the banishment of the Emperor to the Isle of Elba, and the return of the Bourbons. In concert with the Prussians and Russians, who had brought them back, they had exiled the Emperor. Learning all this, your mother said to the general: 'The war is finished; you are free; but your Emperor is in trouble. You owe everything to him; go and join him in his misfortunes. I know not when we shall meet again, but I will never marry any one but you. I am yours till death.' Before he set out the general called me to him, and said: 'Dagobert, remain here; Madame de Elbe may have need of you to fly from her family; if they should press too hard upon her; our correspondence will have to pass through your hands; at Paris I shall see your wife and son; I will comfort them, and tell them you are my friend.'

"Always the same," said Rose, with emotion, as she looked affectionately at Dagobert.

"As faithful to the father and mother as to their children," added Blanche.

"To love one was to love them all," replied the soldier. "Well, the general joined the Emperor at Elba; I remained at Warsaw, concealed in the neighborhood of your mother's house; I received the letters, and conveyed them to her clandestinely. In one of those letters—I feel proud to tell you of it, my children—the general informed me that the Emperor himself had remembered me."

"What, did he know you?"

"A little, I flatter myself. 'Oh! Dagobert!' said he to your father, who was talking to him about me; 'a horse grenadier of my old guard—a soldier of Egypt and Italy, battered with wounds—my own hand at Wagram—I have not forgotten him! I vow, children, when your mother read that to me, I cried like a fool!'"