



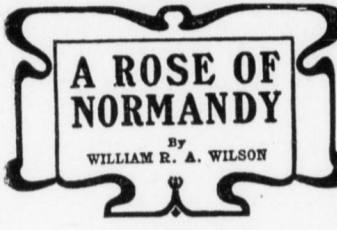
THE MOUNTAINS.

Towering high above the treetops,
All their gray lone summits rise,
Till the heights in mighty beauty
Seem to touch the bending skies.

Fair the morning's golden sunlight
On their peaks in splendor lies,
And the glory of the sunset
Lingering there in grandeur dies.

Winter's silvery snowflakes resting
On their heads a crown descend,
And the lonely eagles nesting
Find their heights a sheltering friend.

J. B. M. Wright, in Boston Budget.



CHAPTER VI.—CONTINUED.

It must needs be business of great import that would take a human being out in such a storm. Whatever his object, the man's purpose never for a moment wavered as he fought against the sweep of the drenching blast that he encountered while crossing the Pont Notre Dame. Turning and walking along the river bank for a short distance, he finally entered a small and obscure cross-street. He proceeded along this, until he was directly in front of a dilapidated building situated in the rear of the Hotel de Ville. Here he stopped and gave a peculiar whistle, which could not have been heard for more than 20 paces, because of the uproar of the storm. A dark figure, securely muffled like his own, appeared at his side, as suddenly and mysteriously as though he had come up through the earth. A sign was given and returned, and the heads of the two men approached each other, while their lips moved in some mysterious interchange of words.

All seemed well, for the first conspirator turned, and, opening a narrow door with a small key, disappeared, followed by the other. They felt their way along a pitch dark passage. Again a key was used, and a word of caution heard from the leader as they descended a flight of stairs into a subterranean way. This was soon traversed, and a door was reached, through whose cracks and keyhole a light appeared. This opened into a room built entirely underground and lighted by a large lamp. A table occupied the center of the floor, and several chairs were scattered about. A large brazier of lighted charcoal warmed the air and dissipated the moisture of the place. An opening in the roof leading to the outside world somewhere gave sufficient ventilation.

The door being closed, the leader threw off his cloak and muffer and advanced to the brazier, spreading his hands above the glowing coals with a slight shiver. At length he turned and showed by the lamplight the form and features of Jean Baptiste Colbert, minister of finance, the most powerful as well as the most energetic of the king's servants: of middle stature, rather lean than fat; black hair, so thin that he always wore a cap; of low and dejected mien, gloomy air, and stern aspect; eyes usually half closed, giving him the appearance of great craftiness; his outward behavior modest and accompanied by much seeming plainness and simplicity; sober, sleeping little, always alert; hard and inflexible of temper, beholding without concern the misery of an infinite number whom he had ruined to enrich his master's treasury, and hence advance his own interests. Nicknamed "The Man of Marble," he sacrificed honor, integrity, gratitude, and everything else for the benefit of his ambition.

His companion also removed the covering about his face and neck. His dress was that of a man of the lower classes, his face pale, sharply cut and ascetic. His manner toward his companion was that of an inferior in the presence of his superior in authority. Colbert spoke first.

"A terrible night," he said with another shiver that convulsed his entire frame, and caused him to seek again the grateful glow of the coals.

"Truly, a fearful storm," replied the other. "But it is necessary for members of our order to be about the order's business ad majorem Dei gloriam in spite of the raging of the elements."

Colbert sat down in one of the chairs near the table, motioned to his companion to approach and dry himself, and after seizing a quill and drawing near his elbow the ink-horn and parchment that lay there ready for use, he commanded the other to relate his story.

"I left Quebec," began the messenger, for he was none other, "in November and reached La Rochelle in January last. The day after landing I was seized with a terrible fever, contracted on board ship. When I recovered I found that two months had elapsed. I bore with me a message from the bishop of Quebec, who, although not a member of our order, is very friendly to it. I was instructed to deliver it to you in person and to avoid all help from the members of our order in France, so that none would know that the Jesuits in Quebec were communicating with you. I started from La Rochelle penniless and alone. Deprived of the support of my order, I was obliged to beg my way. The fever left me with a running sore upon my leg. By exhibiting this to the passers-by, I was enabled to get the money to live on. A relapse con-

fined me to bed for another month, when I had arrived within ten leagues of Paris. I sent you word requesting an interview; you appointed the time and place, and here I am."

During this recital, Colbert had watched the features of the speaker with a keen gaze, and now and then made a note of place and circumstance upon the parchment for future corroboration. When he had finished, he said coldly:

"You have done well. Where is the message?"

The man in reply bent down and began unwinding a heavy bandage from about his leg. The end reached, a huge open sore was disclosed below the knee. Inserting his little finger within the sore and pressing from the outside with his other hand, a small piece of lead the shape and size of a bullet was squeezed out from the wound.

"A safe hiding-place," he remarked, as he carefully wiped it; "besides, it served to keep the wound open and running."

Bringing the piece of lead to the light, he pulled the ends apart, which revealed a cavity neatly hollowed out. Within this hole was a piece of very thin oiled silk rolled up into as compact a mass as possible.

Colbert opened it and spread it out. There was nothing visible on it, but he opened a drawer in the table, and, taking out a small flask of liquid, touched the surface of the silk lightly with a drop. Instantly a written word appeared distinctly and then faded away slowly. He seemed to be satisfied at this, so laying the message upon the table, he arose, and turning to the man asked if he were dry. His companion understood that he was dismissed, so, after bandaging up his leg and muffling his face, he moved toward the door, accompanied by Colbert, who followed him, opening the successive doors until he reached the street.

When he returned, he reseated himself, and, taking up the bit of silk, began the task of finding out what it contained. As he applied a drop of the secret fluid to each word he quickly wrote it down on parchment before it faded. Word by word he revealed the message until the end. Then putting the original away in a secret place, he took up the copy and read as follows:

"The chiefest among my friends here have urged me to write this letter to you, promising that a trusty messenger shall deliver it into your hands. They beg me to implore you to use your great power to retard and hinder the plans of the Sieur de la Salle, who is now in France. His projects of colonization and exploration are in direct rivalry to the work of the missionaries, while the extension of his fur-trade with the savages takes them out of the power and influence of the church. The fathers desire to keep the fur-trade to themselves, and feel that he can do them great injury."

"LAVAL,
"Bishop of Quebec."

In nearly every land of the then known world, in every court and palace, there were stationed secret emissaries of the great Society of Jesus. The minister of many a king, even the servants of the bed-chamber, the cloth-merchant, the innkeeper, the horseshoer, the slavey in the kitchen—all were enrolled among the faithful adherents of this mighty order, forming one of its important sub-divisions.

Colbert was one of these. To render strict obedience he should have placed the welfare of the order above every other consideration. But as has been indicated, the one great impulse of the man's life was ambition, that could use everything for an aid, but would allow nothing to overshadow it. The Jesuits were a terrible enemy, and a most valuable ally; hence he chose them as the latter, doing what he could to further their plans and win their esteem, so long as it did not interfere with his own projects. A serious clash of the two interests had never arisen before. But now the issue must be met, for chief among his plans for the glory of France and of her king (and hence indirectly for his own aggrandizement) was the development and exploration of the western wilds of New France. Already were the Dutch and English and Spaniards pressing forward with men and gold, hurrying forth exploring expeditions led by men of courage and resource. He well knew that whichever nation first explored the unknown region adjoining the present holding of France in the New World; he who planted trading-posts and gained the aid and friendship of the savage tribes for his king and country, would win a continent.

The dazzling stories of wealth untold to be found in those regions stirred his blood, for he realized that if he could but guide and direct the king in the affairs of colonization to the grand realization of his dream, he would have but to ask, to receive his heart's fondest desire from the hands of a grateful monarch. Upon this pinnacle of power thus gained, the world would forget the wine merchant's son of Rheims in envious adulation. The reins thus placed within his hands, he would be enabled to drive rough-shod over his enemies, crushing them beyond recovery. He would be greater even than the king himself, because he would have acquired such unlimited influence over the royal mind and favor that it would be he who would stand within the shadow of the throne, directing wars, dictating peace, uprooting nations, and dethroning kings.

To gain this end, he had need of just such men as he knew La Salle to be. It would be he that would reap the benefits of the explorer's efforts if successful; and upon the head of that intrepid man alone would the results of failure fall.

Thus lost in the imaginings of future greatness, he sat until the dimming of the light warned him of the passage of time. He started up and, quickly secreting whatever papers he had in a hiding-place in the wall, he extinguished the lamp and left the room.

When he reached the street he found day already dawned. The rain had ceased, although it was still gloomy. The working people were moving about already to begin anew the toil of the day. Colbert, well disguised, walked rapidly along, his mind busy devising some plan whereby his task-masters could be satisfied without incurring his own future perils. Once he came into sudden collision with a huge fish-wife while turning a corner, who straightway launched at him her choicest stock of Parisian billingsgate, a little dreaming that he whom she thus reviled was the second man in the kingdom.

CHAPTER VII.
CONTAINING SCENES CHIEFLY FEMINE THAT TEND TO PROVE THAT PITY IS AKIN TO LOVE.

If the storm brought broken chimney-pots and puddly streets to the city of Paris, it bore renewed brightness to the flowers and a fresher green to the early summer verdure of the country outside; and to no spot did it bring newer life and greater gladness to flower and shrub than to Choisy Mademoiselle.

This princely estate lay about 2½ leagues from Paris on the road to Orleans. The broad Seine flowing past the lowermost of its terraces, the hundred-acre park about the house (a fair expanse of green turf broken here and there by the varied trees and bushes set out by the most famous landscape gardener of the age), the woods on either side trimmed into an exact resemblance of each other, made it seem a veritable glimpse of paradise to the dust-laden traveler as he urged on his tired horse toward the city.

This was the favorite summer home of Louise de Montpensier, "Mademoiselle" (or "La Grande Mademoiselle" as she loved to be called), only daughter of Gaston, Duc d'Orleans, the king's uncle; of her who was the greatest heiress in all Europe; who in her early youth had determined to be queen of France, and had endeavored to win her kingly cousin into a closer relationship; who on the destruction of this dream turned her attention to the emperor of Germany; who, at the time of the Fronde, had entered Paris, assumed command, and even turned the guns of the Bastille upon the royal army; who in her day, had repulsed the wooing of Charles II. of England (then in exile) and voted him a bore; and who ultimately, after refusing an emperor, three reigning monarchs, Phillip of France (the brother of Louis), and half a dozen sovereign princes, married a rascally adventurer who forced her to pick up his hat and pull off his muddy riding boots, to show his contempt for her.

It was to this shady, restful home that she retired when the heat of summer came, to train her hounds, try her English horses, tend her aviaries, row on the river, or watch her flowers. Her other castles and estates stood



CHOISY MADEMOISELLE.

high as Choisy. So well known was her desire for quiet when she retired there that not even the king himself would have ventured to intrude without a cousinly invitation. Hither came by special favor a few choice spirits, Corneille or Racine to read a new play; Mansard to show her the plans for a new palace he was building for the king (Mademoiselle affected to patronize the arts); or perhaps a bevy of feminine friends brimming over with gossip of the court.

Mademoiselle was by nature a bundle of contradictions. Understanding politics, she had small capacity for ruling; ostentations in the distribution of her wealth without being charitable; shrewd in judgment, yet so blinded by conceit that all the world looked on and laughed at her folly; of warlike disposition (a hundred times more a leader or a general than her father), yet with a woman's heart, and in her better, softer moments displaying a gentleness truly feminine.

Fairly good-looking she was, despite the long Bourbon nose; tall, shapely, with really beautiful hair; eyes blue, mouth firm, and a finely moulded shoulder. She had withal an air of command that bespoke royal blood. She was of the court, courtly; unbending only at times and allowing familiarity in none, save her lady-in-waiting, or companion as she chose to call her.

It was on this afternoon, when the whole earth was brighter for its plunge-bath of the night before, that a coach of state with outriders turned in from the road and stopped at the main entrance of the house. The footmen descended, the door was opened, and "La Grande Mademoiselle" stepped forth in all the stateliness a queen could show. With this regal air she entered the long gallery, whose satin-covered walls were decorated with portraits of her famous and illustrious ancestors. Passing its length, she entered a small writing-room, beyond which was the door leading to her own private apartments. Opening this

noiselessly, she stopped and gazed long and earnestly at some object within. Gradually her expression changed. Her queenliness was gone, gone her majesty, and the womanliness which overcame but seldom her proud imperious nature clothed her as with a different garment.

The only occupant of the room was a young girl, barely 19, who reclined in an easy-chair near the open window. She was clothed in a white gown of thin silk, with gold stars and leaves in Persian stitch scattered over it; a pale pink sash was tied in a large knot below her bosom. She was tall and slender, with that grace of repose and freedom of action that is only gained by healthful country life. Her hair, light brown and fine of texture, rippled about her temples in a variety of natural waves, falling over her shoulders in long ringlets; eyes that showed a brown deeper than that of her hair; soft lashes that partly veiled, partly displayed the glance within; lips thin, playfully curved, yet expressing moral firmness which could pour or pray as her emotion demanded—a natural beauty, unmarred by folly or the decrees of fashion. She was the embodiment of youthful vigor; vigor of body and health of mind. The soft glow in her cheek and the calm earnest look in her eye, a look that knew not evil, neither searched for it in others, both showed that she was not of the court or city.

This was mademoiselle's constant companion, Renee d'Outrelaise, only daughter of a noble of Poitou, long of lineage, but poor in purse. The ambition of her mother for her daughter's advancement had led her, much against the old comte's wishes, to send her to Paris to an influential friend, in order that she might become attached as lady-in-waiting to one of the royal household. Mademoiselle had seen her soon after her arrival and had taken her as her personal attendant.

Struck by the nobility of thought and character soon displayed by her protegee, she chose to keep her altogether from the noxious vapors of court life and allow the budding flower to develop uncontaminated within the bounds of her own presence. Her especial fear was that her royal cousin, the king, becoming enamored of the freshness of her beauty, should seek to pluck this blossom for his own refreshment as he had so often done before. Hence it was that Renee followed her patroness from castle to castle as she in turn visited her different estates or accompanied her to Paris, where, lodged in mademoiselle's city house, the palace of the Luxembourg, she remained hidden from all mauline eyes, save those alone whom mademoiselle deemed it prudent to admit.

[To Be Continued.]

Complimentary Contradiction.

A New York publisher has a reputation for employing the homeliest stenographers and typewriters in the city. Efficiency rather than beauty is what he wants, and he knows the prettiest ones are not the most efficient. Just the same it is said of him that he doesn't know a pretty woman when he sees one. Still his wife is an unusually handsome woman.

Not long ago she came into the office, where she appears only at rare intervals, and only when it is absolutely necessary. She was met by an office boy, a bright Irish lad, who had never seen her. She asked for Mr. Blank.

"Who shall I say wants to see him, mem?" he inquired.

"His wife," she replied.

He looked at her in open-eyed surprise and genuine admiration.

"Sure, mem, I'll tell him," he said, starting off, "and bad cess to them that says he has no taste in ladies, mem."—N. Y. Times.

Hinted to Do It.

During the last Congressional campaign the candidates for the honor of representing a certain East Tennessee district gathered to meet the voters at a country court-house. There was a rough-looking old mountaineer in the audience. He looked over the aspirants on the platform with a critical eye. One of them had done him several favors, and he felt in duty bound to vote for him. "Not a very promising lot, are they?" he remarked in an audible whisper to a man three seats away. Them's only the kind we used to run for constable when I was a boy. Them's my candidate—that yaller-headed chap, third from this end. I've got to vote for him, but I'd give ten dollars if I hadn't seen him first."—Washington Post.

The Minister and the Widow.

The Rev. Samuel Robbins, a brother of the late Rev. Chandler Robbins, of Boston, was noted for his wit. One of his best retorts was made in Framingham Center, where 40 years ago he was pastor of the Unitarian church.

He had heard that a young widow in his congregation was intending again to enter the matrimonial state, and as he knew her very well he broached the subject to her.

"Yes," she replied, "I feel that my little son Edward needs a father's care."

"Oho!" exclaimed Mr. Robbins, "so you're going to get married to 'raise Ned!'"—Boston Herald.

An Explanation.

Sir Robert Ball, the noted British astronomer, went to a remote town in Ireland to lecture on his favorite topic. Arriving at the station he looked for the expected conveyance, but found none. After all the other passengers, had disappeared a man stepped up and said: "Maybe you're Sir Robert Ball?" After receiving an affirmative reply, the man hastily apologized, saying: "Sure, your honor, I'm sorry I kept you waiting, but I was told to look for an intellectual gentleman."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

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