

THE WANDERING JEW.

BY EUGENE SUE.

CHAPTER XXXI.

FRIENDLY SERVICES.

Notwithstanding his surprise and uneasiness, Rodin did not frown. He began by locking his door after him, as he noticed the young girl's inquisitive glance. Then he said to her good-naturedly, "who do you want, my dear?"

"M. Rodin," repeated Rose-Pompon, stoutly, opening her bright blue eyes to their full extent, and looking Rodin full in the face.

"It's not here," said he, moving towards the stairs. "I do not know him. Inquire above or below."

"No, you don't! giving yourself airs at your age!" said Rose-Pompon, shrugging her shoulders. "As if we did not know that you are M. Rodin."

"Charlemagne," said the socius, bowing; "Charlemagne, to serve you—if I am able."

"You are not able," answered Rose-Pompon, majestically; then she added with a mocking air, "So, we have our little pussy-cat hiding-places; we change our name; we are afraid Mamma Rodin will find us out."

"Come, my dear child," said the socius, with a paternal smile; "you have come to the right quarter. I am an old man, but I love youth—happy, joyous youth! Amuse yourself, pray, at my expense. Only let me pass, for I am in a hurry." And Rodin again advanced towards the stairs.

"M. Rodin," said Rose-Pompon, in a solemn voice, "I have very important things to say to you, and advice to ask about a love affair."

"Why, little madcap that you are! have you nobody to tease in your own house, that you must come here?"

"I lodge in this house, M. Rodin," answered Rose-Pompon, laying a malicious stress on the name of her victim.

"You? Oh, dear, only to think I did not know I had such a pretty neighbor."

"Yes, I have lodged here six months, M. Rodin."

"Really! where?"

"On the third story, front, M. Rodin."

"It was you, then, that sang so well just now?"

"Rather."

"You gave me great pleasure, I must say."

"You are very polite, M. Rodin."

"You lodge, I suppose, with your respectable family?"

"I believe you, M. Rodin," said Rose-Pompon, casting down her eyes with a timid air. "I lodge with Grandpapa Philemon, and Grandmama Bacchanal—who is a queen, and no mistake."

Rodin had hitherto been seriously uneasy, not knowing in what manner Rose had discovered his real name. But on hearing her mention the Bacchanal Queen, with the information that she lodged in the house, he found something to compensate for the disagreeable incident of Rose-Pompon's appearance. It was, indeed, important to Rodin to find out the Bacchanal Queen, the mistress of Sleepinbuff, and the sister of Mother Bunch, who had been noted as dangerous since her interview with the superior of the convent, and the part she had taken in the projected escape of Mdlle. de Cardoville. Moreover, Rodin hoped—thanks to what he had just heard—to bring Rose-Pompon to confess to him the name of the person from whom she had learned that "Charlemagne" masked "Rodin."

Hardly had the young girl pronounced the name of the Bacchanal Queen, than Rodin clasped his hands, and appeared as much surprised as interested.

"Oh, my dear child," he exclaimed, "I conjure you not to jest on this subject. Are you speaking of a young girl who bears that nickname, the sister of a deformed needlewoman?"

"Yes, sir, the Bacchanal Queen is her nickname," said Rose-Pompon, astonished in her turn; "she is really Cephyse Soliveau, and she is my friend."

"Oh! she is your friend?" said Rodin, reflecting.

"Yes, sir, my bosom friend."

"So you love her?"

"Like a sister. Poor girl! I do what I can for her, and that's not much. But how comes it that a respectable man of your age should know the Bacchanal Queen?—Ah! that shows you have a false name!"

"My dear child, I am no longer inclined to laugh," said Rodin, with so sorrowful an air, that Rose-Pompon, reproaching herself with her pleasantry, said to him: "But how come it that you know Cephyse?"

"Alas! I do not know her—but a young fellow, that I like excessively—"

"Jacques Rennepont?"

"Otherwise called Sleepinbuff. He is now in prison for debt," sighed Rodin. "I saw him yesterday."

"You saw him yesterday?—how strange!" said Rose-Pompon, clapping her hands. "Quick! quick!—come over to Philemon's, to give Cephyse news of her lover. She is so uneasy about him."

"My dear child, I should like to give her good news of that worthy fellow, whom I like in spite of his follies, for who has not been guilty of follies?" added Rodin, with indulgent good-nature.

"To be sure," said Rose-Pompon, twisting about as if she still wore the costume of a debardeur.

"I will say more," added Rodin: "I love him because of his follies; for, talk as we may, my dear child, there is always something good at bottom, a good heart, or something, in those who spend generously their money for other people."

"Well, come! you are a very good sort of man," said Rose-Pompon, enchanted with Rodin's philosophy. "But why will you not come and see Cephyse, and talk to her of Jacques?"

"Of what use would it be to tell her what she knows already—that Jacques is in prison? What I should like, would be to get the worthy fellow out of his scrape."

"Oh, sir! only do that, only get Jacques out of prison, cried Rose-Pompon, warmly, "and we will both give you a kiss—me and Cephyse!"

"It would be throwing kisses away, dear little madcap!" said Rodin, smiling. "But be satisfied, I want no reward to induce me to do good when I can."

"Then you hope to get Jacques out of prison?"

Rodin shook his head, and answered with a grieved and disappointed air. "I did hope it. Certainly, I did hope it; but now all is changed."

"How's that?" asked Rose-Pompon, with surprise.

"That foolish joke of calling me M. Rodin may appear very amusing to you, my dear child. I understand it, you being only a echo. Some one has said to you: 'Go and tell M. Charlemagne that he is one M. Rodin. That will be very funny.'"

"Certainly, I should never myself have thought of calling you M. Rodin. One does not invent such names," answered Rose-Pompon.

"Well! that person, with his foolish jokes, has done, without knowing it, an injury to Jacques Rennepont."

"What! because I called you Rodin instead of Charlemagne?" cried Rose-Pompon, much regretting the pleasantry which she had carried on at the instigation of Ninny Moulin. "But really, sir," she added, "what can this joke have to do with the service that you were about to render Jacques?"

"I am not at liberty to tell you, my child. In truth, I am very sorry for poor Jacques. Believe me, I am; but do let me pass."

"Listen to me, sir, I beg, said Rose-Pompon; "if I told you the name of the person who told me to call you Rodin, would you interest yourself again for Jacques?"

"I do not wish to know any one's secrets, my dear child. In all this, you have been the echo of persons who are, perhaps, very dangerous; and, notwithstanding the interest I feel for Jacques Rennepont, I do not wish, you understand, to make myself enemies. Heaven forbid!"

Rose-Pompon did not at all comprehend Rodin's fears, and upon this he had counted; for, after a second's reflection, the young girl resumed: "Well, sir—this is too deep for me; I do not understand it. All I know is, that I am truly sorry if I have injured a good young man by a mere joke. I will tell you exactly how it happened. My frankness may be of some use."

"Frankness will often clear up the most obscure matters," said Rodin, sententiously.

"After all," said Rose-Pompon, "it's Ninny's fault. Why does he tell me nonsense, that might injure poor Cephyse's lover? You see, sir, it happened in this way. Ninny Moulin, who is fond of a joke, saw you just now in the street. The portress told him that your name was Charlemagne. He said to me: 'No; his name is Rodin. We must play him a trick. Go to his room, Rose-Pompon, knock at the door, and call him M. Rodin. You will see what a rum face he will make.' I promised Ninny Moulin, not to name him; but I do it, rather than run the risk of injuring Jacques."

At Ninny Moulin's name Rodin had not been able to repress a movement of surprise. This pamphleteer, whom he had employed to edit the "Neighborly Love," was not personally formidable; but, being fond of talking in his drink, he might become troublesome, particularly if Rodin, as was probable, had often to visit this house, to execute his project upon Sleepinbuff, through the medium of the Bacchanal Queen. The socius resolved, therefore, to provide against this inconvenience.

"So, my dear child," said he to Rose-Pompon,

"it is a M. Desmoulins that persuaded you to play off this silly joke?"

"Not Desmoulins, but Dumoulin," corrected Rose-Pompon. "He writes in the pewholders' papers, and defends the saint Drinkard and Saint Flash-ete, as he himself declares."

"This gentleman appears to be very gay."

"Oh! a very good fellow."

"But stop," resumed Rodin, appearing to recollect himself; "aint he a man about thirty-six or forty, fat, with a ruddy complexion?"

"Ruddy as a glass of red wine," said Rose-Pompon, "and with a pimpled nose like a mulberry."

"That's the man—M. Dumoulin. Oh! in that case, I am quite satisfied, my dear child. The jest no longer makes me uneasy; for M. Dumoulin is a very worthy man—only perhaps a little too fond of his joke."

"Then, sir, you will try to be useful to Jacques? The stupid pleasantry of Ninny Moulin will not prevent you?"

"I hope not."

"But I must not tell Ninny Moulin that you know it was he who sent me to call you M. Rodin—eh, sir?"

"Why not? In every case, my dear child, it is always better to speak frankly the truth."

"But, sir, Ninny Moulin so strongly recommended me not to name him to you—"

"If you have named him, it is from a very good motive; why not avow it? However, my dear child, this concerns you, not me. Do as you think best."

"And may I tell Cephyse of your good intentions towards Jacques?"

"The truth, my dear child, always the truth. One need never hesitate to say what is."

"Poor Cephyse! how happy she will be!" cried Rose-Pompon, cheerfully; "and the news will come just in time."

"Only you must not exaggerate; I do not promise positively to get this good fellow out of prison; I say, that I will do what I can. But what I promise positively is—for, since the imprisonment of poor Jacques, your friend most be very much staitened—"

"Alas, sir!"

"What I promise positively is, some little assistance, which your friend will receive today, to enable her to live honestly; and if she behaves well—hereafter—why, hereafter, we shall see."

"Oh, sir! you do not know how welcome will be your assistance to poor Cephyse! One might fancy you were her actual good angel. Faith! you may call yourself Rodin, or Charlemagne; all I know is, that you are a nice, sweet—"

"Come, come, do not exaggerate," said Rodin; "Say a good sort of old fellow; nothing more, my dear child. But see how things fall out, sometimes! Who could have told me, when I heard you knock at my door—which, I must say, vexed me a great deal—that it was a pretty little neighbor of mine, who, under the pretext of playing off a joke, was to put me in the way of doing a good action? Go and comfort your friend; this evening she will receive some assistance; and let us have hope and confidence. Thanks be, there are still some good people in the world!"

"Oh, sir! you prove it yourself."

"Not at all! The happiness of the old is to see the young happy."

This was said by Rodin with so much kindness, that Rose-Pompon felt the tears well up to her eyes, and answered with much emotion: "Sir, Cephyse and me are only poor girls; there are many more virtuous in the world; but I venture to say, we have good hearts. Now, if ever you should be ill, only send for us; there are no Sisters of Charity that will take better care of you. It is all that we can offer you, without reckoning Philemon, who shall go through fire and water for you, I give you my word for it—and Cephyse, I am sure, will answer for Jacques also, that he will be yours in life and death."

"You see, my dear child, that I was right in saying—a fitful head and a good heart. Adieu, till we meet again."

Thereupon Rodin, taking up the basket, which he had placed on the ground by the side of his umbrella, prepared to descend the stairs.

"First of all, you must give me this basket; it will be in your way going down," said Rose-Pompon, taking the basket from the hands of Rodin, notwithstanding his resistance. Then she added: "Lean upon my arm. The stairs are so dark. You might slip."

"I will accept your offer, my dear child, for I am not very courageous." Leaning paternally on the right arm of Rose-Pompon, who held the basket in her left hand, Rodin descended the stairs, and crossed the court-yard.

"Up there, on the third story, do you see that big face close to the window-frame?" said Rose-Pompon suddenly to Rodin, stopping in the centre of the little court. "That is my Ninny Moulin. Do you know him? Is he the same as yours?"

"The same as mine," said Rodin, raising his head, and waving his hand very affectionately to Jacques Dumoulin, who, stupefied thereat, retired abruptly from the window.

"The poor fellow! I am sure he is afraid of me since his foolish joke," said Rodin, smiling. "He is very wrong."

And he accompanied these last words with sinister nipping of the lips, not perceived by Rose-Pompon.

"And now, my dear child," said he, as they both entered the passage, "I no longer need your assistance; return to your friend, and tell her the good news you have heard."

"Yes, sir, you are right. I burn with impatience to tell her what a good man you are." And Rose-Pompon sprung towards the stairs.

"Stop, stop! how about my basket that the little madcap carries off with her!" said Rodin.

"Oh, true! I beg pardon, sir. Poor Cephyse! how pleased she will be. Adieu, sir!" And Rose-Pompon's pretty figure disappeared in the darkness of the staircase, which she mounted with an alert and impatient step.

Rodin issued from the entry. "Here is your basket, my good lady," said he, stopping at the threshold of Mother Arsene's shop. "I give you my humble thanks for your kindness."

"For nothing, my dear sir, for nothing. It is all at your service. Well! was the radish good?"

"Succulent, my dear madame, and excellent."

"Oh! I am glad of it. Shall we soon see you again?"

"I hope so. But could you tell me where is the nearest post-office?"

"Turn to the left, the third house, at the grocer's."

"A thousand thanks."

"I wager it's a love letter for your sweetheart," said Mother Arsene, enlivened probably by Rose-Pompon's and Ninny Moulin's proximity.

"Ha! ha! ha! the good lady!" said Rodin, with a titter. Then, suddenly resuming his serious aspect, he made a low bow to the green-grocer, adding: "Your most obedient, humble servant!" and walked out into the street.

We now usher the reader into Dr. Baleinier's asylum, in which Mdlle. de Cardoville was confined.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE ADVICE.

Adrienne de Cardoville had been still more strictly confined in Dr. Baleinier's house, since the double nocturnal attempt of Agricola and Dagobert, in which the soldier, though severely wounded, and succeeded, thanks to the intrepid devotion of his son, seconded by the heroic Spoilport, it gaining the little garden gate of the convent, and escaping by way of the boulevard, along with the young smith. Four o'clock had just struck. Adrienne, since the previous day, had been removed to a chamber on the second story of the asylum. The grated window, with closed shutters, only admitted a faint light to this apartment. The young lady, since her interview with Mother Bunch, expected to be delivered any day by the intervention of her friends. But she felt painful uneasiness on the subject of Agricola and Dagobert, being absolutely ignorant of the issue of the struggle in which her intended liberators had been engaged with the people of the asylum and convent. She had in vain questioned her keepers on the subject; they had remained perfectly mute. These new incidents had augmented the bitter resentment of Adrienne against the Princess de Saint-Dizier, Father d'Aigrigny, and their creatures. The slight paleness of Mdlle. de Cardoville's charming face, and her fine eyes a little drooping, betrayed her recent sufferings; seated before a little table, with her forehead resting upon one of her hands, half veiled by the long curls of her golden hair, she was turning over the leaves of a book. Suddenly, the door opened, and M. Baleinier entered. The doctor, a Jesuit, in lay attire, a docile and passive instrument of the will of his Order, was only half in the confidence of Father d'Aigrigny and the Princes de Saint-Dizier. He was ignorant of the object of the imprisonment of Mdlle. de Cardoville; he was ignorant also of the sudden change which had taken place in the relative position of Father d'Aigrigny and Rodin, after the reading of the testament of Marius de Rennepont. The doctor had, only the day before, received orders from Father d'Aigrigny (now acting under the directions of Rodin) to confine Mdlle. de Cardoville still more strictly, to act towards her with redoubled severity, and to endeavor to force her, it will be seen by what expedients, to renounce the judicial proceedings, which she promised herself to take hereafter against her persecutors. At sight of the doctor, Mdlle. de Cardoville could not hide the aversion and disdain with which this man inspired her. M. Baleinier, on the contrary, always smiling, always courteous, approached Adrienne with per-