

ROMANCE OF A PARSON-AGE.

No sleeper little town than St. Anatole lies nestled amid the vine-clad hills of eastern France, none of more smiling, gracious aspect. There is picture-queenes, too, about its quiet streets, the low arcades with round arches recalling Spanish occupation of Franche Comte, part of the rich dower of Mary of Burgundy, and bits Spanish domestic architecture remain here and there. Round about rise the pleasant hills, more gentle declivities, although designated by the name of mountains in these parts; a little river runs by the town, biding itself in a green valley; beyond tower the dark pine forests of the Jura; white far away stretches the Alpine fairyland, Mont Blanc, and its sister peaks, flakes of violet and amber in the firmament. So dead alive this townling of 2,000, or 3,000 souls, so unfrequented by tourists and remote from the highways of the world, that not a carriage awaits the chance traveler who makes a halt here. Only a tumble-down omnibus, for the convenience of business men, plies between the railway station and the one inn of the place. Into this cumbersome vehicle, on a bright September day, stepped a lady whose appearance was little in keeping with such shabby surroundings. Her dress was simple enough certainly, a gown were hardly plainer, yet the black gown of light gauze, the long veil that seemed part of it and the small bonnet, a mere coronet of jet on the golden hair, but served to heighten the wearer's beauty. Her's was loyness of the most dignified kind, features, figure, carriage, indicated the nobility imparted by high rank and elegant bringing up, as well as a certain state natural to some women; and, in spite of the studied sobriety of dress, evidences were there of ancestral wealth and splendor. From her small ears hung rare emeralds in the quaint setting of the Renaissance. The brooch that fastened her dress was a fleur de lis fashioned of pearls, evidently an heirloom; and as she gathered up her skirts to step into the omnibus, a flounce of rich lace fell over the slender foot. There were no other passengers, and the blue-bloused conductor, hat in hand, stood by the door awaiting instructions. So self-absorbed however, was the lady, that she did not notice his presence, and he was obliged at last to ask her destination.

Slightly coloring, and with the air of one aroused from deep reverie, she made reply:

Drive me if you please, to the Protestant parsonage.

Once or twice, when the horses slackened speed, and she thought it was time to alight, her color went and came, she trembled violently and drew a deep breath; but when indeed the wheels stood still, by a tremendous effort she recovered self-possession.

Is the Pastor Anville within? Her voice did not tremble, but it was in a strained key. She had turned very pale, and was evidently asking herself whether indeed she had courage to fulfill her errand.

The Pastor Anville?—I am he, was the reply, spoken briefly and absently.

The minister had evidently been disturbed in the midst of serious occupation, and had not so much as given himself time to identify his intruder. This much was clear a lady waited on his threshold; he felt bound to invite her within.

He was a striking looking man, in middle life—that is to say, in his prime. But for the habiliments of a Protestant pastor, he must at once have been taken for a Catholic priest. The priestly stamp was undoubtedly there—the fine features closely shaven, the penetrating look, the general aspect recalled rather the disciple of Loyola than of Calvin; and could it be the crown of the head showed unmistakable signs of the tonsure!

He was no meanly endowed son of Adam, quite the reverse; but for all that an observer would single him out of a crowd by reason of intellectual rather than physical superiority. The noble brow, the commanding look marked him from others. He ought to have occupied one of the metropolitan pulpits of the world. Such a man could but be a force, moral as well as spiritual—a mighty lever of

human wills and passions, a powerful agent in the strife of good with evil.

Bright sunshine filled the little study in which the pair now stood face to face. The lady had raised her veil, her fair, gold brown hair caught the sunlight. The place seemed irradiated by her pensive yet sunny beauty.

Do you not recognize me now? she asked, in a voice of sweet trembling, feminine appeal. Georgette de Beaumont—oftimes your penitent in days gone by?

I forget nothing, was the bitter, perhaps ironic reply. You are one of those who came to my confessional with your girlish derelictions years ago.

For a brief moment he had seemed to stagger shrinking from that exquisite presence; but, just as she had done a moment before, by a violent effort he now regained his self-composure. Offering her a seat, the pastor placed a chair for himself opposite her own, then closed the door, evidently prepared for a confidence.

You have come to me in some trouble or perplexity—that I see, he began, smiling faintly. And you are aware of my altered circumstances. As a friend, as a minister of the gospel, I am ready to advise, perhaps able to comfort; the priest, the confessor, the absolver, you know well, have ceased to exist.

I know it, was the timid, girlishly hesitating reply.

Yet the beautiful speaker could hardly be called a girl. She was in the flower of womanhood, not its opening bud, and had certainly passed her thirtieth year.

I should have come to you long ago, she continued, but my courage failed me.

Then she broke off suddenly, as if courage failed her still. A lovely blush tinged her cheeks, tears glistened on the long eyelashes. He leaned forward and scrutinized her keenly.

You, too, he said, Georgette de Beaumont, daughter of one of the most ancient houses of Catholic France, you also have forsaken the faith of your fathers? Is it possible that you are a Protestant now, like myself?

I am a Catholic still, was the passionate, reckless answer. But I am alone in the world. My apostasy could pain none. I love. Only say the word, and I place my conscience in your keeping.

Oh, he cried, in a voice deeply moved—he was evidently wrang to the heart of this confession, implying as it did an empty woman's life, a hungry heart, an unsatisfied soul—oh! leave these rude conflicts to minds of tougher texture—these dire problems to theologians—and rest content yourself to be good and happy.

The words were uttered with deep feeling, almost impassioned tenderness and neither knew how it was. She had slipped from her chair to the side of his own and was kneeling there—kneeling to him as she had done many and many a time years ago in the confessional. The fair head, with its coronet of golden hair, was uplifted to his, the sweet lips were on a level with his rough hand. All shrinking all terror, all hesitancy had left her now. The supreme moment was come she felt entirely mistress of herself, and able to utter the inmost thought of her heart.

You bid me be good and happy, she said. There is only one way, May I tell what that way is? May I confess to you as to the old days?

He smiled then, a sheltering encouraging smile much as if she were some bewitching child fleeing to him from chimerical terrors. To his thinking she was still the sunny, sparkling, frolicsome Georgette of old, no soulless Georgette certainly, but a worldling from the cradle, the spoiled darling of a noble house, the heiress of one of the handsomest fortunes in France, rebuked by him punished by him in the confessional, for childish shortcomings in matter of religious duty, years ago. That smile, sad although it was wonderfully irradiated his dark physiognomy. It brought back to Georgette's mind his former self: He seemed to her what he had ever been. She knew not indeed of the change, outward as well as spiritual, that had come over him during these intervening years. For the caustic yet benignant abbe, the consummate man of the world, the fiery disputant, the mighty orator, all these

belonged to a bygone time Pastor Anville's friends and small congregation were only familiar with an over conscientious, laborious and learned minister of the gospel. His real, his best self, was perforce concealed from the simple townfolk. And only here and there was the fact realized that the Protestant pastor of St. Anatole had formerly preached to crowded audiences in one of the great churches in Paris had seceded, in fact from Rome to Luther.

By all means unburden yourself. I shall be glad to serve you, he said, growing more genial, yielding in spite of himself to the witchery of her presence. Thus encouraged, still kneeling beside him, her hands clasped on the arm of his chair, her upraised face sweet and innocent as that of a 5-year-old maiden; she began her story.

You thought doubtless you had a careless girl to deal with in days gone by. I seemed a mere plaything to you. Very likely you even begrudged the time spent upon me in the confessional, and but for my position, would have delegated the charge to another. It was never as you fancied. I belied myself, as many women do, putting on the self that pleases the world. I was, from the first, impressionable, sincere, capable of better things.

He was still as far as ever from divining her errand. But he found it sweet to listen to her, to be able to gaze on her, and feel in a certain subtle, impersonal sense that she belonged to him as of old. He could still chide caress, encourage.

That better self I felt conscious of; how could I assert it? she cried, growing more and more eloquent on her own behalf. I was compelled to live in the world, whether I would or no. From my cradle upward I was trained to play a part. And you, too, even you, my spiritual guide, my monitor, you did not seek to arouse deeper feelings. I should have listened to you in the confessional had your heart spoken.

The rebuke was a crushing one and he flinched under it; a word of apology and expostulation rose to his lips but he reserved it till she should have done. She anticipated him. I could understand your motive, she went on; your duty was not to make a woman think for herself, or seek to be happy after her own way. Brilliant as you were, experienced as you were, you yet lowered yourself of set purpose in your dealings with my sex. As a priest, as a theologian, you could hardly act otherwise. But I read your character, although you never read mine.

Again he flinched. Her words had struck home. I saw through the veil, she continued; you played women's intellects as with toys themselves you did not despise. But for your calling, your vows, I could have played with you in turn.

Does the priest cease to be a human being? he asked, bitter almost vindictiveness: Oh, have done; the stings of conscience I have borne, and can bear; your reproaches unman me utterly.

She touched his arm with a soothing gesture, and made him meet her look of tender pity and insinuation. It is not yourself I reproach, she said very gently. Remember that should I have made the long journey hither for such a purpose? But hear me out.

She paused for a moment, as if to gather fresh courage and self reliance then went on in quicker, more fervid tones.

Do you remember a curious experience that happened to you during a memorable storm in Paris, just ten years ago? A hurricane so fearful raged over the city that it was dangerous to be abroad; the rain flowed in rivers through the streets, many people were injured by falling tiles, and the lightning flashes seemed as if every moment they would fire the place. Your vast church was empty, but you were at your post, when a woman dressed in black and closely veiled stole up to the confessional and knelt to you.

Again a light as of sudden conviction seemed to break upon his mind, but this time of no impersonal nature; it was a conviction that had to do with him as well as with her. He flushed, turned pale, made an effort to speak, but failed, the words stayed on his faltering lips.

She confessed to you in the storm, Georgette continued, and what a story was that for a woman to utter, a priest to listen to! Father she said in pity, hear, comfort advise me. I possess everything that others of my sex envy—wealth, noble rank, suitors past counting, and all these are as nothing, even hateful to me. I love one who it is sinful to think of as a lover. The only man who has ever touched my heart is he who has charge of my soul. And he knows it, he is so far guilty too. And your answer to this appeal? she cried, passionately. I resented it then. You seemed more cruel to me than that awful storm, more cruel than life, but you could help yourself. Sister, you said in a strange voice a voice that made me tremble, do not think that you are alone in your dilemma. Many another, and many a stronger one, too has succumb to the same temptation, and dared to love where love was forbidden. Pray for them as for yourself. I have comfort to give you, but follow my counsel. Go back to the world, and, when the world has taught you to forget, then seek the church's consolation, not before.

You were that woman? Asked the pastor, his voice sinking to an aghast whisper.

I am telling you my own story she replied. "Hear me out. Your answer chilled, but did not crush me. I found a certain comfort in it after a time. At last then, I said to myself, I do not suffer, I do not love alone and, who could tell—I was perhaps even loved in return? I found consolation in the thought that we two, my nameless lover and myself, were martyrs together. So I went back to the world as you had bidden me. I tried to be mundane and heartless—to forget. My life now was changed. My father was named ambassador at a foreign court. We spent several years out of France, and existence was one prolonged whirl of pleasure and excitement. But I never forgot—

She flashed upon him the light of her pure, lovely eyes, and said passionately: to one memory; I lived in it still. And when I returned to Paris a few months ago, an orphan, mistress of my own fortunes, alone in the world I learned your strange story. Force of conviction had led out to change your religion. Like myself, you were free!

The very sound of that word seemed to have magic for her ears. The timid, hesitating look of appeal vanished, her voice grew strong, firm, exultant. Tears rose to the sweet eyes and trembled on the delicately flushed cheek, but they were tears of pure joy.

For, of course, she said gathering his hands to her own—the words she had just uttered, almost to her own thinking, made them already one—it is of yourself I have been speaking all this time, and I was not surely wrong; you loved me, did you not? To think of the joy I felt when I learned what had happened! For the first time in my life I rejoiced in the fact that I was rich. Oh! I said to myself, now at last my wealth can be turned to noble uses. In his hands it will become a thing to glory in. I do not, she said, emphasizing the words with artless sincerity. I could be quite happy in such a home as this, in your side. But you were made for a lofty position, you were born to rule. Think, then, how useful my large fortune will be to you. If, indeed, it is a better religion a higher truth that you now follow you may be the means of persuading many. I have planned it all. We will build a beautiful Protestant church in Paris; from far and wide people will flock to hear you. Once more you will be in your proper sphere, for I am sure you cannot be happy or quite satisfied here. This career of a country pastor is too narrow, too circumscribed, for a nature like yours.

He bowed acquiescingly. Yes, it was all true. So much his face said. All that I have is yours, she went on; the vast fortune my father left me, the hotel in Paris, the chateau in Touraine, these are drawn to me, and all I care for, I live for is this—

The clear impassioned voice broke down; the fair head dropped; the hand she held to her heart was kissed and bedewed with tears. Throughout the latter part of the their interview the pastor had seemed under a spell. Once or twice he would fain to interrupt, but utterance

failed him. He, too, was flushed tearful shaken in every limb. Those last wild words, those burning tears and kisses on his hand, broke the charm and recalled him to realities. He rose now and for a moment stood over her with a strange expression as if he were calling down the blessings of heaven upon her fair head; as if indeed he was shrinking from some angelic vision, that reproved his own faultiness and mortality. Then without a word, he led her to the window.

It looked upon the long narrow garden stretching from the house and a little church, now flooded with warm sunshine. All was calm, golden, peaceful; yet Georgette gazed with a sudden, unexplained sinking of the heart. At the farther end, under the shadow of a lofty plane tree, was a table, and by it stood a patient-faced woman evidently of the peasant class, busily ironing. Homely as was her appearance, it was, nevertheless, not without a certain dignity and pathos: She looked so absorbed in sense of every thing but the matter of fact, prosaic task before her.

You see yonder poor good woman, the pastor said as the pair thus watched the unconscious figure from the window. I loved another, whose story you have just told. But the first act of my new life, and newly awakened conscience, was to atone to her I had wronged in my youth.

And romance had now surely knocked at the parsonage door for the first, last time. With burning tears, a hard clasp, a whispered word, and one long lingering gaze into each other's eyes, the two parted. Who shall say ever to meet again?

Strange as it would seem at first sight, this fateful meeting little affected the tenor of their outward lives. It was as if all the daring, all the heroism all the force of these two characters had been already spent; by Georgette de Beaumont upon the initiative that had been the one truly fine act of her life; by the pastor, upon twofold sacrifice made for conscience sake. He had suddenly found himself at the parting of the way; on the one hand, beckoned worldly fortune, the esteem of the great, a command-social position; on the other poverty, scorn, an abnormal condition, but, coupled with these, a conscience at rest. Then came the second choice. He might make material atonement to the peasant girl he had wronged years before: He might then, having dismissed this subject of self reproach, think of the fireside happiness no longer denied him, and even dream of Georgette, the beautiful Georgette!

Once the straight path taken, the tempting traverse lost sight of forever, he seemed to lose all ambition, all enterprise, even all capacity of looking forward.

Again and again after that interview Georgette tried to rouse him from his lethargy and entice him from the dead alive country town in which he was lost to the world. Yet he seemed not unhappy, rather passive and automatic, as if the strings of passion and action were stopped forever, brought to a standstill by some rude shock.

It was the same with Georgette. After that journey to the parsonage amid the vines, she returned whither she had come, and continued to live in the world. Again and again suitors demanded her hand but she steadfastly refused to marry.—M. E. B. in Temple Bar.

Farming as a Profession.

Mr. James Parton closes an article on "Farming as a Profession for Young Men" as follows:

If any young fellow should ask me, Shall I be a farmer? I should have to reply by asking him another question—Are you man enough.

There are in the United States about four million farmers. They are not all getting rich by any means for bonanzas are not to be had for the asking, but they are all getting a living. They are a tough-bodied, hard working and hard-headed set of men, and compare well in all respects with any other class in the country.

It is one of the anomalies of our civilization that young men will flock to the cities, live in a second rate boarding-house and end a long career just as poor as they began it, when it is possible to get a good-sized farm for about nothing, live in the open air,

eat well, sleep well and be free from dyspepsia and rheumatism.

A big city is to most young men about what a candle is to a moth—just as attractive and just as fatal. They are willing to take their chance at success knowing that it is nine to one against them, and they are unwilling to take their chance with a Western farm, knowing that it is nine to one in their favor.

A very large number of our German immigrants and a smaller number of Irishmen start for the West within twenty-four hours after reaching New York. In the course of a few years they have cleared ground enough for their crops, have their houses and outbuildings, their cattle, their sense of independence and a penny or two for a rainy day.

The best thing in this country is its large area of public land, and one of the best characteristics of the government is its generosity in giving this land for the honest settler to make a home on. It to the four million farmers another million could be added from the ranks of the wage earners we should discover an easier solution of the labor problem and the young men who might adopt farming as a profession would find in their new life a health, contentment and happiness which the cruel competitions of city life will never yield.

Tahty Facts Worth Knowing.

The second largest state is California. Nebraska is more than twice the size of Indiana.

Michigan and Florida are the same size.

Texas is four times as large as the New England States.

Dakota is larger than England, Scotland and Ireland together.

The population of London, England, is equal to that of Canada, or that of New York State, including its cities.

Kentucky and Portugal are about the same size.

California is nearly five times as large as Ireland.

The island of Cuba and the State of Tennessee are nearly equal in area.

Brazil is nearly as large as the United States; but the population of the latter is six times that of the former.

The populations of Canada, New York, Ireland and Belgium are about the same.

If the people of Canada and of the United States were placed in the State of Texas, the number of persons to the square mile would be fewer than at present in China.

The population of Canada is double that of Australia.

Colorado is as large as New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey together.

It would take ten states as large as Massachusetts to make a state as large as Kansas.

There are more people in the cities of New York and Brooklyn than in the State of Massachusetts, including its cities.

There are as many people in the City of Chicago as in the State of Connecticut.

There are twenty-seven states and territories each larger than New York.

Oregon is equal in area to New York and Pennsylvania.

Massachusetts is smaller than either New Hampshire or Vermont.

Minnesota is twice the size of Ohio.

The three states bordering on the Pacific are larger than the thirteen states bordering on the Atlantic.

Montana is thirty times larger than Connecticut.

Dakota is four times larger than Indiana.

Iowa is five times as large as Belgium, and four times as large as Denmark.

Maryland and Switzerland are about the same size.

Michigan is twice the size of Scotland.

The area of the Dominion of Canada is almost equal to the area of the United States, including Alaska.

Texas is as large as France, Holland and Belgium together.

There are nearly as many people in the City of Philadelphia as in the State of Kansas.

Garibaldi's Remains.

A remarkable controversy is being fought out over the body of Garibaldi. It will be recalled that when the hero and patriot died, his last will was found to confirm his expressions in life in favor of cremation. He required his executors to see that his body should not be buried, but burned. The feelings of some of the members of his family, and not a few of his friends, were adverse to such a treatment of his remains. From that time to this, the present head of the family, the Deputy Menotti Garibaldi, has been entreated again and again by his father's admirers to carry out the great patriot's last request. Menotti, however, has always steadily resisted these appeals. The whole business has now been put into the hands of the Milan Cremation Society, which is about to take legal proceedings against Menotti Garibaldi in order to compel him to lay aside his personal objections and comply with the direction of his father.

Aphorisms from Africa.

De coolies spring hides the closest amongst de rocks.

Las year's hot spell cools off mighty fast.

Light nigger too much fo' de so-back boss.

De meller apple give fa'r warnin, fo it fall.

De noise o' de wheels don't measure de load in de wagon.

Wild goose in de wheat fiel' don't go to sleep.

Twon't he'p de crop to plant a new fangled sort o' corn with fifteen ears to de stalk on de po' broomstraw fiel'; dat sort o' land got all it kin do raisin' one ear to de bill.

De dog dat try to scratch a mole out de ground ain't got nough education to hurt him.

Blind hoss know when de trough am empty.