

LITERATURE.

NAPOLEON'S MERCY

Napoleon was conversing with Josephine, when one of his officers entered and announced a young woman from Lyons—"What is her business with me?"

"Some petition," answered de Merville, the officer.

"Show her into our presence," said Napoleon.

The officer re-appeared with the lady leaning on his arm, whose face, as could be discerned through the thick folds of a veil, was very beautiful. She trembled as she approached the door.

"Mademoiselle," whispered the guide kindly pressing her hand, "take courage, but answer promptly whatever questions the Emperor proposes, he detests hesitation." Then ushering her into a spacious apartment, he bowed and retired.

The trembling girl, perceiving Napoleon, on whom her fondest hopes depended, forgot herself and her timidity; she thought only of Napoleon, exclaimed, in a voice choked with emotion, "Mercy sire! I sue for mercy and pardon." She could articulate no more. Josephine stepped from her partial concealment, and then approaching the group, contributed by her sympathizing words of encouragement, to restore the courage of the young petitioner as she bade her rise.

"Your petition, Mademoiselle," said he

Henriette Armond (for that was her name) looked imploringly at the Emperor and exclaimed:—

"Ah, sire, I ask pardon for Louis Delmarre, who is condemned to be shot to-morrow. Oh, grant him your most royal pardon."

A cloud gathered on the brow of Napoleon as he interrupted her with—

"A deserter, madam, he has twice deserted. No, he must be an example for the rest of the regiment."

"But the cause of his desertion," cried Henrietta, in agony; he was compelled to join the army against his will."

"What are the causes of his desertion?" interrupted Napoleon.

"Two weeks since," answered Henrietta, "he received the news that an only parent, a mother, sire, was on her death-bed, and longed, day and night to behold her son again. Louis knew that relief or release was impossible. His mind was filled with one thought—that she might close her eyes forever, ere they restored on a son she loved so fondly."

"Did she die?" asked the Empress with interest.

"No, Madam," replied Henrietta, "she at length recovered. But hardly had Louis received her blessing, been folded in her arms, ere he was torn from her grasp by the officers of justice, who dragged him thither. Oh! must he die? Mercy, sire, I beseech you."

"Mademoiselle," said Napoleon, apparently softened, "this was the second offence—name the first—you omitted that."

"It was," said Henrietta, hesitating and coloring. "It was—that he heard that I was to marry Conrad Ferant, whom I detest as much as he does."

"Are you his sister, that he feels so great an interest in your fate?" asked the Emperor.

"O, no, sire," said Henrietta, her lovely cheek assuming still deeper the hue of the rose, "I am only his cousin."

"Ah! only his cousin," repeated Napoleon, glancing at Josephine with a half-suppressed smile.

"O, sire," cried Henrietta, "think of the anguish of his widowed mother, when she recollects that the affection for her is the cause of his death." "What," she continued, "can I do to save!" and the poor girl forgetting the presence of royalty, burst into tears. The kind-hearted Josephine glanced at the Emperor, with eyes expressive of sympathy. She noticed the workings of his face, and felt at once it would be very uncertain whether Louis Delmarre was to be shot the next morning.

Napoleon approached the weeping girl.—She hastily looked up and dried her tears.

"Mademoiselle," said he, "would you give

your life to save his? would you die, could Louis Delmarre be restored to life, liberty, and his mother?"

Henrietta started back, deadly pale, looking fixedly at the Emperor for a moment, then turning away, she buried her face in her hands.

After a silence of some minutes, Henrietta looked up, an air of fixed determination resting upon her face, "I am willing," she said in a low voice.

Napoleon looked at her in surprise, as if he had not anticipated so ready an answer to his proposal.

"I will see you again," said he; "in the meantime accept such apartments for your accommodation as I shall direct."

As soon as the door closed upon the fair petitioner, Napoleon walked to the window, against which Josephine was leaning and said: "I see how it is; Louis Delmarre is the lover of this young girl. True to woman's nature she has braved difficulty to beg for his release."

"How strong must be the love she bears for him," said the Empress.

"Ah!" responded he, "I have a mind to subject that same love to a severe test.—Much do I doubt whether she will give her life for him. Nevertheless, I will see."

"Sure," cried Josephine, "you are not serious. Louis can be pardoned without the death of Henrietta."

Napoleon drew near the window; they conversed in a low voice.

Henrietta stood alone in a magnificent apartment. Hours unobserved, so intensely was she absorbed in reverie, and a small folded paper was tightly grasped in her hand. On it were traced these words:—

"A deserter is condemned by the laws of the army to suffer death. If you wish Delmarre restored to liberty, the means are in your power. Ere the day dawns, he may be on his way to join his mother, whom he so much loves."

"Ah, do not I love him, too?" murmured the young Henrietta. Pressing her hands upon her heart, as if to still its tumultuous beating, she paced the apartment. The door opened, and the Chevalier de Merville entered. He paused ere he articulated "Mademoiselle."

"I am ready," replied Henrietta, "my decision is made."

De Merville appeared to comprehend the import of her words. He looked upon her in reverence as well as admiration, as she stood with a high resolve impressed upon her beautiful brow.

"Follow me, Mademoiselle," said he

They traversed long corridors, and numerous suits of superb apartments, and descending a staircase, quickly reached the outer court, communicating with the guard-house. Entering this, Henrietta was ushered by her guide into a small apartment, where she was soon left to herself.

On the chair was flung a uniform of the regiment to which Louis belonged. On the table lay a large plumed cap. Henrietta comprehended it in a moment. Quickly habituating herself in the uniform, she stood before a mirror, gathered up her beautiful brown tresses in a knot, and placed the cap upon her head. She almost uttered a cry of joy at the success of her transformation; she knew that she was to be led to the fatal ground at the morning's dawn. The bullet which was to have struck Louis to the heart, but she shrink not back. Love triumphed over woman's nature. "Louis's mother will bless me in her heart," she whispered. "Louis himself will never forget me. Ah, often has he sworn that he loved me better than all things else." Drawing a lock of his raven hair from her bosom she pressed it to her lips, and then she breathed a prayer to heaven.

Morning dawned. The sound of fomen aroused Henrietta. She started up—gazed the band of hair, awaiting her summons. The door opened and two soldiers entered, repeating the name of Louis Delmarre; they suddenly led her forth to die. The soldiers, whose bullets were to pierce the heart of Louis, had taken their stand and only awaited the word of command from the Emperor, who was stationed at the window, commanding a view of the whole scene.

"Oh!" cried Josephine, who stood by him, but concealed by the window drapery from the view of those below. "O, sire, I can endure it no longer, it seems so much like a dreadful reality. Mark the devoted girl. No shrinking back. See, she seems calmly awaiting the dreadful moment."

"Stop," cried Napoleon, from the window, "Louis Delmarre is pardoned. I revoke the sentence."

A loud burst of applause from the lips of the soldiers followed this announcement. No one of them but loved and respected his comrade.

The next moment, ere they could press around to congratulate the supposed Louis, De Merville had eagerly drawn the bewildered Henrietta through the crowd, back to the cell whence she emerged but a few moments before.

"Resume your dress again, Mademoiselle," hurriedly whispered he, "lose no time. The Emperor wishes to see you; I will return very soon."

Henrietta was like one in a dream, but a gleam of delicious hope thrilled her soul. She felt the dawning of happiness break upon her heart. Soon again resuming her pretty rustic habiliments, De Merville re-appeared; once again she trod the audience room of the Emperor. Lifting her eyes from the ground, as the lofty door swung open, she beheld Louis.

An exclamation of joy burst from the lips of both, as regardless of others, they rushed in each other's arms.

Napoleon stepped forward, "Louis Delmarre you have heard from my lips the tale of this lovely girl's devotion and courage. Do you love her as she deserves?"

"I could die for her," answered Louis proudly.

"Well, well," cried the Emperor, "this ever test of love will suffice. So dutiful a son, so faithful a lover, will doubtless make the best husband."

"You, Lieutenant Delmarre, are discharged from your regiment. Return to your native valley, with Henrietta as your bride."

"Here," said the benevolent Josephine emerging from the recessed window, "ere are one hundred louis d'ors, as thy marriage dowry, Henrietta."

A charming blush suffused the face of the beautiful girl, as she received the purse of the Empress.

"Long live Napoleon," exclaimed Louis, with a heart too full of grateful emotion for further utterance, he took the hand of Henrietta, and making a grateful obeisance, left the apartment.

"Marriage by Surprise," Italy.

The Florence correspondent of the London News says: "I met in society a few days ago an English lady who had just been released from prison, where she had undergone two months solitary confinement having contracted marriage with a Tuscan officer in the manner termed *matrimonio d' sorpresa*, which may be considered equivalent to a Gretna Green match in England. The parties being much attached to each other although family obstacles prevented their immediate marrying *in forma*, they resolved to adopt the plan above mentioned, which consists in the couple presenting themselves before the curate of the parish, and stating to him in presence of two witnesses that they are man and wife. This forms a valid marriage, according to the law of the Church of Rome. The lady in the present case being a Roman Catholic, sent to the curate to inform him that she wished to confess, and requested him to name the hour that would suit him to hear her. At the hour named she repaired to the confessional and had fully engaged the priest's attentions when her lover, attended by two witnesses suddenly presented himself. The lady arose and gave him her hand, the fatal words were pronounced, the witnesses attested, and the curate became the unwilling instrument of marrying by surprise." But although this marriage contracted in this manner is perfectly valid, it is punishable in Tuscany as a civil misdemeanor, so that the law condemns where Church sanctions. The officer was first confined in a military,

fortress, deprived of his rank, and dismissed the service, and then sent to expiate his offence in civil point of view, by two months solitary confinement in the Mauratte cellular prison and his wife had undergone a similar term in another prison.

Another instance of this kind occurred here recently, wherein the priest was sent for as to attend a dying person; but one of the witnesses getting alarmed before the curate arrived, went down stairs and warned his reverence that a snare was prepared for him. The curate very indignantly sent for a couple of gentlemen, and with them presented himself to arrest the culpable parties. The other witness got out of an upper window and escaped over the tiles; but the bridegroom, nohing daunted by the priest and his *posse comitatus*, and resolve not to miss marriage for want of witnesses, addressed the curate in the usual formula: "This is my wife," said he. "And this is my husband," responded the lady; "and these two gentlemen," resumed the bridegroom, pointing to the two astounded gendarmes, "are witnesses." The priest was done, and the marriage was valid."

A FIGHT BETWEEN AN ELEPHANT AND A BULL.

A correspondent of the Baltimore Patriot, writing from Athens Co., Ohio, gives the following account of a rencontre between one of Barnum's elephants and a pugnacious bull:

"I have just been wandering about the country in search of land, belonging to some client of mine, and, in doing so, have met with many amusing incidents. Only the other day, as a caravan of rare animals, including one that travelled with a trunk, was passing up, on Federal Hill, but Federal Creek, in Athens County, Ohio, it encountered a sturdy Buckeye driving a large bull. Now the bull, unlike some people, had never seen the elephant before, and when the critter came in sight, commenced making his fore-feet familiar with the 'free soil,' and his lungs familiar with their accustomed exercise. His driver and owner warned Barnum's agent to get his elephant out of way. But Mr. Barnum's agent said he would risk his elephant if Buckeye would risk his bull. Whereupon the Western Taurus renewed his bellowing, and made a desperate lung at the huge monster of India. The contest was somewhat similar to certain political ones, for the elephant with one blow from his trunk stretched the bull upon the ground, breaking three of his ribs, and driving the breath so far from his body that it has utterly refused to return. My Buckeye friend was obliged to content with Mr. Bull's beef, tallow and hide whilst the elephant went on his way, driven by his whistling and whittling attendant. True, the beef owner consoled himself by saying that he had been saved a great deal of trouble, and the fight had turned out just as expected. This should be a warning to the Durhams never to attack elephants."

"Human nature is very frail. Few men have a stronger feeling of it, under the influence of a sense of justice, than England's great admiral, Lord Nelson. He was always loth to inflict punishment, and when obliged, as he called it, to 'endure the torture of seeing me flogged,' he came out of his cabin with a hurried step, ran into the gangway, and reading the articles of war which the culprit had infringed, said 'Boatswain do your duty!'"

"The lash was instantly applied, and the sufferer exclaimed—'Forgive me admiral, forgive me!' On such occasions, Nelson would look around with wild anxiety, and all his officers kept silence he would say—'what none of you speak for him? cast off;' and then added to the suffering culprit 'In the day of battle remember me Jack!'"

A sharper who had pawned his hat, out of church in the middle of a crowd, snatched a man's hat from under his arm. The p fellow, feeling his hat gone, cried, 'They have stolen my hat!' The sharper immediately putting the hat on his head, and covering with both his hands, exclaimed, 'Have the I defy them to take mine!'"