

upon her, but she did not turn hers again toward him. With a slight inclination of the head, she passed into the church.

'The bend of her neck is like that of a pigeon,' murmured Gapit, gazing after her. 'My pure little white dove of Kergoz.'

In the parish of Garlau it was customary from time immemorial for the bell-ringer to make a visitation among the better class of inhabitants for the purpose of collecting what were called his 'Easter-eggs' as an acknowledgment of his services. Remembering his self-registered promise, Agapit had refrained from visiting the farm of Pierre Mevel, until he reflected that the omission to do so might look churlish and could hardly be explained or excused. He made several ineffectual efforts to call there, hovering near the outskirts and then shrinking away on some trifling excuse of going to another patron in the vicinity.

At length on Good Friday afternoon, about four o'clock, he summoned courage to enter the gate and knock at the door of the kitchen. It was Jeanne Louise herself who opened it.

'Ah, it is you, Agapit!' she said. 'Come in. My father is just taking a bite.'

'Yes, yes, here I am!' cried Pierre from the long table where he was attacking a huge piece of dry bread. 'This is my breakfast, boy,' he continued. 'Will you not join me? Good Friday, you know, and the fare meagre. But Jeanne Louise will fetch us a pitcher of cider.'

The girl had already gone for it, and, presently returning, placed it on the table before them.

'It took you a long time to respond to my invitation, Gapit,' she said, pouring out the sparkling draught with a charming smile that went to Agapit's head like new wine.

He could not answer her. She remembered, then, that she had asked him! She had meant it! She still thought of him, perhaps, as of one who might have been her lover—if—if—if— Then he said:

'Yes, I was not well, but now I am better.'

Judging from the manner in which you ring those bells, you are,' interposed the farmer. 'So you feel your strength returning, Gapit?'

'Yes, indeed.'

The boy straightened himself as he answered; and he felt afterward that he felt a sensation as though all his bones had cracked on the instant. So strong was the impression that he looked at his companions for some observation; but apparently they were unaware of it, for they said nothing. At the same time his limbs trembled so violently that he pressed his arms on the table and his feet firmly to the floor, so that the father and daughter might not notice it.

'Perhaps you may entirely recover after a time,' said the farmer kindly.

'I am almost well already,' replied Gapit. 'The doctor says I shall soon be all right.'

Pierre Mevel arose from the table and went into an adjoining room. Jeanne Louise had remained standing, and was now smiling at Gapit with a sweetness that completely upset him. The love he had so faithfully tried to repress again reasserted itself under the magic of her presence. Hope filled his heart; health seemed to glow in his enfeebled limbs, his sluggish veins.

Soon the farmer reappeared. In his hand he held a five-franc piece, which he extended to the young man.

Agapit's face turned pale.

'No,' he said, shaking his head—'I cannot take it. That is not what I want.'

'You do not want it?' exclaimed Pierre Mevel in surprise. 'Is it not enough?'

'It is not money I would ask from you, Pere Mevel,' answered Agapit, with strong emotion.

'What, then?'

'It is your daughter, Jeanne Louise—when I shall be well.'

'My daughter!' cried the farmer. 'What are you saying, Agapit?'

'I love her. I shall soon be well. Will you give her to me?'

'Poor fellow, you will never be well!' said Pierre Mevel, laying one hand on the shoulder of Jeanne Louise. 'Be a man, Gapit. Do not even in thought seek to link the life of a cripple with that of a bright young girl.'

Agapit raised his eyes to those of her whom he loved. In a moment he realised what he had done—the selfishness of it, the horror of it.

'You are right—oh, you are right! Forgive me, Pierre Mevel! Forgive me, Jeanne Louise—Jeanne Louise!'

Tears were streaming down his cheeks. Father and daughter turned away; they could not bear to witness his anguish. He went so quietly that they did not know the moment of his departure; but when they

looked again upon the place where he had been standing he was gone.

II.

On Holy Saturday, after two days of funeral silence, the bells, to use a phrase common in that Morlaix country, 'came back from Rome.' It is a return always impatiently awaited by that primitive people, some among the younger and less pious of whom do not enter the church until the joyful carillons of the 'Gloria in Excelsis' have rung from the gray turreted steeple.

As Agapit made his appearance in the porch, one of the girls cried out:

'You must give us your best touches to-day, Gapit!'

'I will try—you shall see, Pierrette,' he said briefly, as he passed them.

'How sad he looks,' remarked another. 'But I think he is straighter than he used to be.'

There was no sadness, however, in the peal that rang out from the tower a few moments afterward. Loud and long rang the bells; never had the oldest inhabitant of the parish of Garlau heard them give forth so jubilant a song. But even as the people looked at one another in pride and delight, the chimes suddenly ceased in the midst of an exuberant theme; three solemn funeral strokes succeeded each other, strange, muffled, slow—then there was silence.

Louis, the old sacristan, hurried from the vestry. At the same moment several of the men left the church. They met at the foot of the tower.

'Something has happened!' cried Louis. 'Let us go up.'

He took the lead, and, following him, the others ascended one by one. When they reached the top, the three bell cords were still swinging, but the longest and thickest had been wrenched apart. Half of it dangled from the roof of the belfry, the other could not be seen. And Gapit Quesseveur was not there.

There is something wrong,' said Louis, going at once to a small trap-door near the wall. 'Look here, my friends! The old rope parted in twain: Gapit, standing near the trap, was thrown violently upon it. It is old and rotten. He has fallen through. We shall find him at the bottom.'

'We shall find him dead, then,' said Athanase Du-four. 'It's a fall of sixty feet at least.'

Without another word they slowly descended the stair; and there, behind it, as Louis had predicted, they found the apparently lifeless body of the young bell-ringer. Blood was flowing from a wound in the back of the head; there was also a deep cut in the forehead. They bent over him.

'He breathes,' said Louis—'very faintly, but he breathes. Run, Victor, for the doctor! There may be some hope. Meanwhile, before the people come out of church, you and I, Athanase, can easily carry him home.'

In a second Victor was gone.

The Widow Quesseveur lived close to the church. A premonition of accident had caused her to come out. They met her at the door of the tower, surrounded by a crowd of idlers eager to learn what had occurred. One glance at the pale face covered with blood told the true Breton mother that action was required at present, whatever weeping might come after; and she led the way to her humble home, where the doctor had already arrived.

(To be concluded next week.)

The observation of Lord Hugh Cecil the other day at Greenwich that the King would, in the exercise of his undoubted prerogative, convene Parliament, as in former times, at places other than the Palace of Westminster, may render it of interest to know that the ancient Parliament House of Ireland was not the only place in which the Irish Parliament held its sessions. It sat at many other places, as, for instance, Drogheda, Trim, Kilkenny. The Irish Parliaments of Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I. assembled in rooms prepared for the purpose in Dublin Castle; the Parliament of James II, sat in the Four Courts, which was then the King's Inns, and the site of an ancient abbey. From the Restoration till 1725 the Irish Parliament sat at Chester House, which was the site of the existing edifice.

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