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Clearfield Republican.

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THE OTHER GARRET.

In the year 1846, finding myself out of employment, I happened to hear that there was a demand in Paris for workmen in my business. I understood the French language, and had no family ties to keep me in London; so I packed up all my worldly goods, and with a few pounds in my pocket, proceeded to the gay capital. I hired a single chamber on the second floor of one of the enormous "hotels garnis," or furnished houses, in the Rue du Faubourg Poissonniere; and the next day went out to seek employment. I had two letters of introduction to masters—one directed to the Rue St. Martin, where I proceeded first. The employer received me kindly, but said he had no need of workmen. The second gave me the same answer, but added that if in six weeks' time I were not engaged, he should certainly be in a condition to employ me. A month passed and left me still idle. I found that I had been misinformed as to the demand for workmen; or else, that the state of things had changed since the date of my information. I began to think of returning to London, before my stock of money became too low to enable me to do so; but, by a strange fate, I was positively without a friend or relative in England; and, if I returned, I did not see that I should greatly improve my prospects. On the other hand, the house in the Faubourg St. Antoine, had assured me that I should be engaged there in another fortnight. I resolved to stay. I saw my money dwindle down to the exact sum which would take me back to London. I hesitated—but at last spent a portion, with the resolution of a man who burns his boat upon the shore to give himself the courage of desperation. Meanwhile I renewed my search, but still without success; till, at last, the day came when I was to present myself at the manufactory in the Rue St. Antoine. The aspect of the workshop, and the countenance of the master, were a sufficient answer. I left the house with a heavy heart—my last and most confident hope was gone in an instant! I was without friends—almost without money, or the means of getting it; and as effectually cut off from my own country as if I had been in the heart of Siberia. I had no spirit to renew the search that day. I took my small loaf and cheese, and with a book in my hand and sat in the garden of the Luxembourgh till the light failed. I returned home, and entering at the lodge, asked to speak with the porter's wife, of whom I had hired my room. At the same time, a young woman lodging in the same house came in and asked if there was a letter for her. The landlady gave her one, and she broke open the seal and began to read it eagerly. I felt some degree of shame to speak of my business in presence of a stranger; but the young lodger was absorbed in reading her letter, and showed no signs of departing.

"I wish, Madame Mallet, to ask if you had another room to let, which I might exchange for my own."

"Oh, yes—Monsieur would like one better furnished; one on the first floor perhaps. Well, I must say Monsieur is not lodged very comfortably; but however, for six francs a week, I am sure Monsieur would not find a nicer loding in all Paris."

"No, Madame Mallet, it is not that which I want. I simply wished to know if you had another room unoccupied, at a lower rent than my own."

"Why yes," replied she, in a less respectable tone—"if you wish for one cheaper you must be content to climb up to the top floor, where I have a little room, not very elegantly furnished as a matter of course, at four francs per week. This young person occupies the other garret, which she will tell you is pretty comfortable."

The young lady raised her eyes from the letter, and murmured timidly, 'that she was quite satisfied with it.'

I observed her as she spoke. She was certainly far from being handsome, but her dress though plain was neat and graceful. There was, however, an expression in her face of meek humility, the result, perhaps of a consciousness of a want of beauty.—On that account she had, I thought experienced neglect, perhaps harsh treatment, and had become timid and retiring, never forgetting her defects.

"Monsieur can walk up and see his new room if he pleases," added Madame Mallet—"or, as it is quite ready, he has nothing to do but to carry up his box."

She took the light, and I followed. My near neighbor wished me good night upon the landing and I entered my new abode. The room was small, and paved with red tiles. It contained simply a bed, two chairs, and a table, and on the wall a few Catholic pictures. The house, like most of the "hotels garnis" in the suburbs of Paris, was a great building, forming three sides of a square, the yard planted with trees. My window looked out upon this yard. I sat myself down and began to reflect upon my position. My money, if I lived the life of a hermit, would not last me more than three weeks. I might then, perhaps sell a few, book I had brought with me—the only consolation to which I could turn in my trouble; I had also a ring which my mother had given me, and which I had resolved never to part with.

I continued to seek employment and to live with the most rigid economy; but at length I found myself without a sou. I took my books and sold them for a few francs at one of those innumerable book stalls that line the quays of the Seine.—When this money was gone I sat down in despair, with my face between my hands. I had no further resource but my mother's ring, and this I was determined to keep. The day passed away, and I tasted no food. The next day I fasted also. I was determined, if at length I gave away to hunger, at least not to do so without such a struggle as should console me in after time for breaking my resolution. The sun shone brightly that day, and I heard my neighbor singing with her window open, where I had often seen her, above the trees. I went to bed early to forget the pangs of hunger, but I could not sleep. A gnawing in the stomach, accompanied by heat and thirst, kept me awake till the light streamed in through the long narrow windows. Then I heard my neighbor again moving briskly in the next apartment. Presently I heard her open and fasten back the long wooden screens or jalousies, which close from the outside of all the windows in Paris. Then, like a bird at the sight of a fine morning, she began to sing again, till the day grew more advanced, and I heard the noise of people in the street. She descended the stairs, and I saw her cross the yard, with her graceful little cap, which all French women wear in the morning, and carrying in her hand a basket of woven straw, such as the French prisoners made and sold in England at the time of the last war.

I could hardly stand for faintness; I waited till I thought it late enough to find some jeweler's shop open, and then, taking my ring, I crept down stairs noiselessly as if I were about to do some shameful deed. Oh, how happy and gay seemed everything in the street compared with me! The sun shone, and the air was so calm and clear, and the faces of the people so cheerful, as they passed to and fro under the long line of trees under the Boulevards. I soon found a goldsmith, where I offered my ring. The man eyed me attentively for a moment, for there was something suspicious in coming to sell a ring at so early an hour. However he seemed satisfied with my appearance, and having examined the stone, and tested the gold with aquafortis, he offered me sixty francs; I believe two thirds of its value—but I accepted them and departed.

The occupant of the "other garret" seemed to haunt me. I met her as I crossed the threshhold of the jeweler's door, returning with her basket full—a long loaf and a melon forcing up the lid. I bid her good morning and passed on. I entered the restaurant and asked for breakfast, of which I eat heartily, though I was careful not to eat too much after my long fast. But in spite of my precautions I felt extremely ill. My eyes were glazed; my lips (as I saw in the glass) were black and parched, and I trembled from head to foot. I do not remember how I spent that day, but all night long I lay in bed, burnt up with fever, and haunted by wild dreams.

Sometimes I seemed to walk between high leaning walls, that threatened to topple down and crush me; and I quickened my pace to escape them, but their length was interminable. At others, I climbed in darkness up a spiral staircase to the roof of some great cathedral; I heard the rolling of organs like low thunder; I climbed, and climbed, fearing to be stifled, till, at length I issued on the roof; and looking down from the dreadful height, I saw a great city spread below, and far away broad fields, and hill tops crowned with windmills. A fear of falling took hold of me, but I could not recede; and I called aloud for some one to come and drag me back to the little door. Then, perplexed with the sudden change, and asking myself whether I dreamed or not. I stood in a level country, where there were long broad ditches, filled with flags and bulrushes bordered by stunted willows. Here there was a stagnant pond, its scummy surface shot with purple and green, its long feathered grasses hunted by splendid dragon-flies; for it was a deep still noontide, and the blue and dazzling sky shut in all that broad landscape. And, although I had thought myself the only living being there,—and although my mother had been dead for many years—I turned around and found her standing by me without surprise. She bade me go with her, and see what she would show me. Soon we stood upon a wide road, and as I guessed, upon the outskirts of a great city, for I heard a noise of a multitude far off; presently we entered the city by a gate; and we looked down on a broad street lined on each side with temples, and great houses—an endless line of pillars, for the street seemed to traverse the whole city; and at the bottom, far away, we saw blue mountains stretching out into the sky. We walked towards them—a great crowd accompanying us—till we issued by another gate, and saw the field again. It suddenly grew dark; but the crowd continued to pour outward by the city gates. After a long time of darkness, I looked up, and saw a faint flush of light around the horizon; and as it grew not only in the east, but in the west, and in every direction, I saw the edges of hills, and the spires of fir plantations against the sky—I said, "It is not the daybreak, but the coming of a great wonder." And I heard my mother's voice, saying, "Fear nothing; you have kept the ring—I gave you, and your love for me will wipe out many sins." Then a great fear seized me, and I called upon her by name, and would have held her by the garment, but she was gone. Meanwile, I prayed upon my knees, and I heard the stir of the voiceless multitude around me, and I fell upon my knees and wept.

I do not know who found out first that I lay ill. Throughout the next day I was half awake, with a consciousness of some one moving in the room; and in the evening a doctor came to me, perhaps he had been before, but I had no memory of it. He gave me medicine which I took without inquiry, and another night passed in a calmer sleep. When I awoke again I felt better. There was daylight in the room. I stretched my hand out to draw aside the curtain of my bed, when to my astonishment, I saw upon my finger the ring which I had sold to the jeweler. There was no doubt of its identity. I tried to recall the events of the last two days. Was this, then, only part of the terrible dream which had oppressed me? No. I remembered too well the days of my poverty and hunger; the long struggle with myself, and the final yielding; the shop on the Boulevard where I had sold my ring, and the Restaurant where I had broke my fast. I thrust my hand under my pillow and drew forth my money, the surest proof that I was not deceived. However I pushed aside my curtains, to assure myself that I was at home, in my own bed room, when, to my surprise, there was my next room neighbor sitting near my window, busily working upon a little cap. The table was drawn up to her side, and upon it was some lace and ribbon. She plied her needle briskly for a while without observing me, and then held out the cap at arm's length, and eyed it like a connosseur. Then she worked a minute or two longer, and again she held it out, when, suddenly holding it sideways, she saw me looking at her.

"Does Monsieur want anything?" she asked.

"Yes," said I, "I wish to know the name of my unknown friend, who has restored to me a ring, given to me by my mother when dying, and which I would have guarded as my life, but that I was compelled to sell it for bread, two days ago. I cannot guess what being has done this. I have no friend in Paris, and I have not spoken of this to a soul. But I entreat you, if you know, not to conceal the name, that I may bless it to my latest hour."

"By-and-by, Monsieur you shall know all; but at present—"

"Nay," I interrupted, "I entreat you to tell me; but why should I doubt? It can be no other than yourself; and yet, I cannot tell why you should thus interest yourself for a poor stanger and a foreigner."

"But would not Monsieur have done an equal kindness for a stranger? There," she exclaimed, suddenly checking herself, "the secret which I meant to keep is told. Mons. Gallart, the cure, always said I was a silly thing."

"But why wish to conceal so good an action?"

"I do not know, except that I should have liked to wait till you were rich enough to repay me. Now you will tease yourself about the money, though I am sure I do not want it. I never should have had it, but for Mons. Gallart, the cure; for, you see, I never thought of saving money. I used to buy every week a new cap, and now and then a new dress till, one day, Mons. Gallart overtook me in the meadow coming from mass, spoke to me about youth, and how soon it was flown, and asked me if I had ever considered that one day I should be no longer young and stong. And I said I had; but it seemed that so many long years must pass away before that time come. He told me that he himself thought like me once, but now his hair had grown gray; he looked back and saw how quickly a man glides from youth to age. "Besides," he said "you may be taken ill," and you have not a friend in the world, excepting me; and I am poor. Would it not be well to try and save a little money? Indeed," he said, "I would not ask you to forego one pleasure, if I did not think it might spare you some future pain." And so he talked to me in this way as we walked arm-in-arm, along the foot-path through the fields, till we came to the road at Neuilly; and then he blessed me, and bade me good-by and returned across the fields. And all the way home I thought upon his words, and resolved to buy fewer caps and dresses, and now that is a year ago, and I have saved a hundred francs, and next Sunday I would have taken them to mass with me, and waited for him again in the church yard, and have shown how I minded what he said, and have asked what to do with all my money."

"And you give all this pleasure for my sake?"

"Nay Monsieur—to what better use could he tell me to employ it? I am not grown old yet. I am not ill—I had no use for it."

"God bless you," I exclaimed, "I hope soon to repay you the money; though the debt of gratitude I owe you I can never do away. But how did you learn that I had sold this ring, and where?"

"Oh, I partly guessed it, as you shall hear. Madame Mallet came to my room door, and said you were very ill, and asked me to come and watch you while she fetched a doctor. I came in and sat by the bedside till the doctor came and saw you were in a high fever, and in great danger, and you ought not to be left alone. So I offered to sit by you, for, you see, I can work here as well as in my own room; for I lose no time. Madame Mallet offered also; and we agreed to attend upon you by turns. And when I was left alone, and you were asleep and dreaming, I heard you talk of a ring, and entreating some one to keep it for you till you came again, and bought with a hundred times its value. Then you sobbed and spoke rapidly in a language I did not understand. Suddenly I remembered meeting you at the jeweller's door the day before; and I said to myself, he has been compelled to sell a keepsake, and this it is that preys upon his mind, and makes him ill. And I tho't of my money, and blessed the good old cure, whose advice had enabled me to help you. In the morning, I went out as usual with my basket and found again the shop upon the Boulevard Montmartre. I asked if some one had not sold a ring there the day before. The man answered yes. I toly him that you wished to buy it again, and he said that you could have it for eighty francs. So I paid him the money and brough the ring away. And then I thought how surprised and delighted you would be to find it on your finger on awakening; so I contrived when your hand was stretched out upon the coverlet, to put it on without disturbing you."

My eyes were filled with tears at the thought of so much simplicity and goodness, I would have said a hundred things, but I could not find a word to utter. I wished that she had been an English woman, that my emotion might speak, without restraint, in its natural language.—She saw me striving to speak and stopped me.

"You must not talk," she said. The Doctor cautioned me above all things, not to let you talk or be excited; and here I have been chattering more than an hour, and forgetting that I ought to go to market."

So saying, she put on her cap, and taking her basket, went out and shut the door noiselessly behind her.

I lay in bed a fortnight; and every day she sat with me and chatted. The constant attendance was no longer necessary, but I begged her to stay with me by day. As I grew better the restraint diminished, and all her natural cheerfulness began to show itself. Her little rounded figure glided about the room with all the lightness of a fawn. Sometimes she sat singing and working, as if in her own room, and then would check harself, and say that it made my head ache; till I begged her to go on.

One day I said to her, "You have never told me your name."

"Aimee: and yours?"

"William Arnot," said I, shearing myself of the final consonant to suit her French ear—"in French, Guillaumea Arnot. It is not so pretty a one as yours, which makes you always beloved," said I, playing upon the word.

"Nay, excepting M. Gallart, I do not know a single being whom I can call my friend."

"And how is this?" I asked—your are so kind and good?"

"I never knew my mother," she replied. "My father was a vinegrower in a little village in Lorraine; and M. Gallart was the cure there at that time. I had a sister who was very beautiful; and M. Gallart taught us both to read and write, and to understand the best writers, whose works he lent us from his library. But my sister was proud and never loved me much: and when she married a rich man, and went to Paris to live, she thought of us no more. I forgave all this, but when my father lay ill, and his farm had gone to ruin, we wrote to her in vain. When he died, we wrote again, and had no answer, I thought I never could forgive her while I lived. The good old cure had been removed to the parish of St. Etienne, where he preaches now, sometime before my father died; but he came to me as soon as he received the news, and arranged my father's funeral. Afterwards, as I had no relatives in the the village, M. Gallart took me to Paris with him and placed me with Madame Armonville, a milliner in the Rue Richelieu; where I learnt how to earn my living. I have never seen my sister since I have been here; but once, soon after I came to Paris I passed by her house. I saw the windows brilliantly lighted, and I heard music. They had a party there that night. I stood looking up at the windows, and crying bitterly. I would have given all that I possessed to see my sister once more if only for a moment, to remind her of the days we spent in our childhood.—But I was afraid of being driven from the door if I rang, and so I passed on, and never went that way again; that is my history, Monsieur."

"It is very sad," I said. "I will not tell you now, by what strange order of events I also am friendless in the world. Some other time I will tell you all. Your story has made me sad, and I did not like to dwell upon the past. Let us rather look forward to the future and like brother and sister, resolve to help and cherish one another while we live."

I took her hand and pressed it in my own. I spoke hurriedly and earnestly, for I felt most deeply every word I uttered. A new source of life had sprung up in my heart. I forgot how little I was in a condition to help her—poor and wretched as I was. The sight of such a noble creature despised, and ill-treated by the world, preserving all hope and cheerfulness, and seeking only to do good to others, had made me a new man. All life stood out before me with another aspect. I felt a stronger faith than ever I had before, that all the evil in the world, the thought of which had long haunted and perplexed me, will one day vanish like the mist, and show the beauty of God's purposes hid within. I was so happy, and so filled with hope, that I thought I felt the near approach of better days; and indeed from that time the current of my fortune ebbed and turned.

At the end of three weeks I was so far recovered as to leave the house and renew my search for employment. I found a great change had taken place since I had kept my room. In every trade there seemed to be a new life; and in a few days I was engaged in the manufactory in the Rue St. Denis. My employer was pleased with my work, and paid me well. My first care was to repay my friend the money which I owed her. She arranged a visit to the cure on the following Sunday, and showed him her money, as she had originally intended. I offered to accompany her.

There are but few days in our lives which are not forgotten as soon as passed. The fete days in the calendar of our existence are few and far apart. Yet sometimes we come to a day which never passes from our memory till we die. Everything we thought and did upon that day comes back upon us afterwards, when the eye is filmed with thought, and all the present is forgotten for a while. This Sunday will live forever in my memory, one of the foremost of such happy days. We rose early, and went out of Paris by the Barriere del l'Etoile. It was a still, cold autumn morning. The mist that lingered still, when we set out, had wholly passed away, and left a heavy dew upon the leaves, and laid the dust upon the roads. We turned off from the highway after awhile, and took a foot path across the meadows till we came to a deep valley, and stood still to look around for a time. Behind us we saw the towers and triumphal arches of Paris—the white houses of the outskirts sprinkled, far and wide, among the trees. But below it was quite a landscape. One side of the valley was plughed up to the borders of a wood. In the hollow stood the old church where we were going, ivy-squared, with a square tower. Behind flowed the Seine, and, farther still, the forest, called the Bois de Boulogne, piled up into the sky its masses of innumerable tints. We descended and entered the church. We were late, for we had lingered long to look upon that scene. My friend touched the incense brush, which was presented to her at the door, but I did not. There was chaunting as we entered; but presently the cure mounted the pulpit and began to preach. He was a fine old man. His hair was grey, but he was not bald. His face was benign and placid, though at times, it wore a somewhat care-worn expression, and his forehead was planted deep with wrinkles. I listened with delight to his discourse which seemed to harmonize with the mood wrought in my mind by the calm autumnal day, and the sight of that still country; for he preached not of dogmas, or of articles of faith, but of charity and love to all mankind.

We waited for him in the churchyard, and when the whole of the congregation had left the church, and the footpaths were dotted with them in their neat attire, the cure issued from the door, and the sexton fastened the great bolts behind him. Aimee ran to meet him, and he kissed her on the forehead, and turning towards me, said, "So you have found a new friend."

"No, Monsieur," said I, taking off my hat with a feeling of reverence, "say, rather, that I have found a new friend; for to her I owe my life and peace of mind; and as yet I have not found occasion to make her a return."

She looked confused; but the cure patted her on the head and begged me to walk beside him, and tell him how this was. He walked between us in his silked gown, tied with a girdle at the waist, and with his head uncovered, while I related to him all my story. She hung down her head, but the old man raised it up and kissed her on the forehead once again. And he begged us to come home and dine with him with so much earnestness that we complied. I half-guessed his reason. He had viewed me at first with the anxiety with which a father scrutinizes the lover of his child, and he wished to have me longer with him that he might better judge. We talked together all the afternoon, but Aimee sat in silence, listening to our words. The discourse of the old man was full of deep and practical philosophy. It was the language of a man grown weary in seeking, in the eternal ebb and flow of history, the tendency of life, and had fallen back upon the present, and a good and holy life, as the only certain things which man can hold. In the evening he accompanied us back to the church, where we left him, and took our way homewards. We looked back again from the hill top, and saw the sun about to sink into the forest, and a level shaft of light shot across all that golden sea of leaves. It was dusk when we returned. A few days afterwards she received a letter from the old man, as he was accustomed to do at certain intervals. He spoke favorably of me, amongst other things, but cautioned her to avoid, not only evil, but the appearance of evil, so that she might escape the scandal of the world.

The church was too far for her to visit regularly. But after she had been to mass, we went together every Sunday to St. Cloud or Asnieres, or some other village, in the environs. The fine weather lingered still. The trees under our window were nearly bare, and the vine against the house had begun to shed its stalks, but in the country the trees were still thick with leaves, for there had been no wind. The mornings became more misty, but at midday the sun was warm. It seemed the winter would never come—such a golden calm had fallen on the earth; till one moning while we talked of country rambles, I looked out of my window and saw the snow flakes falling in the street.—Then came the winter nights and how to pass them? We could sip no longer our coffe on the Boulevards, sitting at the little green table under the trees. Sometimes we played at chess, which I had taught her, and twice we went to the theatre together. But this was not enough. One day I asked her if she would like to learn English, and she said, "Yes," and promised to take pains to learn. I bought a little grammar, and began. The cure had taught her well the principles of grammar, so that she very quickly comprehended the rules. She applied herself with unwavering industry—even while she worked, she she had her grammar open before her, conning the rules and learning them by heart; and at night I read with her, and explained the words and peculiarities. At the end of five months she could read it pretty well, and began to try to speak.—There was something so simple in her foreign accent, and her literal translations of the idiom of her own language, that I could not help laughing. But she was not discouraged, but would laugh too, and ask me to explain her error, and promise to speak better by-and-by.

The summer came again, and I worked early and late, for we were very busy. It happened, at that time, we had some work to execute near Orleans; and a little troop of workmen were to be sent there to stay for a couple of months. The master selected me to superintend them. The choice was a confidence, and I could not refuse to go. I told my friend of it in the evening. I was to leave Paris on the evening following, and the day previously, we arranged to visit the old cure once again.

Yet another day, which will linger in my memory till I die!—the brightest of those happy days! We went out early this time. It was the first day of June—a fine clear morning. A gentle rain had fallen in the night, and every thing looked fresh and green. We walked along the borders of the wood and heard the blackbird, hidden in the leaves, sing out and stop; and then there was a dead silence; till another answered, deeper in the woods. I had never seen her dressed so prettily before. She wore a dress of grey merino, and a cape of the same stuff. Her cap was of lace, and pale blue ribbon. We did not speak often. I thought of the separation on the morrow, and at every step I seemed to shrink from it more. Afterwards we went to St. Cloud, which was not far off. And all this time I had never spoken to her of anything but friendship, nor ever whispered to myself how I loved her. My love had been too pure to know itself. We wandered in the park till it was time to go, and still we lingered. We sat down upon a seat, beneath great oaks: and then, when the hour grew nearer, when we were to depart, I felt more deeply still how all my soul was bound to her. I could not leave her till I told her all.

Eight weeks passed slowly in the old city of Orleans; but every day I wrote to her, and she replied—the solace of our solitary nights. She told me, in her innocence of heart, how she had loved me ever since the day we went to the cure in the valley; and how she had feared that I should never love her as she loved me; for "you alone" she said, "could unsea