

LITERATURE.

THE FIVE FRANC PIECE.

(Concluded.)

"Hunger compelled this poor girl to beg for a crust of bread; she shrouded her head in a veil, once her mother's and her only inheritance; she bent her body that she might appear old and infirm, and went down from her garret into the street—there she extended her suppliant hand. Alas! the hand was white and delicately formed, and there would be danger in allowing it to be seen; she bound the veil around it as if to hide a loathsome object. She took her stand near the entrance of the court-yard far distant from the light of the street lamps, and when there passed a young and happy girl, (alas! far happier than herself,) she held out her hand asking but a *sou*—one *sou*, to buy a little bread—but at evening young girls in Paris are thinking of other things than giving away *sous*. If she saw an old man approach, she ventured to implore his aid, but age is hard-hearted and miserly, and the old man would turn away and pass on. The evening had been chilly, rain began to fall, it was growing late, and the night watchmen were going their rounds, when the young girl ready to faint with hunger and disappointment, held out her hand once more. It was to a young man, who stopped, and drew from his pocket a piece of money, which he dropped into her hand, as if afraid of the contact of so much misery.

"A policeman, who no doubt had been watching the poor girl, suddenly appeared and seizing her rudely by the arm, exclaimed, 'Ah! I have caught you at last, so you are begging in the street, to the station-house old witch!' The young man immediately interfered, taking her part with the greatest warmth—he drew within his arm of the beggar whose hand he had a moment before feared would spoil his gloved fingers, saying to the policeman as he did it—the woman is no beggar, you are mistaken, I know all about her." "But, sir," said the enforcer of the law against street begging, "I saw her hold out her hand to you and—" "I tell you," said the young man steadily, "I know her and shall protect her." "My good woman," said he, whispering in the ear of the young girl, whom he supposed old and ugly, "take this *five franc piece* and let me lead you to the next street, that you may get away from this fellow who will continue to watch you!" The *five franc piece* slipped from your hand into mine, and as we passed under a lamp, which until then I had taken care to avoid, I saw your face."

"My face?" exclaimed Frederick.

"Yes, my dear Frederick, your face, it was you who thus preserved my honor and my life, you gave five francs in charity to your future wife."

"You!" said Frederick, "you, young, beautiful and rich, you a beggar!"

"Yes," said Mademoiselle de la Tour, "once I was indebted for charity, once only, and it was to you. The morning succeeding this day of misery, which I now look upon as the most fortunate one of my life, a kind hearted *concierger* took pity on me, (and she has had cause to bless the hour she did so,) and found me a place as seamstress in the establishment of a rich nobleman. My cheerfulness and good looks returned with my ability to support myself, and although my unhappy parents were sincerely regretted, time, which accomplishes all things, gradually soothed my grief, and I fortunately became a favorite with the respectable house-keeper."

"One day Lord Melville came into my little room, as I was at work, and seated himself at my side. He was not far from sixty-five, tall, thin, of a severe expression of countenance, and his ordinary manner was haughty, cold, and reserved. 'Young woman,' said he, 'I know the story of your life; will you marry me?'"

"Marry you?" I exclaimed, "your lordship is jesting." "I never jest," said his lordship, "I ask again will you marry me? I am rich, and am determined my wealth shall not go to unworthy nephews, who would bury me tomorrow, if they could. I am a martyr to the gout, and would rather be nursed by a wife than by mercenary servants. If I am to believe what I hear in your favor, you possess elevation of

mind and correct principle—it is in your power to become Lady Melville, and to prove to the world that you are as fitted for admiration in prosperity, as you have been praiseworthy in struggling with adversity!" "I loved you," continued the bride, "and although I had seen you but for a moment, yet I could not banish your image, and something whispered to me from the inmost recess of my heart, that our lives were to be passed together."

"When I looked at Lord Melville and observed attentively his stern unyielding countenance, his piercing grey eyes, and the determination shown in carrying out the plan he now meditated, I was willing to lend my aid in its accomplishment. It appeared to me that I ought not to encourage this cunning device by which he would disinherit his nephews, and thus, although the noble lord did not receive an immediate refusal, yet he saw my hesitancy and agitation, and like most persons who meet with unexpected obstacles in accomplishing their views, he became more eager, and pressed his suit with unwonted ardor. Those with whom I lived, and everybody I knew, advised me to profit by this freak of an English lord with millions; a part, at least, of whose fortune, in the event of my doing so must soon become mine. As for myself, I thought of you, my gratitude lent a thousand graces to your person. I recalled continually the kind tone of your voice, although heard but for an instant. You had never looked in my face, and yet I was near sacrificing to this dream of the imagination, my good fortune and your own; but I had taken too severe a lesson in the miseries of a life of poverty and suffering to allow these romantic feelings to overpower my better judgment—your image was reluctantly thrust aside by the poor sewing girl, and I became Lady Melville."

"It was indeed, my dear Frederick, a fairy tale, that I, a poor, destitute, friendless orphan girl, should become the wife of one of the richest of England's Peers; that I, a modern Cinderella in my magnificent equipage with servants in heraldic liveries, should drive through the street, in which, but a few short months before I had walked a shivering beggar; that I, clothed in the richest silks and radiant with jewels, should look from my high estate, upon the very spot where I had stood extending my trembling hand for charity. It was a turn of fortune's wheel, too incredible for belief, in truth, a fairy tale; but the fancies of this world of ours, my dear Frederick, are the passions of mankind."

"Happy Lord Melville," cried Frederick, "he could enrich you!"

"He was, indeed, happy," said Madame de la Tour; "for the event proved that this marriage, which the world looked upon as an old man's folly, I caused to be regarded by this same world as the most sensible thing he could have done. He was rich, not only beyond his wants, but beyond even his wishes. He could never manage to expend his entire income, and his fortune was therefore continually increasing—He believed from the first hour of our union that he might trust in the attachment of a wife who owed everything to his bounty, and never did he for one moment repent his marriage with a French woman. I reposed on my part perfect and entire confidence in Lord Melville, as to any provision in the disposition of his fortune, and with sincerity and tenderness watched over his declining years. He died, leaving me the whole of his immense riches, and I then inwardly vowed to marry no other than the man who had relieved me in my greatest need. But how silent you are!" said Madame de la Tour, pressing the hand of the husband she had enriched and would love with such devotion, "and you never visited in the gay world nor went to the theatre, nor concerts—ah! if I had but known your name." While she thus playfully reproached her astonished husband, she took from around her neck a chain of rubies, to which was suspended a diminutive silk purse, from the latter she took out a *five franc piece*, set in a little frame of gold."

"It is the same one," said she, putting it into Frederick's hand for a moment, and then taking it back again. "The sight of this cherished piece of silver gave me a supper and a roof to shelter me until the next day, when at my earnest request it was so arranged that I could redeem and keep your fortunate gift—it has never

for a moment left me. Ah! how happy I was when I first saw you in the street—with what joy I ordered the coachman to stop—I was nearly frantic with agitation and delight; and I at once adopted the only pretext I could so suddenly think of, to get you into the carriage. I had but one fear—you might be married—had that been the case, you would have never heard this story. Lady Melville would have been your good genius; she would secretly have enriched you beyond the dreams of avarice, but the unhappy woman would have sought out a home in another land, far from the man whose hand and heart could never be hers."

Frederick de la Tour dropped the hand of his wife; he let fall the embroidered robe, and with both hands grasping firmly the piece of silver, he raised it to his lips, with an almost reverential solemnity—"You see, said Madame de la Tour, "that I am no fairy, but that on the contrary, from you came the fairy's gift, and it has indeed proved a wondrous talisman."

Children suckled by Wolves.

This subject is one which will not be unwelcome to those whose faith in the myths of Roman history has been dissipated by Niebuhr and others: they may still believe the story of Romulus and Remus and the wolf. The Honorable Captain Egerton, in a communication from India, says: Colonel Sleeman told me one of the strangest stories I ever heard relating to some children, natives of this country (Oude,) carried away and brought up by wolves. He is acquainted with five instances of this, in two of which he has both seen the children and knows the circumstances connected with their recapture from the animals. It seems that wolves are very numerous about Cawpore and Lucknow, and that children are constantly carried off by them. Most of these have, of course served as dinners for their captors, but some have been brought up and educated by them after their own fashion. Some time ago, two of the king of Oude's sowars (mounted gendarmes,) riding along the banks of the Goomptje, saw three animals come down to drink. Two were evidently young wolves, but the third was as evidently some other animal. The sowars rushed in upon them, captured the three, and to their great surprise found that one was a small naked boy. He was on all fours like his companions; had callosities on his knees and elbows, evidently caused by the attitude in moving about; and bit and scratched violently in resisting the capture. The boy was brought up in Lucknow, where he lived some time, and may, for aught I know, be living still. He was quite unable to articulate words, but had a dog-like intellect—quick at understanding signs, and so on. Another *enfant trouve*, under the same circumstances, lived with two English people for some time. He learned at last to pronounce the name of a lady who was very kind to him, and for whom he shewed some affection; but his intellect was always clouded, and more like the instinct of a dog than the mind of a human being. There was another more wonderful, but hardly so well authenticated, story of a boy who never could get rid of a strong wolfish smell, and who was seen not long after his capture, to be visited by three wolves, which came evidently with hostile intentions, but which, after closely examining, he seeming not the least alarmed—played with him, and some nights afterwards brought their relations, making the number of visitors amount to five—the number of cubs which composed the litter from which he had been taken. There is no account of any grown-up person having been found among the wolves. Probably, after a certain time, the captives may have got into a set of less scrupulous wolves, not acquainted with the family; the result is obvious.—*Chamber's Journal*.

At one of the hotels, the other night, an honest countryman, who had come to the city for the first time, was awakened by the cry of "Oy! buy any Oy!" beneath his window. Frightened half to death he aroused his fellow lodger, and enquired what it meant?

"Oh, bless you, it's nothing but oysters," said his room mate, in a pet.

"Gosh!" cried Johnathan, "do tell if oysters holler as loud as that?"

FLOGGING AN EDITOR.

Some years ago, a populous town, located towards the interior of Mississippi, was infested by a gang of blacklegs, who amused themselves at times, when they could find nobody else to pluck, by preying upon each other. A new importation of these sporting gentry excited some alarm among the inhabitants, lest they should be completely over-run; they determined therefore on their expulsion. A poor wretch of a country editor, who was expected, by virtue of his vocation, to take upon himself all the responsibilities from which others might choose to shrink, was peremptorily called upon by his "patrons"—that is, those who paid him two dollars a year for his paper, and therefore presumed that they owned him, body and soul—to make an effort towards the extermination of the enemy. The unfortunate editor being gifted with about as much brains as money—skull and purse both empty—said at once he would indite a "flasher," one that would undoubtedly drive the obnoxious vermin into some more hospitable region. And when his paper appeared, it was a "flasher" sure enough. In the course of his observations he gave the initials of several of the fraternity, whom he desired to leave town as soon as possible, if they had the slightest desire to save their bacon.

The next morning, while the poor scribe was comfortably seated in his office, listlessly fumbling over a meagre parcel of exchanges, he heard footsteps on the stairs; and presently an individual having accomplished the ascent, made his appearance. His first salutation was slightly abrupt.

"Where is the editor of this dirty lying paper?"

Now, aside from the rudeness of this opening interrogatory, there were other considerations that induced the editor to believe there was trouble on foot. The personage who addressed him bore a cowhide in his hand, and moreover, seemed to be exceedingly enraged. This was not all; he recognized in him a distinguished leader of the sporting fraternity, with whose cognomen he had taken very irreverent liberties. It was without the slightest hesitation, therefore, that he replied to the introducer's query—

"I don't know."

"Do you belong to the concern?"

"No, indeed, but I presume the editor will be in soon."

"Well," said the visitor, "I will wait for him. And suiting the action to the word, he composedly took a chair, picked up a paper and commenced reading."

"If I meet him," said the frightened knight of the scissors and quill, "I will tell him there is a gentleman here who wishes to see him."

As he reached the foot of the stairs, in his hasty retreat, he was accosted by another person, who thus made himself known:—

"Can you tell me where I can find the sneaking rascal who has charge of this villainous sheet?" producing the last number of "Freedom's Echo, and the Battle-Axe of Liberty."

"Yes," replied the Editor, "he is up there in the office now, reading, with his back to the door."

"Thank you," exclaimed the stranger, as he bounced up the stairs.

"I've got you, have I!" ejaculated he, as he made a grasp at his brother in iniquity, and they came crashing to the floor together.

As the combatants, notwithstanding the similarity of their vocation, happened to be unacquainted with each other, a very pretty quarrel ensued. First one was at the top, then the other; blow followed blow, kick followed kick, oath followed oath, until, bruised, exhausted, and bloody, with features resembling Deaf Burke after a two hours' pugilistic encounter, there was by mutual consent a cessation of hostilities. As the warriors sat on the floor contemplating each other, the first comer found breath enough to ask:—

"Who are you? What did you attack me for?"

"You abused me in your paper, you scoundrel!"

"Me! I'm not the editor. I came here to flog him myself!"

Mutual explanations and apologies ensued, and the two mistaken gentlemen retired to "bind up their wounds." As the story comes to us, the distinguished individual whose vocation it was to enlighten the world by the aid of that great engine, the public press, escaped scot free.