

stop there; I successively mastered chemistry and physics. It was now that, having by industry and economy, put myself in the way of entering upon some small business transactions, I proceeded by slow, but sure steps, still extending them; until at length, by perseverance and diligence I became what I am."

"You have rendered yourself the most considerable man in France."

"One of the most considered at least, I hope," replied M. Durand, but let us return to this great favour I have to ask of you. Here is a document of which I want four or five copies made; you will carry it home with you, and prepare me these copies this evening. As your office hours are not at my disposal, and M. Tremont would grumble if I should keep you from your duty, I must thus trespass on your kindness."

"Oh! sir," said Leopold, confused, "do not talk to me of kindness, when every hour of my life belongs to you."

"Be sure not to shew this paper to any one, even to your mother."

"That I promise you, sir."

"And by the bye, how is your mother?"

"Oh, very well, sir, and she will be delighted to hear that——."

"That I have enquired after her health," said the banker, smiling, and she will doubtless go and proclaim every where the kind condescension of M. Durand in asking for her."

"Do you not desire her gratitude?"

"I did but jest, Leopold, I did but jest, my friend; your mother is a worthy and honest woman, and if she does somewhat exaggerate the little I have been able to do for her, this sentiment springs from a virtue so rare, that I should commend it, if any other than myself were the object of it. Present my best respects to her."

"I thank you, sir, but when must I bring these copies?"

"To-morrow morning."

"Then I will bring them early, for you set out to-morrow for L'Etang."

"By my faith but you are right. To-morrow is Sunday, and I must set out this evening, for my daughter would complain should I not arrive until to-morrow. There is a ball to-morrow at M. de Tavie's country seat, and I am charged with I don't know how many commissions for her."

"I can spend to-day in making these copies."

"No, no, I should then have to make your excuse to M. Tremont; we will manage better than that. Come to-morrow to L'Etang—you

shall spend the day with us, and I will take you with me to the ball in the evening. Come, this is a settled affair." At this proposition, Leopold blushed deeply; he cast down his eyes with an embarrassed air, and seemed to hesitate. The countenance of M. Durand clouded over for an instant, and he said in a tone of slight displeasure—"what! sir, cannot you oblige me so far?"

"I am only confounded at the kindness of your invitation," replied the youth. "My apparent hesitation proceeds only from an overpowering sense of your goodness, that I have done so little to merit. My mother's happiness will be even greater than mine."

"M. Durand's features expanded, and he replied in a tone of returning cheerfulness.—"Well, if you find that they do not tire you at L'Etang, you must ask her to accompany you on some future occasion."

"Oh! sir, sir," replied Leopold, with tears in his eyes, and suffocated by his grateful emotions.

"Enough, my son," said Durand, giving him his hand, which the former kissed in his anxiety to suppress the warmth of his feelings, "now leave me."

Durand saw him retire, and then gave free vent to the gratified sensations this interview had caused him, by taking two or three rapid turns round his apartment and rubbing his hands triumphantly. When this emotion had somewhat evaporated, he resumed his seat near the bureau, and rung again. The valet re-appeared.

"Who are the people in waiting?" said the banker. The man respectfully handed in their several cards to his master. The latter read them, and stopping at one of them, said—"who is this M. Felix of Marseilles?"

"He is an old gentleman of about seventy or eighty years of age, and is the last comer, sir."

"Then let him be admitted last."

"The first that arrived was M. le Marquis de Berizy," said the valet.

"Show in M. Daneau," replied the banker, "and beg M. le Marquis to excuse this preference, M. Daneau's attendance being by appointment."

M. Daneau made his appearance at this instant, and making an awkward salutation, stood seemingly embarrassed at being in the presence of one of the most wealthy capitalists in Europe. M. Durand made as if he did not observe this embarrassment, and said, whilst with a welcome gesture, motioning him to be