

paper, upon which presumably another sigh was recorded. How could Marietta get by?

She remained standing and her limbs trembled with fear. She was on the point of returning to the house. Scarcely had she taken two steps backward when she looked around at the sleeper and remained standing again. But from that distance she could not recognize his face. But now or never was the mystery to be solved. She tripped lightly nearer to the palm, but it seemed as if he moved. Marietta again started on a run for the house, but his moving was only an illusion of Marietta's fear. Again she retraced her steps toward the palm, but he might perhaps be feigning sleep. She fled again in the direction of home, but who will fear because of a mere perhaps? She retook her way to the palms.

In this wavering of her timid and eager soul between fright and curiosity. In this tripping back and forth between the palms and home, she had approached each time a few steps nearer the sleeper, while at the same time her curiosity was gaining the victory over her fear.

"How does he concern me, anyway? My path simply leads me past him. Whether he sleeps or wakes, I am going on."

Thus thought Mere Manon's daughter. She did not get past, however, but stopped opposite; for one must see the face of a giver of flowers, just to be certain. Meanwhile he was sleeping as if he had not enjoyed sound slumber for a month. Who was it? Now who else do you suppose it should be but the archvillain Colin.

It had been him, then, who, out of longstanding enmity, had caused the gentle girl so much vexation with the preacher, and had brought her into troublesome relations with Hautmartin; it had been him who had gone and teased her with flowers in order to torture her curiosity. Why? He hated Marietta. He always betrayed his ill-will toward the poor girl in company in an unpardonable manner. He got away if he could, and if he couldn't he annoyed the gentle little girl. He was talkative, friendly and agreeable to all the girls of La Napoule except Marietta. Think of it! He had never asked her to dance with him once, and she danced most charmingly.

Now there he lay, betrayed, entrapped. Vengeance awakened in Marietta's breast. What injury could she do him! She took the bouquet of flowers, untied them and scattered with righteous anger his present scornfully over the sleeper. But the paper on which was recorded the sigh, "Dear Marietta!" she kept and thrust it quickly in her bosom. She would preserve this proof of his handwriting for future use. Marietta was sharp. She was about to go. But her vengeance did not appear to be satisfied. She could not leave the place without punishing Colin's baseness with a similar one. She tore from her hat the silk violet-colored ribbon and wound it gently around the arm of the sleeper and passed it around the tree, tying Colin to the palm with three firm knots. If he should awake now, how astonished he should be! Now his curiosity would keep him on the rack to learn who had played him this trick. That, he could not possibly guess. It served him right.

Marietta was altogether too lenient toward him. She seemed to repent of her work as soon as she had finished it. Her heart throbbled violently. I even believe that tears came to her eyes which were resting pitifully on her criminal. Slowly she went back to the pomegranate on the cliff, all the time looking cautiously around her; slowly she ascended and looked again under the palm. Then she hastened away as she heard the call of Mere Manon.

VIII.—THE RIBBON.

But on that selfsame day Colin played a new trick. What did he do? He openly undertook to disgrace the poor little Marietta. Ah! she had never once supposed that anyone in La Napoule would recognize her violet-colored ribbon. But Colin knew it only too well. He wound it proudly about his hat, and wore it where everybody might see it, as a prize. And everyone, youths and maidens, cried: "It is Marietta's!" and all the girls cried: "The wretch!" And all the young men who enjoyed looking at Marietta, cried: "The wretch!"

"How is this, Mere Manon?" cried Monsieur Hautmartin, as he entered her house, and he cried so loud that it resounded strangely in his great nose. "How is this? Will you permit that? My affianced presents the young renter, Colin, with the ribbon from her hat. It is high time that we celebrate the marriage. It has come to such a pass that it is my right to speak."

"You are right," answered Mere Manon. "If matters stand so, the wedding must take place immediately. This is too much, altogether too much."

"But Mere Manon, your daughter still refuses me her consent."

"Simply prepare the wedding feast." "But she will not even once look upon me kindly; and if I sit down by her, the little witch jumps up and runs away."

"Nevertheless, Monsieur Hautmartin, prepare the wedding feast."

"But if Marietta persists in refusing?"

"We will surprise her. We will go to Father Jerome. On Monday bright and early he shall perform the marriage. We will bring him to it. I am her mother. You are the highest magistrate in La Napoule. He must obey. But Marietta must know nothing whatever of it. Monday morning early I will send her to Father Jerome, all alone, on an errand, that she may suspect nothing. Then the priest will talk with her confidentially. Shortly we will arrive. Then quickly to the altar. And then if Marietta still insist upon saying no, what of it? The old man can hear nothing. But until then silence to Marietta and all La Napoule."

There the matter rested. Marietta did not so much as dream of the fate which awaited her. She thought only of the villainy of Colin who had made her the topic of conversation with the people of the whole place. Oh, how she repented her thoughtlessness in regard to the ribbon! Yet in her heart she forgave the wretch his offense. Marietta was far too good. She said to her mother, she said to all her companions: "Colin found my ribbon, which I had lost. I did not give it to him. Now he wishes to tease me with it. You now very well that Colin has always been unkind toward me and has always sought occasion to vex me!"

Ah, the poor child! She did not know of the new horror which the malicious fellow was meditating.

IX.—THE GOBLET BROKEN.

In the early morning Marietta went with the goblet to the spring. Yet there were no flowers on the rock. It was doubtless too early; the sun was scarcely up out of the sea.

Steps rustled behind her. It was Colin coming; in his hand were the flowers. Marietta's cheeks became blood-red. Colin stammered: "Good morning, Marietta." But the greeting did not come from his heart; he was scarcely able to express the words.

"Why do you wear my ribbon so publicly, Colin?" said Marietta, and she set the goblet on the rock. "I did not give it to you."

"You did not give it to me, dear Marietta?" and he became pale, evidently from internal anger.

Marietta was ashamed of her falsehood; her lids dropped and she said after a while: "I gave it to you; yet you should not wear it so in view. Give it back to me."

Then he slowly unfastened it; his anger was, evidently, so great that he could not keep the tears from his eyes nor the sigh in his breast.

"Marietta, dear, let me keep your ribbon!" he said softly.

"No," she answered.

Then his concealed anger passed into desperation. With a sigh, he looked into the sky, then sorrowfully upon Marietta, who stood quietly and gently by the spring with downcast eyes and arms hanging by her side.

He wound the violet ribbon around Marietta, who stood quietly and gently by the spring with downcast eyes the bouquet and cried: "Take them all then," and he flung the flowers so knavishly at the goblet that it fell from the rock and broke in pieces. Then he fled exultingly.

Mere Manon, concealed behind a window, had heard and seen all. But when the goblet broke, sight and hearing both failed her. She was hardly able to speak for horror. And when she pressed herself forcibly into the narrow window to cry after the fleeing criminal, she tore the window loose from the crumbling stones, so that it fell with a great crash upon the ground and went to pieces.

So much misfortune would have shaken any other woman from her composure. But Mere Manon soon recovered herself.

"Lucky chance, that I was witness of his crime!" she cried; "he must be brought before the judge. For the goblet and the window he shall pay their weight in gold. That will give you a rich portion, Marietta!"

But when Marietta brought in the pieces of the broken goblet, when Mere Manon saw the lost paradise; the good Adam without a head; and only the limbs of Eve, standing firm; the serpent triumphing, uninjured; the tiger unharmed; but the little lamb vanished all except his tail, as if the tiger had swallowed him! then Mere Manon broke out, roaring at the absurdness of Colin, and said:

"It is easy to see that the devil had a hand in this!"

X.—THE TRIAL.

Mere Manon took the goblet in one hand and Marietta by the other, and about nine o'clock went to where Monsieur Hautmartin was wont to hold court. With loud crying she laid her complaint before him, showing the broken goblet and the lost paradise. Marietta wept bitterly.

The judge, when he saw the broken goblet and his lovely bride-elect in tears, worked himself up to such a pitch of anger that his nose became as purple as Marietta's famous ribbon. He commissioned his bailiffs to bring in the offender with all possible dispatch.

Colin came in deep contrition. With such eloquence Mere Manon now repeated her complaint in the presence of the judge, his bailiffs, and the clerks. But Colin heard nothing. He went up to Marietta and whispered: "Forgive me, dear Marietta, as I forgive you. I did not break your goblet intentionally; but you—you have broken my heart."

"What does that whispering mean, there?" cried Monsieur Hautmartin the complaint against you, and offer your defense."

"I have no defense to make. I broke the goblet against my will," answered Colin.

"That I firmly believe," said Marietta.