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VIRELOUP'S PASTOR.

Vireloup is a village of a hundred inhabitants, hidden away in the midst of the forest land on the outskirts of Burgundy and the Langres region, in France. Its low houses, with rubble walls, and appearing crushed under the heavy covering of those flat stones which the mountain peasants call "lava," overhang in picturesque disorder a ravine in whose depths flows a purling stream on its way to join the Ource. A forest of magnificent trees encircles this hamlet, interposing eight or nine miles of solitude between it and the nearest town. So wild is the spot that the very wolves, it is said, feel themselves strangers there, and flee at the sight of it—whence comes the name of Vireloup (turn wolf.) At the summit of the incline where the buildings lie scattered among the verdure there rises a low belfry covered with a slate roof in a somewhat dilapidated condition; beside which, separated from the church by the cemetery and a modest garden, and inclosed by a cornel hedge, the parsonage shows its gray front, whereon clings a vine whose grapes never ripen.

The parish is a poor one, little meadow or cultivated land there, and the inhabitants gain a meager living by working in the woods. The forest, where they exercise the woodcutter's trade, nearly provides them with food and house shelter. It supplies them with everything, firewood and timber, beech-nut oil for lighting and cooking, basket loads of mushrooms and wild fruits for the daily supper, hares and partridges (taken with a snare) for gala days. Separated from the rest of the world by the isolating inclosure of the woods, the people of Vireloup are very primitive folks, living almost outside of civilization. Cross country roads of a horrible kind alone bind them to the chief town of the department—the rural postman visits the village three times a week bringing certain official papers for the mayor or for the pastor, and very rarely a letter. The news of the outer world reaches Vereloup only at long intervals between, and so much behind time as to be almost legendary when it spreads through the village.

* * * * *

One Sunday morning, towards the end of summer, led on by the charms of herb-gathering in the midst of the wood, I lost my way among the thick forest trees; and just on the stroke of ten I came hungry on Vireloup. The August sun heated to a dazzling whiteness the single steep and stony street; and in the sparkling glitter of the strong sunshine the hamlet appeared to be asleep. All the dwellings were closed, and in front of the irregularly built houses some hens clucked discreetly, striking their busy beaks here and there into the mouldy dung-heaps lying around. I tried in vain to discover above any door the traditional juniper bush announcing an inn. Everywhere closed doors and windows hermetically covered by little curtains of a red square pattern.

Not far from the church, from whence there came a hum of voices singing in unison, I at length perceived, in the shade of a barn porch, an aged woman seated huddled in a chair turning a rosary between her fingers. Approaching her, I became aware that her lower limbs were paralyzed; and I concluded that she had caused herself to be carried there, near the half-opened windows of the choir, that she might hear from thence the chanting of the officiating clergy and take part in high mass. Apologizing for troubling her, I requested her to direct me to an inn.

"There is no inn at Vireloup," she replied, laying her rosary in her lap. "What would be the use of any? No travelers pass this way."

"But when by chance there is one where can he procure anything to eat?"

"Oh, well, at the pastor's house."

"At the pastor's house?"

"Yes; that is where the foresters and the high-road surveyors alight when they pass through this region. Only you will have to wait till mass is over."

* * * * *

Having nothing better to do than to attend high mass, I entered the church.

As soon as I pushed open the door I understood why the village had appeared so deserted. The narrow nave, with its low, green-painted pillars, was crammed with the faithful. The whole population was packed together there. The women, in violet-colored head-dress, edged with black tulle, occupied the seats; the men, in blouses, stood in the aisles; the village notables, in brave attire, displayed themselves in the church officers' pew; the children sat in a line on the steps of the choir, the girls on the left and the boys on the right. A sunbeam, stealing in through the broken windows of a recess in the choir, fell obliquely across the nave, bringing into prominence the features tanned by the free open air, and the horny hands hardened by the handling of the axe. Continual contact with the trees of the forest gave all this population something of the knotty and rigid physiognomy of the beeches and the oaks, in whose midst they dwelt familiarly. The women, with half opened lips and joined hands, had the attitudes of wooden saints; the men, motionless, with arms hanging down, sleepy-eyed, retained something of the somewhat impassibility of a forest of lofty trees.

The preface had just been rehearsed. The celebrant, in a surplice, was chanting, accompanied by an aged precentor—"Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini." (Holy, holy, holy, blessed be he who cometh in the name of the Lord.) The priest escorted by the two chorister-boys with fair entangled locks, recited the canon of the mass. Upon his turning round after lifting the chalice for its adoration by the faithful, I rapidly examined the features of him of whom I was about to ask the hospitality of a breakfast.

About fifty years of age, lean and knotty like his parishioners, with clear and artless eyes, prominent nose and a large mouth expressive of an amiable temperament, his was the face of a good and simple-hearted man. After the bell had sounded three times for the Agnus Dei, he recited the Pater in a clear well-toned voice; then, having received the sacrament, he proceeded to the ablutions. When he had wiped the chalice and shut it up in the tabernacle, I observed an unusual movement through the whole congregation. Some blew their noses, others coughed, each one settled himself and leaned forward as if better to hear. Eyes that looked sleepy before were lit up now, and turned impatiently towards the niche whither the chorister boy went to restore the holy vessels to their resting place. For a moment I supposed the pastor was about to preach; but I was soon undeceived by the reappearance of the young acolyte carrying this time on a tray—can you guess?—a clarionet! At the same instant over all their countenances there came a sunny smile of satisfaction, while the priest took the instrument in his hand. He drew his fingers slowly over it, and then to my exceeding great astonishment, placing it to his lips he began to play.

* * * * *

It was an improvised performance, half sacred, half profane; now having for a subject some song of the church, as the "Adeste fideles," or "O filii et filiæ—then some old-time melody, "O Tuneful Pipe," or "When Still a Child," &c. Really the pastor did not play at all badly; and his parishioners, far from being amazed, as I was, at this strange interlude, seemed to consider the thing as quite a matter of course, and to rejoice thereat exceedingly. The women appeared to be enraptured, the men nodded in time, the children opened their eyes wide with joy. The sharp nasal tones of the clarionet ascended merrily in the poor little church, filling it with tender and simple melody. The old and saintly images attached to the walls seemed to look youthful again at the sound; the paper flowers adorning the altar rustled gently, as if caressed by the vibrations of the notes, and the puff-checked cherubs carved on the keystone of the vaulted roof smiled from ear to ear.

This having lasted a full quarter of an hour, the pastor then wiped the mouth piece of his clarionet, and placing it again on the tray which the chorister boy piously restored to its place, he turned round to the high-altar to recite the final orisons and to read the last gospel. The parishioners were already rising to leave their places, and the children dispersed rapidly through the nave making click-clack on the floor with their wooden shoes.

When the crowd had passed out I went to seek the pastor. I found him in the sacristy in the act of removing his sacerdotal vestments; and I timidly explained to him the necessity in which I found myself, in the absense of any inn in the village, to have recourse to his hospitality. He listened to me, all the while folding up his chasuble and replacing it in a drawer; then said with a smile:

"Why, of course! It is quite natural. I consider it a pastoral duty to offer my table to those rare strangers whom chance brings into my parish—Jean Louis!" he continued, addressing a chorister boy, "go and tell Philomene to set the table for two, and to give a double allowance of eggs to her omelette. You will have poor fare, sir, for our resources are very limited. But you know what is written in the Book of Proverbs, 'Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.'"

* * * * *

Something more than herbs graced the pastor's table at breakfast, and it was none the less generous a repast for being so heartily offered. The omelette of sorrel was accompanied by a trout boiled in wine sauce and a savory ham—the whole being seasoned with a mild wine of the Montsaugeonnais, which in the ribbed glass assumed a pleasant tint of gooseberry green. My host was merrily inclined, and evidently knew how to set folks at their ease. So, when the dessert came on, which consisted of fresh hazelnuts and madeleine pears just gathered from the garden, I made up my mind to question the good priest concerning that remarkable clarionet interlude which puzzled me so much.

"Monsieur le cure," I began, you will perhaps think me inquisitive, but I attended high mass and I confess I was a little astonished——"

"I know what you are going to say," he interrupted good humoredly, "my clarionet solo scandalized you. You are not the first; and as I do not wish to scandalize any one, I owe you an explanation, and you shall have it."

"When monseigneur confided to me the direction of this parish (and that will be fifteen years ago come the Feast of Saint George) I found Vireloup in the most deplorable condition, both moral and material—a population of savages, sir, and what is worse, a population of heathens! The men and women spent every day in the woods, including Sunday; and as soon as the children got to be twelve years old they left school and catechism to roam in the forest. The whole set of them resembled a herd of deer much more than a community of Christians. You saw our church. It is not rich; but at that time it was a very barn, where the dandelions grew among the pavement. And I give you my word, sir, that it was not the frequent coming together of my parishioners that hindered grass from growing there. On Sundays I celebrated holy mass in presence of ten aged women and as many children. As for the men, they never showed themselves in church at all. In vain each Sunday did I expend all my eloquence. My sermons would sooner have touched the stone pillars than the hearts of those infidels.

"I was deeply distressed over this state of affairs. One spring evening, after mournfully reflecting over this hardness of heart, which was a real mortification to me, I addressed a fervent prayer to the all-kind God, beseeching Him to come to my aid, for my part, my labor was being spent in vain. The prayer having refreshed my heart, the thought came suddenly into my head that I would divert myself from this gloomy frame of mind by a little music. In my youth I was possessed of some skill with the clarionet, and I had brought my instrument along with me when I came to Vireloup. I went to seek it at the bottom of a cupboard and set about playing through my whole list of airs. The evening being sultry, I had opened my library window, and as I glanced into the street while pausing between two pieces I beheld a considerable assemblage there. The whole parish had congregated in front of my door. These folk had never heard any other music than that of the larks or the village herdsman's horn. Thus they gave very evident signs of an enthusiastic admiration; and when I ceased playing there was a general murmur of disappointment in the street.

"This was for me a glimpse of light, and as it were a providential teaching. Since these pagans were affected by music, that was the means through which they could be brought to mass. But how to set about it? Our church had not even a harmonium, and I was too poor to purchase one. Then I thought that in default of an organ my clarionet might do perhaps. And why not? The important point was to gain these hardened souls to God. I hesitated no longer; and on the following Sunday, before chanting the Kyrie, I regaled my ten aged women with a solo on the clarionet. The news of this unusual ceremonial spread rapidly, as you may well think; and the Sunday after, as soon as mass began, my church was full. Men, women and children—the whole parish, in Sunday attire, filled the nave, when I commenced to play the air from 'Joseph.'"

"How you most have triumphed, Monsieur le Cure!"

"Wait! The triumph was short. Scarcely was my solo finished, than all these good-for-nothings scampered away like a flock of sparrows, and I found myself alone with my ten good women, neither more no less. It was a discomfiture and a lesson. But what? In every undertaking there are the preliminary gropings. 'Any way, you'll have to come, my frolicsome friends,' I thought to myself. Then, instead of playing my piece at the beginning of mass, I had to come a little before the dismissal—the Ite, missa est—and my wild animals were obliged to attend through the Holy Sacrifice if they wishe to hear 'the music.' They had to wait through the 'Gloria' and the sermon, and the rest. And now they got in the way of it, and not one of my parishioners misses mass!

"Well, sir, would you believe it?" added the worthy pastor, "this affair for a time was made a cause of unpleasantness in a certain high quarter. Some of my fellow clergy, whether jealous or too rigid, found this mingling of the sacred and profane somewhat shocking to their sense of propriety, and the matter was brought to the bishop's notice. Happily monseigneur is a man of sense and humor. 'Gentlemen, replied he to my traducers; 'Since King David danced before the ark it may well be permitted to Monsieur le Cure, of Vireloup, to play on the clarionet before the tabernacle; and we ought to say to him, as the prophet Nathan said to King David: 'Go do all that is in thine heart, for the Lord is with thee!'"

Economizing Time.

Do you not know many homes where the supply of cooking utensils is so unnecessarily limited that a good deal of time is daily wasted and much extra labor expended in preparing the meals by having to wash one saucepan in which to cook a second dish that could as well have been cooked with the same fire, and watched at the same time as the first? Or a towel must do duty as a strainer or calender, no account being made of the time required to wash the towel, nor of its becoming worn and stained? Or a silver spoon is used to stir or lift food for the lack of iron or wooden ones? Why not afford such kettles and pans as are really needed for advantageous cooking, and "save" in some other department?

Have you ever seen some busy housewife hanging out clothes on a cold, windy day, taking off a clothes-peg each time a garment is added to the line, trying to make the peg hold two and sometimes three articles? Since good clothes-pegs can be had so cheaply, it seems rather far-fetched saving to stand on the icy ground double the time really required to shake out and hang the clothes, and run the risk of taking cold while so doing.

Could any arithmetician compute the number of half-hours spent in rearing a family of a half a dozen children, in untying "hard knots" in shoe-strings that are too short or are so worn as to require tying in more than one place, and must again be untied before the little shoe can be taken off? Shoe-strings cost so little. Could the hours which some mothers spend, during one year alone, in managing wornout shoe-lacing in order to save a few pence, not better be utilized in doing some sewing, or other work by which enough could be earned to stock the family with shoe-strings for life?

Going to Change His Brand.

"Can I do anything for you?" politely inquired the young man in charge of a cigar store as a stranger entered.

"Why, yes, I guess so," was the rather slow reply.

"You make a brand of cigars called the 'Lurids' don't you?

"Yes, sir, we do."

"And you keep advertising that you are bound to preserve the excellence of the brand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I've been smoking the Lurids for a couple of years past, and it's only latety I've noticed a change in the taste, I thought I'd drop in and see about it."

"Why, sir, we are using even better tobacco."

"And the same fillers?"

"Better fillers, sir."

"Well, that's probably the matter. Up to a fortnight ago they had a beautiful taste of tarred rope and my wife used to inhale the smoke for catarrh. Since that time they seemed to have a sort of sheep twine taste, and the smell is like an old towel on fire. I was going to say that if——"

"Our cigars are made entirely of choice tobacco, sir."

"No rope inside?"

"No sir."

"Oh, well, then I guess I'll change my brand. Tarred rope lays over sheep twine any day in the week with me, and there's my wife's catarrh and the baby's whooping cough to be consulted. Sorry to have troubled you, but all of us have our tastes, you know."

THERE is an onyx quarry at New Suisin, Cal., and 100 tons of it were shipped to New York lately to be made into mantels, bureau tops, etc., while some of it will be worked into jewelry.

NEWSPAPER LAWS

If subscribers order the discontinuation of newspapers, the publishers may continue to send them until all arrearages are paid.

If subscribers refuse or neglect to take their newspapers from the office to which they are sent they are held responsible until they have settled the bills and ordered them discontinued.

If subscribers move to other places without informing the publisher, and the newspapers are sent to the former place, they are responsible.

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Origin and Advantages of Arbor Day.

"Arbor Day" originated in Lincoln, Nebraska, in the year 1872. The State Board of Agriculture being in session, early in January, the Hon. J. Sterling Morton, on the 4th day of the month, introduced a resolution, and urged its adoption, whereby a day should be set apart each year for the planting. The resolution was adopted, and "Arbor Day" came into existence. It is now a legal holiday, and upon its annual return, the 22d of April, the banks, public offices, and business houses close their doors. The schools suspend their usual routine, and the people all celebrate the day by planting something.

Arbor Day has given an impetus to tree planting, such as could not have been secured in any other way, and under its influence many a former barren spot is to-day a shady grove. In the capital city of the State, where I write may be seen one of the most remarkable examples of its influence. Twenty years ago there was here an absolutely treeless plain; not a leaf was interposed between the summer's sun and the heated ground. To-day there are, by actual calculation, very nearly one million trees within the city limits, and as one now looks over the city, from some tall building, he sees little else than a great green forest. The dwellings are mostly hidden by the dense foliage, and only here and there a tower, a roof, or a chimney assures the observer that he is overlooking a city and not a veritable forest.

The lesson which this sylvan city of the plains emphasizes, is that the prairies can be changed into forests. No one who has ever seen this great urban forest now asks whether trees will grow upon the plains. As an object lesson for the whole country, the capital city forest of Nebraska is worthy of careful consideration. What tree-planting has done here, and in hundreds of the smaller Nebraska towns, it may do for the towns and cities of other parts of the country.—PROF. CHAS. BESSEY, *in American Agriculturist for August.*

Fighting Poultry Vermin in Summer.

Frequently the most difficult work of the poultry man is that of ridding the premises of vermin. Most persons do not become aware of the presence of vermin until the little red mites are seen in myriads. These can easily be destroyed by using proper methods. The great scourge of poultry is not the mites, but the large body-louse that hides at the base of feathers, on the head and neck. As they are only on the fowls, an examination of the quarters does not reveal them, when the hens seem to droop without apparent cause, the chances are that a close examination on their heads and necks will reveal swarms of these lice. Little chicks, especially those that feather very rapidly, such as Dorkings, Games, and Leghorns, will soon succumb to the large lice, and often the cause will be ascribed to something else.

To prevent lice on fowls, the best thing is the dust-bath, which must consist of fine dry clay or coal ashes. If the quarters are kept clean, the hens will prevent the attacks by dusting, but when once the lice put in an appearance, the poultryman is compelled to take active measures, as the lice must be fought until not a single one remains. Kerosene must not be used on the bodies of the hens, as it will sometimes kill them. For the large lice, first grease the heads, necks, and vents with a mixture made by adding a teaspoonful cr crude petroleum to every gill of lard. Use it warm, so it will spread well. Then dust the hens well with California or Persian Insect Powder. Repeat this every third day and dust every portion of the body, but do not grease the body—only the head, neck and vent.—*American Agriculturist for August.*

'I see, James,' remarked a New Jersey grocer, as he was looking over his books the other day, 'that you constantly leave the *h* out of the word 'sugar.'"

'Certainly, sir; that's according to Webster.'

'Webster! Webster! Young man, I've been in this business for twenty-eight years and I don't propose at this late day to let no Webster come around and dictate to me. Put in the *h* sir, and don't you let a single *s* out of the word 'sinnamon' if you wish to keep your place here!'

Jones—is that your umbrella? Smith (cautiously)—Why? have you lost one?—Pittsburg Dispatch.

Wife—You haven't been inside of a church since we were married. Husband (sorrowfully)—No; a burnt child dreads the fire.—Omnibus.

Mother—Help! help! Our little Isaac has swallowed a half dollar! Father—Lord, what a fuss! You make as much noise about it as if he had swallowed a $20 gold piece.—Anonymus.