

THE WANDERING JEW.

BY EUGENE SUW.

CHAPTER LV.

THE ATTACK.

"First learn, father, what are the duties which would keep me here; then you shall know those which may take me away from you, from my daughters and from my other child."

"What other child?"
"The son of my old friend, the Indian prince."
"Djalma? Is there anything the matter with him?"

"Father, he frightens me. I told you, father, of his mad and unhappy passion for Mlle. de Cardoville."

"Does that frighten you, my son?" said the old man looking at the marshal with surprise. "Djalma is only eighteen, and, at that age, one love drives away another."

"You have no idea of the ravages which the passion has already made in the ardent, indomitable boy; sometimes, fits of savage ferocity follow the most painful dejection. Yesterday, I came suddenly upon him; his eyes were blood-shot, his features contracted with rage; yielding to an impulse of mad fury, he was piercing with his poniard a cushion of red cloth, whilst he exclaimed, panting for breath, 'Ha! blood! I will have blood!' 'Unhappy boy!' I said to him, 'what means this insane passion?' 'I'm killing the man!' replied he, in a hollow and savage voice; it is thus he designates his supposed rival."

"There is indeed something terrible," said the old man, "in such a passion, in such a heart."

"At other times," resumed the marshal, "it is against Mlle. de Cardoville that his rage bursts forth; and at others, against himself. I have been obliged to remove his weapons, for a man who came with him from Java, and who appears much attached to him, has informed me that he suspected him of entertaining some thoughts of suicide."

"Unfortunate boy!"

"Well, father," said Marshal Simon, with profound bitterness; "it is at the moment when my daughters and my adopted son require all my solicitude, that I am on the eve of quitting them."

"Of quitting them?"

"Yes, to fulfil a still more sacred duty than that imposed by friendship or family," said the marshal, in so grave and solemn a tone, that his father exclaimed with deep emotion:

"What can this duty be?"

"Father," said the marshal, after remaining a moment in thoughtful silence, "who made me what I am? Who gave me the ducal title and the marshal's baton?"

"Napoleon."

"For you, the stern republican, I know that he lost all his value, when, from the first citizen of a Republic, he became an emperor."

"I cursed his weakness," said Father Simon, sadly; "the demi-god sank into a man."

"But for me, father—for me, the soldier, who have always fought beside him, or under his eye—for me; whom he raised from the lowest rank in the army to the highest—for me, whom he loaded with benefits and marks of affection—for me, he was more than a hero, he was a friend—and there was as much gratitude as admiration in my idolatry for him. When he was exiled, I would fain have shared his exile; they refused me that favor; then I conspired, then I drew my sword against those who had robbed his son of the crown which France had given him."

"And, in your position, you did well, Pierre; without sharing your admiration, I understood your gratitude. The projects of exile, the conspiracies—I approved them all—you know it."

"Well, then, that disinherited child, in whose name I conspired seventeen years ago, is now of an age to wield his father's sword."

"Napoleon II!" exclaimed the old man, looking at his son with surprise and extreme anxiety; "the king of Rome."

"King? no; he is no longer king. Napoleon? no; he is no longer Napoleon. They have given him some Austrian name, because the other frightened them. Everything frightens them. Do you know what they are doing with the son of the Emperor?" resumed the marshal, with painful excitement. "They are torturing him—killing him by inches?"

"Who told you this?"

"Somebody who knows, whose words are but too true. Yes; the son of the Emperor struggles with all his strength against a premature death. With his eyes turned toward France he waits—he waits—and no one comes—no one—out of all the men that his father made as great as they once were little, not one thinks of that crowned child, whom they are stifling, till he dies."

"But you think of him?"

"Yes; but I had first to learn—oh! there is no

doubt of it for I have not derived all my information from the same source—I had first to learn the cruel fate of this youth, to whom I also swore allegiance; for one day, as I have told you, the Emperor, proud and loving father as he was, showed him to me in his cradle, and said: 'My old friend, you will be to the son what you have been to the father, who loves us, loves France.'

"Yes, I know it. Many times you have repeated those words to me, and, like yourself, I have been moved by them."

"Well, father! suppose, informed of the sufferings of the son of the Emperor, I had seen—with the positive certainty that I was deceived—a letter from a person of high rank in the court of Vienna, offering to a man that was still faithful to the Emperor's memory, the means of communicating with the King of Rome, and perhaps of saving him from his tormentors—"

"What next?" said the workman, looking fixedly at his son. "Suppose Napoleon II once at liberty—"

"What next?" exclaimed the marshal. Then he added, in a suppressed voice: "Do you think, that France is insensible to the humiliations she endures? Do you think that the memory of the Emperor is extinct? No, no; it is, above all, in the days of our country's degradation, that she whispers that sacred name. How would it be, then, were that name to rise glorious on the frontier, riviving in his son? Do you not think that the heart of all France would beat for him?"

"This implies a conspiracy—against the present government—with Napoleon II for a watchword," said the workman. "This is very serious."

"I told you, father, that I was very unhappy; judge if it be not so," cried the marshal. "Not only I ask myself, if I ought to abandon my children and you, to run the risk of so daring an enterprise, but I ask myself if I am not bound to the present government, which, in acknowledging my rank and title, if it bestowed no favor, at least did me an act of justice. How shall I decide?—abandon all that I love, or remain insensible to the tortures of the son of the Emperor—of that Emperor to whom I owe everything—to whom I have sworn fidelity, both to himself and child? Shall I lose the only opportunity, perhaps, of saving him, or shall I conspire in his favor? Tell me, if I exaggerate what I owe to the memory of the Emperor? Decide for me, father! During a whole sleepless night, I strove to discover, in the midst of this chaos, the line prescribed by honor; but I only wandered from indecision to indecision. You alone; father—you alone, I repeat, can direct me."

After remaining for some moments in deep thought, the old man was about to answer, when some person, running across the little garden, opened the door hastily, and entered the room in which were the marshal and his father. It was Olivier, the young workman, who had been able to effect his escape from the village in which the wolves had assembled.

"M. Simon! M. Simon!" cried he, pale and panting for breath. "They are here—close at hand. They have come to attack the factory."

"Who?" cried the old man, rising hastily.

"The Wolves, quarrymen, and stonemasons, joined on the road by a crowd of people from the neighborhood, and vagabonds from town. Do you not hear them? They are shouting, 'Death to the Devourers!'"

The clamor was indeed approaching, and grew more and more distinct.

"It is the same noise that I heard just now," said the marshal, rising in his turn.

"There are more than 200 of them, M. Simon," said Olivier; "they are armed with clubs and stones, and unfortunately the greater part of our workmen are in Paris. We are not above forty here in all; the women and children are already flying to their chambers, screaming for terror. Do you not hear them?"

The ceiling shook beneath the tread of many hasty feet.

"Will this attack be a serious one?" said the marshal to his father, who appeared more and more dejected.

"Very serious," said the old man; "there is nothing more fierce than these combats between different unions; and everything has been done lately to excite the people of the neighborhood against the factory."

"If you are so inferior in number," said the marshal, "you must begin by barricading all the doors—and then—"

He was unable to conclude. A burst of ferocious cries shook the windows of the room, and seemed so near and loud, that the marshal, his father and the young workman, rushed out into the little garden, which was bounded on one side by a wall that separated it from the fields. Suddenly, whilst the shouts redoubled in violence, a shower of large stones, intended to break the windows of the house, smashed some of the panes on the first story, struck against the wall, and fell

into the garden, all around the marshal and his father. By a fatal chance, one of these large stones struck the old man on the head. He staggered, bent forward, and fell bleeding into the arms of Marshal Simon, just as arose from without, with increased fury, the savage cries of, "Death to the Devourers!"

CHAPTER LVI.

THE WOLVES AND THE DEVOURERS.

It was a frightful thing to view the approach of the lawless crowd, whose first act of hostility had been so fatal to Marshal Simon's father. One wing of the Common Dwelling-house, which joined the garden-wall on that side, was next to the field. It was there that the Wolves began their attack. The precipitation of their march, the halt they had made at two public-houses on the road, their ardent impatience for the approaching struggle, had inflamed these men to a high pitch of savage excitement. Having discharged their first shower of stones, most of the assailants stooped down to look for more ammunition. Some of them, to do so with greater ease, held their bludgeons between their teeth; others had placed them against the wall; here and there, groups had formed tumultuously round the principle leaders of the band; the most neatly dressed of these men wore frocks, with caps, whilst others were almost in rags, for, as we have already said, many of the hangers-on at the barrier, and people without any profession, had joined the troop of the Wolves, whether welcome or not. Some hideous women, with tattered garments, who always seem to follow in the track of such people accompanied them on this occasion, and, by their cries and fury, inflamed still more the general excitement. One of them, tall, robust, with purple complexion, blood-shot eyes and toothless jaws, had a handkerchief over her head, from beneath which escaped her yellow, frowzy hair. Over her ragged gown, she wore an old plaid shawl, crossed over her bosom, and tied behind her back. This hag seemed possessed with a demon. She had tucked up her half-torn sleeves, in one hand she brandished a stick, in the other she grasped a huge stone; her companions called her Ciboule (scullion).

This horrible hag exclaimed, in a hoarse voice, "I'll bite the women of the factory; I'll make them bleed."

The ferocious words were received with applause by her companions, and with savage cries of, "Ciboule for ever!" which excited her to frenzy.

Amongst the other leaders, was a small, dry, pale man, with the face of a ferret, and a black beard all round the chin; he wore a scarlet Greek cap, and beneath his long blouse, perfectly new, appeared a pair of neat cloth trousers, strapped over thin boots. This man was evidently of a different condition of life from that of the persons in the troop; it was he, in particular, who ascribed the most irritating and insulting language to the workmen of the factory, with regard to the inhabitants of the neighborhood. He howled a great deal, but he carried neither stick nor stone.

A full-faced, fresh-colored man, with a formidable bass voice, like a chorister's, asked him:

"Will you not have a shot at those impious dogs, who might bring down the cholera on the country, as the curate told us?"

"I will have a better shot than you," said the little man, with a singular, sinister smile.

"And with what, I'd like to see?" "Probably with this," said the little man, stooping to pick up a large stone; but, as he bent, a well-filled though light bag, which he appeared to carry under his blouse, fell to the ground.

"Look, you are losing both bag and baggage," said the other; "it does not seem very heavy."

"They are samples of wool," answered the man with the ferret's face, as he hastily picked up the bag, and replaced it under his blouse; then he added: "Attention! the big blaster is going to speak."

And, in fact, he who exercised the most complete ascendancy over the irritated crowd was the terrible quarryman. His gigantic form towered so much above the multitude, that his great head, bound in its ragged handkerchief, and his Herculean shoulders, covered with a fallow goat-skin, were always visible above the level of that dark and swarming crowd, only relieved here and there by a few women's caps, like so many white points. Seeing to what a degree of exasperation the minds of the crowd had reached, the small number of honest, but misguided workmen, who had allowed themselves to be drawn into this dangerous enterprise, under the pretext of a quarrel between rival unions, now fearing for the consequences of the struggle, tried, but too late, to abandon the main body. Pressed close, and as it were, girt in with the more hostile groups, dreading to pass for cowards, or to expose themselves to the bad treatment of the majority, they were forced to wait for a more favorable moment

to effect their escape. To the savage cheers, which had accompanied the first discharge of stones, succeeded a deep silence commanded by the stentorian voice of the quarryman.

"The Wolves have howled," he exclaimed, "let us wait and see how the Devourers will answer, and when they will begin the fight."

"We must draw them out of their factory, and fight them on neutral ground," said the little man with the ferret's face, who appeared to be the thieves' advocate; otherwise there would be trespass."

"What do we care about trespass?" cried the horrible hag, Ciboule; "in or out, I will tear the chits of the factory."

"Yes, yes," cried other hideous creatures, as ragged as Ciboule herself; "we must not leave all to the men."

"We must have our fun too!"

"The women of the factory say that all the women of the neighborhood are drunken drabs," cried the little man with the ferret's face.

"Good! we'll pay them for it."

"The women shall have their share."

"That's our business."

"They like to sing in their Common Home," cried Ciboule; "we will make them sing the wrong side of their mouth, in the key of 'Oh, dear me!'"

This pleasantry was received with shouts, hootings, and furious stamping of the feet, to which the stentorian voice of the quarryman put a term by roaring, "Silence!"

"Silence! silence!" repeated the crowd; "hear the blaster."

"If the Devourers are cowards enough not to dare to show themselves, after a second volley of stones, there is a door down there which we can break open, and we will soon hunt them from their holes."

"It would be better to draw them out, so that none might remain in the factory," said the little old man with the ferret's face, who appeared to have some secret motive.

"A man fights where he can," cried the quarryman, in a voice of thunder; "all right, if we can but once catch hold. We could fight on a sloping roof; or on top of a wall—couldn't we, my Wolves?"

"Yes, yes!" cried the crowd, still more excited by the savage words; "if they don't come out, we will break in."

"We will see their fine palace!"

"The pagans haven't even a chapel," said the bass voice. "The curate has damed them all!"

"Why should they have a palace, and we nothing but dog-kennels?"

"Hardy's workmen say that kennels are good enough for such as you," said the little man with the ferret's face.

"Yes, yes! they said so."

"We'll break all their traps."

"We'll pull down their bazaar."

"We'll throw the house out of the windows."

"When we have made the mealy-mouthed chits sing," cried Ciboule, "we will make them dance to the clatter of stones on their heads."

"Come, my Wolves! attention!" cried the quarryman, still in the same stentorian voice; "one more volley, and if the Devourers do not come out, down with the door!"

This proposition was received with cheers of savage ardor, and the quarryman, whose voice rose above the tumult, cried with all the strength of his Herculean lungs: "Attention, my Wolves. Make ready! all together. Now, are you ready?"

"Yes, yes; all ready!"

"Then, present! fire!"

And, for the second time, a shower of enormous stones poured upon that side of the Common Dwelling-house which was turned toward the fields. A part of those projectiles broke such of the windows as had been spared by the first volley. To the sharp smashing and crackling of glass were joined the ferocious cries uttered in chorus by this formidable mob, drunk with its own excesses: "Death to the Devourers!"

Soon these outcries became perfectly frantic, when, through the broken windows, the assailants perceived women running in terror, some with children in their arms, and others raising their hands to heaven, calling aloud for help; whilst a few, bolder than the rest, leaned out of the windows, and tried to fasten the outside blinds.

(To be continued.)

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