

Whilst lending his aid, Rosen had taken possession and hidden from Madame Gerald's view the journal which Leopold held in his hand.

A physician came, and he said, in private to Rosen, as the latter led him downstairs from the patient's room:

'This crisis will probably be the last. Prepare his family for the worst. The unhappy young man's confessor should be sent for.'

This task terrified Rosen. He hadn't the courage to speak immediately about it to the mother, and he went and seated himself at the end of the garden. The leaves had almost all fallen from the bushes, and some pale roses alone hung upon the almost denuded branches. The cottage, clad with vines of a brilliant purple, was looking bright and cheerful in the sunshine.

'What sorrow is under that roof!' said Rosen to himself. 'Why did Leopold ever leave it? But what did he learn from this fatal paper?'

He opened the newspaper, and at a place greased and torn he read the two following paragraphs:

'By superior orders, the Royal Academy of Music has just received and placed in rehearsal a grand opera composed by Prince Muratori. This indefinitely adjourns the performance of Gerald's opera, "The Prince of Sicily," although accepted three months ago. It is stated, further, that Gerald has died of a malady of a chest at Pisa.'

And further on:

'A fashionable throng assembled yesterday in the Church of the Madeleine, and the most conspicuous financiers mingled with many artistic celebrities. The fair songstress whom all Paris had been applauding during the last three years, Mlle. Estrella Diaz, was wedded to the wealthy banker, M. Dupre, widower, by his first marriage, of Mlle. de Parthenay. The witnesses were M——, etc.'

'It is the icy hand of death, is that?' said Rosen to himself, in consideration. 'I must at once speak to this poor mother.'

He walked towards the house. Mme. Gerald was coming to meet him. She was very pale, and said to him:

'I did not know till now how wretched I am, monsieur. I knew that my son was ruined, I knew that he was going to die, but I did not know that he had ceased to be a Christian. I have just heard him blaspheme. That is the worst of my griefs. Oh! monsieur, what is it that has befallen him?'

'Let us go to him,' said Rosen. 'I will speak to him.'

They entered his room. Henriette was weeping on her knees beside her brother's bed, and the sick man, on seeing them enter, exclaimed:

'All is shattered, all! Oh, Rosen! No more hope. They tell me I am dying. God is without pity. And they want me to pray to Him! Never!'

'We will pray for you,' said Rosen, 'and God will pardon you. Unhappy man! Remember how you have lived! Who, if not yourself, has dug the abyss under your feet?'

'Let me alone,' said Gerald, 'your words are cruel. Let all leave the room; I wish to die alone.'

They obeyed, affrighted, and waited out of sight of the dying man; but his sister, drawing him gently, folded him in her arms, and said to him:

'Would you drive me away, too?'

He embraced her, and melted into tears.

She watched beside him all that night, and he refused to see his mother and his friend Rosen.

'Do not insist on his seeing you,' said the physician; 'in a few days more he will ask for you. He may live for some weeks longer, but he must be spared all emotion.'

Three days passed away thus. Rosen said to Mme. Gerald:

'I am of no use here. If you will permit me, I will go and see at Ars that priest of whom so much is said, and I will beg of him Leopold's recovery.'

'I will go with you, dear sir,' said the mother. 'For a long time I have been wishing to make the same pilgrimage.'

'Let us depart immediately,' said the young man; 'it will be easy for your daughter to hide our absence from your son.'

They set out that same night, and on the second morning after their departure they arrived at Ars. As was usual, a large crowd was awaiting the holy priest in the church. He entered, looking more like an apparition than a living being. His vestments floated about him like those of a shadow, and his luminous and expressive eyes lit up his pale and transparent visage with a supernatural glow. After praying before the

altar he turned and directed a long and earnest gaze on those present. There were gathered all varieties of human misery, the infirm, the sick, and those whose hearts were tortured by hidden sorrows and troubles. The holy priest went directly to Rosen.

'Follow me,' he said.

And he led him into the sacristy. At the expiration of a short time the young man came forth, filled with emotion, and said to Mme. Gerald:

'The Saint desires to see you.'

She rose, trembling, and walked slowly to the sacristy. When she returned, they heard Mass, which was said by the holy priest, and both communicated; and when Mass was over they did not delay in leaving by the carriage that had brought them. Rosen did not venture to ask any question; he himself awaited with anxiety the moment of their arrival.

They reached Madame Gerald's in the evening. Nothing had changed in the external aspect of the dwelling. The old servant, Josette, was waiting for them on the threshold. She ran towards them.

'Rejoice, madame, Monsieur Leopold has asked for a priest. This morning, at 9 o'clock, I went for Abbe. Albert; your son made his confession to him, and he has received Holy Communion with the piety of an angel. He is very tranquil now; you will see he will recover.'

The mother raised her eyes towards heaven—eyes weary from weeping, and without being able to utter a word entered the house.

The brother and sister were praying together. On seeing his mother, Leopold stretched out his arms towards her. Rosen remained on the threshold.

'My mother,' said the sick man. 'What did the holy priest of Ars say to you? Shall I recover?'

'My son,' said she, 'between this fleeting life and life eternal what must the choice be?'

'I accept death,' replied Leopold. 'I offer up to God the sacrifice of my life; may it wash away my sins!'

'Leopold,' said Rosen, weeping, 'forgive me for the cruel words I spoke the other day.'

'I thank you for them,' said the sick man. 'They have awakened my soul from the sleep of death.'

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A little while after, Leopold calmly expired. He had requested his friend to leave him alone for some moments with his mother and sister, and to go and sing outside the house the 'Wanderer's Song.' Rosen complied with the caprice of the dying man. He sang it in the silence of the night, just as he had sung it the first time that Leopold had heard it.

When he returned, Leopold thanked him, and did not live to see the return of day.

After he had fulfilled the last duties to his dead friend, Rosen took his leave of Mme. Gerald and her daughter.

'May God reward you, Monsieur Rosen!' said the bereaved mother to him. 'May He reward you for the kindness and goodness you have shown my son! Farewell, dear, very dear friend of my poor child!'

'If you say farewell to me I will not go,' he said, growing pale. 'Say to me au revoir, or I will stay.'

'Au revoir,' said Henriette, weeping, and he departed.

A year afterwards, on the anniversary of her pilgrimage to Ars, Mme. Gerald once more repaired there, this time accompanied by her daughter. She entered in her turn the confessional of the holy priest. He recognised her, and spoke to her for a long while. At the sound of his voice, celestial peace seemed to descend into the heart of the poor mother. At the moment when she was about to leave the confessional he said to her:

'Go and bring your son; he is in the church.'

'Alas!' she said, thinking that the holy priest had forgotten. 'I no longer have a son.'

'Go and bring him immediately,' said the priest; 'your son is there.'

The mother rose, bathed in tears, and beheld at a distance Rosen, who was entering the church.

She understood then. Two months later Henriette left off her mourning garments in order to assume the white attire of a bride.—Pilot.

COLDS LEAVE WEAK PLACES.
WEAK, COUGH-INJURED SPOTS INVITE CONSUMPTION
TAKE TUSSICURA, THE MARVELLOUS THROAT AND
LUNG TONIC.