ful description of the laborious and painful analysis which formed the crown of his labors, but he would prepare the Commission to be shocked by it. With these introductory words, he laid before them a specimen of Representative Chamber.

When the Commission had examined, obviously with emotions of the most poignant and painful nature, the miserable sample produced, Mr. Bull proceeded with his description. The specimen of Representative Chamber to which he invited their anxious attention, was brought from Westminster Market. It had been collected there in the month of July in the present year. No particular counter had been resorted to more than another, but the whole market had been laid under contribution to furnish the sample. Its diseased condition would be apparent, without any scientific aids, to the most short-sighted individual. It was fearfully adulterated with Talk, stained with Job, and diluted with large quantities of coloring matter of a false and deceptive nature. It was thickly overlaid with a varnish which he had resolved into its component parts, and had found to be made of Trash (both maudlin and defiant), boiled up with large quantities of Party Turpitude, and a heap of Cant. Cant, he need not tell the Commission, was the worst of poisons. It was almost inconceivable to him how an article in itself so wholesome as Representative Chamber, could have been got into this disgraceful state. It was mere Carrion, wholly unfit for human consumption, and calculated to produce nausea and vomiting.

On being questioned by the Commission, whether, in addition to the deleterious substances already mentioned, he had detected the presence of Humbug in the sample before them, Mr. Bull replied, "Humbug? Rank Humbug, in one form or another, pervades the entire mass." He went on to say, that he thought it scarcely in human nature to endure, for any length of time, the close contemplation of this specimen: so revolting was it to all the senses. Mr. Bull was asked, whether he could account; first, for this alarming degeneracy in an article so important to the Public; and secondly, for its acceptance by the Public? The Commission observing that however the stomachs of the people might revolt at it—and justly—still they did endure it, and did look on at the Market in which it was exposed. In answer to these inquiries, Mr. Bull offered the following explanation.

In respect of the wretched condition of the article itself (he said), he attributed that result, chiefly, to its being in the hands of those unprincipled wholesale dealers to whom he had already referred. When one of those dealers succeeded to a business—or "came in," according to the slang of the trade—his first proceeding, after the adulteration of Public Office with Noodledom, was to consider how he could adulterate and lower his Representative Chamber. This he did by a variety of arts, recklessly employing the dirtiest agents. Now, the trade had been so long in the hands of these men, and one of them had so uniformly imitated another (however violent their trade-opposition might be among themselves), in adulterating this commodity, that respectable persons who wished to do business fairly, had been prevented from investing their capital, whatever it might be, in this branch of commerce, and had indeed been heard to declare in many instances that they would prefer the calling of an honest scavenger. Again, it was to be observed, that the before-mentioned dealers, being for the most part in a large way, had numbers of retainers, tenants, tradesmen, and workpeople, upon whom they put off their bad Representative Chamber, by compelling them to take it whether they liked it or not. In respect of the acceptance of this dreadful commodity by the Public, Mr. Bull observed, that it was not to be denied that the Public had been much too prone to accept the coloring matter in preference to the genuine article. Sometimes it was Blood, and sometimes it was Beer; sometimes it was Talk, and sometimes it was Cant; but, mere coloring-matter they certainly had too often looked for, when they should have looked for bone and sinew. They suffered heavily for it now, and he believed were penitent; there was no doubt whatever in his mind that they had arrived at the mute stage of indignation, and had thoroughly found this article out.

One further question was put by the Commission: namely, what hope had the witness of seeing this necessary of English life, restored to a genuine and wholesome state? Mr. Bull returned, that his sole hope was in the Public's resolutely rejecting all coloring matter whatsoever—in their being equally inexorable with the dealers, whether they threatened or cajoled—and in their steadily insisting on being provided with the commodity in a pure and useful form. The Commission then adjourned, in exceedingly low spirits, *sine die*.

THE LITTLE CHORISTER.

IN FIVE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

THAT day, Ange was very sad. He felt his heart heavy within him, it was so sad to be an orphan—so lone in the world, with nobody to love him. It was true Father Mathurin was very kind to him; but then he did not take much notice of Ange, for he was a very little boy; and old Jeannette was really cross, and scolded him almost every day, in spite of everything he did to please her. How different it was with the other boys of the choir: they had all homes, and mothers to love and tend them, and sisters to play with. Guillaume had a brother, a soldier, who took him on his knee, and told him wonderful stories of

foreign parts when he went home from the choir, and showed him his sword and his gun, and taught him how he should use it if he lived to be a man. Little Charles had a sister who sung, and taught him to sing his part so well in the choir, that Father Mathurin praised him above all other, and made him lead the others. Poor Ange! He had no brother, no sisters. He lived with Father Mathurin and old Jeannette, who took no thought of telling stories to amuse him, and no one helped him with his lessons, so that he was often in disgrace, though he tried to do well, and loved Father Mathurin very much, and wished to please him.

This day, Ange thought more than ever on all these things. Jeannette had been unusually cross; and the lessons he had to learn seemed as if they would not stay properly in his head. It had been a very difficult mass that morning, and Ange felt that he was singing wrong. He thought Father Mathurin's eyes were fixed severely upon him all the time, and the whole church seemed to be filled with the discord of his little voice.

Accordingly, when Ange went with the other boys to the evening service, his large eyes were red with weeping, and there was something very like despair gnawing at his heart.

It was a very beautiful, sacred-looking place, that old Cathedral, those high Gothic arches of sad-coloured stone, now and then tinged with beautiful colours from the sun's rays through the windows of many-coloured stained glass. And the old carved oak pulpit, black with age; and the choir; and the very high seats where Ange sat, all curiously carved, and some with such strange hobgoblin-looking figures, so unreal, and yet so life-like, that they seemed almost to move in the twilight; and Ange would have been dreadfully frightened—only that he knew where he was, and in whose service, and he felt that no evil power could harm him so long as he put his trust in his Lord and Master.

The sun was not set; its rays still came through the stained glass, and rested first on one head and then on another of the boys in the choir; and last of all it came to Ange's head, and then it went away altogether, and the church grew darker, and the organ played solemn and grand music, and the odour of the incense still rested on the air. And the church grew darker and darker, and lights were lighted in different parts, but they seemed to burn very dimly, and to make little aureoles round themselves, and leave every one else in darkness—the cathedral was too vast for anything but the sun to light it; and Father Mathurin mounted into the pulpit, to preach. And Ange, wearied with weeping and sorrow, felt a repose stealing over his troubled little heart. And he tried very hard to listen to what Father Mathurin was saying, and to keep his eyes wide open and fixed upon him; but he could not do it. It seemed as though two leaden weights were tied to his eyes; and then, when he did open them, Father Mathurin seemed to be spinning about, and his voice sounded more like the buzzing of bees than Ange's native language. The struggle lasted some time, and Ange rubbed his eyes again and again; but it was of no use, and at last the poor little head fell upon his breast, and Ange fell fast asleep.

Guillaume, who sat next Ange, was busy whispering to the boy next him, how his brother's regiment was ordered to Paris, and so Jean would see the beautiful queen, and perhaps be made a captain by her, for he was a very handsome man, so the queen could not fail to notice him, Guillaume thought; and Guillaume was in such a hurry to run home and talk to Jean about it, that he never thought of Ange; and indeed if he had, he would have thought that Ange was already gone home, for the arms of the seat were so large, and so much carved, and Ange had sunk down so much since he had fallen asleep, that he really did not look like a little boy at all, but more like a heap of something left in the choir that nobody felt inclined to take any notice of.

And Father Mathurin's sermon was ended, and the lights were all put out, and the people left the church one by one, and then the last step was heard echoing through the lofty building; and then the sound of the great key in the old lock, and the clink of the other keys on the same bunch, as the old verger locked the doors; and then a deep silence—and little Ange was still asleep in the choir.

Still sleeping, softly, peacefully, innocently, as though he had been on the softest bed of down,—a sleep that refreshed his weariness, and made him lose all thought of trouble. First, he slept in all unconsciousness, every thought drowned in the world of sleep; then came a beautiful vision before him—an angel so pure and beautiful, there was a light of glory around him, and, as he drew near to Ange, he seemed to bring an atmosphere of music with him; and Ange, though he knew it was a spirit, felt no fear. And then Ange, in his dream, fell upon his knees, and prayed that Jeannette's heart might be softened towards him; that he might have strength to be good, and that there might be somebody to love him like a mother. Then, by the angel's side, faintly shadowed out, was a pale, wan face, and frail, slender form, beautiful, but sad, and in her arms, resting its head upon her shoulder, lay a beautiful child. To these two mist-like figures the angel pointed, and Ange cried, clasping his little hands together, still on his knees, and with tears of hope and joy stealing down his face,

"Oh, how I would love her, angel, is she not my mother?"

And the figures faded away; and the angel

came quite close to Ange and leant over him; and then a peace greater than before came over him, and the sleep of unconsciousness returned.

What noise was that that startled Ange out of his sleep? How heavy old Jeannette trod—she who always wore list shoes in the house! Ah, Ange must have overslept himself, and Jeannette must have on her sabots to go to market! But that sound—it was a key turning in a lock; and then, the sound of huge heavy doors being thrown open. "Where am I?" cried little Ange, getting up and rubbing his eyes; and then he stared round him, first amazed and then aghast. In the cathedral he had slept all night—in the cathedral! And then came the terrible thought of how old Jeannette would scold him, and how displeased Father Mathurin would be. And then he sat down and cried, fairly overpowered by this new trouble, dreading to go home, for fear of old Jeannette, and not knowing what in the world he should do. But then Ange dried his tears—for the thought of his dream came into his mind—and prayed that he might be guided to do that which was right; and then he rose and took off his little chorister's gown, and folded it up, as he usually did after service, and he smoothed his hair as well as he could, that he might not look disorderly, and walked out of the wide-opened church-door with a strengthened heart, prepared to make a full confession to Father Mathurin of how he had fallen asleep during his sermon, and slept all night in the cathedral.

CHAPTER II.

Ange ran all the way to Father Mathurin's; he would not stop a moment, or even walk slowly, for fear his courage should fail him. He intended to throw himself first at Father Mathurin's feet, and, if he should be so fortunate as to procure his pardon, to prevail upon him to intercede with old Jeannette, of whom poor Ange stood so greatly in dread.

When Ange arrived at Father Mathurin's house, he was surprised to find a group of neighbours round the door, for it was yet very early, and he had quite forgotten that it was the day when the boys of the choir were paid their weekly salary. A mother or sister came with each boy; for though Father Mathurin gave the money into their own hands, yet, when all had been paid, he came to the door, spoke to the parents, and saw that the money was safely delivered up to them, that it might not be ill spent. But poor Ange had forgotten the importance of the day, his heart was so full of his dream, and he thought it was some especial malice on the part of old Jeannette to make his disgrace more public. Poor Ange's heart sunk within him, and he would fain have run away; but there seemed a strange new strength, not his own, supporting him, and he made his way manfully through the little crowd. Jeannette stood on the door-step, talking to the neighbours; but, when Ange came near her, she caught hold of him, and, turning his little face towards her, said, "Why, how bright thou art! Where hast thou been so early?" And when Ange had passed, he heard her say to the neighbours, "Is he not a beautiful boy, our Ange?" Ange was quite bewildered. It seemed as though he was still dreaming. How strange that Jeannette should be so kind! How strange that she should never have missed him! And so Ange, lost in these conjectures, tried to find his way to Father Mathurin's room, but he was too late: the boys were all coming out.

Ange was very glad it was over, for he dreaded being disgraced before the other boys, and he knew he had done very wrong to fall asleep during Father Mathurin's sermon; so he crept quietly into Father Mathurin's room, and waited till he should come back again.

Now Ange had a little room all to himself, at Father Mathurin's house, and every night Jeannette put his supper there while he was at the evening service; for she loved to spend the evening with Margot, and then they gossipped together merrily about their neighbours, which they would not have liked to do so well if Ange had been with them in the kitchen; and Father Mathurin always spent the evening alone, reading and writing, and it would have annoyed him very much to have such a little boy as Ange in the room with him. So Ange always spent the evening quite alone; and so it was that neither Jeannette nor Father Mathurin knew that he had been out of the house all night.

"Ange!" and Ange started up hastily, and his heart throbbed very much, for it was Father Mathurin who had entered the room, and the tone of his voice was angry; "How is it that thou hast lain in bed so late this morning? dost thou not know how many temptations laziness leadeth thee into?"

"Father," answered Ange, more and more surprised, "I have never been in bed all night. I am very, very sorry, but I fell asleep during your sermon, and I slept all night in the cathedral, and it was not till Pierre opened the doors this morning that I awoke and ran here. Do, do forgive me," and little Ange clasped his hands together and looked up in Father Mathurin's face.

"Poor, poor child," and something like a tear glistened in his eye, and his heart smote him for this poor little one; for who but a desolate and uncared-for child could have been a whole night away from his home and none miss him?

Ange had no kind mother or sister to take his money, so that he always gave his weekly salary back to Father Mathurin, but this day Father Mathurin told Ange to keep it.

"Jeannette tells me," he said, "that thou

art in want of a new cap, so go, my child, and choose it for thyself;" and then Father Mathurin stooped down and kissed Ange, for he wished to be very kind, but he was naturally a very grave man, and not much used to children, and he really did not know how to seem kind to them. As soon as Ange was gone, however, he sent for Jeannette, and found fault with her for not paying more attention to Ange.

"Remember," said Father Mathurin, "who said 'suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not,' and think how much we ought to love and tend them for his sake."

But old Jeannette was very angry at being found fault with, as people often are when they know they are wrong; and when she had left Father Mathurin she grumbled to herself about that troublesome boy, who was always getting her into some trouble or other, and then she went into neighbour Margot, who declared she would not bear it any longer, if she were Jeannette.

So Ange went out to buy his cap with the money Father Mathurin had given him, but he had not been out two minutes before he had forgotten all about it; he really could think of nothing but his dream, when he walked up and down the streets instead of looking for a fit shop to buy his cap; he looked everywhere for the two figures in his dream; he felt so certain he should find them somewhere, so sure that the angel had meant he should see them in reality.

Ange always loved to wander about that old town, it had been very large and prosperous, and though now its brightest days were over, yet it had that sacred air of the past about it far more endearing than if it had been the newest and most flourishing of towns.

The houses were built half of wood and there was a great deal of carving about them, and there were the oddest signs over the shops to indicate the occupation of the owner, and quaint inscriptions; and then the first story invariably projected over the street, and made a sort of arcade for the passers by, and the pointed gables stood out in bold relief against the clear bright sky. Then, though the grass did grow in some of the streets because there was so little thoroughfare, yet Ange knew the face of almost every one he met (and this could not have been in a thickly-populated town), and many stopped to speak a kind word to the little chorister.

Ange met Guillaume, who was in high glee, and invited him to come and see his brother's bright new regimentals; but Ange said he could not go that day, and then he came to the part of the town where the fair was, and there he saw a van of wild beasts and a dancing bear, and a polichinelle, which would once have amused him very much; there too were pop-guns to shoot at a target, and many other amusements, which would generally have delighted Ange above all things. But now he could not fix his attention on anything, his eyes were ever watching through the crowd for those two loved figures; and though hope grew fainter and fainter, faith in the beautiful angel cheered his heart, and little Ange wandered on determined not to despair.

The sun sunk lower in the heavens, and the brightness of the day was over, and it gave the world a melancholy tinge like the rays of departing hope. Ange was weary and worn with hope deferred, and at last he sat down by a grotesquely-carved stone fountain, which was in a centre place where four streets met, and there, though there were many many people passing and the busy hum of voices all around him, Ange felt quite alone. He sat in the sunlight and it gilded his hair and made the ever-falling water behind him sparkle like diamonds, and he gazed upon the setting splendour of the sun, and seemed as though he could see far, far beyond this world; and he thought how easy it would be to the great, and wise, and merciful Creator of that glorious sun to make his little heart happy, and give him to love those sweet beings the angel had pointed to in his dream; and Ange prayed again with the intensity of all his heart, and the fountain ever falling murmured music to his prayer.

And now Ange saw by the sunbeams that it was time for evening service, but the cathedral was very near, and he thought he might venture to stay a few minutes longer; it was almost the first time he had rested that day. There he sat languid and tired, with his little head resting on his hand, when suddenly he started—a shudder passed all over his frame; he saw at the corner of one of those four streets the figure of his dream, pale and wan, with an expression of suffering and resignation that sanctified her face. Poorly clad, jostled by passers-by to all of whom she seemed a stranger, she stood like a wanderer seeking a home, but the child ever clasped to her breast seemed sunk in sleep, unconscious for the time of sorrow or want. Ange would fain have run towards her, but he could not move; he had tried to stand up, but his little legs trembled, so that he was obliged to sit down again. But what was his joy when the figure moved across herself to meet him! How he stretched out his arms towards her! how anxiously he watched each trembling footstep! She seemed so weak she could hardly stand. How he trembled lest any of the carts or carriages in the street should touch her!

"Stop a minute; that horse is going to back now. Oh, quick—quick!"

Ange could not help crying as he watched her, for there were now many more people than usual in the street on account of the fair, and it was impossible for her to hear him.

"She is safe! she is safe!" cried Ange, in

a tone of joy and triumph. When, just as he spoke, her foot slipped, and the child fell from her arms.

Ange gave a fearful shriek. The child was almost under a horse's feet. Another instant, and his new found sister would be dead before his eyes.

"Thank God—thank God, he has saved her!"

Without thinking in the least of himself—whether of the danger he ran, or of how weak and powerless a little fellow he was—Ange dashed forward. Another second, and they would both have been trodden down; but he had seized the happy moment. The horse, frightened, reared; and in that moment Ange seized the affrighted little one from the ground, and now she was safely nestling in his arms.

CHAPTER III.

Ange placed the little one gently on the ground by the fountain, and knelt down by the mother. The little girl cried bitterly, for she thought her mother was dead; and Ange tried to comfort her, though in his own heart he thought so too. But Ange sprinkled water on the mother's face, and little Marguerite chafed her hands; and then there came a faint sigh, and Ange's heart beat for joy, and little Marguerite kissed her mother's face and hands in ecstasy, and bathed her in her tears.

"Where is your home?" said Ange.

"We have no home," said Marguerite, "since my father died; and we have come a long, long way, and I am so hungry; and mother says she's no more bread to give me." And little Marguerite cried again.

This made Ange very miserable. At first he thought he would run home, but then he recollected that Father Mathurin would be in the cathedral, and certainly Jeannette would give him nothing. Then he thought he would go to a baker's shop, and beg some bread. Marguerite's mother tried to rise, but she could not; her strength was exhausted, and she sank back again. Still Ange and Marguerite managed to rest her more comfortably against the stone coping of the fountain; and then Ange began to think again what he should do. To assist him in thinking, he put his hands in his pockets; and there—oh joy!—lay the bright silver piece Father Mathurin had given him that morning to buy his cap, and which Ange—utterly unused as he was to have money—had totally forgotten.

How supremely happy little Ange felt now, and how skilfully he avoided the carriages and carts; and how lightly and quickly he flew to neighbour Jacques, who kept a baker's shop.

"Will this buy a loaf, neighbour Jacques?" asked Ange, putting down the silver coin.

Jacques gave him the loaf, and off bounded Ange, never heeding or hearing who cried out as loud as he could, "Stop, stop, my little man; thou hast given me too much."

Ange gave some to Madelaine and some to Marguerite; and then he sat and looked at them; and he could not help saying to himself, "Oh how happy I am!" And then he thought of Him who had heard his prayer, and given him his heart's desire; and Ange prayed a prayer of thankfulness, and tears of joy rolled down his cheeks, for his heart was very full. Now, it happened that while Ange was sitting there, enjoying the luxury of a good action, and Madelaine and Marguerite were eating their bread, Dame Ponsard passed with her fair young daughter, both very gaily attired, having come from the fair.

Dame Ponsard was the hostess of the Bell, and she was a kind motherly sort of woman, and knew Ange very well; for many a sou she had given him to run messages for her, and sweetmeats and apples, and many things she thought likely to please a little boy. So, when she saw Ange sitting by the fountain, she stopped.

"Why, Ange, how is it that thou art not at church? Father Mathurin will reprove thee. Why dost thou dawdle here—hadst thou not all day to play?"

Madelaine answered for him. She told how he had saved her child, and how she was fainting from want, and he had brought her bread to eat; and then she clasped Ange to her heart, and blessed him. And Dame Ponsard's daughter took Ange's little hand, and pressed it, and said, "Dear Ange!" And Ange blushed very red with so much praise, and wondered why they should praise him so much, when he had only done what had made him so very, very happy.

"Where is thy husband?" said Dame Ponsard to Madelaine.

"My husband was a soldier, and was killed a month ago in the war," answered poor Madelaine. And then she turned so very, very pale, Ange thought she was going to faint again. And the wind blew cold, for the sun was set; and Dame Ponsard wrapped her cloak closer round her, and then she said—

"Where dost thou sleep this night?"

"God only knows," answered Madelaine, "for I have no money—no friends."

Then Dame Ponsard paused a moment, and she looked at Madelaine, and she looked at Marguerite; and her daughter Blanche saw what was passing in her mind, and she said, "Do, dear mother." And Dame Ponsard did not want much pressing, for her own heart had spoken warmly enough in Madelaine's behalf. So she turned to poor Madelaine, and said, "Come, thou shalt sleep in my house to-night." And then Blanche took little Marguerite by the hand, all brightly clad as she was; and Ange put his hand in Madelaine's, and they all went to Dame Ponsard's house.

And Dame Ponsard pressed Ange to stay

and sup with them, but he thanked her very much, but said he must run home to Father Mathurin's.

This time, naturally enough, Ange did not in the least expect Jeannette would have missed him; but hardly had he seated himself in his own little room, and begun to eat his apples and bread, than Jeannette entered. Her face was quite red with anger, and she ran up to Ange, and shook him violently. "Where hast been all day, thou little torment?" she cried. "And why didst thou not come home to thy dinner?—and where is the money Father Mathurin gave thee to buy a cap? Thou hast bought no cap with it, I warrant." And Jeannette felt in Ange's empty pockets, and drew them out triumphantly; and then she fell to shaking Ange again, and boxed his ears again, and took away his apples; and all this time Ange could not think of a single word to say to quiet her. And then Father Mathurin's step was heard, and he entered, and led Ange away to his own room. And then Father Mathurin sat Ange upon his knee, and said very gravely, "Now, Ange, tell me the truth—where hast thou been all day, and what hast thou done with the money I gave thee?" But, just then Jeannette came to say that neighbour Jacques wished to speak with Father Mathurin, and Father Mathurin told Jeannette to ask him to come in; and neighbour Jacques entered, cap in hand, and told how little Ange had brought him a silver coin to buy a loaf, and how he had wondered how Ange came by so much money; and finally, how he had brought the change back to Father Mathurin. And then Father Mathurin told Jacques how he had given Ange the money to buy a cap, and how Ange had spent it to buy some bread for Madelaine and Marguerite; for he would not have little Ange suspected of so wicked a thing as having stolen the money. And then neighbour Jacques took his leave, and Father Mathurin bade Ange good-night, and said he was sure to sleep well, because he was a very good boy. And Ange felt so happy, that he thought he should never get to sleep at all; but there he was wrong, for he was soon fast, fast asleep, and dreaming the strangest jumble of things imaginable.

The next morning, Father Mathurin and Ange went to Dame Ponsard's, and there they found poor Madelaine very, very ill; and the doctor whom kind Dame Ponsard sent for said it was a fever, so every one was afraid to go near poor Madelaine for fear of infection, and there was only little Marguerite to watch by her and to smooth her pillow, and give her the medicine that Dr. Maynard had sent her. And Marguerite was a very little girl—much younger than Ange—and so it seemed to Ange impossible that she could do all this by herself; and so Ange begged and prayed to be allowed to stay and watch by his mother, as he called Madelaine. And Ange stayed with Madelaine, and he walked about so gently on his tiptoes in the room, that he might not disturb her; and he smoothed her pillow with his soft little hand far gentler than the gentlest nurse; and the instant she moved, he came to give her medicine, or some tisane to moisten her parched mouth; and he never wearied in this labour of love.

Sometimes, when Madelaine was getting better, when she fell asleep, Ange and Marguerite went for a walk, and it seemed to Ange that the birds sang clearer and flowers smelt sweeter, and the very river danced with a joy it had not known before; and they gathered large bouquets of wild flowers to decorate the sick room, and made daisy chains as they sat to rest by the river's side.

CHAPTER IV.

Madelaine grew better and better; and when she returned to health she found she had two children to love instead of one. And Father Mathurin agreed that Ange should live with Madelaine and Marguerite; and Dame Ponsard found that Madelaine was a very good needlewoman, and she gave her work to do, and persuaded many of the neighbours to give her work too: so that with what Madelaine gained and what Ange gained they had enough to live very comfortably; and Marguerite went to the Sunday-school, and helped her mother about the house on week days. And then, when there was a market, she sold flowers, for where they lived there was a very pretty little garden, and Ange worked in it all his leisure hours, and grew lovely flowers for Marguerite to sell at the market.

Oh, how different Ange's evenings were now!—how Marguerite's little face beamed with joy when he came home; and what a nice supper Madelaine always had for him! Simple as it was, it seemed the daintiest of food to him—they were so happy eating it together.

Time passed on, and Ange was no longer a very little boy; but grew to be tall and strong and handsome and Marguerite grew to be the neatest, prettiest little maid in all the village.

And when Dame Ponsard's daughter Blanche was married, all said Ange was the handsomest youth at the wedding-dance, and none danced so lightly or spoke so gaily as he.

And often when Marguerite went to evening service and walked home with Ange, they would rest together on the stone coping of that same fountain, with the ever-murmuring water behind them, and the sun setting just as it did of yore; and Ange would tell Marguerite all that he had hoped and prayed on that same spot years before, and how fully his dreams of happiness were realised now; and tears of gratitude would come into Marguerite's eyes when she thought of all that Ange had done for them.

As the time passed on, Dame Ponsard

called upon Madelaine, and she said she thought Marguerite might do something better than sell flowers at the market. And then she told how Fauchette was married, and she wanted somebody to supply her place, and thought Marguerite would suit exactly. And Marguerite, though she was very sorry to leave her mother and Ange, was yet delighted at the thought of doing something for herself; for though they were so happy, they were still very poor. And so Marguerite went to be Dame Ponsard's little maid at the Bell, and Madelaine and Ange found it very triste without her at first, though they went to see her very often. Marguerite became the neatest, handiest little maid possible, and with such a cheerful, loveable face that everybody was possessed in her favour.

On Sundays how happy she was to wander in the woods and by the river with Ange; and they talked together of the future, and made such golden plans; and in their plans they were always together. It seemed quite impossible now that Madelaine, Marguerite, and Ange should ever be separated.

And then came a busy time in the town, for it was the conscription, and some hearts beat high with hopes of glory, and some were loth to leave their homes, and mothers' hearts were anxious. The town was full of military, and there was Guillaume's brother Jean, with gay ribbons in his cap, going about the town to persuade the young men how happy a soldier's life was, and how charming it was to travel and see the world —so much better than remaining all one's life in this little stupid town.

Jean tried to persuade Ange too, but that he could not do, for Ange knew what it was to be without a home; and, besides, he would not have left Madelaine and Marguerite of his own free will for any pleasures that could be offered him.

At this time, too, the château was full of people, and there were to be very grand doings there indeed; for the young Count Isidore was coming of age, and so there were fêtes and balls and hunts all the day long; and as it happened that the young Count's birthday was on the first of May, the May-day fête was to be held in his beautiful park. And that morning there was to be a carol sung under his window, which had been composed expressly for the occasion, and Monsieur Freron, the organ-master, declared that Marguerite should sing the first part and lead all the rest; and he taught her how she should raise her little hand when it was time to begin, so that they might all sing together, so that the voices might not come one after another, like birds flying, as he said.

Dame Ponsard, when she heard what an important part Marguerite was to play in the festivities, was particularly anxious that Marguerite should look particularly nice; and so she gave her a very handsome dark blue silk quilted petticoat that had belonged to Blanche, and lent her some beautiful old lace for her little cap. And Ange had been secretly saving up money little by little, so as to be able to buy Marguerite a pair of gold ear-rings, and these he gave her on that morning, so that Marguerite did indeed look quite a little pearl that day. She had on clocked stockings and neat black shoes with high red heels, such as they used to wear in those days, and such a pretty chintz boddice and skirt, tucked up so as to show her quilted petticoat, and a black hood and cloak, and a dainty little muff, and, lastly, a beautiful bunch of spring flowers, which Ange had brought her from the garden.

And so, on that May morning, when the dew was still on the grass, and the sun's rays seemed to cover the whole earth with diamonds, the little choir took their way to the old château, and there ranged themselves under the window of the young lord, to waken him up that day, with melody. When they were all grouped lightly before the window and ready to begin, Marguerite raised her little hand as a signal for them all. Then the chorus began; and, last of all, the young lord himself opened his window wide, and looked down upon them. The boys took off their caps, and shouted, the girls curtsied and waved their handkerchiefs, and the young Count threw down a number of bright gold pieces among them, and then there was a great cry of "Long live Count Isidore!" and then they went away.

Later in the day there was a beautiful Maypole, and a band for the dancers. The park seemed perfectly lighted up with the many gay dresses and happy faces that were scattered about it. The trees were in their freshest green, and the frolicsome wind seemed to carry the peals of laughter through their branches, and make them wave and quiver with pleasure. Then, about mid-day, came all the guests from the château, beautifully dressed, and the young lord in the midst of them, with a beautiful wreath of flowers in his hand; and the ladies with him were laughing and talking, and their silk dresses rustled and gleamed so in the sun, and they wore high powdered hair, and then such dainty little different coloured hats to keep off the sun.

All the girls of the village were bidden to come forward that the young Count might see who was most worthy of the crown. Of each he asked her name, and said some kind word, and held council of the two handsome ladies, and sent for Father Mathurin, and spoke to him. Then, to Marguerite's great surprise little Rosalie came bounding up to her where she sat under a tree with Ange, and said, "Marguerite, Marguerite! you are to be Queen of the May, and you must come now, and receive the crown." Mar-

guerite blushed till she looked a thousand times prettier than before, and Ange felt happy and proud of her. Marguerite advanced before the young Count, and he spoke very kindly to her, and placed the crown gently on her head, and told her that, as he had put the crown upon her fair young head and made her queen, she must try more than ever to be virtuous and good.

One of the handsome ladies came forward, and said: "My name is the Marquise de Belle Isle, and you must keep this for my sake." While she was saying this, she tied round Marguerite's neck a piece of black velvet, to which was attached a beautiful gold cross. The other lady, who was much younger, and very lovely, gave Marguerite a bright cerise-coloured little purse, and said: "My name is Mademoiselle de Bruntière, and you must keep this for remembrance of me." Marguerite curtsied, and thanked them very much, and returned to her companions; and they all crowded round her to see the beautiful wreath, and cross, and purse, and hear all that had been said to her.

Then, in the soft twilight, each returned to his home, bearing bouquets of wild spring flowers from the woods, and the nightingales sang in the soft evening air, and there was a still sweeter murmur of happy voices as they passed through the lanes.

CHAPTER V.

But the prosperity of the little family was destined not to be of long duration. Something occurred which promised to break up all their peaceful happiness. Ange was drawn for the conscription.

On the evening of that dreadful day, Ange, with a heavy heart, came to see Marguerite, and acquaint her with the misfortune that had befallen them; the tears flowed silently down Marguerite's pale face, and Ange could find no words to comfort her as they stood together in the twilight, in the porch, and the old sign of the Bell swung drearily to and fro before them. Long it was, before Ange could tear himself away that night, and wearily and drearily poor Marguerite entered the house, after she had watched Ange down the street, and seen his figure grow less and less in the dusk of the evening. Then Marguerite retired to her own little room, and threw herself on her bed, and cried as though her heart would break. Then she sat up, and thought.

There was a way to set free Ange, but then that way seemed itself an impossibility. Blanche's husband had been drawn, had been bought off; but, to do that for Ange, Marguerite must possess twenty louis—and that seemed perfectly impossible—poor Marguerite's wages were only ten crowns a-year, and that was just two louis and a half, then there were the four sous that had been given to Marguerite in the little purse; and the bright golden louis the young Count had thrown from the window, all of which Madelaine had in keeping for her. Then Marguerite thought of her ear-rings and cross, and wondered how much they were worth, the ear-rings dear Ange had given her, and Marguerite kissed them for his sake; and with all this woe weighing upon her mind, poor Marguerite went to bed, and fell asleep, murmuring Twenty louis—Twenty louis!

The next day, as she was dressing herself Marguerite remembered how Angelique, the daughter of Farmer Bouset, had admired her ear-rings—how she had said they were the prettiest she had ever seen, and that she should try and get a pair like them. Yes, certainly, Angelique would buy the ear-rings, and, perhaps, the cross, too; for he was a rich man, Farmer Bouset, and very fond of Angelique. So Marguerite asked Dame Ponsard's leave to go out for the day; and she would not say a word about it to Madelaine or Ange, for fear he should try and prevent her selling the ear-rings. Marguerite put on her cloak and hood, and tied up her ear-rings and cross in her handkerchief, and she then, with, a heavy heart, took her way to Farmer Bouset's, quite alone.

It was a long, long way, up hill and down dale, but a very beautiful road. The morning was fresh, and clear, and everything in nature looked very lovely with its young spring dress; and there were wild lilies and violets, and primroses, on either side of the road, and the birds sang very sweetly; but Marguerite took no heed of all these beauties now; and the birds' songs did not seem for her, and the flowers looked faded in her eyes, for the thought that Ange was going to leave them had taken all beauty from everything.

And when Marguerite reached the top of the last hill she felt very hot and weary, and so sat down on the soft grass, mixed with wild thyme, and heather, to rest; and the wild ferns grew so tall around her, that they almost made a shade; and then Marguerite untied her handkerchief, in which were the ear-rings and the cross, to look at them as her own, for the last time. And, as she sat there, Marguerite grew very thirsty, and then she bethought her of a little mountain-rill, which came out of a rock close by, that was celebrated for its delicious water, and so Marguerite put the handkerchief down, with her ear-rings upon it—in a conspicuous spot, where she should be sure to see it again in a moment—and then she ran to get the water; and the wind was so great that it almost blew Marguerite's petticoat over her head, as she stooped to catch the water in her hands; and it had made Marguerite's hair quite rough, so she stood for a moment to smooth it with her wet hands, that she might not look untidy when she arrived at the farm.

But when Marguerite returned to the spot where she thought she had left her handker-

chief, there it was not. She searched a long time in vain, without seeing anything of either ear-rings or handkerchief; but at last, at some distance from her, blown by the wind, she saw something white, that looked more like a piece of white paper than anything else. She ran after it, and it was blown on and on: still she followed, and at last reached it. Marguerite picked up the handkerchief, but ear-rings and cross were gone—it was the empty shell without the kernel.

The whole day Marguerite wandered about the common, but, alas! there were so many tall ferns, and so much heather and wild thyme everywhere, she could never feel certain of the precise spot where she had been. Sometimes she thought it was one place where she had sat down, sometimes another; and she searched and searched the whole day long quite uselessly, and then she saw that it was near sunset, and that for that day it would be no use searching any more. With a heavy heart and weary feet, Marguerite took her way home.

Once again by the fountain sat Marguerite and Ange; and Marguerite, foot-sore and sad, told Ange how she had lost the ear-rings and cross, and so all hope of their being able to raise twenty louis was gone. Marguerite, quite overcome, hid her face in her handkerchief and wept bitterly. Just then came the sound of a horse's footsteps close to them, and Marguerite, despite her grief, looked up, and saw the young Count Isidore. And when he saw Marguerite's face, he stopped his horse and said:

"Why! art thou not the Queen of May? What has made thee so soon in tears?"

And then Marguerite told him how Ange had been drawn for the conscription, and how she had gone to sell the ear-rings and the cross the handsome lady had given her to Angelique of the Bouset farm; how on the common the ear-rings had been lost. And then Marguerite's tears flowed a-fresh.

The young Count passed on, and looked very grave, for he had had so many petitions about the conscription that he had been obliged to refuse all, and felt he could not openly do anything for Ange and Marguerite.

When Marguerite returned that night to Dame Ponsard's, she found some very grand people indeed were coming to dine there the next day, and the whole house was in a state of confusion preparing things for them. The dining-room was to be decorated with laurels and flowers, and the band of the young Count's regiment was to play during dinner, and every honour was to be paid them; for though these travellers were only called the Comte and Comtesse du Nord, yet the courier said that was a feigned name, and they were, in fact, heirs to one of the greatest crowns in Europe.

The next day Marguerite could not go to look after her ear-rings, for she had a great deal to do.

All day these great people were expected, and at last there was a great noise of carriages, and they stopped before the door of the Bell, and a great, great many people were there to see the travellers descend; and then Dame Ponsard, rather awe-stricken, but still a smiling and courteous hostess, stood in the porch to receive them, and showed them to their rooms. And then came the dinner; and poor Marguerite, with her pale face and red eyes, had to help others to wait at table.

And the young Count Isidore was there, and he sat on one side of the great lady, and her husband on the other; and they talked a great deal all the dinner, but Marguerite never noticed whether they looked at her or not—she could think of nothing but Ange. But at the end of the dinner, when the dessert was on the table, and all the servants were going away, the lady beckoned to Marguerite and called her by her name; and Marguerite came, and felt very shy and nervous, for it was all she could do to help crying, her heart was so sad.

"So thou art the Queen of the May," said the lady, kindly. "And now tell me, why are thy eyes so red with tears?"

"Ange has been drawn for the conscription, madame," answered Marguerite, in a sad, low voice.

"And dost thou love Ange so much?"

"Oh, yes, very, very much," answered Marguerite; and, despite of herself, she blushed quite red, and the tear-drops came in her eyes again.

"And how much money would it take to free Ange from this conscription?" said the lady's husband.

"Oh, a very large sum; more than we could ever have," answered Marguerite.

"But how much?" said the Countess.

"Alas! twenty louis, madame," answered poor Marguerite. And then she wiped her eyes on the corner of her apron, and made a sort of half-movement to go away; for she felt that if she stayed much longer she should burst into tears.

"Hold out thy apron, my child," said the Countess, gaily. And then from her purse she took twenty louis and strewed them into Marguerite's apron.

Poor Marguerite could not speak a word to thank a kind benefactress: she gave a little scream of astonishment and joy, and the louis rolled on the floor. And she knelt and kissed the lady's dress, which was all the thanks she could offer; for Marguerite's heart was too full for words.

As soon as Marguerite had a little recovered from her agitation, she ran off to their home to find Madelaine and Ange, and impart her joyful tidings. And then she was sadly disappointed to find that Ange was not there. He had been out all day, Madelaine said; but the two took counsel together, and

determined to hasten to the mayor's that night, in spite of Ange's being away, and obtain his dismissal; for Marguerite felt quite uneasy at having such a large sum of money in her possession, for fear something should happen to it before it had accomplished its end.

And the mayor received Madelaine and Marguerite very graciously, and was very glad that they had been able to buy off Ange; for Ange had a good name in the town, and all loved him and thought well of him. And then, very joyfully, Madelaine and Marguerite walked back to the Bell, and there they found Ange sitting in the porch to receive them. And then they all retired together to Marguerite's little room, and Marguerite told how kind the great lady had been to her, and how she could not help thinking that the young Count had told their story, and interested the great lady in their behalf; and Marguerite drew from her pocket the little card which gave Ange his freedom. And then Madelaine clasped Ange to her heart, and kissed him again and again; and Marguerite felt as happy as though she had been a real queen.

And at that moment came a tap at the door; and it was dear, kind Dame Ponsard come to congratulate them on their happiness. And then Marguerite had to tell her story all over again; but she did not the least mind it: she could have told it all day long —she was so happy.

"But what a pity that thou hast lost thy cross and thy ear-rings all for nothing," said Dame Ponsard. Now it was Ange's turn to tell his story; and he told that he had been all day on the common, searching for the said ear-rings and cross; and then, to the great astonishment and delight of all, he drew them both out of his pocket, and told how he had found them, almost hidden by the heather and moss, where they had fallen when the wind had blown the handkerchief away. Most joyfully, he tied the cross round Marguerite's neck, and put the ear-rings in her ears.

The next morning, early, the travellers were to start again. Ange and Marguerite stood ready in the porch, strewing flowers for them to walk over, and in their hands they had bouquets of the choicest flowers of their garden to offer to the Count and Countess; and Ange and Marguerite waited some time before they came; but when at last they did come, and they offered the bouquets, the Countess smiled so kindly, as she took hers, and said to Marguerite, "Is this Ange?" and Marguerite curtsied, and said, "Yes, madame; this is Ange." And when the carriages drove away, all the people cheered them, for they had heard the story of the great lady's kindness; and Ange and Marguerite blessed them from their hearts. And, in after-life, Ange and Marguerite became man and wife, and in their turn had children; and Marguerite told her children the story of her early years, that they might love the poor and friendless, as Ange had loved her and her mother.

JUDGE NOT.

Judge not; the workings of his brain
And of his heart thou canst not see;
What looks to thy dim eyes a stain,
In God's pure light may only be
A scar, brought from some well-won field,
Where thou wouldst only faint and yield.

The look, the air, that frets thy sight,
May be a token, that below
The soul has closed in deadly fight
With some infernal fiery foe,
Whose glance would scorch thy smiling grace,
And cast thee shuddering on thy face!

The fall thou darest to despise—
May be the slackened angel's hand
Has suffered it, that he may rise
And take a firmer, surer stand;
Or, trusting less to earthly things,
May henceforth learn to use his wings.

And judge none lost, but wait, and see
With hopeful pity, not disdain,
The depth of the abyss may be
The measure of the height of pain,
And love and glory that may raise
This soul to God in after days!

WRECKS AT SEA.

The Wreck Chart of the British Islands for the year eighteen hundred and fifty-four, and the last Admiralty register of wrecks, are grievous things to look at and to read. In spite of all that has been said about accidents at sea, they have increased in frequency; and whether they will be much diminished by the operation of those clauses in Mr. Cardwell's Merchant Shipping Act, which are intended to assist in their repression, is extremely doubtful. As the Act only came into operation three months since (on the first of May last), we can speak from no experience of its effects. So far as the prevention of accident is concerned it is a step in the right direction, though but a single step, we fear, where there are half a hundred needed. We feel pretty sure that the most callous man in England (whoever he may be) would be startled by the information given to him at a glance in the Wreck Chart of Great Britain and Ireland. Total wrecks are marked on it with black little eclipsed moons; others, according to their class, with crosses and other signs; each wreck is indicated by its proper mark in the sea adjoining that part of our coast upon which it occurred; and here on the chart in which the wrecks only of last year are set down, they lie blackening our sea along the entire line of British coast, as thick as bees about a honeycomb. The swarm is greater of course near some ports than elsewhere. Colliers and craft of that kind furnish a double file of six and forty wrecks, half of them total wrecks,