

### ABANDONED.

The horns build in plaster dropping rooms,  
And on the mossy porch the lizard lies;  
Around the chimney-slow the swallow flies,  
And on the roof the locusts snow their  
blooms.  
Like some sad thought that broods here, old  
performs  
Haunt the dim stairs. The cautious zephyr  
tries  
Each gusty door, like some dead hand, then  
sighs  
With ghostly lips among the attic glooms.  
And now a heron, now a kingfisher,  
Flits in the willows, where the rills seem  
At each faint fall to hesitate to leap,  
Fluttering the silence with a drowsy stir.  
Here summer seems a placid face asleep  
And the near world a filament of her dreams.  
—Madison Cavein in Century.

### AN INFANT PRODIGY.

She was the only child of two artists engaged at one of the boulevard theaters.

Slaves to their profession, they had no time to spare for Lucette, who was left to the care of her grandmother, a dear old lady of 60 years, who loved the little "maison," just opening its eyes on existence, with the strength and fervency of three—father, mother and self.

All day long she would play with Lucette, while her son and daughter-in-law were learning their parts or rehearsing their roles at the theater. Poor little Lucette! From her earliest days she had been lulled to sleep by long speeches and awakened by explosions of dramatic wrath. How many times in the apartment of the Verniers, which looked upon a gloomy court in the Rue de Bondy, had she been startled by the melodramatic voices and extravagant gestures of her parents while repeating "Robert Maistre," "The Wandering Jew," "Thirty Years of an Actor's Life" and other works of the same class. When the Verniers were "on tour," the grandmother delighted to take Lucette for a day's outing in the suburbs, where the grass was green enough and the trees tall enough to make one think oneself really in the country.

"The child needs a breath of fresh air," she would say, and while she sat upon a folding stool, reading with profound attention the journal she brought with her, Lucette would amuse herself with chasing butterflies, pulling flowers or listening to the blackbird whistling in the branches.

On these occasions the little white face would glow all over with health and pleasure, while the good old dame, made happy at seeing "her child" looking so much stronger and better, would thank God for her and lie down to rest with a peaceful smile and quiet conscience.

When she was 6 years old, Lucette was lively as a kitten and sang like a lark. The grandmother took especial pride in teaching her to repeat passages from Racine and fables from La Fontaine, which the child would recite with a serious air in a voice both musical and impressive.

About this period the parents began to bestow more attention on their charming little daughter.

One evening at dinner Lucette gave a recitation, and Verniere, listening with his mouth full, cried: "Wife, we must make an artist of this youngster. What's bred in the bone comes out in the flesh. She's in love with the 'boards' already. She'll do."

"Not quite a bad idea," said the mother.

"Bah!" interposed the grandmother. "There's plenty of time to talk about that. There's!"

"Listen, granny. There's no time like the present. Now, in a very short while they're going to put on 'The Old Corporal' at the Theatre du Nord. I'm cast for the principal role, that of Corporal Simon, in which I succeed the great comedian, Frederick Lemaire, but the manager has no one to fill the part of Emmeline, the little girl that Corporal Simon carries perched on his knapsack at the siege of Ulm. Well, if I were to propose Lucette!"

"You're a fool," interrupted the old lady, with great energy. "A child of 6 years—delicate, sensitive! You want to kill her perhaps?"

"Get along with you. Don't worry yourself with nonsense of that sort, granny. The child will take no harm. She will be with me. It's an opportunity not to be thrown away. She will make respectable acquaintances and at the same time learn her profession. Just leave us alone, and all will go right.

The old grandmother had to submit. Fifteen days after Lucette was letter perfect in the short part of Emmeline, and Verniere, having laid his proposal before the manager, brought his daughter down to rehearsal.

"She's a prodigy. She'll cram the house," was that astute gentleman's reflection as he watched the performance. At the finish he accepted the offer and closed the bargain.

The curtain rose for the first act of "The Old Corporal." It was the camp before Ulm. General Roquebert, whom Napoleon had ordered to "draw the Austrians" in order to mask an important movement of the main army, was confiding to the old veteran, Antoine Simon, the care of his daughter Emma-

line. The audience, a most sympathetic and enthusiastic one, had eyes only for Lucette Verniere, the child who impersonated Emmeline. As for Simon, he raged and stormed inwardly at the unhappy fortune which had turned him into a "nursery maid," instead of permitting him to bear a hand in tanning the hides of the "Kaiserliche."

The corporal and Emmeline had taken shelter on the outskirts of a wood, when of a sudden Simon perceived the glitter of cannon and the sheen of steel among the trees. Almost at the same moment the enemy "spoke." Volley after volley whistled through the branches, scattering the leaves and tearing off the bark. "It's nothing," said he to the child. "Don't be afraid. Here, let's play 'pick-a-back!'"

The cannon poured in a broadside. Simon lifted the little girl upon his shoulders and set her on his knapsack, and trembling for the first time in his life, fired his musket, to the great delight of Emmeline, who clapped her hands and shouted gleefully. In due time a company of French troops arrived upon the scene, and amid frantic cheering from the spectators the corporal and his companion are borne off in safety, but General Roquebert has been mortally wounded. He is carried in upon a litter, and in his last agony blesses Emmeline, who is left in charge of the old corporal after a thousand instructions and recommendations necessary to the rest of the piece.

The little innocent, crowing and smiling in the middle of this crowd of soldiery, among all these decorations, this noise and smoke of battle, won a veritable triumph. The public applauded with frenzy, and when some one spoke of her as an "infant prodigy" the phrase was caught up and echoed round the house.

Always "pick a back" on the knapsack of the old corporal, she was "called" three times, and on reaching the wings was immediately hugged and kissed, fêted and fondled and crammed with bonbons and dainties by the ladies of the company.

"That was a capital idea of mine," Verniere had said to himself on signing the engagement of his daughter at the Theatre du Nord, "capital."

For a hundred nights "The Old Corporal" drew crowds to the boulevard, and those unable to get inside remained outside to cheer the "infant prodigy," Lucette Verniere.

All was going merrily. At the end of three months Lucette began to show signs that the strain was telling on her. Her slim figure and pale face were growing slimmer and paler. Her eyes were heavy, her look faded. The grandmother observed the symptoms with alarm. She called the attention of the parents to the child, but Verniere would listen to nothing and contented himself with replying:

"Don't make yourself uneasy about nothing. 'The Old Corporal's' beginning to flutter. We can't keep him going much longer, and after he drops Lucette will have plenty of time to rest."

She was "resting" now, little Lucette.

Resting, with a face whiter than the pillow on which her head lay, a victim to brain fever.

From time to time her wasted little hand would grasp convulsively, as if seized with sudden fear, the long, bony hand of her old grandmother.

Poor old woman, how she suffered to see her darling lying ill, and in a fury of anger she would charge Verniere with sacrificing the child to his vanity.

"You have driven her beyond her strength. You've exhausted all her forces. Maudit!"

The father never replied. He knew that he had done a bad business and deserved all the reproaches his mother heaped upon him.

When Lucette opened her big eyes and fixed them on him, they seemed to reproach him also. They felt like knives in his heart.

One afternoon, after the doctor's departure, Lucette was taken delirious. She sat up in bed, staring about her wildly and crying: "The enemy! Look there! Forward! Vive l'empereur!"

And again: "General Roquebert is mortally wounded. A doctor—quick—hurry—there's no time to lose!"

They were phrases from "The Old Corporal," which were passing through the fevered brain of the poor child. Verniere and his wife stood at the head of the bed, plunged in an abyss of grief.

For a few moments the child remained quiet, and the watchers thought she had fallen asleep, but suddenly starting up "all of a piece," and with an agony of terror lighting up her face:

"The enemy!" she cried, throwing up her arms. "The enemy!"

And she fell back dead.

Three days later the body of the "infant prodigy"—Lucette Verniere—was laid in the cemetery at Pantin. On the coffin was placed a magnificent floral crown, which bore the inscription, "To Lucette Verniere, artiste, from the Theatre du Nord."

The old grandmother was too prostrated to join the funeral procession, but after the sun was down, the figure of

the poor old creature might have been seen bending over the still open grave, and her voice heard calling softly, so softly that she seemed afraid it might awaken the little sleeper who lay below: "Lucette, my child; my darling Lucette. It is I. Do you hear me? I am coming to you."

Next morning the gravediggers found upon the grave of the "infant prodigy" the inanimate form of the old grandmother, smiling in death upon her well beloved grandchild Lucette.—From the French.

The Steammaster's Ready Wit.  
The London Standard special correspondent gave a description of a picturesque incident of the Hamburg fete. When the emperor, after the banquet in the town hall and in response to the acclamation of the crowds outside, stepped on to the balcony to show himself to the people, there came a terrific clap of thunder. The first burgomaster, with the quickness of a true courtier, at once remarked to his majesty, "Sire, le ciel vous salue!" (Sir, heaven salutes you.) The emperor's reply is not recorded.

A Margin to Boot.  
"Do you really think that a bicycle is worth the money?"  
"Worth the money?" said the quick tempered man. "Why, mine has paid for itself in less than three months in the beautiful explanation it furnishes for a black eye."—Washington Star.

### PLUCKY KANSAS BOY.

ALTHOUGH SELF TAUGHT HE WINS A WEST POINT APPOINTMENT.

Secretary Lamont Makes Special Ruling In Favor of the Young Man—Story Reads Like a Romance—A Case of Pluck and Perseverance.

When the West Point Military academy opens for the next school year it will have among the fresh arrivals a remarkable young man from Kansas who bears the name of John McCullough. The Kansas City Journal, referring to his recent appointment, speaks of it as an illustration of "what pluck and perseverance will accomplish." The story of this boy reads like a delightful romance. He is a farmer's son, and the home of the family is an out of the way locality, where no "little red school-house" opens its door to seekers for knowledge. The Journal is authority for the statement that this boy has never been to school, the circumstances of the family being such as to prohibit him from the enjoyment of that privilege. Instead of going from home to attend school he staid at home and worked full time on the farm. But there was time for study at night, and he made use of it to such good purpose that he "passed a competitive examination against a large number of other youths who had the advantage of extensive school training."

The law provides that a candidate for West Point must not be over 21 years when appointed. Young McCullough had passed his twenty-first birthday. But Secretary Lamont exercised a wise discretion in ruling that he was 31 until he was 22, and the secretary did not stop there. The Post is glad to record that in order to remove all obstacles in the way of this courageous young fellow the head of the war department ordered a special examination to be held so that McCullough would not be 23 before his final examination.

In order to take his first examination, in which he successfully competed with many bright young men from various schools of good repute, young McCullough drove 300 miles—and Kansas miles are long—in a wagon, camping out at night. It is not strange that Secretary Lamont was deeply impressed when he learned that such a champion had come up out of the wilderness and vanquished the best products of the best families and the most approved training schools. We hope the future of this youth will meet the expectations that are justified by his past. He will find at West Point that poverty is no serious disadvantage. That school is the most democratic of all our institutions. Neither aristocratic birth nor wealth suffices to change a student's rating one iota. "Every tub stands on its own bottom." The sons of poor men are as likely to gain high rating as the sons of the rich.—Washington Post.

Women Hypnotized Him.  
Jesse Johnson, son of a wealthy Mississippi cotton planter, has filed a suit for divorce at Perry, O. T., against his wife, Mariana Johnson. He was in love with a girl at home of foreign birth. His father did not want him to marry at 17 and sent him to school at Worcester, Mass. During the first vacation the father sent him to Asbury Park for the summer to keep him from his first love. There he met a Miss Mynell, who was there with her parents and said her home was New York city. She was many years Johnson's senior. Johnson said the woman hypnotized him, and they were married, the woman paying the expenses. A few days later she left, and he has never seen nor heard of her since.—Chicago Tribune.

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