

THE WANDERING JEW.

BY EUGENE SUE.

CHAPTER X. THE MEETING.

A few moments after, Agricola entered the room; but, as the seamstress perceived at the first glance, in the dejected countenance of the workman, the ruin of her cherished hopes.

“Well!” said Dagobert to his son, in a tone which clearly announced the little faith he attached to the steps taken by Agricola; “well, what news?”

“Father, it is enough to drive one mad—to make one dash one's brains out against the wall!” cried the smith in a rage.

Dagobert turned towards Mother Bunch, and said: “You see, my poor child—I was sure of it.”

“Well, father,” cried Agricola; “have you seen the Count de Montbron?”

“The Count de Montbron set out for Lorraine three days ago. That is my good news,” continued the soldier, with bitter irony; “let us have yours—I long to know all. I need to know, if, on appealing to the laws, which, as you told me, protect and defend honest people, it ever happens that the rogues get the best of it. I want to know this, and then I want an iron hook—so I count on you for both.”

“What do you mean, father?”

“First, tell me what you have done. We have time. It is not much more than half-past eight. On leaving me, where did you go first?”

“To the commissary, who had already received your depositions.”

by a lieutenant. I told him all. He saw that I was so much moved, and I spoke with so much warmth and conviction, that he became interested.—‘Lieutenant,’ said I to him, ‘grant me one favor: Let a petty officer and two soldiers go to the convent, to obtain a legal entrance. Let them ask to see the daughters of Marshal Simon, and learn whether it is their choice to remain, or return to my father, who brought them from Russia. You will then see if they are not detained against their will—’”

“And what answer did he give you, Agricola?” asked Mother Bunch, while Dagobert shrugged his shoulders, and continued to walk up and down.

“My good fellow” said he, “what you ask me is impossible. I understand your motives, but I cannot take upon myself so serious a measure. I should be broke were I to enter a convent by force.”

So saying, the smith sank upon a chair, for he was worn out with anxiety and fatigue. There was a moment of profound silence after these words of Agricola, which destroyed the last hopes of the three, mute and crushed beneath the strokes of inexorable fatality.

A new incident came to deepen the sad and painful character of this scene.

The door—which Agricola had not thought of fastening—opened, as it were, timidly, and Frances Baudoin, Dagobert's wife, pale, sinking, hardly able to support herself, appeared on the threshold.

The soldier, Agricola, and Mother Bunch, were plunged in such deep dejection, that neither of them at first perceived the entrance. Frances advanced two steps into the room, fell upon her knees, clasped her hands together, and said in a weak and humble voice; “My poor husband—pardon!”

At these words, Agricola and the work-girl—whose backs were towards the door—turned round suddenly, and Dagobert hastily raised his head.

“My mother!” cried Agricola, running to Frances.

CHAPTER XI. DISCOVERIES.

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behind you: you will be more comfortable, and warmer.”

“How you both spoil me!” said Frances, trying to smile. “And you to be so kind, after all the ill I have done!” added she to Dagobert, as, disengaging one of her hands from those of her son, she took the soldier's hand and pressed it to her tearful eyes. “In prison,” said she in a low voice, “I had time to repent.”

Agricola's heart was near breaking at the thought that his pious and good mother, with her angelic purity, should for a moment have been confined in prison with so many miserable creatures. He would have made some attempt to console her on the subject of the painful past, but he feared to give a new shock to Dagobert, and was silent.

(To be continued.)

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