her state of health. Well, we are in the

hands of providence, and we count on the Holy Virgin, who will surely perform a

At last Mme, de Jonquiere, reassured by

CHAPTER III.

As soon as the train stopped at Poitiers Sister Hyacinthe made haste to get down in the midst of the crowd of porters who were opening the doors and the pligrims who were tumbling out.

"Wait, wait," she repeated. "Allow me to pass first. I want to see if all is over." Then, when she had got into the other com partment she raised the man's head, thinking at first that he was indeed dead, seeing

him so pale and with vacant eyes. But she felt a faint pulse. "No, no. He breathes. Quick, they must hurry." And seeing the other sister, the

one who was at that end of the carriage "I beg you, Sister Claire des Anges, go and find Father Massias, who ought to be in the third or fourth carriage. Tell him we have here an ill person in great danger, and ask him to bring the holy oils at once.'

Without answering the sister disappeared amid the bustle. She was small, delicate and gentle, with a collected air, mysterious eyes but yet most active. Pierre, who had followed the scene, stand-

ing at the other end of the compartment, made a suggestion. "If they were also to find the doctor?"

"Of course. I was thinking of that," answered Sister Hyacinthe. "Oh, Abbe, would you be kind enough to go yourself?"

Pierre was just about to propose that he should go to the canteen van to ask for some soup for Marie. Somewhat easier, now that she was no longer shaken, the invalid had opened her eyes and had allowed her father to sit her up. She had insisted greatly, in her ardent longing for some pure air, to be taken for an instant on the platform. But she felt that would be too much to ask, that it would give too much trouble to get her back again, and M. de Guersaint, who had breakfasted in the train, as had also the greater number of pilgrims and invalids, stood on the footway near the open door to smoke a cigarette, while Pierre ran to the canteen, where also might be found the doctor on duty and a small pharmacy.

In the railway carriage were the other ill ones who could not think of getting out. La Grivotte strangled and was delirious; she kept even Mme, de Jonquiere, who had given a "rendezvous" in the esting room to her daughter, Raymonde, to Mme. Volman and Mme. Desagneaux, to all four breakfast to-But how could she leave alone, on the hard bench, that wretch who seemed in agonies of death? And M. Sabathier, nailed to his seat, was waiting for Mme. Sabathier, who had gone to get him a bunch of grape while Martha had not moved, not leaving her brother, the missionary, whose feeble complaint continued. The others who could walk had bustled about to get out, being it a hurry to escape for a moment from that vehicle of anguish where their legs had been benumbed during the seven long hours since they had started. Mme. Mage had at once separated, going to one of the deserted ends of the station, straying off there with her melancholy; stupefied by suffering, Mme. Wetu had had the strength to get a short distance, then to sit down on a bench in the glare of the sun, whose heat she did not feel, while Elise Roquet, who had felt modest enough to swathe her face again in her black scarf, was looking everywhere for a fountain, devoured by a thirst fer cold water, her little Rose in her arms, trying to make her smile, to enliven her by showing her some highly colored pistures that the solemn

child looked at without seeking. Pierre had, however, the greatest trouble in the world to make his way through the crowd that deluged the quay. It was unimaginable, the living stream, the lame and the sound, that the train had emptied there, more than a thousand persons running, pushing suffocating. Every railway carriage had given up its miserable contents, as though ward in a hospital had been vacated, and one was able to conjecture what an awful amount of suffering the white train was transporting, that before it landed was to be given a legend of horror. Some of the infirm dragged themselves, others were carried, many sat in a heap on the sidewalk There were rude pushes, loud calls, a mad haste toward the eating room and bar. Every one was in a hurry, was attending to his own business. It was so short, this stop of half an hour, the only one they were to have until Lourdes. And the only bright-ness in the midst of the black soutanes, the poor people in worn out clothes, without any precise color, was the gleaming whiteness of the little Sisters of the Assumption, white and active, with their cap, their shirt

and their apron like snow. When at last Pierre got to the canteen van, about the middle of the train, he found van, about the middle of the chain, and the training of the control of the chain and the control of the chain and the control of the chain and control of the chain and condensed milk in cans was only diluted in proportion as it was required. Some other provisions were spread on boards. biscuits, fruit and chocolate. But opposite to the empty hands that were stretched out Sister Saint Francois, in charge of the service a woman of 45, short and fat, with a good fresh face, rather lost her head. She should have been distributing as she listened to Pierre calling the doctor, who was installed in another compartment of the van with his traveling pharmacy. Then, as the young priest gave his explications, he spoke of the poor man who was dying. She had her place filled; she also wished to go and see,

"Sister, I was just coming to ask you for

some soup for an ill person."
"Well, abbe, I will carry it. Go in front."
They hurried, the doctor and the abbe, exchanging rapid questions and answers, fol-lowed by Sister Francois, who carried the soup with great care in the midst of the bumping crowd. The doctor was a dark boy, of about 28, robust, very hand-some, and with the head of a young Roman emperor, such as may still be found growing among the burnt fields of Provence. As soon as Sister Hyacinthe saw him she was surprised and exclaimed: Well! it is you, M. Ferrand?"

Both stood amazed at the meeting. The Sisters of the Assumption have, as a brave duty, to take care of the sick, especially the sick poor, who cannot pay, who suffer in mansards, and thus they pass their lives with the most mizerable, staying by deathin scanty rooms, giving the most inbeds, in scanty rooms, giving the most in-timate care, cooking, deing housework, liv-ing as servants or as one of the family, until recovery or death. It was thus that Sister Hyacinthe, so young, with her cream-like face, wherein her blue eyes laughed ceaselessly, was installed one day with this young man, then a medical student, a prey to typhoid fever, and in such dire poverty that he lived in the Rue du Four in a sort of cellar, without fire or air. She never left him, had saved him with her passion to live only for others, as a girl might who had herself once been found in the porch of a church, whose only family consisted of those who suffered, to whom she vowed herwith all her burning desire to love And what an adorable month, followed what exquisite companionship, in that purbrotherhood of suffering. When he called her "sister" it was indeed to his sister that spoke. She was also a mother, who ok him up and put him to bed like her lid, without any other feeling between them than that of supreme pity, the divine tenderness of charity. She was always gay tenderness of charity. without sex, with no other instinct than comfort and console, and he adored and venerated her, and had of her the most chaste and the most passionate recollec-

"Oh! Sister Hyacinthe, Sister Hyacinthe," murmured, delighted. Only a chance had brought them face face, for Ferrand was not a believer, and he there because at the last mo was there because at the late had taken a friend's place, who was sud-

a year he had been house physician at la Pitle. This trip to Lourdes, with its par-licular conditions, interested him. But the pleasure of meeting was making hem forget the man, and the sister recol-

eted herself. "You see, Monsieur Ferrand, it is for this poor man. For an instant we thought him dead. Ever since Ambolse he has given us nany fears, and I have just sent for holy oils. Do you find him so low? Can you not revive him a little?"

Already the young doctor was examining him. Then the other invalids, who had stayed in the railroad carriage, became in-terested and looked. Marie, to whom Sister Saint Francois had given the bowl of soup, held it with such a shaking hand hat Pierre had taken it and was trying to make her drink it, but she could not swal-low, she could not finish the soup, her eyes fixed on the man, waiting, as if her own existence depended on it.

"Tell us," asked anew Sister Hyacinthe, "how do you find him? What is his dis-

"Oh, what disease?" murmured Ferrand;

he has every kind." Then, pulling a small vial from his pocket, he tried to pour a few drops between the closed teeth of the ill man. The latter gave a sigh, lifted his eyelids, let them fall again, and that was all; he gave no further sign of Sister Hyacinthe, habitually so calm, who

ever despaired, was most impatient.
"But this is terrible! And Sister Clare des Anges does not return. And yet showed her plainly the carriage of Father Massias My God! What is to become of us? Seeing she could be of no use Sister Saint Francois started to return to the van. Before then, however, she asked if it were not possible that the man might be dying simply from inanition, for that happened, and she had only come to offer provisions At last, as she was going, she promised that if she met Sister Claire des Anges she would hurry her, and she had not gone twenty yards before she turned and with a gesture showed the sister coming back alone, with her circumspect but short steps. Leaning out of the door Sister Hyacinthe increased the calls:

"Make haste! Make haste! Well! And Father Massias?" "He is not there."

"What! He is not there?" "No. I tried my best to hurry, but in all this crowd one cannot go fast. When I got to the railway carriage Father Massius had already gone out, and without doubt had left the station."

She explained that the father, according to what they told her, must have had a "rendezvous" with the cure of Saint Rade-In years past the national pligrimage had stopped for twenty-four hours; the invalids were placed in the city hospital, and they march to Saint Radegonde in procession. But this year there had been some obstacle, the train was to run direct to Lourdes, and the father was doubtless there talking with the cure, having some business together.

"They promised me surely to give the message, to send him here with the holy oils, as soon as they could find him." was a veritable disaster for Sister Hya-

cinthe. Since science could do nothing, perhaps the holy oils might have helped the ill man. Often she had seen that happen. "Oh, sister, sister, how distressed I am!
You do not know how sweet you would be
if you would go back there. You would be
on the watch for the father so that you might fetch him as soon as he appeared. "Yes, sister," obediently answered Sister Claire des Anges, who again started off with her grave and raysterious air, slipping through the crowd with the suppleness of a

shadow All this time Ferrand had been looking at the man, distressed at being unable to give Sister Hyacintae the pleasure of seeing him revive. And, as he made a gesture of impatience, she once more besought him, "Mon-sleur Ferrand, stay with me; wait until father arrives. I should feel quieter." He remained, helping her to lift up the man who had slipped from the seat. Then she took a cloth and wiped his face, that was continually covered with a heavy sweat. And the waiting was prolonged, amid the discom-fort of the invalids who had remained in the railway train, and the curlosity of the out-siders, who commenced to collect. A young girl briskly scattered the crowd, and stand-

ing on the footrail addressed Mme. de Jon "What is it, mamma? Those ladies are waiting for you at the eating room." It was Raymonde de Jonquiere, already somewhat mature for her twenty-five sum-

mers, but who resembled her mother amaz-ingly, with the same large nose, big mouth, fat and agreeable face. "But, my child, do you not see I can not leave this poor woman?"
And she shoved La Grivotte, who at that

moment was seized with an attack of coughing that was shaking her terribly.
"Oh, mamma, what a pity! Mme. Delagueaux and Mme. Volmar intended to make this little breakfast of us four such a pleas-

"What do you want, my poor child? Begin without me. Say to the ladies that just as soon as I can I will escape and join them

there. Then with an after thought:—"Wait; there is the doctor. I will try to get him to look after my invalid. Go away. I will follow. And you know I am dying of hunger." Raymonde returned quickly to the eating room, while Mme. de Jonquiere begged Fer-

rand to come to her and see if he could no help La Grivotte. He had already, at Mar tha's request, examined Brother Isider, whose meaning did not cease, and he had once again by a broken-hearted gesture signified his impotence. However, he hastened to raise the consumptive to a seat, hoping to stop her cough, which did become less and Then he assisted the hospital lady to induce her to swallow a mouthful of calm ing medicine. The presence of the doctor in the railway carriage continued to make a stir among the invalids. Mr. Sabathier, who was slowly eating the bunch of grapes his wife had brought him, did not question the doctor, knowing before hand what the answer would be, weary of having consulted as he expressed it, all the princes of science but he could not fail to feel some relief the fact of seeing him reseat the poor girl, whose proximity bothered him. And Marie herself looked at what he did with a grow-

ing interest, yet certain that for her like wise he could do nothing. On the platform the scurrying increased. There only remained a quarter of an hour. As if she were insensible, with open, staring eyes. Mme. Vetu slept off her trouble under the scorching rays of the sun, while in front of her Mme. Vincent was still walking slowly with her little Rose, whose little bird-like weight she scarcely felt in her arms. Many persons rushed to the fountain to fill their jugs, cans and bottles. Mme. Maze, very dainty and delicate thought she would so to There only remained a quarter of an hour dainty and delicate, thought she would go to wash her hands; but just as she reached there she found Elsie Rouquet preparing to drink and she shrank back from that monster -that dog's head with the gnawing muzzle that held the crooked allt of her nose, the ongue hanging out and lapping-and everyhody felt the same shudder, the same re-luctance to fill the bottles, the jugs and the ans at the fountain where she had drank

A large number of pilgrims had been cating all along the platform. One heard the are along the platform. One heard regular tappig of a woman's crutches coming and going without stopping in the midst of the groups. A cripple scated in a wooden box dragged himself painfully along the ground in search of no one knew what. Others, lying in a heap, did not atir. All this overflow of a moment, this rolling hospital emptied out for one-half hour, recaled amid the agitated flurry of the sound and well a poverty and fearful sadness under

the broad light of midday. Pierre had not left Marie again, for M. de Guersaint had disappeared, attracted by the glimpse of green country to be seen at the end of the station. And the young priest, uneasy because she had been unable to finish her soup, forced himself with a smile to tempt her appetite by offering to go and buy

dealy prevented from coming. For nearly her a peach, but she refused. She was suffer ing too much; nothing pleased her. She looked at him with her large, sad eyes divided between her impatience of stopping that retarded her possible cure and her dread of being once more shaken to pieces on that hard and interminable journey. A fat man approached and touched Pierre'

arm. He was grizzly, wore a beard and had a large and paternal face. "Excuse me, Abbe. Is there not a man dying in this railway carriage?" And as the priest replied in the affirmative he became quite friendly and familiar.

"My name is Vigueron. I am assistant head clerk in the Department of Finance, and I have asked for a holiday to take our son. Gustave, to Lourdes, accompanied by my wife. The dear child puts his whole trust in the Holy Virgin, to whom we pray for him night and morning. We are in the railway carriage in front of yours, where we have a econd class compartment." Then turning, with a motion of his hand,

e called his party.
"Come here, come here! It is in here. 'he unfortunate sick man is indeed at the

last gasp."
Mme. Vigueron was small, with a long pale face and with a povercy of blood that in the accuracy of all good country people reappeared terribly in her son Gustave. The latter, although 15, hardly seemed 10 years old, bent, thin as a skeleton. His right leg was withered and wasted away, which obliged him to walk with a crutch. He had pinched little face, slightly crooked, that was all eyes, but eyes sparkling with intelligence, quickened by pain and looking straigh down in the depths of souls.

An old lady followed, with a pasty face dragging her legs with difficulty, and M. | may not even work a little, it is forbidden

Ferrand, felt she could leave La Grivotte But she fook care to say to Pierre:
"I am dying of hunger. I am going to the eating room for a moment. But, I beg you, invalid begins to cough again come and fetch me. After she had succeeded with great diffi-

culty in crossing the platform, she again found another crowd in the eating room.

The pilgrims in easy circumstances had taken forcible possession of the tables—above all, many priests were helping themselves in the dim made by knives, forks and dishes. Three or four waiters were not nearly enough to guarantee any service, all the more that a crowd hindered them, pressing to the counter, buying fruit, rolls of bread and comment. And it was there,

of bread and con meat. And it was there,
at the end of the room, at a small table,
that Raymonde, was breakfasting with Mme.
Deagueaux and time. Volmar.
"Ah! mamma at last!" she cried. "I was
about to go back to find you. They must
allow you to akt."
She laughed wayly very happy over the She laughed gayly, very happy over the incidents of the journey and over this picked up meal, this windfall. "Here, I have saved your share of a trout with green sauce) and here is a cutlet wait-

ing. The rest of us are already eating It was, indeed delightful. It was a folly corner that was pleasant to see. Young Mme. Deagueaux, above all, was adorable. A delicate blonde, with wild, flow-ing yellow heir, a milk-white skin, deep dimples, very smiling, very nice-wealthily married. She had for three years past left her husband at Troutville about the middle of August to accompany the national pil grimage in guise of hospital patroness. I was her great passion, a shuddering pity a need to give her whole time to the in-valids for five days, a regular debauch of absolute devotion, from which she returned exhausted and delighted. Her only sorrow was that as yet she had no children, and sometimes with a comical air she regretted that she had missed her vocation—that of a

"Ah, my dear," she said gayly to Ray-monde, "do not bewall that your mother is engrossed by her ill ones. At least it occu pies her.

And, speaking to Mme, de Jonquiere, "If you knew how long we find the time in our comfortable, first class compartment!



THE STOP AT POITIERS.

Vigueron, remembering that he had quite orgotten her, turned toward Pierre in order introduce her. "Mme. Chaise, my wife's eldest sister, who

also wished to accompany Gustave, whom she dearly loves." And leaning forward, in a low voice, with an air of confidence:

"It is Mme. Chaise, widow of the silk merchant, enormously rich. She has a heart trouble that causes her great uneasiness." Then the entire family, massed in a group evinced the greatest curiosity as to what was happening in the railway carriage. ple were constantly collecting, and the father, in order that his son might look at his ease, lifted him for a moment in his arms, while the aunt held the crutch, his mother stood up, too, on the tips of her

In the carriage there was exactly same sight as before. The man on his bench, occupying the corner, stiffened, with his head leaning against the hard board partition. He was livid, his cyclids closed, his mouth drawn by the agony, bathed in an lev sweat that from time to time Sister Hyacinthe wiped away with a cloth, and the latter no longer spoke, no longer fussed, but had returned to her usual serenity, counting on Heaven and simply looking out

at the platform once in a while to see if Father Massias were not coming. "Look well, Gustave," said M. Vigueron to his son. "It must be a consumptive." The child, who was scarred with scrofula, whose hip was eaten by a running abscess, who had the beginning of necrosis of the vertebrae, appeared to be passionately interested in this death agony. He was not afraid; he smiled with a smile of infinite

sadness.

it is fearful," murmured Mme Chaise, whom the fear of death turned pale in her continual dread of some sudden shock that might kill her. "Dame," answered M. Vigueron, philoophically, "each in turn; we are all mor-

And Gustave's smile then took on a sort of sad mockery, as if he had heard other words, an unconscious wish, the hope that the old aunt would die before he did, and that he might inhreit the promised 500,000 francs. and that he himself would not trouble his

family for long. him down," said Mme. Vigueron to her husband. "You tire him holding on to

haise, to protect the child from any knock The poor little midget had need to be watched. They feared to lose him at any minute. Even the father thought it would be best to get him at once back to their own compartment, and as the two women car-ried him off he added, greatly overcome, turning again toward Pierre:

begged to be put in with the invalids, but all the places had been given, and I shall be reduced to trying to sleep tonight in my corner." She laughed and added:—
"Is it not so? Mme. Volmar, we will go to

sleep, as conversation appears to tire you The latter, who must have seen her 30th year, was very dark, had a long face, with finely marked features and large, magnifi-cent eyes like living coals, over which at times there seemed to pass an extinguishi wave. At first sight she was not beautiful, but the longer one looked at her the more intense and overpowering she became, stir ring passions and unrest. Further, she held herself in the background, modestly and effacing self, always wearing without a jewel, although she was the wife of a diamand merchant in Paris.

"Oh, I." she murmured, "provided I am not pushed about too much, I am content." In truth she had already been twice to Lourdes as helper, but one never saw her there in the hospital of Our Lady of Lourdes, for she always said she was overesuch fatigue that she was obliged to remain in her room.

Mme. de Jonquiere, the directress of the ward, had always shown for her an amiable tolerance. "Oh, my God! My poor friends, you have plenty of time to spare. Sleep away, if you can, and then it will be your turn, when I

can no longer keep up."

Then, speaking to her daughter, "You, my darling, must be careful not to excite yourself too much if you want to keep a clear head." But Raymonde looked at her with a smil-

ing, reproachful air.
"Mamma, why do you say such things?
Am I not very reasonable?" There was no need for her to boast for firm will, a resolution to make her own life-looked out of her gray eyes under an air

looked out of her gray eyes under an air of careless youth, simply content to live.
"It is so," confessed the mother with slight confusion, "This little girl is more often right than I. Here, pass me the cutlet, and I can tell you it is welcome. Heavens, how hungry I was!"

The breakfast went on, enlivened by the continued laughing of Mme. Deagueaux and Raymonde. The latter was animated, and her face, that the hope of marriage had already made somewhat sallow, found once ready made somewhat sallow, found once more the rosy tints of her twentieth summer. Courses were put on the table two at a time, for there were only ten minutes left. All over the room there was a growing commotion among the convives, who feared lest they might not have time to drink

their coffee.

But Pierre appeared. Again La Grivotte had been seized with a choking turn, and Mme. de Jongstere finished her artichoke, and after kissing her daughter good night their coffee. turning again toward Pierre:

"Ah, Abbe, if God were to take him, our life would go, too, with him. I do not speak of his aunt's fortune: that would pass to other nephews. And it would be against nature if he went before she did, considering quainted with her, as he still made occasional

the diamond merchant, and an old acquaint ance of his own mother—a most terribic woman, of extravagant religion, so hardened and severe that she closed the shutters to prevent her daughter-in-law from looking into the street. And he knew her history—the young woman imprisoned the very day after her marriage, between her mother-i law who terrified her, and her husband. monster of repulsive ugliness, who eve went so far as to beat her, mad with jeal ousy, although he kept mistresses himself They only allowed her to go out for an in-stant to go to church. One day at Trinity Pierre had, indeed, guessed her secre by seeing her behind the church seeing exchange a rapid word with a proper looking man, of distinguished air; the b table fall so easily to be forgiven, the in the arms of the discreet friend who hap-pened to be there, the hidden and consuming passion that may not be satisfied, yet burns on; the meeting that had given so much trouble to accomplish, waiting for for weeks, that is greedily enjoyed, in a final flare of fancy.

She was troubled and held out to him her

thin and feverish little hand. "Why, what a meeting, Abbe! It is long since we have seen each other,"

And she explained that this was her third trip to Lourdes, and that her mother-in-law had exacted that she should be in the party of the Association of Our Lady of Salutation. "It's surprising that you did not see her at the station. She put me into the train and will be there to fetch me when I return."

All this was said very simply, but with such a pointed meaning of irony that Pierr had not much to guess. He knew she had no religion, and only took it up to gain a few hours of freedom once in a while, and he strongly suspected that some one was waiting for her yonder, that she was thus hastening to her lover, with the ardent though suppressed air and flaming eyes that she scarcely concealed under a veil of deadly indifference.

"And I," said he presently, "I am with friend of my childhood, a poor young sick girl. I beg to recommend her to your care." Then, as she blushed slightly, he no longer doubted. Elsewhere Raymonde was settling the bill, with the assurance of a young per son accustomed to figures, and Mme. gueaux went off with Mme, Volmar, Th waiters were not attentive. Every one was hurrying out, as they heard a bell ring. Pierre, too, was hastening back to the car riage when he was once more stopped. "Ah, Vicar," he cried, "I saw you just as

we were starting, but I have not been able to shake your hand before this."

And he held out his own to the old priest. who looked at him smilingly with the air of a noble man. Abbe Judaine was the vicar Saligny, a small community of Oise. Large, tall, he had a fat, rosy face, surrounded by white curls, and one recognized a holy man, one whom neither the flesh no the spirit had tormented. With peacetu sanctity he firmly believed, absolutely without any struggle, with the easy faith of child who was ignorant of all passions. Since the Virgin had at Lourdes by a marvelous miracle of which people still talked cured him of an eye trouble, his belief had become still more blind and devoted, as if it were quite saturated with divine gratitude "I am very glad to see you with us, my friend," he said, softly, "because young priests have much to gain by making these pilgrimages. They tell me that there is a spirit of revolution among some. Well, you will see all these poor people praying to-gether, a spectacle that will bring tears from you. How can one refuse to place himself n the hands of God before so much suffer ing alleviated or entirely cured?"

He also was with an invalid. He showed

He also was with an invalid. He showed a first class compariment, where a placard was attached, marked "Mr. l'Abbe Judaine. Reserved." Then lowering his voice:

"It is Mme. Dieulefa, you know, the wife of the banker. Their chateau, a royal domain, is in my parish, and when they heard that the Holy Virgin had been willing to make a sign of grace to me they besaught me to intercede for the poor ill one. There! Do you see her on the ground? She demanded positively to be taken out for a moment, although it will be trouble enough to get her back again."

There was indeed on the platform in a

There was indeed on the platform in sort of a long box a woman whose beautiful, pure oval face and lovely eyes did not bear the traces of more than 26 years. She had been selzed by a fearful disease, the abgrease the skeleton, the slow destruction of the bone. Three years ago, after being con-fined with a stillborn child, she had felt vague pains in the spinal column. Then little by little the bones became rarified and deformed, the vertebraes collapsed, the bones of the pelvis became flattened, those legs and arms began to shorten, and shrunken, as if melted away, she had be-come a human rag—a creature, fluid and without name, that could not be stood up-right, that was carried about with the greatest care for fear of seeing it escape

from between the fingers. The head alone retained its beauty, a motionless head, with a stupid and imbedie air. And around this lamentable remnant of a woman that made the heart ache were the evidences of the great luxury in which she lived; the blue silk tufting of the box that held her, the rare laces with which she was covered, the cap of Valenciennes that she wore—all spoke of a wealth that was spread about her till the end.

"Ah, what a pity!" continued Abbe Judaine, in an undertone, "to think she is so young, so pretty and rich as Croesus. And if she knew how they loved her, with what adoration she is still surrounded! That is her and here is husband, that big man near her, and here is her sister, Mme. Jousseur, that elegant look-

ing woman." Pierre remembered having often read in the newspapers the name of Mme. Jousseur, the wife of a diplomat, and very much "laucee" in the best Catholic circles in Paris. There had also been rumored concerning here a story about a second erning her a story about great passion overcome and vanquished. She was besides very pretty, dressed with an art of marvelvery pretty, dressed with an approximation of our simplicity, and giving the impression of an air of perfect devotion toward her poor sister. And, as for the husband, who had at 35 inherited the colossal business of 35 inherited the colossal business of his father, he was a handsome man, with a fair complexion, very neat and fitted snugly in a black frock coat, but his eyes were full of tears, for he adored his wife, and he had left his affairs to take her to Lourdes, put ting his last hope in this appeal to Divine

mercy. Certainly since the morning Pierre had seen all kinds of terrible ills, in this mourn-ful white train. But none had so completely ful white train. upset him as this miserable skeleton oman who was liquifying in the midst of ier laces and her millions. "The unfortunate creature!" he murmured,

shuddering. Then Abbe Judaine made a motion of serene hope. "The Holy Virgin will cure her. I have prayed so hard for it."

But there was another clanging of the bill, and this time it was really the start. There were still two minutes. This produced final pushing, people coming back with things to eat done up in papers, with bottle and jugs that they had filled at the fountain missed their way, not being able Many missed their way, not being and to find their railway carriages, running, as it lost, the length of the train, while the in-valids dragged themselves in the midst of a hurried noise of crutches; and others, who walked with difficulty, tried to quicken their walked with difficulty, tried to quicken their pace, hanging on the arms of the hospital nurses. Four men had great difficulty in getting Mme. Dieulafa back to her first class compartment. The Viguerons, who were content to travel second class, had already installed themselves in their compartment in the middle of an extraordinary hears of backets boyes, valies that hardly heap of baskets, boxes, values, that hardly gave little Gustave room enough to stretch his poor abortive members. Then they all reappeared, Mme. Vincent holding her dar-ling little girl up at arm's length in terror lest she should hear her scream; Mme. whom they were obliged to push in, after waking her from the oblivion of her torture Elsis Houquet, soaking wet because she in-sisted on trying to drink, was attempting to dry her monstrous face, and while each one was taking his seat, so that the carriage was filling up. Marie was listening to her father, who, delighted at having gone to the end of the station, he had found there a switchman's little house, from which he had

switchman's little house, then we have a seen a really lovely country.

"Do you wish us to lay you down at once?" asked Pierre, who was disturbed by the agonized expression of the sick girl.

"Oh! no, no, presently!" she replied. "I have time enough to hear these wheels grinding under my head, as if they were crushing

Sister Hyacinthe had just begged Ferrand to look at the man once more before he re-turned to the cantien van. She was still waiting for Father Massias, astonished at waiting for Pather Massias, astonished at this inexplicable delay; but she had not

visits to old Mme. Volmar, the mother of quite given him up, because Sister Claire des

Auges had not returned.

'Monsieur Ferrand, I beg of you, tell me Again the young doctor looked, listened and counted. Then with a discouraging motion and in a low voice:—

"My opinion is that you will not take him alive to Lourdes. All the heads were stretched, anxiouset, if they had only known the man's name whence he came, who he was! But the miserable unknown, from whom they could of get a word, and who was about to die there in that carriage, without anybody being able to put a name on his body' Sister Hyacinthe suggested that they should search him. Under the circumstances there surely could be no harm to do so, "Monsleur Ferrand look in his pockets." The latter with care searched the man. In his pockets he only found a rosary, a knife and three sous. They never found out any thing more.

Just at this moment a voice announced Sister Claire des Auges and Father Massias The latter had simply been belated by chatting with the vicar of Saint Radegonde in a waiting room. There was a feeling of great relief, and for a moment everything seemed all right. But the train was just starting, the employes were already shutting the the employes were already shutting the doors. They would have to expedite the

extreme unction in all haste, if they did not wish to cause too great a delay. "This way, Reverend Father!" cried Sis-ter Hyacinthe. "Yes, yes, get in! Our poor invalid is here.'

Father Massias, five years older than Pierre, who, however, had been a fellow pupil with him at the seminary, had a large, thin body, with the face of an as-cetle, whose light beard made a frame in which sparkled two burning eyes. He was neither the doubting priest nor the priest of childlike faith, but an apostle carried away by passion, always ready to fight and to conquer for the pure glory of the Virgin. Under his black cloak with a large hood, his shaggy hat with its wide brim, he was resplendent with the continual ardor

He had at once taken from his pocket the silver box containing the holy oil. And in the midst of the last slamming of the doors, in the noise of the running of the pilgrims, the ceremony began, although the station master restlessly looked at the clock, seeing that he must give them a few moments of

grace. "Credo in unum Deum," quickly mur-

mured the priest.
"Amen," responded Sister Hyacinthe and Amen, responded state Hydrau and all the occupants of the railway carriage.

Those who were able had knelt upon the benches. The others had clasped their hands, multiplying the signs of the cross, and when, after the muttering of the prayers, there followed the ritual of the litany, the voices were raised and an ardent desire was wafted with the Kyric Eleiso desire was watted with the Kyrie Eleison for the remission of sins, for the physical and spiritual cure of the man. Might his whole life, of which they were ignorant, be forgiven, and might he enter in person, but

triumphant, into the kingdom of God! "Christe, exaudi nos.

"Ora pro nobis, sancta Dei Genitrix." Father Massias had taken out the silver needle, on which hung a drop of holy oil. In such a bustle, in the waiting at the tra where people were putting their heads by mistake into doors, he could not think o giving the customary unction upon all the organs of sense, those doors through which enter sin. As the ritual permitted in pressing case, he was obliged to be conten with a single unction, and he gave it. the mouth—on that livid, half opened mouth from which there came but a faint breath while the face, with closed eyes, seemed a ready dead, returned to the ashes of mother earth.

"Per istam sanctam unctionem, et suar piissimam miscricordiam, indulgent tib Dominus quidquid per visum, auditum, odora tum, gustum, tactum, deliquist!"
The remainder of the ceremony was lost,

jostled and carried away by the start. priest had scarcely time to wipe away the drop with the little bit of wadding held in eadiness by Sister Hyacinthe. bliged to get out of the carriage and int his own as fast as he could, putting the box containing the holy oils in order, while the ssistants finished the final prayer mpossible for us to wait any longer," peated the station master, excitedly, "Come, come; make them hurry." At last they were finally off. Every one reseated themselves, retired to their corners. Mme. de Jonquiere, still troubled by the condition of la Grivotte, had changed her place, and was nearer to her. Opposite M. Sabathler, who walted, resigned and silent. Sister Hyacinthe had not returned to her compar ment, but decided to stay near the man, to

watch him and help him. All the mor hat, being there, she was able to look Brother Isidore, whose sufferings Martha was no longer able to alleviate. And Marie growing yet more pale, felt even before it has started under a leaden sky, in her tende flesh, the jolting of the train as it carried its charge of ill people in the closeness and imprisoned air of the overheated carriage. There was a loud whistle, the machinery started, and Sister Hyacinthe stood up t

'Le Magnificat, my children."

CHAPTER IV.

Just as the train was moving the door wa opened and a guard pushed a young girl of about 14 into the compartment with Pierre and Marie.
"Here, here is a place; hurry

With long faces they had already com-menced to protest, when Sister Hyacintha gave a cry: "Why, is that you Sophie? You ard coming again to see the lioly Virgin, who cured you last year?' And at the same time Mme. de Jonquiere

"Ah! that is right, my little friend Sophie t is good to be grateful. "Yes, Sister, or yes, Madame," answered

the young girl modestly.
At any rate the door had again been shut, and they were obliged to accept this new pilgrim, who seemed to have fallen from heaven just as the train, that she had nearly missed, was starting. She was thin, so she would not take up much room. Besides, there ladies knew her, and

hearing that she had been cured by the Hol-Virgin, every eye was fixed upon her. But they were out of the station, the machinery creaked under the increasing rapidity of th vheels, and Sister Hyacinthe, clapping her hands, repeated:

"Come, come, my children, the 'Magnifi-cat." While the song of praise swelled high above the joltings, Pierre looked at Sophie. She was evidently a little peasant. a daughter of one of those poor laborers from the neighborhood of Poltiers, who had been spoiled and treated as a lady by her parents ever since the had become one of the elect, a wonder visited by all the clergy of the district. She had on a straw hat, with pink ribbons; a gray woolen dress, trimmed with flounce, and her round face was not pretty but good-natured looking, very fresh, bright, cunning eyes that gave her a smiling

yet modest look.

When the magnificat was over Pierre could not resist the desire to question Sophie. A child of this age, of such a caudid appear-ance and who could not possibly be a liar. greatly interested him.

"Then you nearly missed the train, my

"Oh! Monsieur l'Abbe, I should have been provoked, for I have been at the station since Radegonde, who knows me well, and wh called me to kirs him and to tell me that I was a good little girl to go back to Lourdes. Then it seems the train was just starting and I only had time to run. Oh! how I did

She laughed, still out of breath and still feeling guilty that she had been so heedless.
"And what is your name, my child?"
"Sophie Couteau, Abbe:"

"Are you from Politiers itself?"
"No, indeed. We live at Vivonne, seven kilometres away. My father and mother are quite well off, and all would go on well enough if there were not eight children at home. I am the fifth. Fortunately the first four are already working."
"And you, my child, what do you do?"
"Oh, Abbe, I am not of much use. Eye

since last year, when I came back cured, I have never been quiet a single day, because, you know, people come to see me and I had to go to see the bishop and to the convents and everywhere. And before that I had been ill for a long time. I could not walk without stick, my foot was so painful that I screamed at every step." Then the Holy Virgin has cured you of

had foot?" Sophie did not have time to answer. ister Hyacinthe, who had been listening 'It was a carries of the bone of the left heel, dating from three years back. The

heel, dating from three years back. The foot was swollen and deformed and there

were fistulas that gave vent to a continua

supporation."
At once all the invalids in the carriags ommenced to be interested. They never In her they sought to find a prodigy. In order to see her better those who were able stood up, while the others, the infirm, stretched on their mattresses, raised them-selves and turned their heads. Coming to them in the renewal of their suffering that they knew they must endure for fifteen more hours after leaving Poitters, the sudden coming of this child, elect of heaven, was like a divine message—the ray of hope was like a divine message—the ray of hope from which they should gather strength till the end of the journey. Afready the groats ceased somewhat, and all the faces relaxed in the overwhelming desire to be-

Above all, revived and half raising herself. Marie clasped her trembling hands and spoke softly to Pierre.

"I beseech you to question her. Ask her to tell us all. Cured! Good Lord! Cured

of such an ill!"

Mme. De Jonquiere, overcome, had leane to forward to kiss the child across the parti-

"Of course our little friend is just about to do so. Are you not, my darling, going to tell us what the Holy Virgin has done for

"Certainly, madame. All that you want." She had a smiling and modest look, with eyes that sparkled with intelligence. She wanted to begin at once, and raised her right hand with a pretty gesture to attract atten-tion. She had evidently already become accustomed to pleas? a crowd. But she could not be seen from all the seats in the railway carriage, so Sister Hyacinthe had an

"Stand up on the seat, Sophie, and speak rather load on account of the noise."

This amused her and she had to walt
to begin until she had quieted down once

'It was this way-my foot was uselesy. could not even go to church and I always had to keep it wrapped in cloths, b cause nasty stuff came out of it. M. Rivoire, the doctor, who had made a cut in it to see in-side, said he would have to take out a bit of bone, which certainly would have made me lame. Then, after praying well to the Holy Virgin, I went and dipped my foot in the water, with so great a longing to be cured that I did not even take the time to remove the rag. And when I took my foot out everything had stayed behind, there was nothing left on it."

A murmur ran about, a mixture of surprise, astonishment and longing, at hearing this wonderful tale, so comforting to the hopeless. But the girl had not finished. She took her time and ended with another motion, her two arms slightly raised.

"When M. Rivolre saw my foot again at Vivonne he said: "Whether it be God or the devil who had cured this child it is all the same; but the truth is that she is cured."

This time peals of laughter were heard. She had told the story so often that now she knew it by heart. The words of the doctor always produced an effect, and so sure was she that people would laugh that she always laughed herself before and. And it was still

so ingenuous and touching.

She had, however, forgotten a detail, for Sister Hylicinthe, who had by a giance an-nounced the doctor's remark to her audience, now whispered softly:

"And, Sophle, what you said to the countess, the superintendent of your ward."
"Oh, yes. I had not taken along many rags for my foot and I told her that the Holy Virgin had been very good to care me the first day, because on the morrow my stock would have been exhausted."

Again there was fresh joy. She was so sweet to have been cured thus. And on further questioning by Mme. Jonquiere, she had to relate the story about her boots, her beautiful new boots, that the countess had priven her, and in which, enchanted, she had run, danced and jumped. Think of it! In

able to put on a slipper! Made pale and grave by the subtle mis-givings that invaded him, Pierre continued to look at her. And he asked her other ques-tions. Decidedly she did not lie, but he suspected in her a slow distortion of truth, an embellishing quite to be understood, in her joy of having been helped, and of having become a little person of importance. Who knew now who her the pretended wound that had been instantly completely healed in a few seconds had not really taken many days to be accomplished? Where were the wit-

"I was there," Mme. de Jonquiere was tellng at that moment, "She was not in my

ward, but I met her that very morning Pierre interrupted her quickly:

"Ah! you saw her foot before and after the immersion?" "No, no; I hardly think any one could have seen it, because it was so enveloped in compresses. She told you herself that the compresses fell off into the spring." And, turning toward the child, "But she will show you-her foot. Won't you, Sophie?

Unfasten your shoe." The latter, with a promptitude and easy that showed how accustomed she was to do it, took off her shoe and pulled off her stocking. She thrust out her foot, very clean, very white, well cared for, with the pink nails nicely cut, turning it round with a complacent air, so that the priest might examine it comfortably. Under the ankle there was a long scar, whose whitened edges dearly bore witness to the gravity of the

"Oh, Abbe! take hold of the heel, squeeze it with all your might; I no longer feel any-

Pierre made a motion; and it might have been supposed that he was overcome by the power of the Holy Virgin. He remained un-easy in his doubt. What unknown force had acted? Or, rather, what false diagnosis of the doctor, what concurrence of errors and exaggerations, had led to this beautiful tale?
But the invalids all wished to see this
miraculous foot—this visible proof of divine curing that all were looking for-and it was Marie who touched it first, sitting on her bench, suffering less already. Then Mme. Maze, taken out of her melancholy, passed it on to Mme. Vincent, who klased it for the hope it had given. M. Sabathier had listened with a rapturous air, Mn e. Vetu, La Grivotte, with a rapturous air, Mr. e. Vetu, La Grivotte, even Erother Isidore had opened his eyes with interest, and the face of Ell'se Rouquet, transfigured by faith, had become more extraordinary almost beautiful; for a wound that had thus disappeared, did it not mean her wound also would be healed? Her face, retaining only a mere sear, would be like the faces of the rest of the world? Sophie, transfer in held on to one of the curtain

standing up, held on to one of the curtain rods, and resting her foot on the edge of the partitions, turned to the left and to the right, without letting go, very happy and very proud of the exciamations, of the growing admiration and religious respect shown to this small end of her person, this little naked foot that was now considered sacred.
"One must, doubtless, have great faith,"
Marie thought out loud. "One must have a
pure soul." Then speaking to M. de Guer-

"Father, I think I should be cured if were only 10 years old and had the unsulled soul of a little girl."

But you are only 10, dearest. Pierre, delittle girls of 10 have any whiter souls than With his chimerical tastes he adored tales with his chimerical tastes he ador'd tales and miracies. And the priest, profoundly touched by the ardent purity of the young girl, no longer sought to discuss, leaving her to lose herself in the breath of consoling

illusion that was passing.

Since leaving Poitlers the air had become very heavy. A storm was coming in the leaden sky and it seemed as if the train were passing through a furnace. The villages passed by, gloomy and descried under the burning sun. At Cache-Verac the beads acts of piety were stackened somewhat. Sister Hyacinthe, who had not yet break-fasted, decided to quickly est some bread and fruit while she continued to take care of the man, whose faint breath seemed rather more

ogular. So it was only at Euffee, at 3 'clock, that the verpers of the Holy Virgin "Ora pro nobis, sancta Dei Genitrix." "Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus As they were finishing M. Sabathier, who

had been looking at little Sophie put on her shoe and stocking, turned to M. de Guer-"Undoubtedly the case of this child is interesting. But it is nothing. There are many more astonishing than hers. Do you know the story of Pierre de Budder, a Helgian

workman? orkman?"
Everybody again began to liaten,
"This man had had his leg broken by a
all from a tree. For eight years the
we pieces of bone would not knit. One two ends through a sore that was to s

hung party a, turning in every which way