

Pulpit and Pew.

I heard a dull preacher
One summer day,
And I wished the poor teacher
A furling away.

And I sat with the others,
Held in by the gloom;

While the trees were my brothers
And earth had more room.

And I heard the leaves rustle
And hiss in the air—
And I shunned the man's bustle,
I shrank from the prayer.

Alas for the preacher!
Alas for the throng!
Untaught was the teacher,
And so he went wrong!

SAMUEL W. DUFFIELD.

THE FISHERWOMAN OF HONFLEUR.

A TALE OF THE FRENCH COMMUNE.

CHAPTER III.

On quitting the bureau of the ascent, the young fisherman inadvertently wandered into the twentieth arrondissement, formerly a detached village, called Belleville, but now one of the most turbulent districts of Paris, and at that period the headquarters of Communism.

He soon discovered he had strolled away from those parts of the city he wished to see; but as he wandered along, seeking to get clear of the dirty, narrow streets which opened in every direction, whichever way he turned he found himself becoming more and more involved amidst the intricacies of the poverty-stricken quarters; and still, unknown to himself, he was followed by Lucien Pierrot.

It would have been difficult, probably, for Lucien to say with what special object he thus followed the young fisherman in his rambles through the city. It was perhaps chiefly that he sought to discover Antoine's motive for coming to Paris so soon after his return from sea; while at the same time he may have thought that something might occur that would enable him to gratify his long-cherished craving for vengeance.

If the latter notion occupied his thoughts, the opportunity occurred sooner than he could have anticipated. Antoine was passing through one of the longest, crookedest, and narrowest streets of this disreputable district, when he saw, a few paces in advance of him, a young lad of eighteen, who was apparently a stranger in Paris, and who seemed to be wandering about without having any particular object in view.

That the young fellow was a peasant, was manifested, not only in his garb, but likewise in his gait, manner and whole appearance. He wore a blue linen blouse, belted round the waist, and a pair of clumsy sabots, which, together with his leathern gaiters, were incumbered with the dried yellow mud of the country lanes; and as he slouched along, as if he were traversing a newly ploughed field, he stared about him with a look of stupid wonder and curiosity.

Suddenly, three of the small, boyish-looking soldiers of which the infantry of France seems mainly to be composed, bearing muskets and fixed bayonets that to a casual observer would appear too heavy for them to carry, pounced upon him from beneath a covered gateway, one of the party seizing him by the collar of his blouse and declaring him to be under arrest.

For a few moments the youth seemed to be stupefied; then he struggled to release himself, but was instantly seized by another of the soldiers, while the third whose arm bore a corporal's stripe, told him that he had better come quietly to jail.

"Why do you arrest me? What crime have I committed?" whined the young man, as he trembled in every limb. "I have but this day arrived in Paris. I am a stranger in the city, and an innocent of wrong-doing."

"Innocent! Of course thou art innocent, mon brave," sneered the corporal. "Harmless as a lamb. Nobody is ever guilty, according to his own account—Take the fellow along, comrades!"—addressing the soldiers—"the mob is already closing up behind us."

He would speedily have disappeared with him, had not Antoine, who had hitherto looked on as if bewildered, but whose sympathies were with the peasant, hastened to the rescue of the young lad. Wrenching the musket and bayonet from the grasp of the soldier he struck him senseless to the ground with one blow of his fist. "Ra, lad run!" he cried. "Dost not see that thou art free? Away, away!"

The peasant, who for a few moments seemed to have become paralysed with terror, made off as fast as his legs could carry him.

The beat of a drum and the steady tramp of feet were heard near by.

"Scatter! Scatter and fly!" shouted a hoarse voice in the rear of the crowd. "Do ye not hear? The soldiers are approaching."

The mob disappeared as rapidly as they had gathered, leaving the unfortunate soldiers stretched on the ground bleeding, bruised, and senseless. In half a minute the front rank of a troop of soldiers appeared at the entrance of the street. Antoine was stooping over the soldier whom he had struck down, striving to restore him to consciousness. He knew not of the approach of the troop until the men were close upon him, when, suddenly becoming aware of his own danger, he took to flight.

Some of the soldiers started in pursuit of the fugitive, while the main body hastened to the succour of their hapless comrades. Antoine, however, gained upon his pursuers, and would have escaped, but that on turning the corner of a street, he found himself confronted by another party of soldiers who were hastening to the scene of the disturbance. He stopped short and was about to take refuge in a narrow court, where he might have concealed himself till the soldiers had passed by, when Lucien Pierrot, who had never lost sight of the young fisherman, and had witnessed all that had occurred, shouted: "Seize that young man! He is a Communist, and was the leader of the mob."

In an instant, Antoine was surrounded, seized, and pitilessly dragged off to prison. There was a brief examination before a sergeant of police, in which Lucien Pierrot, who appeared as prosecutor, denounced the prisoner, Antoine Duroc, as a Communist leader of the lowest and vilest class, and swore that he had seen the prisoner strike a soldier down with his own hand and brutally maltreat him, thus effecting the release of a man under arrest.

Antoine, who declared that he was not a Communist, and that he knew not the meaning of the word, did not attempt to deny that he had struck down a soldier, and released a poor young peasant whom he believed to be innocent. This was enough; he was ordered to be confined and closely guarded until he could be brought before the military authorities the next day. The jailer, however, who was a native of Brittany, and had heard the young fisherman's simple story, believed in his innocence. He knew Lucien Pierrot as a paid government spy, and believed him capable of any falsehood or iniquity whereby he might gratify his malice against any individual who had offended him, or might pocket a reward for his vigilance in behalf of the government.

He pitied the unfortunate prisoner; and Antoine, who felt the need of sympathy, spoke of his young wife, who would now be impatiently waiting for his return from Paris.

"It grieves me sorely, Monsieur," he added, "that I have no means of acquainting my poor Madeleine with the misfortune that has befallen me. She will not know what to think, and will fear that some serious accident has happened to me."

"Thou canst write to thy wife, mon ami," said the jailer. "I will post the letter."

"Monsieur, I cannot write," replied Antoine.

"Then tell me what thou wouldst say, and I will write for thee."

Antoine dictated a few lines, informing Madeleine that he was in prison in Paris, having been denounced as a Communist by a government spy named Lucien Pierrot; but, anxious not to alarm his wife, he expressed the hope that he would speedily be released, and that he would be able, when taken before the court, to prove his innocence.

The jailer shook his head gravely, but made no remark, and probably Antoine himself did not feel the confidence in his speedy release that he sought to impart to his wife; though, being ignorant of the dreadful severity with which those who were suspected of Communism were punished, he doubted not that he would be set at liberty in the course of a few days at the furthest.

The letter was despatched; and was received by Madeleine at the moment when she was setting forth to meet her husband at the Honfleur railroad depot, fully expecting him to return that day.

The young wife was dreadfully alarmed on reading the letter. "It is my fault," she thought. "I am to blame. I ought not to have concealed from my husband the base conduct of the villain Lucien Pierrot. He threatened me with vengeance, and now he has accomplished his purpose. If I had told Antoine, he would have been on his guard against the wretch, and this trouble would not have occurred. But I acted as I thought, for the best." She sank into a chair, and for a few minutes felt perfectly helpless; but recollecting that it was necessary to exert herself immediately in her husband's behalf, she determined to proceed instantly to the mayor of Honfleur and seek his advice and assistance.

Monsieur le Maire was himself the owner of numerous fishing-luggers. Antoine was known to him, and was a favorite with him; and Madeleine knew that he would do all in his power to help her in her sore trouble. He read the letter, and heard from Madeleine the story of Lucien Pierrot's base conduct towards her. That Antoine had no connection with Communism, he was well aware; but he read the journal constantly, and he knew that the government, having been terribly frightened, were now proceeding with ruthless severity against all persons even suspected of complicity with Communism. That the young fisherman was guiltless of any such complicity, he could prove, if it were not already too late; but then he knew nothing of Antoine's having assaulted a soldier and released a man under arrest. Nothing of this was mentioned in the letter.

"You must hasten immediately to Paris," he said. "I know not what else to advise. I am acquainted with the sous-prefet of police

—a worthy man, who will do all in his power to help you, if satisfied that your husband is innocent. But you must lose no time. I will give you a letter to Monsieur le Sous-prefet.—Shall you need money?" Not wishing to alarm Madeleine, the mayor said nothing to her of his own fear that it might already be too late to save her husband. He wrote the letter, and handed it to her, and having been assured that she needed no help in money, advised her to set forth immediately.

The young wife needed no urging. Anticipating the result of her interview with the mayor, she had left her babe in charge of a kind neighbor; and proceeding instantly to the railway station, she, after five tedious hours, reached Paris. A stranger, unaccustomed to the noise, bustle, and confusion of a great city, she felt for the moment bewildered and lost. But the errand she had come upon quickened her faculties and inspired her with a desperate courage. Her first idea was to visit her husband and gladden him with her presence; and inquiring her way of different persons whom she met, she soon found the prison in which Antoine was confined. But, on requesting admission, she was informed that, without a special order from a magistrate, no person was permitted, under any circumstances, to visit or have any communication whatever with a prisoner. It was terrible for her to gaze upon the stone walls of the prison, and knowing that her husband was confined within those walls, to be refused permission to see him. But waiting no time in useless lamentation, she hired a conveyance, and was driven to the abode of the sous-prefet, some little distance beyond the city. It was already late when she reached the house; but she rang the bell, and gained admittance.

Monsieur le Prefet had just dined, she was informed by a servant, and would see no person on business that evening; she must attend at the police court the next morning. But on her producing the letter from the mayor of Honfleur, the servant said that he would acquaint Monsieur with her presence.

The sous-prefet was seated at a table reading an evening journal, when the servant entered and informed his master that a young woman wished to see him on business of importance.

"At this hour!" exclaimed the prefet angrily. "I cannot be disturbed. You should have told her so. Tell her to call at my bureau to-morrow."

The servant withdrew, but presently reappeared. "What now, sirrah?" demanded the prefet.

"Monsieur," replied the servant. "the young woman will not go away. She says she must see you on a matter of life and death, and she bade me hand you this letter."

With an exclamation of angry annoyance, the prefet glanced over the contents of the letter. "Who is this woman? What does she look like?" he asked.

"She is very young, Monsieur, and seems to be in sore trouble. She told me she had travelled a long distance."

"Well, well; show her up-stairs."

The servant again withdrew; and in a few moments returned, accompanied by Madeleine, frightened, even amidst her sorrow, at the grandeur—to her eyes—by which she was surrounded.

"Enter, Madame," said the prefet, who appeared to be surprised at the extreme youth and remarkable appearance of the young woman in her fisherman's garb. "Pray, be seated, Madame," he continued in a gentler tone of voice; "and please to tell me briefly and clearly the object of your visit to Paris. I learn from my friend the mayor's letter that your husband is in prison, charged with complicity with Communism. My friend writes to assure me that he can certify that your husband cannot possibly be connected with the infamous Communists."

"No; my husband knows nothing of the matter, Monsieur," said Madeleine; and then she briefly told how it happened that he had visited Paris at this time.

"Then he arrived but three days ago, young woman?" said the prefet. "His name? Ah?"—again glancing over the mayor's letter—"I see; Antoine Duroc. It strikes me," he went on, "that I have some recollection of that name." He rose, went to a writing table, and returned and reread himself, glancing over the pages of a rough ledger or memorandum-book. As he did so, he read, as if to himself, yet loud enough for Madeleine to hear: "Antoine Duroc, fisherman, aged twenty-three years, charged with inciting a mob to attack the military, and with having himself violently assaulted a soldier and released a prisoner who was under arrest. Denounced as a dangerous Communist by Lucien Pierrot."

"This is a serious matter, young woman," said the prefet to Madeleine; "much more serious than my friend's letter lead me to anticipate. It is out of my power to interfere in the matter, even if I had the wish to do so; and I have no sympathy with the Communists, nor with individuals who incite others to offend against the laws."

"Oh, believe me, Monsieur!" interrupted Madeleine, wringing her hands in an agony of distress; "it is false that my husband is what you call a Communist. He knows not the meaning of the word. I have heard nothing of his having assaulted a soldier and released a prisoner. He said nothing of that in his letter to me; and I do not believe it is true that he has done such a thing. But, Monsieur, this man, Lucien Pierrot, is a vile wretch, who swears the lives of innocent men away for gain, and is unworthy of credence. He has vowed vengeance against my husband and me because I refused to listen to his base importunities; and then blushing with shame amidst her distress, she related to the prefet the story of Lucien's conduct to her previous to her marriage. While she was speaking, the daughter of the prefet, a young and pretty girl of fifteen years, entered the room, and approaching her father, said: "Dear papa, I am come to wish you good-night." Then perceiving Madeleine for the first time, she became silent, and stood gazing pitifully upon the young fisherwoman behind her father's chair.

"It is sad—very sad, my poor woman," said the prefet, when Madeleine had ended her story, "but, as I have told you, I have no power to interfere in the prisoner's behalf. Your husband is charged with a military offence. He will be tried by a court-martial to-morrow morning. I dare not bid you

hope for his acquittal. Such wretches as Pierrot are necessary to the government in such times as this. His oath will be taken by the members of the court-martial in preference to that of the accused, even though they regard the accused with contempt. The trial will be brief, and the sentence of the court-martial will be immediately carried into effect. It is quite impossible for me to say or do anything in behalf of your husband that will be of the least service to him."

"Ah, Monsieur," sighed Madeleine, "at what hour to-morrow will the trial take place?"

"At seven o'clock. It will likely be over at nine o'clock; and at noon the sentence of the court will be carried out. A great number of prisoners await their trial by court-martial to-morrow."

Madeline, weeping bitterly, threw herself on her knees before the prefet. "Monsieur, Monsieur!" she cried, "it is terrible. Men are wolves. They have no pity. But can heaven permit such injustice? Monsieur, as you hope for mercy on the last great day, intercede for my innocent husband! Save him, Monsieur, and I will pray for you, and will teach my innocent babe to pray for you and yours so long as we may live."

"I pity you with all my heart," replied the prefet, in a tone of deep sympathy; "but again I assure you I can do nothing for you; I am powerless to help you. Paris is under martial law. The civil authorities are superseded for the time being by the military. I cannot interfere with the trial or sentence of a court-martial." He advanced towards the suppliant young wife, and held forth his hand to assist her to rise; but Madeleine, overcome by the intensity of her affliction, fainted, and sank down on the floor.

The prefet rang the bell, and when the servant appeared, bade him send some of the female domestics to the assistance of the poor woman. The women came; and Madeleine, having partially recovered consciousness, was tenderly assisted from the room. "Take care of her, poor creature," said the prefet. "Let her rest a while before she goes away; and if she will partake of it, give her some refreshment."

"Poor woman! so young and so pretty!" he soliloquised, when the servants had withdrawn with the agonised wife. "I pity her sincerely; but I cannot assist her. Any interference on my part would be worse than useless.—Pauline my love," he went on, looking round for his daughter, whom he now recollected had entered the room while the young woman was kneeling before him.

But Pauline had disappeared; she had quitted the room with the servants and their helpless, sorrowing burden.

The sous-prefet did not resume the perusal of his journal. He was a man of kindly feelings, despite the hardening influences to which he was constantly subjected through his official position; and though he had his doubts, as men in his position always have in such cases, he was inclined to believe that Antoine had been falsely and maliciously accused. Yet he felt that he could not interfere in the prisoner's behalf.

At the end of half an hour his daughter re-entered the room.

"Ah, Pauline, my darling, where hast thou been?" he cried. "Thou wert here awhile since. Why didst thou go away, my child?"

"Papa," replied the young girl, drawing near to her father, and placing her arm round his neck. "I went after that poor young fisherman."

"But the servants will take good care of her, my pet."

"Yes, dear papa; but I took her to my own apartment and made her tell me all her story. She dared not tell you all. She was frightened, poor thing. O papa! it is so sad—so sad! I am sure, quite sure that the poor man is innocent of the political crimes imputed to him; and I have made the poor young wife promise to come here early to-morrow. I told her you would try to do something for her. And you will—will you not, dear papa, for my sake?"

"Pauline, darling, you have done very wrong; you have encouraged the poor woman to hope for assistance that I cannot render. I am powerless in the matter, as I have told her already—even if I were sure of the man's innocence."

"Sure, papa?" exclaimed Pauline. "Can you doubt? You will not doubt to-morrow when you have heard all."

"My darling," answered the sous-prefet, "no matter how strongly I may believe in the poor man's innocence, I can do nothing for him. He will be tried by court-martial in the morning, and in a few minutes will be either acquitted or condemned. They waste no time in these cases. If he be found guilty, as is most probable, he will be shot before noon."

"Papa, you must do something," persisted the young girl. "There is always time till the last moment. You will restore the poor woman's husband to her. Think over what I have said, papa; and now, good-night; and kissing her father, Pauline hastened from the room before the prefet could make any reply.

CHAPTER IV.

When M. le Sous-prefet entered the breakfast room early the next morning, he found his daughter and Madeleine awaiting him—the latter trembling with doubt and fear, yet kept from utter despair by the young lady's encouraging words.

"Now, Madame, tell papa everything," said Pauline. "Do not be afraid. Papa is kind and good, though he is sometimes severe with wicked people."

Thus encouraged, Madeleine told everything; and the prefet was convinced that her husband was no Communist, but was the innocent victim of a vile, unprincipled person seeking to gratify his desire for vengeance. Still, he knew not how he could interfere with any good result in behalf of the unfortunate young fisherman. The court-martial was to open at seven o'clock that morning.

"In all probability," he thought, "the poor man is already condemned and sentenced. A few minutes would suffice for all."

He had ordered a police sergeant to bring him a report of the results of the court-martial, the moment it was closed.

It was now past eight o'clock, and Madeleine was just finishing her story when a servant announced the arrival of the sergeant.

The prefet quitted the room and went to the sergeant, who presented him with the report. In one hour, sixteen prisoners had been found guilty and sentenced to death! One had been acquitted; but third in the list appeared the name of Antoine Duroc, a fisherman, of Honfleur; a rabid Communist, guilty of inciting and leading a mob to attack a military guard, and rescuing a prisoner under arrest. The condemned to be shot, at noon, in a fosse in the rear of La Roquette, a prison near the Place Voltaire.

Antoine's generous impulse which had led him to release a youth whom he believed to be innocent, brought his doom upon him. He did not attempt to deny the fact; and all he could say in extenuation of his guilt was that he believed the poor lad was innocent. The young fisherman's bold, manly appearance in marked contrast with the aspect of the miserable, ragged, dirty, and generally ill-looking prisoners who were tried at the same time, interested some of the younger officers of the court-martial in his favor. One of these young officers severely cross-questioned the witness Lucien Pierrot.

"Who and what are you?" he asked. "Can you deny the fact that you are a miserable spy, gaining your livelihood by denouncing and swearing away the lives of your fellow-men?"

"I am in the pay of the government," replied Lucien. "I have done my employers good service."

"Silence!" said the President of the court-martial to the officer. "The man speaks the truth—such wretches, however we may despise them," he added *otto voce*, "are necessary evils in such times as these."

The favorable notice of the younger officers availed Antoine nothing. As we have already stated, he was condemned and sentenced to death; and the report of the result of the court-martial was already in the hands of the sous-prefet, whose daughter had followed him from the apartment, and now met him re-ascending the stairs.

"Papa, you have heard bad news," she said, looking into her father's troubled face.

"It has happened as I told you it would, Pauline," replied the prefet. "A few hours hence he will be shot!"

"No, papa, no!" exclaimed the young girl, arresting her father's further progress. "How can you tell that to his poor young wife? Papa, it must not—shall not be! There is yet time. You are acquainted with Monsieur le General Beaumont, the President of the court-martial. Hasten to him, papa. Take the poor woman with you. Show Monsieur le General the mayor's letter; let the young wife tell her own story. Meanwhile, dear papa, I will pray earnestly for your success. But go at once; lose not a moment of time."

"I will go, Pauline," replied the prefet, after a few moments' thought. "I will do my best; but I have faint hope of success. Monsieur le General is, as you say, a friend of mine, and a just man. But he is stern and uncompromising in the performance of what he believes to be his duty; and he is justly and terribly severe in his dealings with the Communists—"

"But the poor man is not a Communist, papa!" interposed Pauline.

"Perhaps not; but the General believes him to be one of those guilty, blood-stained wretches. If the General were to learn the nature of my errand, I do not believe he would see me. Nevertheless, I will go, and will do my utmost to save the poor man."

The prefet and his daughter re-entered the room in which Madeleine, in a dreadful state of suspense, was awaiting their return. She had feared that some ill news had arrived, and a glance at the faces of the prefet and his daughter convinced her that her fears were not groundless.

"Monsieur, you have heard bad news," she faintly gasped. "My husband—my beloved Antoine is"—She could not give utterance to the dread word that was on her lips.

It was necessary to acquaint her with what had occurred.

"Is convicted and sentenced to death; but he may yet be saved," said the prefet. "Be calm, Madame. Do not give way to despair. Bear up bravely. Much now depends upon yourself. Have you strength and courage to accompany me immediately to Monsieur le General Beaumont, the President of the court-martial that sat this morning?"

"Monsieur, I have strength and courage to go anywhere—to do anything to save my poor innocent husband."

"Then come with me—come at once, just as you are. You shall plead your husband's cause with the General. Do not hope too much; but do not despair of obtaining your husband's pardon.

The sympathies of the prefet were now fully aroused. He ordered the horses to be put to his carriage, and bade Madeleine follow him into the courtyard. As she was leaving, she threw her arms round Pauline's neck and embraced her. "Mademoiselle, thou art an angel of goodness!" she murmured. "If I succeed—and my heart tells me that the good God will grant me success it will be to thee, under heaven, that my Antoine will owe his life. Thou wilt restore an innocent man to his wife and babe, and wilt save his judges from imbruing their hands in innocent blood." Then she hastened after the prefet, and entered the carriage—which was already waiting in the courtyard—with him.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Truthful Men.

Mr. Beecher thinks that ninety-five men in every hundred will lie. He has the right idea, but his proportion is not exactly correct. Now, there's Mr. Beecher won't lie for one; and there's "us," that makes two. And you'll have to advertise to find the other three, and they will probably lie to get the reward.—Havkeje.

When John Saunders went from Kentucky to the West some forty years ago he swore that his betrothed, whom he left behind, should not see him until he became a millionaire. A few days since he balanced up his affairs in Montana, and finding himself possessed of the desired million, returned to Kentucky, looked up his old sweetheart, and the twain were made one. He is 68, she is 64.