[FOR THE RECORD-UNION.]

SET IN A SILVER SEA!

A ROMANCE BY B. L. FARJEON.

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CHAPTER X.

MARGARET TIGHTENS THE CHAINS WHICH BIND HER TO SLAVERY.

"Of what passed between us immediately after this I have but an indistinct remembrance, my agitation was so great. I know that one moment I accused my master of the blackest treachery, and the next entreated him upon my knees to tell me where I could find Clarice; I know that he made lame attempts at explanation, which I refused to accept, and that in the end he struck me, and forcing me into a small room, turned the key upon me. There was a bed in the room, but I did not seek repose; through that long, long night I sat in the dark or walked about the room, asking myself what I could do to rescue my sister, and what motive my master could have had in getting rid of one who was useful and profitable to him. I could find no answers to my torturing questions. All that I could do was to suffer and wait.

"In the morning my master came to the door.

"'Are you up?' he called.

"'Yes,' I answered.

"He unlocked the door. I ran out to him; there was still a lingering hope. Clarice might have arrived during the night.

"'Has she come?' I cried eagerly. 'Have you heard anything of her?'

"'I have heard nothing of her.' He looked at me keenly. 'You have not slept.'

"'How could I sleep in such agony and suspense as I am suffering?'

"'It will not help you to find Clarice,' he said.

"'I wish I could die!' I exclaimed despairingly.

"'That will not help you to find Clarice.'

"'You really mean it?' I implored. 'You wish to find her? You will try to find her?'

"'Without doubt I shall, unless you continue to thwart me. You are a bad reasoner, Margaret. Did not Clarice put money in my pocket, and did you ever know me go against my own interests?'

"He had breakfast placed before me, and stood over me while I forced myself to eat; indeed, I was compelled to eat, having partaken of so little food during the last two days. Then he bade me accompany him, and to my surprise took me to the office of a magistrate, where he made a formal complaint of the abduction of Clarice, his apprentice. He gave a minute description of Clarice, and of the man into whose care he had confided her, of the wagon which conveyed her away, of his instructions to the man, of his inability to discover any trace of him, and of my prostration and grief at my sister's disappearance. I listened in amazement. He spoke with such an assumption of sincerity and sorrow that it was scarcely possible for a stranger to disbelieve him.

"His statement was taken down in writing, and he was informed that the law could not assist him until he discovered the person into whose charge he had given his apprentice.

"'It shall be the business of my life to find and punish him,' said my master, 'and to restore Clarice to the arms of her unhappy sister.'

"The magistrate complimented him upon his humanity, and me upon having so kind-hearted a master and guardian. He was, indeed, too strong and cunning for me.

"When we left the magistrate's office, my master said:

"'Margaret, it is time we came to an understanding. You did not sleep last night. Why?'

"'I am very unhappy,' I replied, 'and I could not sleep.'

"'You passed the time in thinking what it was best for you to do to find Clarice?'

"'Yes.'

"'I also have been thinking seriously of that—as I have proved by my visit to the magistrate this morning—and of the relations in which you and I stand to each other. They do not satisfy me.'

"'Neither do they satisfy me.'

"'You do not trust me?'

"I was silent; with Clarice in my mind, I felt it would not be prudent to anger him too far.

"'It is clear that you are determined not to do me justice, and that you are tired of me. Well, I am also getting tired of you. You pine for liberty. I give it to you. Do you understand me?'

"'Not quite,' I replied, with inward fear.

"'Yet it is not difficult. I have a legal claim upon you by which I can compel you to work for me until you are 21 years of age; I am willing to relinquish that claim. You look upon your servitude with me as a kind of bondage; I offer you release from a hateful slavery. If you so decide it, you are free to go. I shall require you to sign a paper to the effect that you leave me with your own accord, and that you will never trouble me again; and this night, if you wish, shall terminate our partnership.'

"I was so confounded by this unexpected proposal, made apparently in a frank spirit, that I could not find words to reply.

"'I intend,' continued my master, 'to have this matter settled immediately. I will no longer put up with your whims and caprices. I give you till six o'clock to reflect and decide; if before that time you do not come to me, either to agree to my offer or to promise to be more submissive to me in the future, I will take effectual means to rid myself of you. You have sense as well as spirit, and I think you can see that I am in earnest.'

"'If I resolve to leave you,' I said, 'will you give me a small sum of money to help me on?'

"'Not the smallest coin,' he replied, 'and for the best of all reasons—I am absolutely a beggar.'

"'And I should never see you more?'

"'Never, if I could help it.'

"'Would you continue your search for my sister?'

"'Certainly.'

"'And if you found her?'

"I paused, in great agitation. Never till this moment had I realized how completely this man held me in his power.

"He repeated my words. 'And if I found her? Well?'

"'Would you restore her to me?'

"'You must think me a dull-brained idiot, indeed! Clarice is worth her weight in gold to me.'

"'You know that my heart, my life, are bound up in Clarice, and by force you would keep her from me?'

"'Still unreasonable, Margaret,' he said, in a cold tone of displeasure. 'It is not I who would keep her by force from you; it is you who, by your own deliberate act, will decree the separation. A little reflection will serve you to a clearer view of the case. You have told me in numerous offensive ways that I am acting the part of a tyrant to you; I am, after all, a man of feeling—that is, I am not entirely a log of wood, without sensation. Matters have gone on most unpleasantly for many months until at length they have come to a crisis, and I offer you what you sigh for, your freedom. Upon this, you accuse me of further cruelty. There is no pleasing or satisfying you, one way or another, and I am more than ever resolved that our relations shall come to an end or be placed upon a better footing. What is more, I will have no trickery. You have six hours before you for decision. I shall remain about the inn till 6 o'clock; if you do not come to me before that hour is passed, I shall adopt what course I deem best.'

"'If,' I said timidly, 'I, being alone, should by some good fortune find Clarice, would you take her from me?'

"'She is my apprentice, and I can claim her whenever I have the opportunity. I offer you your freedom; I shall not say how I should act by her. You will confess, Margaret, that by her side you are but a small attraction. I can give you up more easily than I could Clarice. But make your mind easy. Without my aid, your chances of ever seeing Clarice again would not be worth a pinch of air.'

"By this time we had reached the inn, and there my master left me. I entered the room in which I had been made a prisoner the previous night, and endeavored to think; but my mind was in a whirl, and the narrow space seemed to add to my confusion. I went into the open, and under the better influence of sweet air which cooled my hot face, and bright skies which whispered hope and comfort, I schooled myself into a calmer mood. I did not forget that the good Lord was over all, and that my faith in Him would surely help me in my great trouble. I bowed my head and prayed, and my mind became clearer. That my master would be as good as his word, and would give me my freedom if I wished, I saw no reason to doubt; I was not so certain that he really wished to rid himself of me, for if he desired it he could do so without difficulty, by simply leaving me on the road. It forced itself upon me that by accepting his offer of liberty I should be depriving myself of the only link that might lead me to Clarice. It might be that the entire affair was a trick—that he himself had planned the separation, and had conducted matters to their present crisis, so that I should of my own doing destroy any claim I had upon him, and leave him free to travel with Clarice wherever he wished. I shuddered at the thought. Helpless, friendless as I was, the reflection that absolutely my only chance of finding Clarice was by remaining with my master and keeping watch over him, grew gradually into a conviction. To beat despairingly against the bars would not assist me—coolness, watchfulness, submission might. Upon this decision I acted at once. I sought my master, and found him, as usual, playing cards with two or three village louts. He threw up the cards and came to me at once.

"'I have made up my mind,' I said.

"'To what effect?'

"'To remain with you.'

"'And be submissive?'

"'Yes.'

"'You are wise for your own interests, perhaps not so much for mine. But I am a man always prepared to do my duty. I have drawn up two papers, in one of which you ask for your freedom and I give it you, on the condition that you never trouble me again. That, I tear up.' He did so. 'This other paper is to the effect that you bind yourself afresh to me, that in full knowledge of all the circumstances that have passed, you are satisfied that my conduct is that of an honorable man, and that you promise to obey me in all reasonable ways. Will you sign it?'

"'Yes. You will do your best to recover Clarice?'

"'I promise you.'

"He called the landlord to witness my signature, and thus I bound myself afresh to an abhorred slavery.

"From that time to this I have never seen Clarice, nor of my knowledge am I acquainted with the smallest detail of her life since we were so cruelly, so wickedly parted. My master and I traveled from place to place in the old way, and he made what use he could of the gifts I possess. By my services we have managed to live in a poor fashion; we might, I doubt not, have done better so far as the earning of money goes, but my master appears to have lost all spirit since the fatal night from which my thoughts never wander. He lays the blame upon Clarice, and says that she has ruined his career. For the first few months my master used to come to me with accounts of rumors he had heard that a girl answering to the description of Clarice had been seen in such or such a place, and to that place we made all haste, to learn that the rumors were false. My master insists upon it that Clarice has been stolen and sold to some traveling company, the manager of which takes pains to avoid us, or that she is now in another country, entirely out of our reach. Lately he has treated me more harshly than he has ever done before, and a dozen times a day tells me that I am the curse of his life. But although I am frightened of him it seems to me that I must remain with him until he casts me from him, or until I am dead. It is the only way in which I can prove that I am faithful to Clarice. We are now without food or money, and he told me this afternoon that he could not afford to pay for lodgment for us to-night. That is why I am staying in this forest, living upon a hope that is dead, and almost tempted to believe that it would be better for me to put an end to my life than linger on in this state of exquisite suffering. It is impossible for me to say whether my master's story that Clarice has been stolen from us is true or false; it is impossible for me to know whether he has ever uttered one word of truth with relation to my dear, my darling sister, and whether he has not led me from place to place upon invented rumors. My cup of sorrow is very full, and I do not know which way to turn for a crumb of comfort.'"

CHAPTER XI.

WELCOME TO THE SILVER ISLE.

"This," said Matthew Sylvester to those inhabitants of the Silver Isle whom he had chosen to hear the story of Margaret, "is the account I received from Margaret's lips of her trials and sufferings. As I have told you, I wrote it down at her dictation in after times, with but little alteration, so that some record should be kept of what struck me as a very pitiful and pathetic story. As I listened to her that night in the forest my sympathy for her was very great. Every word she uttered bore the impress of truth, and only a thoroughly good woman could have expressed such unselfish love and devotion as she expressed for Clarice. Many times in the course of the narration did she stop and listen, thinking she heard the step or the voice of her master, but he did not make his appearance, and she finished her story without interruption. If I had not already gathered from her description of her master that he was in heart and soul an irreclaimable scoundrel, I should have known it from the fact of his leaving a young girl like Margaret alone and unprotected in such a lonely spot; it was the act of one without feeling or humanity. But I had formed my idea of this man long before Margaret had finished, and my experience of human nature enabled me to arrive nearer to the truth with respect to his dealing with Clarice than Margaret could or dared suspect. With a true pity for the forlorn and desolate girl, I made up my mind to rescue her from her perilous and wretched position. I asked her if, when her master left her, he had promised soon to return, but she could give no information beyond that he said he was going into the town to endeavor to get food or money. Upon that I pointed out to her that it was not likely he would return before morning, and that the best thing she could do would be to accompany me to the inn and accept of my protection. At first I could not persuade her; she feared ill treatment in case her master returned and did not find her. I pledged her my word that she should not be ill treated, and said that my son and I would protect her.

"'I know more of the law than you do,' I said, 'and I am convinced that I can release you from the tyranny of this villain. That it is your best course to leave him I am satisfied—as satisfied as I am that, if you remain with him till death severs the connection, you will never hear one true word from his lips concerning your sister.'

"Her tears flowed at this bitter but necessary assurance, and I stood by her side in silence while she debated within herself. Suddenly she turned her eyes full upon my face and said,

"'Why do you urge me to this? You have never seen me before. What motive have you for wishing me to leave my master?'

"Margaret is a woman with a straight mind, friends, as you will discover for yourselves if we remain with you. I was pleased at this rough frankness.

"'My child,' I said to her in reply, 'I have a sincere pity for you; you have stirred my heart. That in itself would be a sufficient motive, but I have a more selfish one. My son and I, leading just such a wandering life as you have done, would find it lightened and made happier if we had a woman with us. I can see many pleasant pictures in the companionship. I will be a father to you, my son shall be your brother. It is certain you will receive from us affection and fair treatment. You will not be a slave; you will be free to go if you find our company distasteful to you. We travel into parts of the country where it is more likely you will learn something of your sister, if there is anything to learn, than you can possibly do in your present circumstances. For the rest, if you cannot read sincerity in my face, I am powerless to convince you of my honesty of purpose.'

"She placed her hand in mine, and saying she would trust me, accompanied me to the inn, where I made arrangements for her repose. I was up early in the morning, in the confident expectation of seeing Margaret's master. Surely enough, he accosted me the moment I put my face outside the inn door.

"'You brought a girl called Margaret here last night,' he said.

"'I did,' I replied. 'I brought her from the forest, where you had left her without food or protection. You cannot justify yourself.'

"'I am not called upon to do so by you,' he retorted. 'I did not leave her alone for longer than a quarter of an hour.'

"'An untruth,' I said; 'but that is not to the point. I intend to take Margaret from your charge. You are not fit to have the care of a young girl, and this one shall no longer remain with you.'

"I spoke boldly, knowing that it was the only way with such a man as he.

"'How do you propose to deprive me of my property?' he asked, with a covert look at me, measuring my power as it were.

"'By purchase,' I said; 'and if that is not to your liking, by means which will not only not put money in your pocket, but may place you in the clutches of the law. I see I am making an impression upon you. You do not seem to be in flourishing circumstances. How much for the release of this girl? Not, mark you, that I acknowledge your right to her. I can prove the contrary, or a lawyer can do it for me; but I am willing to settle the matter amicably, without the aid of a third person. Name a sum, and let it be small, or you will get nothing, for the release of Margaret. Such a man as yourself does not want to be incumbered with a woman who hates and fears you. Name your price, and try your luck with it at the nearest gaming-table.'

"He caught at the bait, and named a sum not beyond my means. I agreed to pay it to him, and we adjourned for the purpose of drawing up such an agreement as I considered binding. I saw that the fellow was tired of Margaret, and that, setting aside a small feeling of personal vindictiveness which belonged to his mean nature he was glad of the opportunity of ridding himself of her so easily and on terms so favorable. So as to place Margaret entirely out of his power I went to a notary, and had the agreement attested; in effect it was a transfer of apprenticeship, by which for a certain sum Margaret's master relinquished all claim upon her future services. This business concluded I said to the man:

"'It is not likely you or I will ever meet again; if we are in the same neighborhood we shall be glad to avoid each other. Do one gracious act. Tell me what has become of Clarice, and whether I can adopt any means to bring her and Margaret together.'

"He eyed me narrowly, and said, 'I will tell what I know.'

"'You have some information to give, then?'

"'I have.'

"I took from my pocket a gold piece, and offered it to him, but the wretch was greedy and haggled; however, by diplomatic conduct, I convinced him that I would give no more, and he agreed to accept it.

"'How I know what I know,' he said, 'is my secret, which no man can buy. Only in one way can Margaret and Clarice ever be brought together again.'

"'Tell it me.'

"'Death's way. Clarice is dead.'

"'You are not lying?' I asked, shocked and startled by the news and by the callous tone in which it was conveyed.

"'I have no purpose to serve. The girl is dead.'

"'When did this occur?'

"'Shortly after Clarice's disappearance. I learnt it by accident.'

"'Why did you not tell Margaret?'

"'I should have lost my hold upon her; there would have been no bearing with her. She has troubled me enough.'

"I could get no further information from him, and we parted never to meet again.

"I determined to keep the news from Margaret, at least for a time. All that I told her upon my return to the inn was that she was free, and that her master had no further claim upon her. I was glad to see that she and Paul had already become friends.

"'You are now your own mistress, Margaret,' I said, 'and are at liberty to decide for yourself. Will you join us? We shall soon discover whether we suit each other.'

"She replied that she was happy in the prospect I held out to her, and so the compact was made.

"The companionship was in every respect agreeable, and we continued our wandering life, living from hand to mouth, seldom grumbling at the bad fortune which pursued us and kept our pockets empty. There were others worse off than we were. It is a hard world out there, friends; harder for the weak than the strong—harder, I believe, for the pure at heart than for the cunning ones who avoid the straight path upon which the full sunlight shines.

"Then happened a natural thing. In the springtime of life love-buds prepare to blossom. Margaret and Paul were drawn to each other, and sometimes, unconscious to themselves, walked hand-in-hand. It gladdened me to watch the growth of love between two beings who were dear to me; for the more I learned of Margaret's nature the better I appreciated her, and the stronger grew my respect and admiration for her character. Never for an hour did she forget Clarice; the dear name was constantly on her lips. In the midst of her enjoyment of the passing time she would pause and sigh: 'Ah, if Clarice were here!' and would reproach herself for feeling light-hearted in the absence of her beloved sister. Often did I ask myself whether it would not be more merciful to acquaint her with the truth, and as often did I shrink from the sad task. She had one intense desire—to visit once more the town in which Clarice had been torn from her; but her description of the place was so vague that it was long before we were enabled to decide in what direction it lay. The moment we ascertained with some degree of certainty we directed our steps thitherwards. At the same time I resolved that when we reached that abode of sad memories I would inform Margaret of her sister's death. We arrived in the town, and at Margaret's request I made inquiries after Clarice. I might as well have spoken in an unknown tongue. Not a soul remembered her, or could give the slightest information with respect to her. The town was a fashionable one, frequented by tourists, chiefly of the better class, who flowed in and out like a constant tide. We stayed there for three days, and when we had left it behind us, I gently broke the melancholy news to Margaret. I cannot describe her grief; it was so sharp and despairing as to cause me for a time to fear for her reason. Had she not been with us I believe she would have sought relief in death. But love and sympathy lightened her sorrow, and in the course of time she grew calmer. She will never forget Clarice. Old as she may live to be, the memory of that dearly-beloved child will never fade from her mind.

"Friends, I have but little more to say. Margaret returned Paul's love, and they were married. Fortune, as I have told you, has not been kind to us, and Margaret, who will soon become a mother, yearned for a more peaceful life. Many and many a time did I describe to her the sweet repose I enjoyed here in my youthful days, and at length, prevailed upon by Margaret, I consented to come and ask you to receive us. It may be that the restless career we have led may have unsettled us for the quiet life of this lovely isle. But let us try. Briefly let me say—not in praise of ourselves, but as simple matters of justice—that Margaret is a woman who deserves to be loved, and that since I last bade you farewell I have done no act which should make me ashamed to grasp the hands of old comrades in friendship."

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The islanders had listened to Matthew Sylvester's story in silence and with earnest attention, and now that his recital was finished, they arose and said:

"Resume your old life place among us. We welcome you and yours, Matthew Sylvester."

(To be continued.)

FROM PARIS.

SARDOU'S PLAY A FAILURE—FRENCH RELIGION AND FREE THOUGHT.

The Dramatist's Picture of the American Girl in France—Art Club—Some New Paintings.

PARIS, February 23, 1880.

"Daniel Rochat," Sardou's play now being performed at the Theatre Francais, according to the opinion of the litterateurs of Paris, has proved a complete failure. It now depends on the public to see it through a certain number of representations, so as not to force Sardou to make his exit by the back door. Victorien Sardou has soared too high for the strength of his wings, and it is not astonishing that he should suddenly find himself on the ground. A stage mechanic, understanding the secret of doors, and the various effects of opening and closing them, a sort of theatrical expert, has wished to teach principles of high morality to Parisians. He has desired to be more philosophical than the philosophers themselves; but now here is charlatanism destined to as early death as in France, where a man who pretends to be something is that one thing and nothing else, where he is possessor of the ground he has conquered and fully able to defend his property. Victorien Sardou has therefore made the philosophers smile and discontented the public, without satisfying altogether the religious Catholics under whose banner he has ranged his battery. In order to comprehend the plot of this piece one must understand the

RELIGIOUS SITUATION OF FRANCE.

Since there is an established and intolerant religion, the reformers left in France since the massacre of St. Barthelemy are very limited in number, and their efforts at proselytism are very feeble, if ever made. The established religion has it all, therefore, its own way, and finding no opposition, no restraint on its fantasies, it has succeeded in weaning a number from its holy precepts. There exists, therefore, but two denominations—the Catholics and the free-thinkers. The distinction, however, is unjust, for a free-thinker, to religious Catholics, is synonymous of atheist. The free-thinkers are, for the most part, fathers of families, literary and scientific members of society, and although they are determined to think freely on the subject of religion, it does not signify that they are irreligious. Far from it, for all that religion contains of simplicity, charity and humanity belongs to them as well, even though they refuse to conform to the ceremonies of the established church. Sardou has wished to prove the inconvenience of being a free-thinker, and holding Daniel Rochat above the Parisians' heads in a threatening manner, he calls out: "You see what you get by it!" In order to render the argument more forcible and give an appearance of impartiality to his own views, the author has chosen an American lady as the heroine of the play. It is well known that the English and Americans are tolerant so far as to permit each one to seek that religion he may prefer, but they do not admit that one may be without any religion whatever. Sardou, as usual, has not profounded the subject and learned that in those countries the liberty of religious belief has permitted each to seek that consistent with the progression of his intelligence or modification of his views, while keeping in mind the important fact that religion is one of the strongest cards which holds society together. In France but one religion is known, and those who are displeased with it naturally denounce all others. Daniel Rochat is a young French orator of great talent and of wide-spread reputation. He spends his vacation (for he is a Deputy) on the banks of the lake of Geneva in company with two charming American ladies. He is expected at Ferney, where they are to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the death of Voltaire, and where Daniel is to speak. He arrives

IN THE MIDST OF THE CEREMONY

And profits by a momentary respite to recount his adventure during his voyage to his two friends, Dr. Bidache, a free-thinker, and Mr. Fargis, a philosopher, tolerant towards all religions. The two American ladies are two young sisters, Miss Lea and Miss Esther Henderson. Daniel falls in love with the elder, but he did not make himself known by his real name for fear of frightening her. It is only when on the tribune where Daniel appears as the speaker of the day that Lea recognizes him as her traveling companion. It is here the question is posed on which rolls and is constructed the entire piece. If that adorable young girl whom he loves to distraction should not share his ideas. After his lecture on Voltaire, which must have served him as a sufficiently candid expression of faith, when Lea, in the most passionate terms comes to express to him her admiration and enthusiasm, he gives expression to a great cry of joy. "What happiness! Thus my opinions are yours." "Oh, how could you doubt it? Am I not an American girl, raised in the love of the Republic and of liberty?" Lea's aunt is even more confirmative. "Ah, sir, we have a horror of all superstition and despise all vain ceremonies." Therefore Daniel is reassured. Who would not be? But, no; superstition in this case meant Catholicism; the "vain ceremonies" signified mass. The simple girl pleased to think that the free-thinker, whose ideas were, however, widely spread in twenty speeches throughout Europe, did not turn away from the Catholic Church, but to rush into the Protestant Church, and rejected St. Peter only to adore Calvin. However, intoxicated by his glory and eloquence, she promises him her hand on the spot. Two days after the marriage takes place before the civil authorities. The ceremony once accomplished, the pastor enters. Daniel's stupefaction. What is he going to do there? Why, marry us; the civil marriage is but a formality; the religious marriage is the indissoluble link. The struggle then takes place on this ground. Will Daniel go to the church? Will Lea not go? There is the sole situation—there is

THE WHOLE PLAY,

In which the same scene is constantly repeated, in which each one gives his arguments for and against with a distressing monotony. Mr. Sardou could not understand that the subject hedged him in a narrow path. Either the young couple love each other or do not love each other; if they love, it will either be the man who will yield and be carried away by his passion, or it will be the woman. But the moment the hero and heroine pass their time in theological discussions, they cannot really love each other, and therefore cease to be interesting. Lea Henderson has recourse to divorce, and Sardou's moral may be "Free-thinkers push the people to divorce," a state inconsistent with the doctrines of the Church, and the best thing to be done is to rest within the bosom of the Church, without wishing to dispute her authority. At the first representation the play was hissed during a portion of the performance, as also the second night; but the public becomes more and more indulgent, and those who can swallow the play for the sake of the actors and actresses may aid it in dying a respectable death. Sardou, it must be acknowledged, has made some progress in modern history, and learned a little more of the customs of other countries. It can never be forgotten that he has presented American girls on the French stage as creatures without sentiment or modesty, being constantly kissed by men and rocked in their arms, and when once married rushing toward divorce for the permission to exchange their husbands as soon as possible. By transplanting an American girl from her native soil, where she enjoys the liberty she loves, to a European country, whose surroundings are no longer in harmony with her education, he has thought to perform a clever feat; and although it was merely for the purpose of exercising his *esprit* and expressing his contempt of liberal institutions, he nevertheless has done much

HARM TO AMERICAN WOMEN

In the minds of the French ignorant of the truth. Until the present everything that was fantastic and strange in the shape of a woman was invariably ticketed—American. In the "Etrangere" of Alexander Dumas fils the heroine, an unnatural, extraordinary creature, is also an American, although the *type* could not create as much astonishment anywhere as in America. Sardou did not neglect to ridicule what are called Woman's Rights women, and endeavor, by either ignorance or a carelessness of the truth, to put his compatriots on their guard against the customs of a free country. The character of Lea Henderson, aside from her fancy for theological discussions, is charming, all that one may desire in a woman, and this shows either a refutation of Sardou's preconceived idea of American women or the acknowledgment of the progress he has made on the road to facts. It has pleased the French, perhaps more than other nations, to picture the American women as creatures capable of the most extraordinary and fantastic conduct. The moment a woman is free what surprising things will she not do! They do not seem to comprehend that liberty does not mean disorder, and that the strength acquired by women of America through the free exercise of their own powers makes them more capable of steering in a straight course. Every circus rider, the subduer of wild animals, the velocipedist, etc., if a woman, hails from America. No French woman, however proficient in any of these professions, could count on any success whatever did she not change her name to that having an Anglo-Saxon sound, and announce herself as arriving fresh from American shores. Many French persons are therefore somewhat astonished to learn that American women are quiet and modest, live with their husbands to the end of their lives, and raise their children pretty much as the rest of the civilized world, instead of spending their time hanging by one foot from a trapeze, driving four-in-hand along the streets, or promenading on velocipedes.

Each year there is an

EXPOSITION OF PAINTINGS

At the rooms of the famous club of the "Miriltons." A majority of the most famous artists of Paris are members of this club, and it has been customary for them each year to expose those works ordered and finished in that time which may not be destined for the salon. Although at the salon a great number of the pictures may have been sold beforehand, the majority are for sale, whereas at this exposition there is nothing for sale, and as the name of the owner is given with the subject and name of the artist, a greater interest even is manifested among the numerous aristocratic visitors. A certain number of cards are issued by the club to each of the members, who loan them around to their friends. At no artistic exhibition is the crowd as choice and as aristocratic as here. All along the sidewalks of the Place Vendome may be seen elegant carriages with ensigns armorial incrusted in gold on the doors and the harness, and gayly dressed footmen in their gilt and lace awaiting impatiently the arrival of their masters. Not only known artists but many members of the club who are merely amateurs, with pretentions more or less merited, expose as well on these occasions, and if there are often very indifferent works, the fine ones have all the better advantage by the contrast. This year I remarked two very fine portraits by Bonnat, one that of a portly and apoplectic-looking gentleman, which displayed the vigorous hand of the artist; the other was a portrait of two children with flaxen hair; but it must be said that Bonnat does not succeed so well with blondes nor wherein a delicate touch is required. Here were also two portraits by Carolus Duran, one, that of a lady with a very pleasing and finely painted face, but her white satin dress, at whatever distance you might stand from it, invariably appeared white-washed with a very heavy brush which had consented to move but twice up and down the canvass. One of the hands was almost black for the want of a little more white paint. But Carolus Duran will not finish his pictures, and delights in defying both the public and critics by his obstinacy. The other portrait, by the same author, is that of his little girl. That is charming and more finished, for he certainly loves his children and does not quit them so suddenly as he does others. He has a large family, and as each child reaches a certain age he paints its portrait and exposes it, so that the public are quite familiar with his little family.

HIS CHILDREN ARE ADORABLE

And are always most beautifully painted. There is a very fine picture by Detaille, which is probably the most remarkable of the exposition. The subject is *Traite parlementaire aux avant-postes*. The scene varies little from the rest of his, as it is always soldiers, soldiers. Several soldiers are in the foreground, with their backs turned to the public, for they are engaged in looking at the enemy's officer, who has descended from his horse and is having his eyes unbandaged. Near by are the two horses, on one of which sits the guide holding the flag of truce, the other patiently waiting its rider. In the background is the army drawn up, whose number is so great that they mingle in the distance with the dull gray clouds. The clouds above are broken, and the struggling sunbeams fall on the center figures, enveloping them with a soft mellow light. Like the pictures of his famous master, Messonier, Detaille has carefully painted all the details, and they always appear miniature soldiers about to march away. There was a very fine picture by De Neuville, who paints the same *genre* as Detaille, but who has infinitely more talent, according to the opinion of artists and connoisseurs. This picture is small and represents an officer on horseback, followed in the distance by a soldier. The face is quite characteristic, and leads one to suppose that it is a portrait. There are two fine portraits by Emile Levy. A fine Spanish scene of pretty senoritas by J. Clairin, a young artist who first attracted attention some three or four years ago by a very fine portrait of the actress Sarah Bernhardt, which was exposed at the salon, and which brought him honorable mention. He it was illustrated the absurd book she wrote, entitled *Histoire d'une Chaise*—the history of a chair. We noticed two beautiful statuettes by Gustave Dore, which certainly gave us more pleasure than could one of his paintings. VAL.

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