

THE WANDERING JEW.

BY EDWARD BUCK.

CHAPTER LXI.

A few days after the interview of Djalma and Adrienne, just described, Rodin was alone in his bed-chamber, in the house in the Rue de Vaugirard, walking up and down the room where he had so valiantly undergone the moxas of Dr. Balancier.

"On the side of Rome," said Rodin to himself, "I am tranquil. All is going well. The abdication is as good as settled, and if I can pay them the price agreed, the Prince Cardinal can secure me a majority of nine voices in the conclave. Our General is with me; the doubts of Cardinal Malipieri are at an end, or have found no echo. Yet I am not quite easy, with regard to the reported correspondence between Father d'Aigrigny and Malipieri. I have not been able to intercept any of it. No matter; that soldier's business is settled. A little patience and he will be wiped out."

Here the pale lips were contracted by one of those frightful smiles, which gave to Rodin's countenance so diabolical an expression.

After a pause, he resumed: "The funeral of the freethinker, the philanthropist, the workman's friend, took place yesterday at St. Herem. Francis Hardy went off in a fit of ecstatic delirium. I had his donation, it is true; but this is more certain. Everything may be disputed in this world; the dead dispute nothing."

Rodin remained in thought for some moments; then he added, in a grave tone: "There remain this red-haired wench and her mulatto. This is the twenty-seventh of May; the first of June approaches, and these turtle-doves still seem invulnerable. The princess thought she had hit upon a good plan, and I should have thought so too. It was a good idea to mention the discovery of Agricola Baudoin in the madcap's room, for it made the Indian tiger roar with savage jealousy. Yes; but then the dove began to coo, and hold out her pretty beak, and the foolish tiger sheathed his claws, and rolled on the ground before her. It's a pity, for there was some sense in the scheme."

Rodin began again to walk, biting his nails with an air of deep thought. For some moments, such was the tension of his mind, large drops of sweat stood on his yellow brow. He walked up and down, stopped, stamped with his foot, now raised his eyes as if in search of an inspiration, and now scratched his head violently with his left hand, whilst he continued to gnaw the nails of the right.

Then, yielding to a movement of enthusiasm, which was hardly natural to him, the Jesuit exclaimed, with rapture: "Oh, the passions! the passions! what a magical instrument do they form, if you do but touch the keys with a light, skilful, and vigorous hand! Yes, that word is the germ of an idea, that, like the oak, lifts itself up towards heaven, for the greater glory of the Lord—such as they call Him, and such as I would assert Him to be, should I attain—and I shall attain—for these misera-

ble Rensselaers will pass away like a shadow. And what matters it, after all, to the moral order I am reserved to guide, whether these people live or die? What do such lives weigh in the balance of the great destinies of the world? while this inheritance which I shall boldly fling into the scale, will lift me to a sphere, from which one commands many kings, many nations—let them say and make what noise they will. The idiots—the stupid idiots! or rather, the kind, blessed, adorable idiots! They think they have crushed us, when they say to us men of the church: 'You take the temporal!'—Oh, their conscience or their modesty inspires them well, when it bids them not meddle with spiritual things! They abandon the spiritual! they despise it, they will have nothing to do with it—oh, the venerable asses! they do not see, that, even as they go straight to the mill, it is by the spiritual that we go straight to the temporal. As if the mind did not govern the body! They leave us the spiritual—that is, command of the conscience, soul, heart, and judgment—the spiritual—that is, the distribution of heaven's rewards, and punishments, and pardons—without check, without control, in the secrecy of the confessional—and that dolt, the temporal, has nothing but brute matter for his portion, and yet rubs his paunch for joy. Only, from time to time, he perceives, too late, that, if he has the body, we have the soul, and that the soul governs the body, and so the body ends by coming with us also—to the great surprise of Master Temporal, who stands staring with his hands on his paunch, and says: 'Dear me! is it possible?'—"

Then, with a laugh of savage contempt, Rodin began to walk with great strides, and thus continued: "Oh! let me reach it—let me but reach the place of Sixtus V.—and the world shall see (one day, when it awakes) what it is to have the spiritual power in hands like mine—in the hands of a priest, who, for fifty years, has lived hardly, frugally, chastely, and who, were he pope, would continue to live hardly, frugally, chastely!"

Rodin became terrible, as he spoke thus. "No matter," said he, recovering his coolness: "I shall know presently who is there. I must write at once to Jacques Dumoulin, to come hither immediately. He served me well, with regard to that little girl in the Rue Clovis, who made my hair stand on end with her infernal Beranger. This time, Dumoulin may serve me again. I have him in my clutches, and he will obey me."

Rodin sat down to his desk, and wrote. A few seconds later, which was double locked, quite contrary to the rules of the order. But, sure of his own influence and importance, Rodin, who had obtained from the General permission to be rid for a time of the inconvenient company of a socius, often took upon himself to break through a number of the rules. A servant entered, and delivered a letter to Rodin. Before opening it, the latter said to the man: "What carriage is that which just arrived?"

"It comes from Rome, father," answered the servant, bowing.

"From Rome!" said Rodin, hastily; and, in spite of himself, a vague uneasiness was expressed in his countenance. But,

still holding the letter in his hands, he added: "Who comes in the carriage?"

"A reverend father of our blessed company." Notwithstanding his ardent curiosity, for he knew that a reverend father, travelling post, is always charged with some important mission, Rodin asked no more questions on the subject, but, said, as he pointed to the paper in his hand: "Whence comes this letter?"

"From our house at St. Herem, father," Rodin looked more attentively at the writing, and recognized the hand of Father d'Aigrigny, who had been commissioned to attend M. Hardy in his last moments. The letter ran as follows:

"I send a despatch to inform your reverence of a fact which is perhaps more singular than important. After the funeral of M. Francis Hardy, the coffin, which contained his remains, had been provisionally deposited in a vault beneath our chapel, until it could be removed to the cemetery of the neighboring town. This morning, when our people went down into the vault, to make the necessary preparations for the removal of the body—the coffin had disappeared."

"That is strange, indeed," said Rodin, with a start. Then he continued to read:

"All search has hitherto been vain, to discover the authors of the sacrilegious deed. The chapel being, as you know, at a distance from the house, they were able to effect an entry without disturbing us. We have found traces of a four-wheeled carriage on the damp ground in the neighborhood; but, at some little distance from the chapel, these marks are lost in the

sand, and it has been impossible to follow them any farther."

"Who can have carried away this body?" said Rodin, with a thoughtful air. "Who could have any interest in doing so?"

He continued to read: "Luckily, the certificate of death is quite correct. I sent for a doctor from Etampes, to prove the disease, and no question can be raised on that point. The donation is therefore good and valid in every respect, but I think it best to inform your reverence of what has happened, that you may take measures accordingly, etc."

After a moment's reflection, Rodin said to himself: "D'Aigrigny is right in his remark; it is more singular than important. Still, it makes one think. We must have an eye to this affair."

Turning towards the servant, who had brought him the letter, Rodin gave him the note he had just written to Ninny Moulin, and said to him: "Let this letter be taken instantly to its address, and let the bearer wait for an answer."

"Yes, father." At the moment the servant left the room, a reverend father entered, and said to Rodin, "Father Cabocchini of Rome has just arrived, with a mission from our General to your reverence."

At these words, Rodin's blood ran cold, but he maintained his immovable calmness, and said simply, "Where is Father Cabocchini?"

"In the next room, father."

"Beg him to walk in, and leave us," said the other.

A second after, Father Cabocchini of Rome entered the room, and was left alone with Rodin.

To be continued.

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