

See, too, the rim is of shining gold, and the flowers could not bloom more beautifully if they were in a garden; yet they are only painted. And in the midst the paradise! And look, Marietta, how the apples smile on the trees; it makes my mouth water. Adam could not resist if the pretty Eve should offer him one of them. See also how beautifully the lamb playing skips about the old tiger, and the snow white dove stands before the vulture as if she would bill with him!"

Marietta could not look enough. "If I only had such a goblet, mother!" she said; "It is much too beautiful to drink out of; I would put my flowers in it, and look to see paradise there continually. We are at the fair of Venice; but I see a picture: it seems to me as if we were in paradise."

Thus spoke Marietta and summoned all the Lanapoulese maidens to admire the goblet; and soon all the boys and girls are standing there together, and at last well nigh half the population of La Napoule was gathered around the wonderful goblet. But wonderfully costly was it as well; transparent porcelain, with golden handles and bright colors. Someone modestly asked the merchant: "How much, monsieur?" And he answered: "A hundred francs at the lowest." They were all silent and went away.

When no one from La Napoule remained before the booth, Colin came creeping along, threw down a hundred francs, had the goblet put in a box, filled with cotton, and carried it off. His evil plans nobody knew.

Just before reaching La Napoule on his return, as it was getting dark, he met old Jaques, the servant of the judge, who was returning from the field. Jaques was an entirely good fellow, but thoroughly stupid.

"I will give you a trinket, Jaques," said Colin, "if you will carry this box to the house of Mere Manon and leave it there. And if anyone should notice you or should ask you from whom it comes, tell them that it was given you by a stranger. Under no condition disclose my name, or I shall be eternally angry with you."

Jaques promised, took the trinket and the box, and set out in the direction of the little house in the midst of the olive trees and African acacias.

#### V.—THE MESSENGER.

Before he arrived there, his master, Judge Hautmartin, met him, and inquired:

"Jaques, what are you carrying?"

"A box for Mere Manon. But, sir, I cannot tell from whom."

"Why not?"

"Because, monsieur Colin would be eternally angry at me."

"It is well that you know how to keep a secret. Yet it is very late. Give me the box; I am going to Mere Manon's in the morning. I will hand her the box and not betray that it comes from Colin. It will save you the trip and serve as a good excuse."

Jaques gave the box to his master, whom he was accustomed to obey implicitly in everything. The judge carried it to his room and examined it by the lamp with curiosity. Upon the cover was written neatly: "To the lovely and beloved Marietta!" Monsieur Hautmartin knew well enough that this was only a trick of Colin's and that some sly malice lurked behind it. Therefore he opened the box carefully to see if it did not contain a mouse or a rat. But when he beheld the beautiful goblet, which he had seen at Venice, he was heartily afraid. For Monsieur Hautmartin was perfectly aware of the rights of the law as well of the ways that are dark. He imagined, however, that Colin intended to get Marietta in-

to trouble with the goblet. He would give out, doubtless, if it were once in her hands, that it was a present from a fortunate lover in the city, so that all righteous people would have to shun Marietta. Therefore Monsieur Hautmartin, the judge, determined, in order to destroy all suspicion, to represent himself as the giver of the goblet. Besides, he loved Marietta and would be only too glad to see whether she would follow the preaching of old Father Jerome toward him: "Children, love one another!" To be sure, Monsieur was a child of fifty, and Marietta thought that the sentence did not apply to him. Mere Manon, on the contrary, held that the judge was a sensible child, that he had money and respect throughout all La Napoule, from one end of the town to the other. And when the judge spoke of marriage, and Marietta ran away through fear, Mere Manon remained sitting and experienced no awe of the tall, venerable man. It must be confessed that no fault could be found with his person. And though Colin, perhaps, might be the handsomest man in the town, yet monsieur, the judge, much surpassed him in two respects: namely, in years and in an enormous nose. Yes, this nose, which ever preceded the judge like a courier to announce his approach, was a veritable elephant among human noses.

With this elephant, his good intention and the goblet, the judge went on the following morning to the house in the midst of the olive trees and African acacias.

"For the beautiful Marietta," he began, "there is nothing too costly. Yesterday you admired the goblet at Venice. Allow me, sweet Marietta, to lay both this and my loving heart at your feet."

Mere Manon and Marietta were charmed and amazed as they beheld the goblet. Mere Manon's eyes sparkled blissfully, but Marietta turned pale and said: "I can accept neither your heart nor your goblet." Then Mere Manon was angry and cried:

"But I accept heart and goblet. You goose, how long will you scorn your fortune? For whom are you waiting? Is some count of Provence to make you his bride that you despise the judge of La Napoule? I know how to care for you better. Monsieur Hautmartin, I count it an honor to nie to call you my son-in-law."

Then Marietta went out and wept bitterly, and hated the lovely goblet with all her heart.

But the judge stroked his great nose with his broad hand, and said wisely:

"Mere Manon, do not hasten matters unduly. The little pigeon will yield at last, when she knows me better. I am not violent. I understand girls pretty thoroughly, and before a quarter of a year passes by, I will slip into Marietta's heart."

"His nose is too big for that!" whispered Marietta, who was listening just outside the door, and she laughed to herself. Indeed a quarter of a year slipped away, and Monsieur Hautmartin had not entered her heart, even so much as with the point of his nose."

#### VI.—THE FLOWERS.

But during these three months Marietta had many other annoyances. The goblet had caused her much trouble and vexation, as will be seen by what follows.

For two whole weeks nothing but this goblet was talked of throughout La Napoule. Everybody said it was a present from the judge and that the wedding had already been appointed. But when Marietta solemnly declared to her companions that she would drown herself in the bottom of the sea rather than marry the judge, they only continued to be more suspicious than ever, and teased her by saying: "How

sweet it will be to sit in the shadow of his nose!" This was the first vexation.

In the next place Mere Manon was thoroughly and cruelly determined; so she compelled Marietta to go every morning to rinse the goblet at the spring and to fill it with fresh flowers. By this means she hoped to accustom Marietta to the goblet and to the heart of the giver. But Marietta, notwithstanding, continued to hate both gift and giver, and her task at the spring became to her a real punishment. Second vexation.

Then, when she came to the spring, regularly twice a week there lay upon the rock nearby a bunch of the most beautiful flowers, neatly arranged, and finely suited to the splendor of the goblet. Around the stems she always found fastened a strip of paper, on which was written: "Dear Marietta." Now certainly none could be foolish enough to try to make Marietta believe that magicians or fairies were still in the world. Consequently, the flowers and the tender address accompanying them must come from Monsieur Hautmartin. Marietta would not smell them for fear lest the living breath of the judge's nose might still be hovering about them. She, however, kept the flowers as they were prettier than field flow and tore the strip of paper into a thousand pieces, scattering them about the place where the bouquet was accustomed to lie. But that did not in the least anger Judge Hautmartin, whose love was evidently as incomparable after its kind as his nose was after its kind. Third vexation.

But at last it was discovered in conversation with the judge that he was not the giver of the flowers. Who could it be then? Marietta was very much astonished at this unexpected discovery. But from that time forth she rather liked to take the flowers from the rock, and to smell of them, too; but who could it be that placed them there? Marietta was what most maidens are, of course, not accustomed to be very curious. She hit upon this and that youth of La Napoule, but she was never satisfied that her guess was correct. She lingered and listened about the place late at night; she rose early in the morning; but she heard or saw no one. And yet regularly twice a week the flowers were there in the morning, and wound about them the slip of paper, on which was recorded a sweet sigh: "Dear Marietta." Such a thing would awaken curiosity in the most indifferent maiden. But curiosity at length becomes a consuming torment. Fourth vexation.

#### VII.—EVIL UPON EVIL.

It happened that on Sunday, Father Jerome preached upon the subject "Wonderful are the dispensations of Heaven." And the little Marietta thought, "Will it be in accordance with the dispensations of heaven that I learn who the invisible giver of the flowers is." Father Jerome was not wrong.

One summer night when it had been very warm, Marietta awoke early, and was unable to go to sleep again. Accordingly she sprang joyfully from her bed, just as the first beams of morning broke over the blue Mediterranean and across the Lérinian Islands to the window of her little chamber. She dressed and went out to bathe her face and arms in the cool spring; she took her hat with her that she might walk awhile by the sea. She knew where there was a secret place to bathe.

In order to reach this secret spot she had to pass over the cliff behind the house, and down again past some pomegranates and palms. This time she was unable to get past them. For under the tallest, and youngest of the palms lay a young slim man—near him a bouquet of lovely flowers. There was likewise to be seen a strip of white