

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE BROKEN GOBLET.

[Translated for the "News" from the German of Zschokke, by Prof. C. M. Stebbins of the Salt Lake High School.]

I.—MIRETTA.

La Napoule is, I know, only a very little place on the Bay of Cannes; yet it is well known throughout all Provence. It lies in the evergreen shadow of lofty palms and dark orange trees. That, however, to tell the truth, is not what makes it renowned. It is said that the reddest grapes, the sweetest roses and the most beautiful maidens are reared there. This I cannot affirm; but, in the meantime, I am pleased to believe it. It is a pity that La Napoule is so small, and cannot produce more red grapes, beautiful roses and beautiful maidens. Otherwise there might be some of them in our own country.

If all the La Napoulese women have been beautiful since the founding of the town, then truly the little Marietta must have been a wonder of wonders, inasmuch as the Chronicle makes special mention of her. She was called indeed the Little Marietta, though she was not smaller than a child of seventeen years and over usually is; whose forehead reaches just to the lips of a full grown man.

The Chronicle of La Napoule had its own good grounds for telling of Marietta. I, in the place of the Chronicle, would have done the same. For Marietta, who had up to this time lived at Avignon with Mere Manon, almost turned the town up side down, when she returned to the place of her birth. Not particularly the houses, but the people and more especially their heads; and not, indeed, the heads even of all the people, but rather of those whose heads and hearts, when in the presence of two eyes full of soul, are in danger. In such circumstances there is no jest. I know it.

Mere Manon would have done better if she had remained at Avignon. But in La Napoule she had a small inheritance; it included a small farm, some vineyards, and a little cottage beneath a shadow of a rock, in the midst of olive trees and African acacias. Such a thing a portionless widow does not reject. Now according to her idea she was as rich and as fortunate, as if she were countess of Provence or the like.

So much the worse was it for the Lanapoulese. They had not expected such a calamity, and had never read in Homer that a pretty woman had been able to bring all Greece and Asia Minor to arms.

II.—HOW MISFORTUNE CAME.

Scarcely had Marietta been among the olive trees and African acacias a fortnight before every young La Napoulese knew that Marietta lived there, and that not a more charming girl dwelt in all Provence than in that very house.

When she went through the town, tripping lightly, like a disguised angel, in the fluttering jacket and pale green bodice, with a cluster of orange blossoms and rose buds on her breast, and flowers and ribbons waving from her green hat, which shaded her gentle face—then all the old people suddenly became talkative and the young ones became dumb. Everywhere, one after another windows and doors were opened and everywhere she received a "Good morning" or "Good evening,

Marietta;" and smiling she bowed to the right and to the left.

When she entered the Church, all hearts (that is, those of the young men) forsook heaven; all eyes left the Saints; and the praying fingers erred in telling the beads of the rosary. That, truly, must often have been a source of great vexation, particularly to the pious.

At such times the young ladies of La Napoule must have been especially pious, for they were most angry of all. And it was scarcely to be wondered at. For since Marietta's arrival more than one betrothed had become cold, and more than one wooer had proved faithless to his beloved. There were, accordingly, everywhere, many quarrels and reproofs, many tears, lectures and mittens. They spoke no more of weddings but of separations. Rings and bands, pledges of their fidelity, were returned. The older people mixed in the quarrels of their children. Hate and strife ran from house to house. It was too bad.

"Marietta is to blame for it all," said the pious maidens; then their mothers said it; then their fathers said it too; and at last even the young men said it.

But Marietta, screened in modesty and innocence, like the expanding glow of a rose bud in the dark green of the calyx, suspected nothing of the misery she had caused, and remained kind toward all. That moved first the young men, and they said: "Why grieve the gentle, innocent child? She is guileless!" then the fathers said it; then the mothers said it too; and at last all, even the pious maidens said it. For whoever spoke with Marietta could not help being won to her. And before a half year had gone by everyone had spoken with her and loved her. She, however, did not believe that she was so much loved, just as before she had not believed that anyone could hate her. Who guesses how much the dark violet, often trod in the grass, is worth!

Now everybody, man and woman wished to atone for the injustice to Marietta. Sympathy heightened the tenderness of affection. Everywhere Marietta was greeted more cordially, smiled to more kindly, and more heartily bidden to the rural games and dances.

III.—MALICIOUS COLIN.

Yet not all men have the sweet gift of sympathy, but are hard-hearted, like Pharaoh. This comes doubtless from the natural degeneracy of man since the first fall; or, because the Evil One was not disposed of in the proper manner at baptism.

A memorable example of such hard-heartedness as young Colin, the richest renter and landowner in La Napoule, who could scarcely traverse his vineyards, and his orchards of olives and lemons and oranges in a whole day. And just this process the natural degeneracy of his disposition, that he was well nigh twenty-seven years old, without having once asked himself why a maiden should be created.

To be sure all the people, especially maiden ladies of that uncertain age in which they gladly overlook faults, held Colin to be the best fellow under the sun. His figure, his quick, frank nature, his glance, his smile, had the good fortune to please the above-mentioned ladies, who would have granted absolution in case of need for any of which cry to heaven. But the verdict of such judges is not entirely to be trusted.

While old and young at La Napoule

had reconciled themselves to the innocent Marietta and had made friends with her, Colin was the only one, who remained inexorable toward the sweet girl. If the conversation chanced to turn upon Marietta, he became as dumb as a fish. If he happened to meet her in the street, he became red and pale with anger and cast sideways upon her veritably withering glances. At evening, when the young people assembled on the sea shore near the ruins of an old castle to engage in friendly games, to lead the rural dance, or to begin a round of songs, Colin was never found wanting. As soon as Marietta came, however, the malicious Colin was silent, and not all the money in the world would induce him to sing again. It was a shame, for he had a beautiful voice. Everyone liked to hear him, and his store of songs was inexhaustible.

All the maidens liked to meet Colin, and he was friendly with them all. He had, as I have already said, a roguish look, which the young ladies both feared and loved; and when he smiled, he was a subject for a painter. But naturally enough the much insulted Marietta did not once look at him. And in that he was perfectly right. Whether he smiled or not, it was all the same to her. Of his roguish look, perhaps, she had not even heard; and in that she was again right. If he were telling stories, and he knew a great many, she teased her neighbors, or sometimes pulled weeds and pelted Pierre or Paul, and chatted and laughed, hearing nothing that Colin said. That wounded the proud fellow, and he often broke off in the midst of his story and went away melancholy.

Vengeance is sweet. The daughter of Mere Manon might have triumphed completely; but Marietta was entirely too good a child for that, her heart was too tender. When Colin became silent she was sorry. If he was sad her merriment left her. When he went away she did not long remain; and once at home, she wept more sorrowing tears than the penitent Magdalen, and had not sinned half so much.

IV.—THE GOBLET.

Father Jerome, the priest of La Napoule, an old man of seventy years, had all the virtues of his order, together with the single fault that he was, because of his age, exceedingly hard of hearing. But for that he preached all the more with edification to the ears of his children of baptism and the confessional, and they all listened to him gladly. To be sure, he preached continually upon two subjects, as though his whole religious creed were contained in them. Either: "Children, love one another;" or, "Children, wonderful are the dispensations of heaven!" But truly in them were included so much belief, love and hope, that one might have become well satisfied with them alone in case of necessity. The children loved one another very obediently, and placed their hopes in the dispensations of heaven. Colin alone, stubborn of heart, took no notice of it. If he was friendly, it was only an indication of his evil intentions.

The Lanapoulese people enjoy going to the fair at Vence. Life is gay there, and, if there is little money, there are all sorts of wares. Now Marietta went with Mere Manon to the fair; Colin was likewise there. He purchased all kinds of dainties and trinkets for his girl friends—but not a sou did he spend for Marietta. And yet he was everywhere upon her heels; but he did not speak to her, nor she to him. It was easy to be seen that he was meditating some evil.

Mere Manon was standing in a booth when suddenly she said: "O Marietta, see this beautiful goblet! A queen need not be ashamed to touch it to her lips.