

THE LITTLE DRUMMER. BY THE WRITERS OF "THE BILLOP MYSTERY."

THE Little Drummer.

From the French of Jean Barnard.

From the Boston Home Journal.

The night of Dec. 24, 1788, was a stormy one. The rain fell in torrents; the wind blew furiously, and at each gust the dead branches fell from the trees with noises that sounded strangely like groans.

It was about 1 o'clock in the morning, and there was a carriage on the road leading from the village of Croix-Daurade, which is situated about four kilometers from Toulouse, to the Chateau de Pallicat. The horses had their heads turned toward the gale, and were becoming restless and unmanageable, when a sudden gust of wind, more violent than the others, blew out the light in the lanterns.

"Stop, Jean!" said a voice from the inside of the carriage.

The coachman obeyed, and descended from his seat. He took the nervous horses by the bridles, and calling by name struck them with his hand to quiet them.

"Can you see a light anywhere?" asked the same voice.

"Yes," replied the coachman, "there's one very near. It is in the cottage of the Margardetto, but it is a very humble place, and Marguerite is very poor."

"What's the difference?" said the man in the carriage. "We will wait at any rate be much better off there than in this raging storm."

The door of the carriage was opened, and a man, holding a very large bundle in his arms, stepped out and ran in the direction indicated by the coachman. He knocked at the door of the cottage, which was opened by a young girl of fourteen or fifteen years of age.

"You here, Monsieur le Marquis?" exclaimed the boy in astonishment.

"Yes," replied the Marquis, as he entered and placed on a chair his precious bundle, which was nothing else than a young girl about the same age as the boy who opened the door.

They were the same age, but in other respects how different! The girl was wrapped in a long cloak of rich fur, through the openings of which could be seen a dress of gold and silver. Her blonde hair was covered with a lace-lined cap, under which shone her beautiful blue eyes. The boy was pale, thin, and had an air of misery and timidity about him that was pitiful to see.

The room in which the Marquis and his daughter had sought shelter was cold and bare, and dimly lighted by a solitary candle. The only articles of furniture were a few wooden chairs, a clock and an old table, and in the corner a bed on which a sick woman was lying.

The Marquis looked about him in surprise; and the lad, who seemed to answer his questions, said:

"Oh, we do not live here, Monsieur le Marquis. You know, my mother is a widow, and she has been sick for two years. I earn barely enough to keep us from starving."

The sudden entrance of the Marquis and his daughter had startled the sleeping woman. Her pale and ghastly face resembled that of a corpse. The boy ran to her side to announce the visit with which they had been honored.

"Yes, my poor Marguerite," said the Marquis, "we were overtaken by the storm on our way to the chateau, and we have sought shelter here."

The poor woman had barely strength to nod her head and to murmur a few words of welcome.

"What is your name?" asked the Marquis of the boy.

"Are you a shepherd?"

"Yes, monsieur; they are your flocks that I tend."

"How much do you earn?"

"It depends on the busy season. Three sous a day; sometimes less than that."

"Is that all?"

"We live on that, my mother and I; or, rather, we do not starve altogether."

"Poor people!" exclaimed the girl.

There was so much sweetness and genuine compassion in her tone that the Marquis called to the coachman, who reigned the lantern and drove the carriage to the door of the cottage.

"Come, monnion, let us hurry to the chateau," said the Marquis to his daughter.

Jeanne de Sordard wrapped herself again in her cloak; but, before leaving, she slipped into her pocket a gold coin, the first one that had ever shone in that miserable hut.

The next day, and all the days following, Jeanne de Sordard and the poor Marguerite, from that time was in need neither of food, medicines nor care. But Marguerite, who was worn out with privations and had a cold, did not recover, and a month later she died in the arms of her son.

Francis vowed eternal gratitude to his young benefactors. Thanks to the tender charity of the young girl, his mother had died, not in the misery and squalor in which she had lived so long, but surrounded by every comfort that could make a death-bed easy.

On her side, Jeanne was greatly impressed with the mild disposition and the honesty of the young shepherd, and she persuaded her father to place him in the convent of the Jacobins at Toulouse as an oblate. It was a great opportunity for the young peasant; and, later he would be an instructor or a lay brother, according to his disposition and talents.

Jeanne went to spend in Toulouse the winter which followed Francis' entrance into the convent. Each Sunday she went to mass at the Dominican convent, for it was there that the most renowned preacher could be heard, and the ceremonies were performed with a pomp that was not equaled in any of the churches of the city.

Francis assisted at these ceremonies as an acolyte, carrying a great silver candlestick, or swinging the censer, whose smoke filled the chapel with the delicious perfumes of the incense. Sometimes he went around the altars with the monk who took up the collections; and, in passing Jeanne de Sordard's pew, the young oblate could not resist fitting up his eyes to the which timid but heartfelt salutation she would always reply by a sign of recognition which was imperceptible to every one else, but which was not lost upon Francis.

In the spring Jeanne returned to the Chateau de Croix-Daurade, and Francis might pass and repass her, but which was not lost upon Francis. The young oblate could not resist fitting up his eyes to the which timid but heartfelt salutation she would always reply by a sign of recognition which was imperceptible to every one else, but which was not lost upon Francis.

It was in the month of February of this year that the religious orders were suppressed by a decree of the assembly, and the doors of all the convents were thrown open. There were many monks who were quite willing to break their vows, save off their beards and ex-

"He'll sing low for a while now, Mrs. Rising," Mr. Rising growled.

"Well, I never knew Bill Jones had much of an ear for music, anyway," John remarked Mrs. Rising hopefully.

"What in the name of sense has that to do with it, Emly?"

"Why, to tell that the notes were uttered wrong, John," said Mrs. Rising, and then added half apologetically, "but perhaps he carried a tuning fork."

"Or possibly a tuning fork, or a table spoon, Emly," said Mr. Rising, with a bitter but unappreciated sarcasm.

"Wake me up, Emly, in five minutes. I've got to go down to board meeting tonight," said Mr. Rising, throwing himself on the lounge.

Mrs. Rising obediently roused her husband, who went down to the board meeting, and asked, "Why is it called a board meeting, John?"

"Because the directors and officers sit on the board, Emly," returned Mr. Rising.

"That's funny," observed Mrs. Rising. "Is it hard, John?"

"Well, I've seen harder things, Emly," replied Mr. Rising.

"How many men sit with you, John?"

"Was Mrs. Rising's next query.

"I am not sure that I ought to write about the demon bicycle, at least until my acquaintance, Monsieur Rataplan, has had time to get back to Paris and put his thoughts in order."

"Still he spoke in the most open way about this miracle, and did not seem to care who heard him, so perhaps he has protected his different inventions as a member of every city society in the world so far as he knew, although, of course, some of them might have escaped him."

"Are you a record breaker?" I asked.

"No, I am not. I have never broken a record. I think I did break the record across France."

"And you are here resting after your ride?"

"Well, yes, in a measure. Actually, I had no intention of coming to Switzerland, but I could not rightly help myself. It all came about through a great mistake."

"You talk English," I said, "with a French accent, and you are a Frenchman. My name's Maguire and I'm from Philadelphia. I have always been in the United States, and I have never been to France. I can't get a fair show in America."

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"So it is. If you don't start in a Frenchman. Where did you learn the language?"

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The Demon Wheel.

ROBERT BARR, in Detroit Free Press.

"Exactly. That's the ordinary storage battery of commerce. You get out only a fraction of the electricity you put in. Ever heard of the Maguire Storage Battery?"

"No, I haven't," I replied.

"It's a small pocket battery—I won't enter into particulars—but by a certain interior arrangement of the plates, it actually converts the E. M. F. of the fluid put into it."

"And what does E. M. F. stand for?"

"Electro motor force. I see you don't understand even the rudiments of electricity. Now it is the Maguire Storage Battery might be applied to a bicycle. It worked beautifully—small and compact, you know—but I couldn't get it charged again. So I put my wits to work and invented a little portable dynamo which was attached to the driving wheel of a bicycle and which would keep replenishing the storage battery. I thought that the force going down hill would run the dynamo, and when the wheels stopped, it would transmit the force to the bicycle when going up hill."

"And did it work?"

"No, it didn't. I did work, my boy, in a way that would have made your hair stand on end, and nearly ruined my constitution, but as soon as I have that invention under control I'll parachute down to you from the clouds of Paris for a trial spin before I had everything completed. I live in the southern part of Paris and so ran down to Philadelphia to see the dynamo. I would go. I had the dynamo in one pocket—it is very small but powerful, as I told you—and the battery in the other. About the size of a small box, it could be carried in a pocket, and I could off the machine with a smooth, easy country road ahead of me, and attached dynamo and battery. But I forgot one thing, and that was the dynamo which I had invented, and which I had named the 'dynamo,' was not a dynamo at all, but a storage battery. I had the dynamo in one pocket—it is very small but powerful, as I told you—and the battery in the other. 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