

A few deaths directly occasioned by the use of Chloroform or ether are, therefore, no more to be adduced as arguments against the employment of those agents, than a few—or a great many—deaths by railway, are arguments for the complete abolition of the railway system. Chloroform and railways are both blessings to humanity; but it is requisite that they should both be managed carefully. It is a fact very much to the credit of the medical profession that instances of accident by Chloroform are so much rarer than railway accidents.

When we before discussed this subject, we mentioned those cases in which especially Chloroform or ether should not be employed; but, we repeat—as it is a kind of information which it is advantageous for the Chloroform-inhaling public to bear well in mind—that the use of such agents is rarely safe in the case of persons suffering under disease of the brain or spinal marrow; of the heart or lungs, having an intermittent pulse; or when they are in a weak and pallid bodily condition. Experience also shows that fatal results have often followed the administration of Chloroform to persons who had exhibited a decisive and unaccountable dread of it. This is a curious fact which we may account for as we please, either by some theory of instinct, or by some superstition of the fore-cast shadow of approaching fate.

THE SECRET OF THE STREAM.

WHEN the silver stars looked down from Heaven
To smile the world to rest,
A woman, from all refuge driven,
Her little babe caress'd,
And thus she sang:

“Sleep within thy mother's arms,
Folded to thy mother's heart,
Folded to the breast that warms
Only from its inward snart,
Only from the pent-up flame
Burning fiercely at its core,
Cherished by my loss and shame:
Shall I live to suffer more?
Shall I live to bear the pangs
Of the world's neglect and scorn?
Hark! the distant bell's clangs
Welcome to the coming morn.
Shall I live to see it rise?
Is't not better far to die?
Shall I gaze upon the skies—
Gaze upon them shamelessly?
Clasp me, babe, around my neck,
Do not fear me for the sobs
That I cannot, cannot check.
Oh! another moment robs
Life of all its painful breath,
Waking us from this sad dream,
E'en the wretched rest in death.
Hark! the murmur of the stream.
Nestle closely, cheek to cheek;
Let us ha-ten to the wave,
Where is found what we would seek,
Death, oblivion, and a grave.”

And the tide rolls on for ever
Of that dark and silent river;
And beneath the wave-foam sparkling,
'Mid the weeds embowered and darkling,
There they lie near one another,
Youthful child and youthful mother;
And the tide rolls on for ever
Of that swift and silent river.

GABRIEL'S MARRIAGE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER THE SECOND.

“I MAY marry Rose with a clear conscience now!” There are some parts of the world, where it would be drawing no natural picture of human nature to represent a son as believing conscientiously that an offence against life and the laws of hospitality, secretly committed by his father, rendered him, though innocent of all participation in it, unworthy to fulfil his engagement with his affianced wife. Among the simple inhabitants of Gabriel's province, however, such acuteness of conscientious sensibility as this was no extraordinary exception to all general rules. Ignorant and superstitious as they might be, the people of Brittany practised the duties of hospitality as devoutly as they practised the duties of the national religion. The presence of the stranger-guest, rich or poor, was a sacred presence at their hearths. His safety was their especial charge—his property their especial responsibility. They might be half-starved, but they were ready to share the last crust with him nevertheless, as they would share it with their own children. Any outrage on the virtue of hospitality, thus born and bred in the people, was viewed by them with universal disgust, and punished by universal execration. This ignominy was uppermost in Gabriel's thoughts by the side of his grandfather's bed; the dread of this worst dishonour, which there was no wiping out, held him speechless before Rose, shamed and horrified him so that he felt unworthy to look her in the face; and when the result of his search at the Merchant's Table proved the absence there of all evidence of the crime spoken of by the old man, the blessed relief, the absorbing triumph of that discovery was expressed entirely in the one thought which had prompted his first joyful words:—He could marry Rose with a clear conscience, for he was the son of an honest man!

When he returned to the cottage, François had not come back. Rose was astonished at the change in Gabriel's manner; even Pierre and the children remarked it. Rest and warmth had by this time so far recovered the younger brother, that he was able to give some account of the perilous adventures of the night at sea. They were still listening to the boy's narrative when François at last returned. It was now Gabriel who held out his hand, and made the first advances towards reconciliation.

To his utter amazement, his father recoiled from him. The variable temper of François

had evidently changed completely during his absence at the village. A settled scowl of distrust darkened his face, as he looked at his son. "I never shake hands with people who have once doubted me," he said loudly and irritably; "for I always doubt them for ever after. You are a bad son! You have suspected your father of some infamy that you dare not openly charge him with, on no other testimony than the rambling nonsense of a half-witted, dying old man. Don't speak to me! I won't hear you! An innocent man and a spy are bad company. Go and denounce me, you Judas in disguise! I don't care for your secret or for you. What's that girl Rose doing here still? Why hasn't she gone home long ago? The priest's coming; we don't want strangers in the house of death. Take her back to the farm-house, and stop there with her, if you like: nobody wants you here!"

There was something in the manner and look of the speaker, as he uttered these words, so strange, so sinister, so indescribably suggestive of his meaning much more than he said, that Gabriel felt his heart sink within him instantly; and almost at the same moment this fearful question forced itself irresistibly on his mind—might not his father have followed him to The Merchant's Table? Even if he had been desired to speak, he could not have spoken now, while that question and the suspicion that it brought with it were utterly destroying all the re-assuring hopes and convictions of the morning. The mental suffering produced by the sudden change from pleasure to pain in all his thoughts, reacted on him physically. He felt as if he were stifling in the air of the cottage, in the presence of his father; and when Rose hurried on her walking attire, and with a face which alternately flushed and turned pale with every moment, approached the door, he went out with her as hastily as if he had been flying from his home. Never had the fresh air and the free daylight felt like heavenly and guardian influences to him until now!

He could comfort Rose under his father's harshness, he could assure her of his own affection that no earthly influence could change, while they walked together towards the farm-house; but he could do no more. He durst not confide to her the subject that was uppermost in his mind: of all human beings she was the last to whom he could reveal the terrible secret that was festering at his heart. As soon as they got within sight of the farm-house, Gabriel stopped; and, promising to see her again soon, took leave of Rose with assumed ease in his manner and with real despair in his heart. Whatever the poor girl might think of it, he felt, at that moment, that he had not courage to face her father, and hear him talk happily and pleasantly, as his custom was, of Rose's approaching marriage.

Left to himself, Gabriel wandered hither

and thither over the open heath, neither knowing nor caring in what direction he turned his steps. The doubts about his father's innocence which had been dissipated by his visit to The Merchant's Table, that father's own language and manner had now revived—had even confirmed, though he dared not yet acknowledge so much to himself. It was terrible enough to be obliged to admit that the result of his morning's search was, after all, not conclusive—that the mystery was in very truth not yet cleared up. The violence of his father's last words of distrust; the extraordinary and indescribable changes in his father's manner while uttering them—what did these things mean? Guilt or innocence? Again, was it any longer reasonable to doubt the death-bed confession made by his grandfather? Was it not, on the contrary, far more probable that the old man's denial in the morning of his own words at night, had been made under the influence of a panic terror, when his moral consciousness was bewildered, and his intellectual faculties were sinking?—The longer Gabriel thought of these questions, the less competent—possibly also the less willing—he felt to answer them. Should he seek advice from others wiser than he? No: not while the thousandth part of a chance remained that his father was innocent. This thought was still in his mind, when he found himself once more in sight of his home. He was still hesitating near the door, when he saw it opened cautiously. His brother Pierre looked out, and then came running towards him. "Come in, Gabriel; oh, do come in!" said the boy earnestly. "We are afraid to be alone with father. He's been beating us for talking of you."

Gabriel went in. His father looked up from the hearth where he was sitting, muttered the word "Spy!" and made a gesture of contempt—but did not address a word directly to his son. The hours passed on in silence; afternoon waned into evening, and evening into night; and still he never spoke to any of his children. Soon after it was dark, he went out, and took his net with him—saying that it was better to be alone on the sea than in the house with a spy. When he returned the next morning, there was no change in him. Days passed—weeks, months even elapsed—and still, though his manner insensibly became what it used to be towards his other children, it never altered towards his eldest son. At the rare periods when they now met, except when absolutely obliged to speak, he preserved total silence in his intercourse with Gabriel. He would never take Gabriel out with him in the boat; he would never sit alone with Gabriel in the house; he would never eat a meal with Gabriel; he would never let the other children talk to him about Gabriel; and he would never hear a word in expostulation, a word in reference to anything his dead father had said or done

on the night of the storm from Gabriel himself.

The young man pined and changed so that even Rose hardly knew him again, under this cruel system of domestic excommunication; under the wearing influence of the one unchanging doubt which never left him; and, more than all, under the incessant reproaches of his own conscience, aroused by the sense that he was evading a responsibility which it was his solemn, his immediate duty to undertake. But no sting of conscience, no ill-treatment at home, and no self-reproaches for failing in his duty of confession, as a good Catholic, were powerful enough in their influence over Gabriel to make him disclose the secret, under the oppression of which his very life was wasting away. He knew that if he once revealed it, whether his father was ultimately proved to be guilty or innocent, there would remain a slur and a suspicion on the family, and on Rose besides from her approaching connection with it, which in their time and in their generation could never be removed. The reproach of the world is terrible even in the crowded city, where many of the dwellers in our abiding-place are strangers to us—but it is far more terrible in the country, where none near us are strangers, where all talk of us and know us, where nothing intervenes between us and the tyranny of the evil tongue. Gabriel had not courage to face this, and dare the fearful chance of life-long ignominy—no, not even to serve the sacred interests of justice, of atonement, and of truth.

While he still remained prostrated under the affliction that was wasting his energies of body and mind, Brittany was visited by a great public calamity in which all private misfortunes were overwhelmed for a while. It was now the time when the ever-gathering storm of the French Revolution had risen to its hurricane climax. Those chiefs of the new republic were now in power, whose last, worst madness it was to decree the extinction of religion and the overthrow of everything that outwardly symbolized it, throughout the whole of the country that they governed. Already this decree had been executed to the letter in and around Paris; and now the soldiers of the republic were on their way to Brittany, headed by commanders whose commission was to root out the Christian religion in the last and the surest of the strongholds still left to it in France.

These men began their work in a spirit worthy of the worst of their superiors who had sent them to do it. They gutted churches, they demolished chapels, they overthrew roadside crosses wherever they found them. The terrible guillotine devoured human lives in the villages of Brittany, as it had devoured them in the streets of Paris; the musket and the sword, in highway and byeway, wreaked havoc on the people—even on women and children kneeling in the act of prayer; the priests

were tracked night and day from one hiding place where they still offered up worship to another, and were killed as soon as overtaken—every atrocity was committed in every district; but the Christian religion still spread wider than the widest bloodshed; still sprang up with ever-renewed vitality from under the very feet of the men whose vain fury was powerless to trample it down. Everywhere the people remained true to their Faith; everywhere the priests stood firm by them in their sorest need. The executioners of the republic had been sent to make Brittany a country of apostates: they did their worst, and left it a country of martyrs.

One evening, while this frightful persecution was still raging, Gabriel happened to be detained unusually late at the cottage of Rose's father. He had lately spent much of his time at the farm-house: it was his only refuge now from that place of suffering, of silence, and of secret shame, which he had once called home! Just as he had taken leave of Rose for the night, and was about to open the farm-house door, her father stopped him, and pointed to a chair in the chimney corner. "Leave us alone, my dear," said the old man to his daughter; "I want to speak to Gabriel. You can go to your mother in the next room."

The words which Père Bonan—as he was called by the neighbours—had now to say in private, were destined to lead to very unexpected events. After referring to the alteration which had appeared of late in Gabriel's manner, the old man began by asking him, sorrowfully but not suspiciously, whether he still preserved his old affection for Rose. On receiving an eager answer in the affirmative, Père Bonan then referred to the persecution still raging through the country, and to the consequent possibility that he, like others of his countrymen, might yet be called to suffer and perhaps to die for the cause of his religion. If this last act of self-sacrifice were required of him, Rose would be left unprotected, unless her affianced husband performed his promise to her, and assumed, without delay, the position of her lawful guardian. "Let me know that you will do this," concluded the old man. "I shall be resigned to all that may be required of me, if I can only know that I shall not die leaving Rose unprotected." Gabriel gave the promise—gave it with his whole heart. As he took leave of Père Bonan, the old man said to him:—

"Come here to-morrow; I shall know more then, than I know now—I shall be able to fix with certainty the day for the fulfilment of your engagement with Rose."

Why did Gabriel hesitate at the farm-house door, looking back on Père Bonan as though he would fain say something, and yet not speaking a word? Why, after he had gone out and had walked onward several paces, did he suddenly stop, return quickly to the

farm-house, stand irresolute before the gate, and then retrace his steps sighing heavily as he went, but never pausing again on his homeward way? Because the torment of his horrible secret had grown harder to bear than ever, since he had given the promise that had been required of him. Because, while a strong impulse moved him frankly to lay bare his hidden dread and doubt to the father whose beloved daughter was soon to be his wife, there was a yet stronger passive influence which paralysed on his lips the terrible confession that he knew not whether he was the son of an honest man, or the son of an assassin and a robber. Made desperate by his situation, he determined, while he hastened homeward, to risk the worst and ask that fatal question of his father in plain words. But this supreme trial for parent and child was not to be. When he entered the cottage, François was absent. He had told the younger children that he should not be home again before noon on the next day.

Early in the morning, Gabriel repaired to the farm-house, as he had been bidden. Influenced by his love for Rose, blindly confiding in the faint hope (which in despite of heart and conscience he still forced himself to cherish) that his father might be innocent, he now preserved the appearance at least of perfect calmness. "If I tell my secret to Rose's father, I risk disturbing in him that confidence in the future safety of his child for which I am his present and only warrant"—Something like this thought was in Gabriel's mind, as he took the hand of Père Bonan, and waited anxiously to hear what was required of him on that day.

"We have a short respite from danger, Gabriel," said the old man. "News has come to me that the spoilers of our churches and the murderers of our congregations, have been stopped on their way hitherward by tidings which have reached them from another district. This interval of peace and safety will be a short one—we must take advantage of it while it is yet ours. My name is among the names on the list of the denounced; if the soldiers of the republic find me here!—but we will say nothing more of this: it is of Rose and of you that I must now speak. On this very evening, your marriage may be solemnized with all the wonted rites of our holy religion, and the blessing may be pronounced over you by the lips of a priest. This evening, therefore, Gabriel, you must become the husband and the protector of Rose. Listen to me attentively, and I will tell you how."

This was the substance of what Gabriel now heard from Père Bonan:—

Not very long before the persecutions broke out in Brittany, a priest, known generally by the name of Father Paul, was appointed to a curacy in one of the northern districts of the province. He fulfilled all the duties of his station in such a manner as to win the confidence and affection of every member of his

congregation, and was often spoken of with respect, even in parts of the country distant from the scene of his labours. It was not, however, until the troubles broke out, and the destruction and bloodshed began, that he became renowned far and wide, from one end of Brittany to another. From the date of the very first persecutions the name of Father Paul was a rallying cry of the hunted peasantry: he was their great encouragement under oppression, their example in danger, their last and only consoler in the hour of death. Wherever havoc and ruin raged most fiercely, wherever the pursuit was hottest and the slaughter most cruel, there the intrepid priest was sure to be seen pursuing his sacred duties in defiance of every peril. His hairbreadth escapes from death; his extraordinary re-appearances in parts of the country where no one ever expected to see him again, were regarded by the poorer classes with superstitious awe. Wherever Father Paul appeared, with his black dress, his calm face, and the ivory crucifix which he always carried in his hand, the people revered him as more than mortal; and grew at last to believe that, single-handed, he would successfully defend his religion against the armies of the republic. But their simple confidence in his powers of resistance was soon destined to be shaken. Fresh reinforcements arrived in Brittany, and overran the whole province from one end to the other. One morning, after celebrating service in a dismantled church, and after narrowly escaping with his life from those who pursued him, the priest disappeared. Secret inquiries were made after him in all directions; but he was heard of no more.

Many weary days had passed, and the dispirited peasantry had already mourned him as dead, when some fishermen on the northern coast observed a ship of light burden in the offing, making signals to the shore. They put off to her in their boats; and on reaching the deck saw standing before them the well-remembered figure of Father Paul. He had returned to his congregations; and had founded the new altar that they were to worship at, on the deck of a ship! Razed from the face of the earth, their Church had not been destroyed—for Father Paul and the priests who acted with him had given that Church a refuge on the sea. Henceforth, their children could still be baptized, their sons and daughters could still be married, the burial of their dead could still be solemnized, under the sanction of the old religion for which, not vainly, they had suffered so patiently and so long. Throughout the remaining time of trouble, the services were uninterrupted on board the ship. A code of signals was established by which those on shore were always enabled to direct their brethren at sea towards such parts of the coast as happened to be uninfested by the enemies of their worship. On the morning

of Gabriel's visit to the farmhouse, these signals had shaped the course of the ship towards the extremity of the peninsula of Quiberon. The people of the district were all prepared to expect the appearance of the vessel some time in the evening, and had their boats ready at a moment's notice to put off and attend the service. At the conclusion of this service Père Bonan had arranged that the marriage of his daughter and Gabriel was to take place.

They waited for evening at the farmhouse. A little before sunset the ship was signalled as in sight; and then Père Bonan and his wife, followed by Gabriel and Rose, set forth over the heath to the beach. With the solitary exception of François Sarzeau, the whole population of the neighbourhood was already assembled there; Gabriel's brother and sisters being among the number. It was the calmest evening that had been known for months. There was not a cloud in the lustrous sky—not a ripple on the still surface of the sea. The smallest children were suffered by their mothers to stray down on the beach as they pleased; for the waves of the great ocean slept as tenderly and noiselessly on their sandy bed, as if they had been changed into the waters of an inland lake. Slow, almost imperceptible, was the approach of the ship—there was hardly a breath of wind to carry her on—she was just drifting gently with the landward set of the tide at that hour, while her sails hung idly against the masts. Long after the sun had gone down, the congregation still waited and watched on the beach. The moon and stars were arrayed in their glory of the night, before the ship dropped anchor. Then the muffled tolling of a bell came solemnly across the quiet waters; and then, from every creek along the shore, as far as the eye could reach, the black forms of the fishermen's boats shot out swift and stealthily into the shining sea.

By the time the boats had arrived alongside of the ship, the lamp had been kindled before the altar, and its flame was gleaming red and dull in the radiant moonlight. Two of the priests on board were clothed in their robes of office, and were waiting in their appointed places to begin the service. But there was a third, dressed only in the ordinary attire of his calling, who mingled with the congregation, and spoke a few words to each of the persons composing it, as, one by one, they mounted the sides of the ship. Those who had never seen him before knew by the famous ivory crucifix in his hand that the priest who received them was Father Paul. Gabriel looked at this man, whom he now beheld for the first time, with a mixture of astonishment and awe; for he saw that the renowned chief of the Christians of Brittany was, to all appearance, but little older than himself. The expression on the pale calm face of the priest was so gentle and kind, that children just able to walk tottered up to him, and held

familiarly by the skirts of his black gown, whenever his clear blue eyes rested on theirs, while he beckoned them to his side. No one would ever have guessed from the countenance of Father Paul what deadly perils he had confronted, but for the scar of a sabre-wound, as yet hardly healed, which ran across his forehead. That wound had been dealt while he was kneeling before the altar, in the last church in Brittany which had escaped spoliation. He would have died where he knelt, but for the peasants who were praying with him, and who, unarmed as they were, threw themselves like tigers on the soldiery, and at awful sacrifice of their own lives saved the life of their priest. There was not a man now on board the ship who would have hesitated, had the occasion called for it again, to have rescued him in the same way.

The service began. Since the days when the primitive Christians worshipped amid the caverns of the earth, can any service be imagined nobler in itself, or sublimer in the circumstances surrounding it, than that which was now offered up? Here was no artificial pomp, no gaudy profusion of ornament, no attendant grandeur of man's creation. All around this church spread the hushed and awful majesty of the tranquil sea. The roof of this cathedral was the immeasurable heaven, the pure moon its one great light, the countless glories of the stars its only adornment. Here were no hired singers or rich priest-princes; no curious sight-seers, or careless lovers of sweet sounds. This congregation, and they who had gathered it together, were all poor alike, all persecuted alike, all worshipping alike to the overthrow of their worldly interests, and at the imminent peril of their lives. How brightly and tenderly the moonlight shone upon the altar and the people before it!—how solemnly and divinely the deep harmonies, as they chanted the penitential Psalms, mingled with the hoarse singing of the freshening night-breeze in the rigging of the ship!—how sweetly the still, rushing murmur of many voices, as they uttered the responses together, now died away and now rose again softly into the mysterious night!

Of all the members of the congregation—young or old—there was but one over whom that impressive service exercised no influence of consolation or of peace: that one was Gabriel. Often, throughout the day, his reproaching conscience had spoken within him again and again. Often, when he joined the little assembly on the beach, he turned away his face in secret shame and apprehension from Rose and her father. Vainly, after gaining the deck of the ship, did he try to meet the eye of Father Paul as frankly, as readily, and as affectionately as others met it. The burden of concealment seemed too heavy to be borne in the presence of the priest—and yet, torment as it was, he still bore it! But when he knelt with the rest of the congregation

and saw Rose kneeling by his side—when he felt the calmness of the solemn night and the still sea filling his heart—when the sounds of the first prayers spoke with a dread spiritual language of their own to his soul—then, the remembrance of the confession which he had neglected, and the terror of receiving unprepared the sacrament which he knew would be offered to him—grew too vivid to be endured: the sense that he merited no longer, though once worthy of it, the confidence in his perfect truth and candour placed in him by the woman with whom he was soon to stand before the altar, overwhelmed him with shame: the mere act of kneeling among that congregation, the passive accomplice by his silence and secrecy, for aught he knew to the contrary, of a crime which it was his bounden duty to denounce, appalled him as if he had already committed sacrilege that could never be forgiven. Tears flowed down his cheeks, though he strove to repress them: sobs burst from him, though he tried to stifle them. He knew that others besides Rose were looking at him in astonishment and alarm; but he could neither control himself, nor move to leave his place, nor raise his eyes even—until suddenly he felt a hand laid on his shoulder. That touch, slight as it was, ran through him instantly. He looked up, and saw Father Paul standing by his side.

Beckoning to him to follow, and signing to the congregation not to suspend their devotions, he led Gabriel out of the assembly—then paused for a moment, reflecting—then beckoning again, took him into the cabin of the ship, and closed the door carefully.

"You have something on your mind," he said simply and quietly, taking the young man by the hand. "I may be able to relieve you, if you tell me what it is."

As Gabriel heard these gentle words, and saw, by the light of a lamp which burnt before a cross fixed against the wall, the sad kindness of expression with which the priest was regarding him, the oppression that had lain so long on his heart seemed to leave it in an instant. The haunting fear of ever divulging his fatal suspicions and his fatal secret had vanished, as it were, at the touch of Father Paul's hand. For the first time, he now repeated to another ear—the sounds of prayer and praise rising grandly the while from the congregation above—his grandfather's death-bed confession, word for word almost, as he had heard it in the cottage on the night of the storm.

Once, and once only, did Father Paul interrupt the narrative, which in whispers was addressed to him. Gabriel had hardly repeated the first two or three sentences of his grandfather's confession, when the priest, in quick altered tones, abruptly asked him his name and place of abode. As the question was answered, Father Paul's calm face became suddenly agitated; but the next moment, resolutely resuming his self-possession, he

bowed his head, as a sign that Gabriel was to continue; clasped his trembling hands, and raising them as if in silent prayer, fixed his eyes intently on the cross. He never looked away from it while the terrible narrative proceeded. But when Gabriel described his search at The Merchant's Table; and, referring to his father's behaviour since that time, appealed to the priest to know whether he might, even yet, in defiance of appearances, be still filially justified in doubting whether the crime had really been perpetrated—then Father Paul moved near to him once more, and spoke again.

"Compose yourself, and look at me," he said, with all and more than all his former sad kindness of voice and manner. "I can end your doubts for ever. Gabriel, your father was guilty in intention and in act; but the victim of his crime still lives. I can prove it."

Gabriel's heart beat wildly; a deadly coldness crept over him, as he saw Father Paul loosen the fastening of his cassock round the throat. At that instant the chanting of the congregation above ceased; and then, the sudden and awful stillness was deepened rather than interrupted by the faint sound of one voice praying. Slowly and with trembling fingers the priest removed the band round his neck—paused a little—sighed heavily—and pointed to a scar which was now plainly visible on one side of his throat. He said something, at the same time; but the bell above tolled while he spoke. It was the signal of the elevation of the Host. Gabriel felt an arm passed round him, guiding him to his knees, and sustaining him from sinking to the floor. For one moment longer he was conscious that the bell had stopped, that there was dead silence, that Father Paul was kneeling by him beneath the cross, with bowed head—then all objects around vanished; and he saw and knew nothing more.

When he recovered his senses, he was still in the cabin—the man whose life his father had attempted was bending over him, and sprinkling water on his face—and the clear voices of the women and children of the congregation were joining the voices of the men in singing the *Agnus Dei*.

"Look up at me without fear, Gabriel," said the priest. "I desire not to avenge injuries: I visit not the sins of the father on the child. Look up, and listen! I have strange things to speak of; and I have a sacred mission to fulfil before the morning, in which you must be my guide."

Gabriel attempted to kneel and kiss his hand, but Father Paul stopped him, and said, pointing to the cross: "Kneel to that—not to me: not to your fellow-mortal, and your friend—for I will be your friend, Gabriel; believing that God's mercy has ordered it so. And now listen to me," he proceeded, with a brotherly tenderness in his

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As Gabriel heard these gentle words, and saw, by the light of a lamp which burnt before a cross fixed against the wall, the sad kindness of expression with which the priest was regarding him, the oppression that had lain so long on his heart seemed to leave it in an instant. The haunting fear of ever divulging his fatal suspicions and his fatal secret had vanished, as it were, at the touch of Father Paul's hand. For the first time, he now repeated to another ear—the sounds of prayer and praise rising grandly the while from the congregation above—his grandfather's death-bed confession, word for word almost, as he had heard it in the cottage on the night of the storm.

Once, and once only, did Father Paul interrupt the narrative, which in whispers was addressed to him. Gabriel had hardly repeated the first two or three sentences of his grandfather's confession, when the priest, in quick altered tones, abruptly asked him his name and place of abode. As the question was answered, Father Paul's calm face became suddenly agitated; but the next moment, resolutely resuming his self-possession, he

bowed his head, as a sign that Gabriel was to continue; clasped his trembling hands, and raising them as if in silent prayer, fixed his eyes intently on the cross. He never looked away from it while the terrible narrative proceeded. But when Gabriel described his search at The Merchant's Table; and, referring to his father's behaviour since that time, appealed to the priest to know whether he might, even yet, in defiance of appearances, be still filially justified in doubting whether the crime had really been perpetrated—then Father Paul moved near to him once more, and spoke again.

"Compose yourself, and look at me," he said, with all and more than all his former sad kindness of voice and manner. "I can end your doubts for ever. Gabriel, your father was guilty in intention and in act; but the victim of his crime still lives. I can prove it."

Gabriel's heart beat wildly; a deadly coldness crept over him, as he saw Father Paul loosen the fastening of his cassock round the throat. At that instant the chanting of the congregation above ceased; and then, the sudden and awful stillness was deepened rather than interrupted by the faint sound of one voice praying. Slowly and with trembling fingers the priest removed the band round his neck—paused a little—sighed heavily—and pointed to a scar which was now plainly visible on one side of his throat. He said something, at the same time; but the bell above tolled while he spoke. It was the signal of the elevation of the Host. Gabriel felt an arm passed round him, guiding him to his knees, and sustaining him from sinking to the floor. For one moment longer he was conscious that the bell had stopped, that there was dead silence, that Father Paul was kneeling by him beneath the cross, with bowed head—then all objects around vanished; and he saw and knew nothing more.

When he recovered his senses, he was still in the cabin—the man whose life his father had attempted was bending over him, and sprinkling water on his face—and the clear voices of the women and children of the congregation were joining the voices of the men in singing the *Agnus Dei*.

"Look up at me without fear, Gabriel," said the priest. "I desire not to avenge injuries: I visit not the sins of the father on the child. Look up, and listen! I have strange things to speak of; and I have a sacred mission to fulfil before the morning, in which you must be my guide."

Gabriel attempted to kneel and kiss his hand, but Father Paul stopped him, and said, pointing to the cross: "Kneel to that—not to me: not to your fellow-mortal, and your friend—for I will be your friend, Gabriel; believing that God's mercy has ordered it so. And now listen to me," he proceeded, with a brotherly tenderness in his

manner which went to Gabriel's heart. "The service is nearly ended. What I have to tell you must be told at once; the errand on which you will guide me must be performed before to-morrow dawns. Sit here near me; and attend to what I now say!"

Gabriel obeyed: Father Paul then proceeded thus:—

"I believe the confession made to you by your grandfather to have been true in every particular. On the evening to which he referred you, I approached your cottage, as he said, for the purpose of asking shelter for the night. At that period, I had been studying hard to qualify myself for the holy calling which I now pursue; and, on the completion of my studies, had indulged in the recreation of a tour on foot through Brittany, by way of innocently and agreeably occupying the leisure time then at my disposal, before I entered the priesthood. When I accosted your father, I had lost my way, had been walking for many hours, and was glad of any rest that I could get for the night. It is unnecessary to pain you now, by reference to the events which followed my entrance under your father's roof. I remember nothing that happened from the time when I laid down to sleep before the fire, until the time when I recovered my senses at the place which you call The Merchant's Table. My first sensation was that of being moved into the cold air; when I opened my eyes I saw the great Druid stones rising close above me, and two men on either side of me rifling my pockets. They found nothing valuable there, and were about to leave me where I lay, when I gathered strength enough to appeal to their mercy through their cupidity. Money was not scarce with me then, and I was able to offer them a rich reward (which they ultimately received as I had promised) if they would take me to any place where I could get shelter and medical help. I suppose they inferred by my language and accent—perhaps also by the linen I wore, which they examined closely—that I belonged to the higher ranks of the community, in spite of the plainness of my outer garments; and might therefore be in a position to make good my promise to them. I heard one say to the other, 'Let us risk it;' and then they took me in their arms, carried me down to a boat on the beach, and rowed to a vessel in the offing. The next day they disembarked me at Paimbœuf, where I got the assistance which I so much needed. I learnt through the confidence they were obliged to place in me, in order to give me the means of sending them their promised reward, that these men were smugglers, and that they were in the habit of using the cavity in which I had been laid, as a place of concealment for goods, and for letters of advice to their accomplices. This accounted for their finding me. As to my wound, I was informed by the surgeon who attended me, that it had missed being inflicted in a mortal

part by less than a quarter of an inch, and that, as it was, nothing but the action of the night air in coagulating the blood over the place had, in the first instance, saved my life. To be brief, I recovered after a long illness, returned to Paris, and was called to the priesthood. The will of my superiors obliged me to perform the first duties of my vocation in the great city; but my own wish was to be appointed to a cure of souls in your province, Gabriel. Can you imagine why?"

The answer to this question was in Gabriel's heart; but he was still too deeply awed and affected by what he had heard to give it utterance.

"I must tell you then what my motive was," said Father Paul. "You must know first that I uniformly abstained from disclosing to any one where and by whom my life had been attempted. I kept this a secret from the men who rescued me—from the surgeon—from my own friends even. My reason for such a proceeding was, I would fain believe, a Christian reason. I hope I had always felt a sincere and humble desire to prove myself, by the help of God, worthy of the sacred vocation to which I was destined. But my miraculous escape from death made an impression on my mind, which gave me another and an infinitely higher view of this vocation—the view which I have since striven, and shall always strive for the future to maintain. As I lay, during the first days of my recovery, examining my own heart, and considering in what manner it would be my duty to act towards your father, when I was restored to health, a thought came into my mind which calmed, comforted, and resolved all my doubts. I said within myself—'In a few months more I shall be called to be one of the chosen ministers of God. If I am worthy of my vocation, my first desire towards this man who has attempted to take my life, should be, not to know that human justice has overtaken him, but to know that he has truly and religiously repented and made atonement for his guilt. To such repentance and atonement let it be my duty to call him; if he reject that appeal, and be hardened only the more against me because I have forgiven him my injuries, then it will be time enough to denounce him for his crimes to his fellow men. Surely it must be well for me here and hereafter, if I begin my career in the holy priesthood by helping to save from hell the soul of the man who, of all others, has most cruelly wronged me.' It was for this reason, Gabriel—it was because I desired to go straightway to your father's cottage, and reclaim him after he had believed me to be dead—that I kept the secret and entreated of my superiors that I might be sent to Brittany. But this, as I have said, was not to be at first, and when my desire was granted, my place was assigned me in a far district. The persecution under which we still suffer broke out;

the designs of my life were changed; my own will became no longer mine to guide me. But, through sorrow and suffering, and danger and bloodshed, I am now led after many days to the execution of that first purpose which I formed on entering the priesthood. Gabriel! when the service is over, and the congregation are dispersed, you must guide me to the door of your father's cottage."

He held up his hand, in sign of silence, as Gabriel was about to answer. Just then, the officiating priests above were pronouncing the final benediction. When it was over, Father Paul opened the cabin door. As he ascended the steps, followed by Gabriel, Père Bonan met them. The old man looked doubtfully and searchingly on his future son-in-law, as he respectfully whispered a few words in the ear of the priest. Father Paul listened attentively, answered in a whisper, and then turned to Gabriel, first telling the few people near them to withdraw a little. "I have been asked whether there is any impediment to your marriage," he said, "and have answered that there is none. What you have said to me has been said in confession, and is a secret between us two. Remember that; and forget not, at the same time, the service which I shall require of you to-night, after the marriage ceremony is over. Where is Rose Bonan?" he added aloud, looking round him. Rose came forward. Father Paul took her hand, and placed it in Gabriel's. "Lead her to the altar steps," he said, "and wait there for me."

It was more than an hour later; the boats had left the ship's side; the congregation had dispersed over the face of the country—but still the vessel remained at anchor. Those who were left in her watched the land more anxiously than usual; for they knew that Father Paul had risked meeting the soldiers of the republic by trusting himself on shore. A boat was awaiting his return on the beach; half of the crew, armed, being posted as scouts in various directions on the high land of the heath. They would have followed and guarded the priest to the place of his destination; but he forbade it; and, leaving them abruptly, walked swiftly onward with one young man only for his companion.

Gabriel had committed his brother and his sisters to the charge of Rose. They were to go to the farm-house that night with his newly-married wife and her father and mother. Father Paul had desired that this might be done. When Gabriel and he were left alone to follow the path which led to the fisherman's cottage, the priest never spoke while they walked on—never looked aside either to the right or the left—always held his ivory crucifix clasped to his breast. They arrived at the door. "Knock," whispered Father Paul to Gabriel, "and then wait here with me."

The door was opened. On a lovely moonlight night François Sarzeau had stood on

that threshold, years since, with a bleeding body in his arms: on a lovely moonlight night, he now stood there again, confronting the very man whose life he had attempted, and knowing him not.

Father Paul advanced a few paces, so that the moonlight fell fuller on his features, and removed his hat. François Sarzeau looked, started, moved one step back, then stood motionless and perfectly silent, while all traces of expression of any kind suddenly vanished from his face. Then the calm, clear tones of the priest stole gently on the dead silence. "I bring a message of peace and forgiveness from a guest of former years," he said; and pointed, as he spoke, to the place where he had been wounded in the neck. For one moment, Gabriel saw his father trembling violently from head to foot—then, his limbs steadied again—stiffened suddenly, as if struck by catalepsy. His lips parted, but without quivering; his eyes glared, but without moving in their orbits. The lovely moonlight itself looked ghastly and horrible, shining on the supernatural panic-deformity of that face! Gabriel turned away his head in terror. He heard the voice of Father Paul saying to him: "Wait here till I come back,"—then, there was an instant of silence again—then a low groaning sound, that seemed to articulate the name of God; a sound unlike his father's voice, unlike any human voice he had ever heard—and then the noise of a closing door. He looked up, and saw that he was standing alone before the cottage.

Once, after an interval, he approached the window. He just saw through it the hand of the priest holding on high the ivory crucifix; but stopped not to see more, for he heard such words, such sounds, as drove him back to his former place. There he stayed, until the noise of something falling heavily within the cottage, struck on his ear. Again he advanced towards the door; heard Father Paul praying; listened for several minutes; then heard a moaning voice, now joining itself to the voice of the priest, now choked in sobs and bitter wailing. Once more he went back out of hearing, and stirred not again from his place. He waited a long and a weary time there—so long that one of the scouts on the look-out came towards him, evidently suspicious of the delay in the priest's return. He waved the man back, and then looked again towards the door. At last, he saw it open—saw Father Paul approach him, leading François Sarzeau by the hand.

The fisherman never raised his downcast eyes to his son's face: tears trickled silently over his cheeks; he followed the hand that led him, as a little child might have followed it, listening anxiously and humbly at the priest's side to every word that he spoke. "Gabriel," said Father Paul, in a voice which trembled a little, for the first time that night—"Gabriel, it has pleased God to grant the perfect fulfilment

of the purpose which brought me to this place; I tell you this, as all that you need—as all, I believe, that you would wish—to know of what has passed while you have been left waiting for me here. Such words as I have now to speak to you, are spoken by your father's earnest desire. It is his own wish that I should communicate to you his confession of having secretly followed you to The Merchant's Table, and of having discovered (as you discovered) that no evidence of his guilt remained there. This admission he thinks will be enough to account for his conduct towards yourself, from that time to this. I have next to tell you (also at your father's desire) that he has promised in my presence, and now promises again in yours, sincerity of repentance in this manner:—When the persecution of our religion has ceased—as cease it will, and that speedily, be assured of it!—he solemnly pledges himself henceforth to devote his life, his strength, and what worldly possessions he may have, or may acquire, to the task of re-erecting and restoring the roadside crosses which have been sacrilegiously overthrown and destroyed in his native province, and to doing good, where he may. I have now said all that is required of me, and may bid you farewell—bearing with me the happy remembrance that I have left a father and son reconciled and restored to each other. May God bless and prosper you, and those dear to you, Gabriel! May God accept your father's repentance, and bless him also throughout his future life!”

He took their hands, pressed them long and warmly, then turned and walked quickly down the path which led to the beach. Gabriel dared not trust himself yet to speak; but he raised his arm, and put it gently round his father's neck. The two stood together so, looking out dimly through the tears that filled their eyes, to the sea. They saw the boat put off in the bright track of the moonlight, and reach the vessel's side; they watched the spreading of the sails, and followed the slow course of the ship till she disappeared past a distant headland from sight. After that, they went into the cottage together. They knew it not then; but they had seen the last, in this world, of Father Paul.

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The events foretold by the good priest happened sooner than even he had anticipated. A new government ruled the destinies of France, and the persecution ceased in Brittany. Among other propositions which were then submitted to the parliament, was one advocating the restoration of the roadside crosses throughout the province. It was found, however, on inquiry, that these crosses were to be counted by thousands, and that the mere cost of the wood required to re-erect them necessitated an expenditure of money which the bankrupt nation could ill afford to

spare. While this project was under discussion, and before it was finally rejected, one man had undertaken the task which the government shrank from attempting. When Gabriel left the cottage, taking his brother and sisters to live with his wife and himself at the farm-house, François Sarzeau left it also, to perform in highway and byway his promise to Father Paul. For months and months he laboured without intermission at his task; still, always doing good, and rendering help and kindness and true charity to all whom he could serve. He walked many a weary mile, toiled through many a hard day's work, humbled himself even to beg of others, to get wood enough to restore a single cross. No one ever heard him complain, ever saw him impatient, ever detected him in faltering at his task. The shelter in an outhouse, the crust of bread and drink of water, which he could always get from the peasantry, seemed to suffice him. Among the people who watched his perseverance, a belief began to gain ground that his life would be miraculously prolonged until he had completed his undertaking from one end of Brittany to the other. But this was not to be. He was seen one cold autumn evening, silently and steadily at work as usual, setting up a new cross on the site of one which had been shattered to splinters in the troubled times. In the morning he was found lying dead beneath the sacred symbol which his own hands had completed and erected in its place during the night. They buried him where he lay; and the priest who consecrated the ground allowed Gabriel to engrave his father's epitaph in the wood of the cross. It was simply the initial letters of the dead man's name, followed by this inscription:—“*Pray for the repose of his soul: he died penitent, and the doer of good works.*”

Once, and once only, did Gabriel hear anything of Father Paul. The good priest showed, by writing to the farm-house, that he had not forgotten the family so largely indebted to him for their happiness. The letter was dated “Rome.” Father Paul said, that such services as he had been permitted to render to the Church in Brittany, had obtained for him a new and a far more glorious trust than any he had yet held. He had been recalled from his curacy, and appointed to be at the head of a mission which was shortly to be despatched to convert the inhabitants of a savage and a far distant land to the Christian faith. He now wrote, as his brethren with him were writing, to take leave of all friends for ever in this world, before setting out—for it was well known to the chosen persons entrusted with the new mission, that they could only hope to advance its object by cheerfully risking their own lives for the sake of their religion. He gave his blessing to François Sarzeau, to Gabriel, and to his family; and bade them

affectionately farewell for the last time. There was a postscript in the letter, which was addressed to Rose, and which she often read afterwards with tearful eyes. The writer begged that, if she should have any children, she would show her friendly and Christian remembrance of him by teaching them to pray (as he hoped she herself would pray) that a blessing might attend Father Paul's labours in the distant land. The priest's loving petition was never forgotten. When Rose taught its first prayer to her first child, the little creature was instructed to end the few simple words pronounced at its mother's knees, with:—"God bless Father Paul!"

ABD-EL-KADER ON HORSEBACK.

SOME curious particulars respecting Arabian horses have lately been given to the world, from no less an authoritative a source than Abd-el-Kader himself. General Daumas has published a work, intitled *Les Chevaux du Sahara*, and it contains the answers furnished by the Arab chief to a list of inquiries that had been expressly addressed to him. The Emir's letter was translated into French by M. Boissonnet, its original form being scrupulously retained; and many of our readers may be gratified by the sight of an English version of the document, even if it be not likely to afford them any very great practical instruction.

November 8, 1851 (the 23rd of Moharrem, the first month of 1268.)

Glory to the One God. His reign alone is eternal.

Health to him who equals in good qualities all the men of his time, who seeks only after good, whose heart is pure and his discourse accomplished, the wise, the intelligent Lord, General Daumas, on the part of your friend, Sid-el-Hadi Abd-el-Kader, son of Mahi-Eddin.

Behold the answer to your questions.

I. You ask how many days an Arabian horse can travel without resting, and without being made to suffer too much.

Know that a horse, who is sound in all his members, who eats barley which his stomach requires, can do whatever his rider wishes him. On this subject the Arabs say *Allef ou annef*, "Give barley, and overwork." But without overworking the horse, he may be made to travel sixteen parasanges every day, (a parasange is a measure of distance—originally Persian—equal to a French league and a half, or three and three-quarters English miles, as near as may be); that is the distance from Mascara to Koudiah-Aghelizan, on the Oued-Mina: it has been measured in *drâa* (cubits). A horse performing this distance (of sixty miles English) daily, and eating as much barley as he likes, can go on without fatigue for three, or even for four months, without resting a single day.

II. You ask what distance a horse can travel in one day.

I cannot tell you precisely; but the distance ought to be not much less than fifty parasanges (one hundred and eighty-seven miles and a half), as from Tlemcen to Mascara. We have seen a very great number of horses perform in one day the distance from Tlemcen to Mascara. Nevertheless, a horse which has completed that journey, ought to be spared the following day, and ought only to be ridden a much shorter distance. Most of our horses could go from Osran to Mascara in one day, and would perform the same journey for two or three successive days. We started from Saïda towards eight in the morning (*au dohha*) in order to fall upon the Arbâa, who encamped at Aaïn-Toukria (among the Oulad-Aïad, near Taza), and we reached them by break of day (*fedjer*). You know the country, and are acquainted with the road which we had to traverse.

III. You ask me for instances of abstinence in the Arabian horse, and for proofs of his power of enduring hunger and thirst.

Know that when we were stationed at the mouth of the Mèlouïa, we made *razzias* in the Djebel-Amour, following the route of the Desert. On the day of attack, we pushed our horses on for a gallop of five or six hours without taking breath, completing our excursion thither and back in twenty, or at most in five-and-twenty days. During this interval of time, our horses had no barley to eat, except what their riders were able to carry with them,—about eight ordinary feeds. Our horses found no straw to eat, but only *alfa* and *chiehh*, or besides that, in spring-time, grass. Notwithstanding which, on returning home again, we performed our games on horseback the day of our arrival, and we shot with a certain number of them. Many which were unable to go through with this last exercise, were still in good travelling condition. Our horses went without drinking, either for one day, or for two; once, no water was to be found for three days. The horses of the Desert do much more than that; they remain about three months without eating a single grain of barley; they have no acquaintance with straw, except on the days when they go to buy corn in the Teli, and in general have nothing to eat but *alfa* and *chiehh*, and sometimes *guetof*. *Chiehh* is better than *alfa*, and *guetof* is better than *chiehh*. The Arabs say, "*Alfa* makes a horse go, *chiehh* makes him fit for battle." And, "*Guetof* is better than barley." Certain years occur in which the horses of the Desert go without tasting a single grain of barley during the whole twelvemonth, when the tribes have not been received in the Teli. They then sometimes give dates to their horses; this food fattens them. Their horses are then capable both of travelling and of going to battle.

IV. You ask me why, when the French do