MONSIEUR ALBANO.

He was a little old man, verging perhaps on 60, with closely-cropped hair, and a hat which Wilhelm could not keep from thinking was one size or more too big for him. A little old man with sad eyes, but with a pleasant voice, and a smile that often quite banished all trace of melancholy from his face.

But Wilhelm—the head-waiter at the dingy old Paris restaurant, where for months he had presented himself at the same hour daily—had taken to him from the very first, and as the gentleman seemed to court retirement, used invariably to ensconce him in the snuggest corner of the room, not far from the charcoal stove—the time was winter—and with no other companions save a pair of tabby cats.

"What is it to-day?" M. Albano would inquire, as he seated himself at his table, with his feet on a morsel of goat-skin placed there for them. "What is it to-day, Wilhelm?"

And Wilhelm used invariably to place a white dimpled fore-finger against the name of some particular dish on the card, and that was the dish M. Albano invariably chose.

It was not long before Wilhelm found out that M. Albano was, like himself, a Hungarian, and, like himself, an exile. They were friends, indeed, after this. Wilhelm told the little old man his story, and to some extent the little old man told Wilhelm his. There was some difference, nevertheless, in their stations in life, for in his own dear land M. Albano had been a count, while Wilhelm had been but a junior engineer.

"And so you are really going?" said Wilhelm, as he stood one day near his friend, the empty soup-bowl in his right hand.

"Really going, Wilhelm."

"Oh, dear! Monsieur, I shall sadly miss you. Is it Brussels, monsieur, Berlin, or Moscow? You say you have had engagements at all these places."

"No, no," replied M. Albano sadly; "it is neither of these places. I am done with them all—done with the world, I might say. I am going home."

"What!" cried Wilhelm, with brightening eyes—"home to our dear land of —"

"Nay, nay, nay; never there again. What matters imperial forgiveness? Can a king mend a broken heart, even if he could restore my fortunes? Could I gaze without grief on those green-wooded hills and valleys that once were mine? Could I mingle with the good people who dwell there—and who once called me lord—without sadness? No, Wilhelm, no. My home is near London, the home of the refugee, the only city in the whole world amid the bustle and stir of which an exile may woo forgetfulness."

Wilhelm lingered by the table for a few moments. He was deep in thought.

"M. Albano," he said at last, "to have employment in London has long been with me an ambitious dream—a castle in the air—call it what you will. I hate the garb of servility in which you now see me. Oh! there are times, monsieur, that I walk my room all night, wild in thought, because I feel I was born for better things. Yet I try to do my duty—my humble duty."

"Yes, yes, yes," said Albano, speaking more briskly than was his wont. "That is right—do your duty. I trust I do mine, humble though that is. Do not let pride interfere with that duty. Be not self-conscious. Concentrate your thoughts and energies in your work, menial though some may call it. Believe me, Wilhelm, a halo surrounds the head of that man or woman who does whatever his or her hand findeth to do, in no half-hearted way, but with a will, a purpose, and an honest pride of action, feeling inwardly that duty is a sacred thing. Study to be content with the state in which Providence has placed you, Wilhelm. Study that—study that."

"But, monsieur, you would then leave ambition out of count."

"No; oh, no! Only let your ambition be subservient to your duty. The march of intellect—the march of the world—is ever, ever onward. Better yourself, by all means, if you can: by so doing you may better the world; but ambitious thoughts or actions must never interfere with your hours of labor. These belong to your present employer, Wilhelm."

"I see, monsieur."

"Well, see and think of it. Meanwhile, here is a pass for the Grand N——r concert. You will see me and my little violin in the second row of the orchestra. You will wait for me, and we will sup together at the Rhondeville."

High over a score of fiddlers at the grand concert that evening, M. Albano's little violin seemed to ring—seemed, at all events—in Wilhelm's ears, just as one hears and can listen only to the nightingale's voice amidst the babel of bird-voices in the woods in early spring.

After the performance, Wilhelm waited for what appeared quite a long time for his friend. All the other musicians had dressed and filed away, but still he came not.

Wilhelm ventured at last to ask one in authority.

"Oh, no!" was the reply; "M. Albano has not gone. He is talking to the manager. The manager wants him to stay on, but he insists on throwing up his engagement."

"Strange!" said Wilhelm.

"Yes, it is strange. You are his friend? Yes. Well, and even you do not seem able to fathom the mystery. But this Albano is a splendid violinist. Any orchestra in Europe would be willing to retain his services, and remunerate him well. Yet, although he is not rich, he is forever on the move. Italy, Belgium, Norway; all countries have him by turns, but none for long. Think you is your friend somewhat distrait?"

"I am sure he is not. I only know he has a reason or reasons for his nomadic tendencies, but he has not thought fit to enlighten me as to what they are, and it would ill become me to inquire. But here he comes."

It was late even for Paris that night ere Wilhelm bade his kind-hearted friend adieu, at the corner of the Rue de la D—, and hurried away to his dingy room.

Yet that evening had been big with Wilhelm's fate. He had supped with M. Albano at a charming little hotel; and, with true politeness, monsieur had said little or nothing about himself, but had led the young man to speak of all his hopes and ambitions.

Wilhelm's great scheme was connected with electricity, not only for the purpose of lighting cities and country houses, but as the moving power of the future; and M. Albano knew enough about chemistry speedily to discern that, if properly worked out, these plans of Wilhelm's might lead him to fame and fortune.

"You will come to England with me, Wilhelm? I have saved a little sum; I will pay your expenses."

"No, friend, no; to England I will come, but everything I will pay myself. Two more months will I work, and then—"

"You will come?"

"Yes."

"And be my guest for a few weeks at my little cottage home?"

So the two parted.

Winter was still holding sway, and snow lay deep all round Paris; but in nine weeks' time what a change there was! With Paris, however, this short and simple story has no longer anything to do. The scene shifts to a tiny but beautiful cottage in Surrey. It stands on the slope of a gently-rising hill, and is almost buried in pine woods.

"Yes, Wilhelm," M. Albano was saying as the two sat together in a little tent on the lawn, "this cottage, these gardens, the beautiful country around, do not seem the same since Marie—since my daughter left me. They are not the same, for I am older now. I can not see with the same eyes, hear with the same ears; it seems as if the gloom of the grave were already closing around me."

"But Marie—your daughter—may return."

"No, that can not be; the pride that caused her to go will prevent her returning. She will never come back."

"Wilhelm was silent.

"A few hasty words—and the words were mine—a few peevish mutterings at the fate that banished me from my native land, that had torn from my breast the insignia of title and honor, and compelled me—me, a count, to drag out a miserable existence in a foreign country, by aid of my violin. I did not mean to imply that I begrudged the labor that kept her as a lady, but I fear I led her to believe so; and I would have laid down my life next minute to have been able to retract, to unsay my cruel words; but next minute Marie was gone. Gone—yes, gone with tears on her face and mayhap a broken heart, though a proud one. And since then I have sought and obtained engagements in almost every capital in Europe. I have been till now ever on the move, thinking, always thinking, I would find my Marie; for one brief note—the only one I received—told me she was so far independent, and that on her voice alone she would now trust for a livlihood. But I am tired, hopeless, and weary."

And so indeed he looked.

A year passed away. The old man appeared no more in any orchestra. Hope itself had fled from his heart, and he mourned for his daughter as for one dead.

Wilhelm was a frequent visitor at the cottage. Aided in his ambition by the ex-count, and possessed of the will to work, the determination to triumph, and that mental staying power which oftentimes leads to success without even the aid of genius, the young man conquered all difficulties, and was already on the first steps of the ladder that leads to fame.

His employment frequently led him to Italy and to that Rome which of late years appears to have taken a new lease of glorious life.

An event now took place which is common enough in the life of most young men: Wilhelm fell in love. But I do not blame him, for all Rome was captivated by the sweet voice and modest and charming manner of a young singer that had lately been brought out by a great master.

Night after night, wherever she sang, Wilhelm was there, listening enthralled. But he could obtain no introduction. She was so near, and yet so far.

Going home late one night from duties that had occupied him for nearly eight-and-forty hours, with little time for sleep, he heard the startling shout of fire. He followed the mob and the rattling ill-contrived engine down a narrow dark street that, from the showers of sparks and the smoke and heat, seemed on fire from end to end.

Wilhelm got close to the burning building, and helped to work the engine. But there was other and braver work for him to tackle. For look! the faces of young people and children frantic with fear appear at an upper window. Who will climb through sparks and smoke up that rickety ladder? Who will volunteer to save them? Wilhelm will! He springs toward it; up and down, and up and down, and he has saved three. He is scorched and burned, but seems to bear a charmed life. The last he saves, to his surprise, if not joy, is the young singer. While she is borne away in safety, he faints and falls.

It is two days before he comes to his senses at his hotel. It would be weeks before he got round. What mattered it? She came daily to see and inquire after his welfare.

Ah! it was the old, old story. But he did not tell it then or there. He told the young singer a story of a different kind: of a lovely little cottage among the pine woods of Surrey, and of an old man who was dying of sorrow because his daughter would never come again. And the girl bent her head and sobbed, and these tears told Wilhelm all.

There was joy in that Surrey cottage when Marie returned. With her came sunshine; sunshine to bird, and flower and tree, and sunshine to old Albano's heart.

There is a larger house now among the pines near the little cottage. Wilhelm is its wealthy owner, Marie its mistress. And long indeed they would think that day that did not bring them a visit from father Albano.—Gordon Stables, M. D., R. N., in Cassell's Magazine.

A New Navigable River in Africa.

The report published by Lieut. Von Nimptsch, of the German army, son-in-law of Gen. Von Loe, aide-de-camp to the emperor, gives some very interesting details of the journey which he made with Herr Wolff, a traveler in the service of the Congo Free State, and which has resulted in the discovery of a river likely to be of material value to traders with the Congo.

The Congo in its course from the southeast, makes a very wide bend to the north, and then descends again to Atlantic, a very large tract of country being embraced in this curve. Within this curve is the river Kassai, which Lieut. Von Nimptsch regards as being "of even greater importance to commerce than the Congo itself." Describing their journey, he says that as far as Luebu, the Kassai flows through wide plains well adapted for cultivation, pasturage, and forests of palm trees and gutta-percha trees. There are many villages on the banks, and the travelers met with great civility in all of them save one, the inhabitants of which fled at their approach. One tribe, adds Lieut. Von Nimptsch, "was remarkable for its joviality. The natives accompanied the steamer in their canoes, and when we landed, organized dances and songs in our honor." There is a great deal of ivory all along the Kassai, and large pieces of the finest quality were readily given in exchange for empty boxes and tins.

They discovered several affluents of the Kassai, and they calculated that they were navigable for a distance of 250 miles. "But the most important affluent," the report goes on to say, "is that which Herr Wolff explored in the steamer Vorwarts during the months of February and March. He ascended this stream to a distance of 430 leagues from its mouth, and one of its northern affluents brought him to within a week's march of Nyangoue. He might have gone still further had his steamer not met with an accident, for there are no cateracts in this river. All this network of navigable water, more than 3,000 miles, is most admirable, and in future it will be possible to travel eastward from the Atlantic, reaching Nyangoue and then Lake Tangyutcka by leaving the Congo at the mouth of the Kassai, without being obliged to ascend the whole of the former stream, thus avoiding the Stanley falls."

Dogs Are Subject to "Running Fits."

The talk about Pasteur and hydrophobia, a dog-fancier informs us, has had a marked effect on his trade. The sending of people across the water to be treated for hydrophobia has riveted attention to the danger of keeping dogs, and many fashionable ladies have disposed of their pugs and other four-footed beasts, and babies are growing in popularity as pets. "Hydrophobia is a fraud and Pasteur is a humbug," said Fourfoot, the fancier. "Dogs have running fits which will pass off if they are let alone. If caught by the windpipe and salt put in his mouth, a dog will be cured of these fits. They may bite sometimes, but hydrophobia results from nervous fright." But such talk, even though widely advertised, will not help the trade. Dogs with "running fits" will continue to be treated as mad, and they are not likely to get the benefit of any doubt on the subject, either.—New York News.

In the Swamps of Arkansas.

In 1860 I was working south on levee work. In these days each man got fourteen "jiggers" of whiskv, some even more. A jigger is a tin cup on top of a dinner pail. The first question asked was: "How many jiggers do you give?" "Ten." "Oh, you're no good. I know a man up here who'll give fourteen." The next question was: "How much do you pay?" It was in the swamps of Arkansas, where even the cats and dogs had ague. I went there sick and worn, but I neither smoked nor drank. I was told I could not do without whisky, but I was the only man out of fifty who made full time. I gained ninety pounds, while men who could have thrown me over their head at the beginning of that year were reduced to skeletons.—Serg. Pat Ready in Globe-Democrat.

Mitigation of Whooping-Cough.

Whooping-cough paroxysms, it is well known, are sensibly ameliorated by the atmosphere of gas works, and there is some reason for the belief that cures of the disease are effected by breathing such air. Dr. W. T. Greene suggests an easily available improvement on the old plan of sending children on visits to gas-works for this purpose. His plan is to attach a piece of rubber tubing to a burner, the tubing being long enough to reach the floor. The gas is turned on just enough to make a perceptible odor, and the child is to inhale it for a few minutes at a time as often as convenient. —Chicago News.

A Blessing on the Picnic.

The picnic is an ancient institutiou, but it has reached its full-blown maturity on American soil. With all its big bugs and little bugs and red bugs and humbugs it comes to us like water in a thirsty land, like a benediction of rest to the weary. It is better than the ball, with its full dress and its flirting, amid lamps above and laughter below. It is better than the religious festival, so common in the great cities of the north, when a man is robbed to the sound of sacred music and eats oysters for charity at $1 a dozen.—Columbus (Ga.) Enquirer-Sun.

Tricycling Fifty Miles a Day.

The daughters of the prince of Wales think nothing of tricycling fifty miles a day, and justly smile at the American girl who faints after a half-mile walk.—London Letter.

Dr. Holmes expresses a belief that professorships tend to produce longevity. "Quarterly payments of a fixed stipend are tranquilizing prescriptions," says he

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