

"And why should she not have promised?"

"But, George—during all this time you have never mentioned it."

"There are some things, Madame Faragon, which one doesn't mention. And I do not know why I should have mentioned it at all. But you understand all about it now. Of course she will marry the man. It is not likely that my father should fail to have his own way with a girl who is dependent on him."

"But he—M. Urmand; he would give her up if he knew it all, would he not?"

To this George made no instant answer; but the idea was there, in his mind, that the linen-merchant might perhaps be induced to abandon his purpose if he could be made to understand that Marie wished it. "If he have any touch of manhood about him he would do so," said he.

"And what will you do, George?"

"Do! I shall do nothing. What should I do? My father has turned me out of the house. That is the whole of it. I do not know that there is any thing to be done." Then he went out, and there was nothing more said upon the question. For three or four days there was nothing said. As he went in and out Madame Faragon would look at him with anxious eyes, questioning herself how far such a feeling of love might in truth make this young man forlorn and wretched. As far as she could judge by his

manner he was very forlorn and very wretched. He did his work, indeed, and was busy about the place, as was his wont. But there was a look of pain in his face, which made her old heart grieve, and by degrees her good wishes for the object which seemed to be so much to him became eager and hot.

"Is there nothing to be done?" she asked at last, putting out her fat hand to take hold of his in sympathy.

"There is nothing to be done," said George, who, however, hated himself because he was doing nothing, and still thought occasionally of that plan of choking his rival.

"If you were to go to Basle and see the man?"

"What could I say to him if I did see him? After all, it is not him that I can blame. I have no just ground of quarrel with him. He has done nothing that is not fair. Why should he not love her if it suits him? Unless he were to fight me, indeed—"

"Oh, George, let there be no fighting."

"It would do no good, I fear."

"None, none, none," said she.

"If I were to kill him, she could not be my wife then."

"No, no; certainly not."

"And if I wounded him, it would make her like him, perhaps. If he were to kill me, indeed, there might be some comfort in that."

After this Madame Faragon made no further suggestions that her young friend should go to Basle.



## CHAPTER XV.

DURING the remainder of the day on which George had left Granpere the hours did not fly very pleasantly at the Lion d'Or. Michel Voss had gone to his niece immediately upon his return from his walk, intending to obtain a renewed pledge from her that she would be true to her engagement. But he had been so full of passion, so beside himself with excitement, so disturbed by all that he had heard, that he had hardly waited with Marie long enough to obtain such a pledge, or to learn from her that she refused to give it. He had only been able to tell her that if she hesitated about marrying Adrian, she should never look upon his face again; and then, without staying for a reply, he had left her. He had been in such a tremor of passion that he had been unable to demand an answer. After that, when George was gone, he kept away from her during the remainder of the morning. Once or twice he said a few words to his wife, and she counseled him to take no further outward notice of any thing that George had said to him. "It will all come right if you will only be a little calm with her," Madame Voss had said. He had tossed his head and declared that he was calm—the calmest man in all Lorraine. Then he had come to his wife again, and she had again given him some good practical advice. "Don't put it into her head that there is to be a doubt," said Madame Voss.

"I haven't put it into her head," he answered, angrily.

"No, my dear, no; but do not allow her to suppose that any body else can put it there either. Let the matter go on. She will see the things bought for her wedding, and when she remembers that she has allowed them to come into the house without remonstrating, she will be quite unable to object. Don't give her an opportunity of objecting." Michel Voss again shook his head, as though his wife were an unreasonable woman, and swore that it was not he who had given Marie such opportunity. But he made up his mind to do as his wife recommended. "Speak softly to her, my dear," said Madame Voss.

"Don't I always speak softly?" said he, turning sharply round upon his spouse.

He made his attempt to speak softly when he met Marie about the house just before supper. He put his hand upon her shoulder and smiled, and murmured some word of love. He was by no means crafty in what he did. Craft, indeed, was not the strong point of his character. She took his rough hand and kissed it, and looked up lovingly, beseechingly, into his face. She knew that he was asking her to consent to the sacrifice, and he knew that she was imploring him to spare her. This was not what Madame Voss had meant by speaking softly. Could she have been allowed to dilate upon her own convictions, or had she been able adequately to express her own ideas, she should have begged that there might be no sentiment, no romance, no kissing of hands, no looking into each other's faces, no half-murmured tones of love. Madame Voss believed strongly that the every-day work of the world was done better without any of these glancings and glimmerings of moonshine. But then her husband was, by nature, of a fervid temperament, given to the influence of unexpressed poetic emotions; and thus subject, in spite of the strength of his will, to much weakness of purpose. Madame Voss perhaps condemned her husband in this matter the more because his romantic disposition never showed itself in his intercourse with her. He would kiss Marie's



hand and press Marie's wrist, and hold dialogues by the eye with Marie. But with his wife his speech was—not exactly yea, yea, and nay, nay—but yes, yes, and no, no. It was not unnatural, therefore, that she should specially dislike this weakness of his which came from his emotional temperament. "I would just let things go, as though there were nothing special at all," she said again to him, before supper, in a whisper.

"And so I do. What would you have me say?"

"Don't mind petting her, but just be as you would be any other day."

"I am as I would be any other day," he replied. However, he knew that his wife was right, and was, in a certain way, aware that if he could only change himself and be another sort of man he might manage the matter better. He could be fiercely angry, or caressingly affectionate. But he was unable to adopt that safe and golden mean which his wife recommended. He could not keep himself from interchanging a piteous glance or two with Marie at supper, and put a great deal too much unction into his caress to please Madame Voss when Marie came to kiss him before she went to bed.

In the mean time Marie was quite aware that it was incumbent on her to determine what she would do. It may be as well to declare at once that she had determined—had determined fully before her uncle and George had started for their walk up to the wood-cutting. When she was giving them their breakfast that morning her mind was fully made up. She had had the night to lie awake upon it, to think it over, and to realize all that George had told her. It had come to her as quite a new thing that the man whom she worshiped worshiped her too. While she believed that nobody else loved her; when she could tell herself that her fate was nothing to any body; as long as it had seemed to her that the world for her must be cold, and hard, and material—so long could she reconcile to herself, after some painful dubious fashion, the idea of being the wife either of Adrian Urmand or of any other man. Some kind of servitude was needful, and if her uncle was decided that she must be banished from his house, the kind of servitude which was proposed to

her at Basle would do as well as another. But when she had learned the truth—a truth so unexpected—then such servitude became impossible to her. On that morning, when she came down to give the men their breakfast, she had quite determined that, let the consequences be what they might, she would never become the wife of Adrian Urmand. Madame Voss had told her husband that when Marie saw the things purchased for her wedding coming into the house, the very feeling that the goods had been bought would bind her to her engagement. Marie had thought of that also, and was aware that she must lose no time in making her purpose known, so that articles which would be unnecessary might not be purchased. On that very morning, while the men had been up in the mountain, she had sat with her aunt hemming sheets—intended as an addition to the already overflowing stock possessed by M. Urmand. It was with difficulty that she had brought herself to do that—telling herself, however, that as the linen was there, it must be hemmed; when there had come a question of marking the sheets, she had evaded the task, not without raising suspicion in the bosom of Madame Voss.

But it was, as she knew, absolutely necessary that her uncle should be informed of her purpose. When he had come to her after the walk and demanded of her whether she still intended to marry Adrian Urmand, she had answered him falsely. "I suppose so," she had said. The question—such a question as it was—had been put to her too abruptly to admit of a true answer on the spur of the moment. But the falsehood almost stuck in her throat, and was a misery to her till she could set it right by a clear declaration of the truth. She had yet to determine what she would do; how she would tell this truth; in what way she would insure to herself the power of carrying out her purpose. Her mind, the reader must remember, was somewhat dark in the matter. She was betrothed to the man, and she had always heard that a betrothal was half a marriage. And yet she knew of instances in which marriages had been broken off after betrothal quite as ceremonious as her own—had been broken off without scan-

dal or special censure from the Church. Her aunt, indeed, and M. le Curé had, ever since the plighting of her troth to M. Urmand, spoken of the matter in her presence as though the wedding were a thing already nearly done; not suggesting by the tenor of their speech that any one could wish in any case to make a change, but pointing out incidentally that any change was now out of the question. But Marie had been sharp enough to understand perfectly the gist of her aunt's manœuvres and of the priest's incidental information. The thing could be done, she knew, and she feared no one in the doing of it—except her uncle. But she did fear that if she simply told him that it must be done, he would have such a power over her that she would not succeed. In what way could she do it first, and then tell him afterward?

At last she determined that she would write a letter to M. Urmand, and show a copy of the letter to her uncle when the post should have taken it so far out of Granpere on its way to Basle as to make it impossible that her uncle should recall it. Much of the day after George's departure and much of the night were spent in the preparation of this letter. Marie Bromar was not so well practiced in the writing of letters as will be the majority of the young ladies who may, perhaps, read her history. It was a difficult thing for her to begin the letter, and a difficult thing for her to bring it to its end. But the letter was written and sent. The post left Granpere at about eight in the morning, taking all letters by way of Remiremont; and on the day following George's departure the post took Marie Bromar's letter to M. Urmand.

When it was gone her state of mind was very painful. Then it was necessary that she should show the copy to her uncle. She had posted the letter between six and seven with her own hands, and had then come trembling back to the inn, fearful that her uncle should discover what she had done before her letter should be beyond his reach. When she saw the mail conveyance go by on its route to Remiremont then she knew that she must begin to prepare for her uncle's wrath. She thought that she had heard that the letters were detained some time at Re-

miremont before they went on to Epinal in one direction and to Mulhouse in the other. She looked at the railway time-table which was hung up in one of the passages of the inn, and saw the hour of the departure of the diligence from Remiremont to catch the train at Mulhouse for Basle. When that hour was passed the conveyance of her letter was insured, and then she must show the copy to her uncle. He came into the house about twelve, and ate his dinner with his wife in the little chamber. Marie, who was in and out of the room during the time, would not sit down with them. When pressed to do so by her uncle she declared that she had eaten lately and was not hungry. It was seldom that she would sit down to dinner, and this, therefore, gave rise to no special remark. As soon as his meal was over Michel Voss got up to go out about his business, as was usual with him. Then Marie followed him into the passage. "Uncle Michel," she said, "I want to speak to you for a moment. Will you come with me?"

"What is it about, Marie?"

"If you will come, I will show you."

"Show me! What will you show me?"

"It's a letter, Uncle Michel. Come up stairs and you shall see it." Then he followed her up stairs, and in the long public room, which was at that hour deserted, she took out of her pocket the copy of her letter to Adrian Urmand, and put it into her uncle's hands. "It is a letter, Uncle Michel, which I have written to M. Urmand. It went this morning, and you must see it."

"A letter to Urmand?" he said, as he took the paper suspiciously into his hands.

"Yes, Uncle Michel. I was obliged to write it. It is the truth, and I was obliged to let him know it. I am afraid you will be angry with me, and—turn me away; but I can not help it."

The letter was as follows:

"THE HOTEL LION D'OR, GRANPERE, October 1, 186-.

"M. URMAND,—I take up my pen in great sorrow and remorse to write you a letter, and to prevent you from coming over here for me, as you intended, on this day fortnight. I have promised to be your wife, but it can not be. I know that I have behaved very badly, but it would be worse if I were to go on and deceive you. Before I knew you I had come to be fond of another man; and I find now, though I have struggled hard to do what my uncle wishes, that I could not promise to love you and be your wife. I



have not told Uncle Michel yet, but I shall as soon as this letter is gone.

"I am very, very sorry for the trouble I have given you. I did not mean to be bad. I hope that you will forget me, and try to forgive me. No one knows better than I do how bad I have been.

"Your most humble servant,

"With the greatest respect,

"MARIE BROMAR."

The letter had taken her long to write, and it took her uncle long to read before he came to the end of it. He did not get through a line without sundry interruptions, which all arose from his determination to contradict at once every assertion which she made. "You can not prevent his coming," he said, "and it shall not be prevented." "Of course you have promised to be his wife, and it must be." "Nonsense about deceiving him. He is not deceived at all." "Trash! you are not fond of another man. It is all nonsense." "You must do what your uncle wishes. You must, now—you must! Of course you will love him. Why can't you let all that come as it does with others?" "Letter gone; yes indeed, and now I must go after it." "Trouble! yes! Why could you not tell me before you sent it? Have I not always been good to you?" "You have not been bad—not before. You have been very good. It is this that is bad." "Forget you, indeed. Of course he won't. How should he? Are you not betrothed to him? He'll forgive you fast enough when you just say that you did not know what you were about when you were writing it." Thus her uncle went on; and as the outburst of his wrath was, as it were, chopped into little bits by his having to continue the reading of the letter, the storm did not fall upon Marie's head so violently as she had expected. "There's a pretty kettle of fish you've made," said he, as soon as he had finished reading the letter. "Of course it means nothing."

"But it must mean something, Uncle Michel."

"I say it means nothing. Now I'll tell you what I shall do, Marie. I shall start for Basle directly. I shall get there by twelve o'clock to-night by going through Colmar, and I shall endeavor to intercept the letter before Urmand would receive it to-morrow." This was a cruel blow to Marie

after all her precautions. "If I can not do that, I shall at any rate see him before he gets it. That is what I shall do, and you must let me tell him, Marie, that you repent having written the letter."

"But I don't repent it, Uncle Michel; I don't indeed. I can't repent it. How can I repent it when I really mean it? I shall never become his wife. Indeed I shall not. Oh, Uncle Michel, pray, pray, pray do not go to Basle."

But Michel Voss resolved that he would go to Basle, and to Basle he went. The immediate weight, too, of Marie's misery was aggravated by the fact that in order to catch the train for Basle at Colmar her uncle need not start quite immediately. There was an hour during which he could continue to exercise his eloquence upon his niece, and endeavor to induce her to authorize him to contradict her own letter. He appealed first to her affection, and then to her duty; and after that, having failed in these appeals, he poured forth the full vials of his wrath upon her head. She was ungrateful, obstinate, false, unwomanly, disobedient, irreligious, sacrilegious, and an idiot. In the fury of his anger there was hardly any epithet of severe rebuke which he spared, and yet, as every cruel word left his mouth, he assured her that it should all be taken to mean nothing if she would only now tell him that he might nullify the letter. Though she had deserved all these bad things which he had spoken of her, yet she should be regarded as having deserved none of them, should again be accepted as having in all points done her duty, if she should only, even now, be obedient. But she was not to be shaken. She had at last formed a resolution, and her uncle's words had no effect toward turning her from it. "Uncle Michel," she said at last, speaking with much seriousness of purpose, and a dignity of person that was by no means thrown away upon him, "if I am what you say, I had better go away from your house. I know I have been bad. I was bad to say that I would marry M. Urmand. I will not defend myself. But nothing on earth shall make me marry him. You had better let me go away and get a place as a servant among our friends at Epinal." But Michel Voss, though he was heaping abuse upon her with the hope

that he might thus achieve his purpose, had not the remotest idea of severing the connection which bound him and her together. He wanted to do her good, not evil. She was exquisitely dear to him. If she would only let him have his way, and provide for

her welfare as he saw, in his wisdom, would be best, he would at once take her in his arms again and tell her that she was the apple of his eye. But she would not; and he went at last off on his road to Colmar and Basle gnashing his teeth in anger.

## CHAPTER XVI.

NOTHING was said to Marie about her sins on that afternoon after her uncle had started on his journey. Everything in the hotel was blank and sad and gloomy; but there was, at any rate, the negative comfort of silence, and Marie was allowed to go about the house and do her work without rebuke. But she observed that the curé—M. le Curé Gondin—sat much with her aunt during the evening, and she did not doubt but that she herself and her iniquities made the subject of their discourse.

M. le Curé Gondin, as he was generally called at Granpere—being always so spoken of, with his full name and title, by the large Protestant portion of the community—was a man very much respected by all the neighborhood. He was respected by the Protestants because he never interfered with them, never told them either behind their backs or before their faces that they would be damned as heretics, and never tried the hopeless task of converting them. In his intercourse with them he dropped the subject of religion altogether—as a philologist or an entomologist will drop his grammar or his insects in his intercourse with those to whom grammar and insects are matters of indifference. And he was respected by the Catholics of both sorts—by those who did not and by those who did adhere with strictness to the letter of their laws of religion. With the former he did his duty, perhaps without much enthusiasm. He preached to them, if they would come and listen to him. He christened them, confirmed them, and absolved them from their sins—of course after due penitence. But he lived with them, too, in a friendly way, pronouncing no anathemas against them because they were not as attentive to their religious exercises as they might have been. But with those who took

a comfort in sacred things, who liked to go to early masses in cold weather, to be punctual at ceremonies, to say the rosary as surely as the evening came, who knew and performed all the intricacies of fasting as ordered by the bishop, down to the refinement of an egg more or less in the whole Lent, or the absence of butter from the day's cookery—with these he had all that enthusiasm which such people like to encounter in their priest. We may say, therefore, that he was a wise man—and probably, on the whole, a good man; that he did good service in his parish, and helped his people along in their lives not inefficiently. He was a small man, with dark hair very closely cut, with a tonsure that was visible, but not more than visible, with a black beard that was shaved every Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday evenings, but which was very black indeed on the Tuesday and Friday mornings. He always wore the black gown of his office, but would go about his parish with an ordinary soft slouch hat—thus subjecting his appearance to an absence of ecclesiastical trimness which perhaps the more enthusiastic of his friends regretted. Madame Voss certainly would have wished that he would have had himself shaved, at any rate, every other day, and that he would have abstained from showing himself in the street of Granpere without his clerical hat. But, though she was very intimate with her curé, and had conferred upon him much material kindness, she had never dared to express her opinion to him upon these matters.

During much of that afternoon M. le Curé sat with Madame Voss, but not a word was said to Marie about her disobedience either by him or by her. Nevertheless Marie felt that her sins were being discussed and that the lecture was coming. She herself had



never quite liked M. le Curé—not having any special reason for disliking him, but regarding him as a man who was perhaps a little deficient in spirit, and perhaps a trifle too mindful of his creature comforts. M. le Curé took a great deal of snuff, and Marie did not like snuff-taking. Her uncle smoked a great deal of tobacco, and that she thought very nice and proper in a man. Had her uncle taken the snuff and the priest smoked the tobacco, she would probably have equally approved of her uncle's practice and disapproved that of the priest, because she loved the one and did not love the other. She had thought it probable that she might be sent for during the evening, and had, therefore, made for herself an immensity of household work, the performance of all which on that very evening the interests of the Lion d'Or would imperatively demand. The work was all done, but no message from Aunt Josey summoned Marie into the little parlor.

Nevertheless Marie had been quite right in her judgment. On the following morning, between eight and nine, M. le Curé was again in the house, and had a cup of coffee taken to him in the little parlor. Marie, who felt angry at his return, would not take it herself, but sent it in by the hands of Peter Veque. Peter Veque returned in a few minutes with a message to Marie, saying that M. le Curé wished to see her.

"Tell him that I am very busy," said Marie. "Say that uncle is away, and that there is a deal to do. Ask him if another day won't suit as well."

She knew when she sent this message that another day would not suit as well. And she must have known also that her uncle's absence made no difference in her work. Peter came back with a request from Madame Voss that Marie would go to her at once. Marie pressed her lips together, clinched her fists, and walked down into the room without the delay of an instant.

"Marie, my dear," said Madame Voss, "M. le Curé wishes to speak to you. I will leave you for a few minutes." There was nothing for it but to listen. Marie could not refuse to be lectured by the priest. But she told herself that having had the courage to resist her uncle, it certainly was

out of the question that any one else should have the power to move her.

"My dear Marie," began the curé, "your aunt has been telling me of this little difference between you and your affianced husband. Won't you sit down, Marie, because we shall be able so to talk more comfortably?"

"I don't want to talk about it at all," said Marie. But she sat down as she was bidden.

"But, my dear, it is needful that your friends should talk to you. I am sure that you have too much sense to think that a young woman like yourself should refuse to hear her friends." Marie had it almost on her tongue to tell the priest that the only friends to whom she chose to listen were her uncle and her aunt; but she thought that it might perhaps be better that she should remain silent. "Of course, my dear, a young person like you must know that she must walk by advice, and I am sure you must feel that no one can give it you more fittingly than your own priest." Then he took a large pinch of snuff.

"If it were any thing to do with the Church—yes," she said.

"And this has to do with the Church very much. Indeed, I do not know how any of our duties in this life can not have to do with the Church. There can be no duty omitted as to which you would not acknowledge that it was necessary that you should get absolution from your priest."

"But that would be in the church," said Marie, not quite knowing how to make good her point.

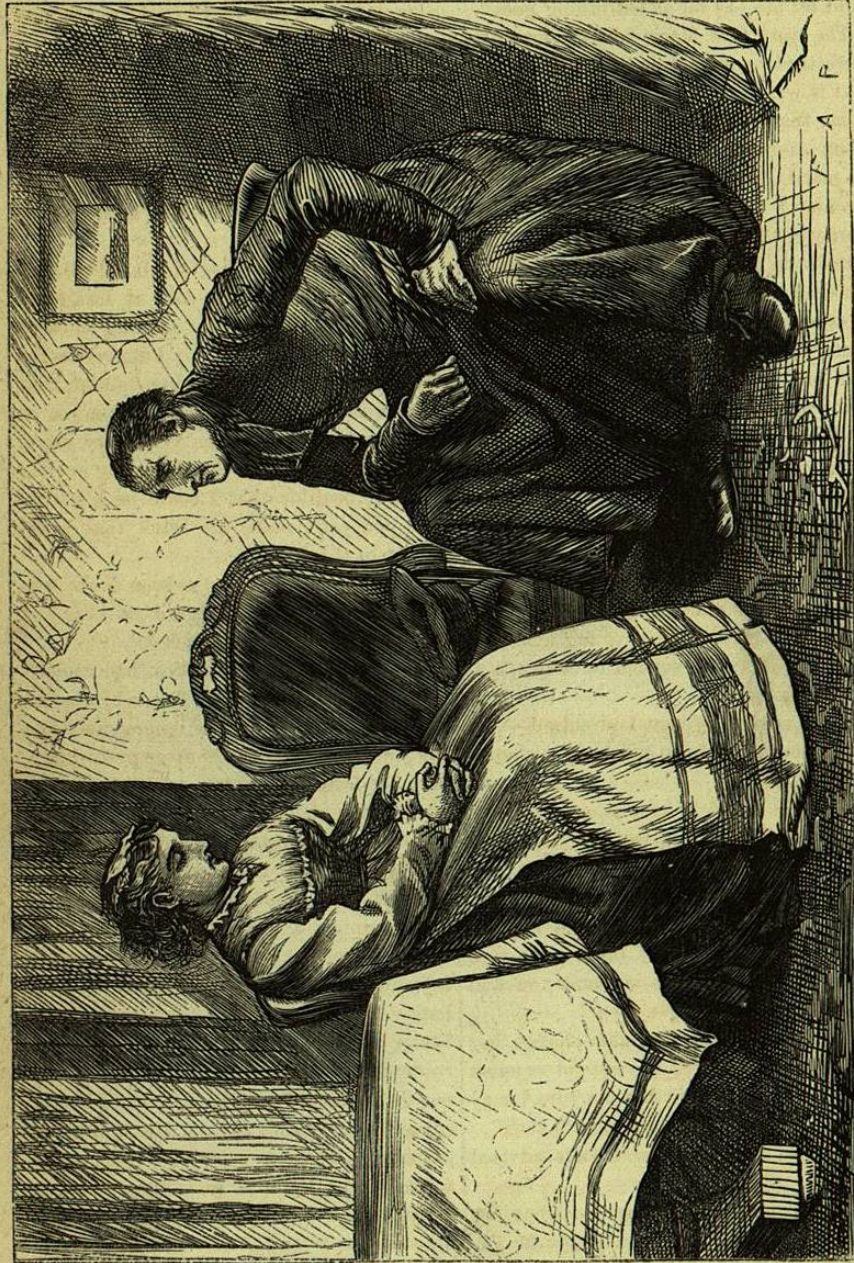
"Whether you are in the church or out of it is just the same. If you were sick and in bed, would your priest be nothing to you then?"

"But I am quite well, Father Gondin."

"Well in health; but sick in spirit—as I am sure you must own. And I must explain to you, my dear, that this is a matter in which your religious duty is specially in question. You have been betrothed, you know, to M. Urmand."

"But people betrothed are very often not married," said Marie, quickly. "There was Annette Lolme at Saint Die. She was betrothed to Jean Stein at Pugnac. That





“YOU WILL BE WICKED IN EVERY WAY,” SAID THE PRIEST.

was only last winter. And then there was something wrong about the money; and the betrothal went for nothing, and Father Carrier himself said it was all right. If it was all right for Annette Lolme, it must be all right for me—as far as betrothing goes.”

The story that Marie told so clearly was perfectly true, and M. le Curé Gondin knew that it was true. He wished now to teach Marie that if certain circumstances should occur after a betrothal which would make the marriage inexpedient in the eyes of the parents of the young people, then the authority of the Church would not exert itself to insist on the sacred nature of the pledge; but that if the pledge was to be called in question simply at the instance of a capricious young woman, then the Church would have full power. His object, in short, was to insist on parental authority, giving to parental authority some little additional strength from his own sacerdotal recognition of the sanctity of the betrothing promise. But he feared that Marie would be too strong for him, if not also too clear-headed. “You can not mean to tell me,” said he, “that you think that such a solemn promise as you have given to this young man, taking one from him as solemn in return, is to go for nothing?”

“I am very sorry that I promised—very sorry indeed; but I can not keep my promise.”

“You are bound to keep it, especially as all your friends wish the marriage, and think that it will be good for you. Annette Lolme’s friends wished her not to marry. It is my duty to tell you, Marie, that if you break your faith to M. Urmand, you will commit a very grievous sin, and you will commit it with your eyes open.”

“If Annette Lolme might change her mind because her lover had not got as much money as people wanted, I am sure I may change mine because I don’t love a man.”

“Annette did what her friends advised her.”

“Then a girl must always do what her friends tell her? If I don’t marry M. Urmand, I sha’n’t be wicked for breaking my promise, but for disobeying Uncle Michel.”

“You will be wicked in every way,” said the priest.

“No, M. le Curé. If I had married M. Urmand, I know I should be wicked to leave him, and I would do my best to live with him and make him a good wife. But I have found out in time that I can’t love him; and therefore I am sure that I ought not to marry him, and I won’t.”

There was much more said between them, but M. le Curé Gondin was not able to prevail in the least. He tried to cajole her, and he tried to persuade by threats, and he tried to conquer her by gratitude and affection toward her uncle. But he could not prevail at all.

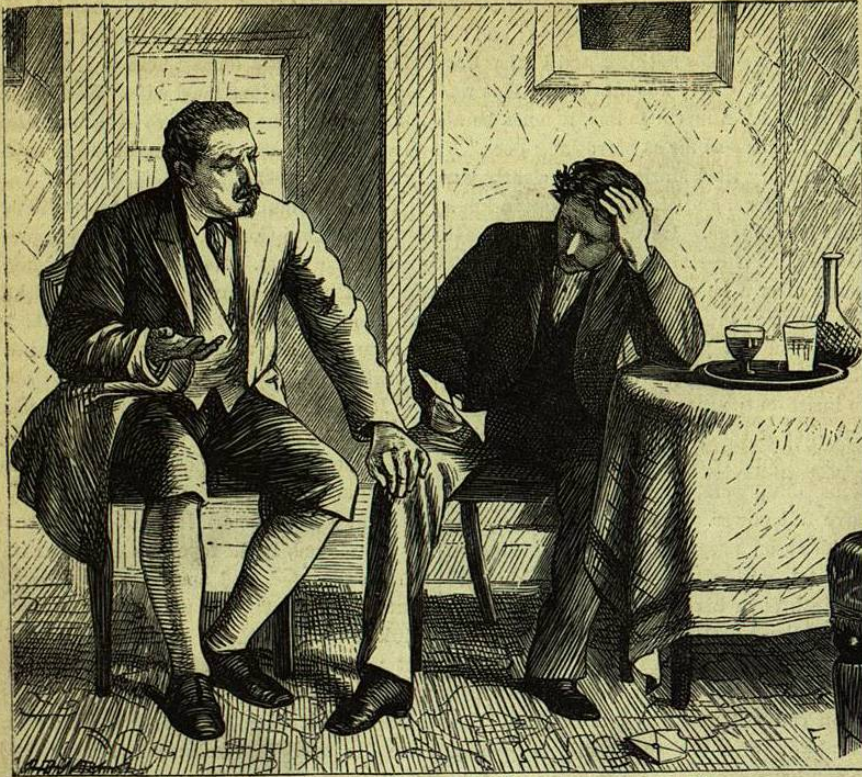
“It is of no use my staying here any longer, M. le Curé,” she said at last, “because I am quite sure that nothing on earth will induce me to consent. I am very sorry for what I have done. If you tell me that I have sinned, I will repent and confess it. I have repented, and am very, very sorry. I know now that I was very wrong ever to think it possible that I could be his wife. But you can’t make me think that I am wrong in this.”

Then she left him, and as soon as she was gone Madame Voss returned to hear the priest’s report as to his success.

In the mean time Michel Voss had reached Basle, arriving there some five hours before Marie’s letter, and, in his ignorance of the law, had made his futile attempt to intercept the letter before it reached the hands of M. Urmand. But he was with Urmand when the letter was delivered, and endeavored to persuade his young friend not to open it. But in doing this he was obliged to explain, to a certain extent, what was the nature of the letter. He was obliged to say so much about it as to justify the unhappy lover in asserting that it would be better for them all that he should know the contents. “At any rate, you will promise not to believe it,” said Michel. And he did succeed in obtaining from M. Urmand a sort of promise that he would not regard the words of the letter as in truth expressing Marie’s real resolution. “Girls, you know, are such queer cattle,” said Michel. “They think about all manner of things, and then they don’t know what they are thinking.”

“But who is the other man?” demanded Adrian, as soon as he had finished the let-





“BUT WHO IS THE OTHER MAN?” DEMANDED ADRIAN.”

ter. Any one judging from his countenance when he asked the question would have imagined that in spite of his promise he believed every word that had been written to him. His face was a picture of blank despair, and his voice was low and hoarse. “You must know whom she means,” he added, when Michel did not at once reply.

“Yes; I know whom she means.”

“Who is it, then, M. Voss?”

“It is George, of course,” replied the innkeeper.

“I did not know,” said poor Adrian Urmand.

“She never spoke a dozen words to any other man in her life; and as for him, she has hardly seen him for the last eighteen months. He has come over and said something to her, like a traitor; has reminded her of some childish promise, some old vow, something said when they were children, and meaning nothing; and so he has frightened her.”

“I was never told that there was any

thing between them,” said Urmand, beginning to think that it would become him to be indignant.

“There was nothing to tell—literally nothing.”

“They must have been writing to each other.”

“Never a line; on my word as a man. It was just as I tell you. When George went from home there had been some fooling, as I thought, between them; and I was glad that he should go. I didn’t think it meant any thing, or ever would.” As Michel Voss said this there did occur to him an idea that perhaps, after all, he had been wrong to interfere in the first instance—that there had then been no really valid reason why George should not have married Marie Bromar; but that did not in the least influence his judgment as to what it might be expedient to do now. He was still as sure as ever that, as things stood now, it was his duty to do, all in his power to bring about the marriage between his niece and Adrian Urmand.

“But since that there has been nothing,” continued he, “absolutely nothing. Ask her, and she will tell you so. It is some romantic idea of hers that she ought to stick to her first promise, now that she has been reminded of it.”

All this did not convince Adrian Urmand, who for a while expressed his opinion that it would be better for him to take Marie’s refusal, and thus to let the matter drop. It would be very bitter to him, because all Basle had now heard of his proposed marriage, and a whole shower of congratulations had already fallen upon him from his fellow-townspiece; but he thought that it would be more bitter to be rejected again in person by Marie Bromar, and then to be stared at by all the natives of Granpere.

He acknowledged that George Voss was a traitor; and would have been ready to own that Marie was another had Michel Voss given him any encouragement in that direction. But Michel throughout the whole morning—and they were closeted together for hours—declared that poor Marie was more sinned against than sinning. If Adrian was but once more over at Granpere all would be made right. At last Michel Voss prevailed, and persuaded the young man to return with him to the Lion d’Or.

They started early on the following morning, and traveled to Granpere by way of Colmar and the mountain. The father thus passed twice through Colmar, but on neither occasion did he call upon his son.

