

sisterly to maternal love—forbidden to me, on pain of ridicule as distressing as if I wore dresses and ornaments, that my ugliness and deformity would render absurd? I wonder, if I were now plunged into the most cruel distress, whether I should suffer as much as I do, on hearing of Agricola's intended marriage? Would hunger, cold, or misery diminish this dreadful dolor?—or is it the dread pain that would make me forget hunger, cold and misery?

"No, no, this irony is bitter. It is not well in me to speak thus. Why such deep grief? In what way have the affection, the esteem, the respect of Agricola, changed towards me? I complain—but how would it be, kind heaven! if, alas! too often happens, I were beautiful, loving, devoted, and he had chosen another, less beautiful, less loving, less devoted?—Should I not be a thousand times more unhappy? for then I might, I would have to blame him—whilst now I can find no fault with him, for never having thought of a union which was impossible, because ridiculous. And had he wished it, could I ever have had the selfishness to consent to it? I began to write the first pages of this diary, as I began these last, with my heart steeped in bitterness—and as I went on, committing to paper what I could have entrusted to no one, my soul grew calm, till Resignation came—Resignation, my chosen saint, who, smiling through her tears, suffers and loves, but hopes—never!"

These words were the last in the journal. It was clear, from the blots of abundant tears, that the unfortunate creature had often paused to weep.

In truth, worn out by so many emotions, Mother Bunch, late in the night, had replaced the book behind the card-board box, not that she thought it safer there than elsewhere (she had no suspicion of the slightest need for such precaution), but because it was more out of the way there than in any of the drawers, which she frequently opened in presence of other people. Determined to perform her courageous promise, and worthily accomplish her task to the end, she waited the next day for Agricola, and firm in her heroic resolution, went with the smith to M. Hardy's factory. Florine, informed of her departure, but detained a portion of the day in attendance on Mdle. de Cardoville, preferred waiting for night to perform the new orders she had asked and received, since she had communicated by letter the contents of Mother Bunch's journal. Certain not to be surprised, she entered the workgirl's chamber, as soon as the night was come.

Knowing the place where she should find the manuscript, she went straight to the desk, took out the box, and then, drawing from her pocket a sealed letter, prepared to leave it in the place of the manuscript, which she was to carry away with her. So doing, she trembled so much, that she was obliged to support herself an instant by the table. Every good sentiment was not extinct in Florine's heart; she obeyed passively the orders

she received, but she felt painfully how horrible and infamous was her conduct. If only herself had been concerned, she would no doubt have had the courage to risk all, rather than submit to this odious despotism; but unfortunately, it was not so, and her pain would have caused the mortal despair of another person whom she loved better than life itself. She resigned herself, therefore, not without cruel anguish, to abominable treachery.

Though she hardly ever knew for what end she acted, and this was particularly the case with regard to the abstraction of the journal, she foresaw vaguely, that the substitution of this sealed letter for the manuscript would have fatal consequences for Mother Bunch, for she remembered Rodin's declaration, that "it was time to finish with the young sempstress."

What did he mean by those words? How would the letter that she was charged to put in the place of the diary contribute to bring about this result? She did not know—but she understood that the clear-sighted devotion of the hunchback justly alarmed the enemies of Mdle. de Cardoville, and that she (Florine) herself daily risked having her perfidy detected by the young needlewoman. This last fear put an end to the hesitations of Florine; she placed the letter behind the box, and, hiding the manuscript under her apron, cautiously withdrew from the chamber.

(Continued on page 5.)

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