



## SYNOPSIS.

Francis Beaupre, a peasant babe of three years, after an amusing incident in which Marshal Ney figures, is made a Chevalier of France by the Emperor Napoleon, in the home of the lad's parents in the village of Vieques, France, where the emperor had briefly stopped to hold a council of war. Napoleon prophesied that the boy might one day be a marshal of France under another Bonaparte. At the age of ten Francis meets a stranger who is astonished when the boy tells him of his ambition. Francis visits General Baron Gaspard Gourgaud, who with Alise, his seven-year-old daughter, lives at the chateau. A soldier of the Empire under Napoleon he tries the boy's imagination with stories of his campaigns. The general offers Francis a home at the chateau. The boy refuses to leave his parents, but in the end becomes a copyist for the general and leaves of the friendship between the general and Francis Zappi, who accompanied with the general under Napoleon. Francis Zappi and his son, Pietro, arrive at the chateau. The general agrees to care for the Marquis's son, who comes from America. The Marquis before leaving for America asks Francis to be a friend to his son. The boy solemnly promises.

## CHAPTER IX.

## The Castle Children.

There was a farm in the Valley Delemontes—five miles it was from Vieques—which was a dependence of the seigneur; for centuries the same family had held it, and it was considered the richest holding for a peasant in that part of the world. Just now the family all at once came to an end. It was necessary to find new tenants, and the general offered the place to Le Francois and La Claire. Even in their best days they had not been so prosperous as this would make them. But what about Francis? The general glowered at them from deep eyes.

"There's always a screw somewhere in every good thing. This time it's the boy."

There was a silence. Claire trembled.

"It will go hard with the lad to give us up," she brought out softly. "He won't give you up; I should not respect him if he gave you up," the general thundered, and the two peasants breathed more freely. This great good fortune was not, after all, the price of their son.

By degrees the three came to an understanding. A tutor was to be engaged for the three children; Francis was to live at the castle as if it should be explained to him—he was going away to school, and every Friday he was to walk to the ferme du Val—the Valley Farm—and stay with his people until Sunday afternoon.

This new order of things was well settled before six months had passed after the going of the Marquis Zappi. And then in three or four months more something happened.

Francis was alone with the general when the letter came. His eyes were on his seigneur's face as he read the letter and the boy saw the blood rush through the weathered skin in a brown-red flood, and then fade out, leaving it gray. The boy had never seen the general look so. With that, the big arms were thrown out on the table and the big grizzled head fell into them.

Then he lifted his head and told the boy how the friend whom he had found lately, after so many years of separation, had gone away not to come back in this life, and how Pietro was fatherless, Francis, holding tightly with both fists to the general's hand, listened wide-eyed, struck to the heart.

"But he had a brave life, my seigneur—it is the best thing that there is. My mother said so. My mother told me that we shall smile later, when we are with the good God, to think that we ever feared death on this earth. For she says one spends a long time with the good God later, and all one's dear friends come, and it is pleasant and it is for a long, long time, while here it is, after all, quite short. Is not that true, my seigneur? My mother said it."

Big little Pietro had to be told what had happened and how the general was now to be a father to him as best he might, and Alise and Francis would be his sister and brother. He took the blow dumbly and went about his studies next morning, but for many days he could not play, and only Francis could make him speak. He was handsome—extraordinarily handsome—and a lovely good child, but slow in initiative where Francis was ready, shy where Francis was friends with all the world, steady-going where the peasant boy was brilliant. Between the two, of such contrasting types, was an unshaken bond from the first, and at this age it seemed to be the little peasant who had everything to give. Smaller physically, weaker in muscle than the big-boned son of North Italy, he yet took quite naturally an attitude of protection and guidance, and Pietro accepted it without hesitation.

Two years slid past noiselessly, unnoticed, and it was vacation time; it was August of the year 1824. The old chateau of Vieques—the ruin—lay back behind the corn fields and smiled in hot sunlight.

A tall lad of fourteen, another boy, lighter, quicker, darker, and a little girl of eleven in a short white dress, wandered through the ruins, talking earnestly now, silent now, filling the grim place with easy laughter again.

Alise and Francis and Pietro were growing up; the general already grumbled words about kittens turning into cats, as he looked at them.

"Just behind the great stone there," Alise formulated, "was the dog's bedroom. Of course, a great monsieur like the dog had his own bedroom—yes, and office, too—and maybe his dining-room."

And the joke was enough on that lazy day of vacation to set peals of laughter ringing through the ruins. Alise stopped laughing suddenly.

"Who is that?" she demanded. Her eyes were lifted to the hill rising behind the green mound, and the glance of the others followed hers. A young man, a boy, was coming lightly down the slope, and something in his figure and movement made it impossible even at a distance that it should be any one of the village. He saw them, and came forward, and his cap was off quickly as he glanced at Alise. But with a keen look at the three, it was Francis to whom he spoke.

"Is this Francis?" he asked.

"But yes, Monsieur," Francis answered, wondering—and in a moment he wondered more. The strange boy, his cap flung from him, dropped on his knees and kissed the grass that grew over the Roman governor's foundations. With that he was standing again, looking at them unashamed from his quiet gray eyes.

"It is the first time I have touched the soil of France since I was seven years old," he stated, not as if to excuse his act, but as if explaining something historical. And was silent. The strange boy talked very little; they could not recollect that he asked questions, after his first startling question; yet here was Alise, the very spirited and proud little Alise, anxious to make him understand everything of their own affairs.

"I am Alise," she began—and stopped short, seized with shyness. Was it courtesy to explain to the young monsieur about her distinguished father? She found herself suddenly in an agony of confusion. Then the stranger made a low bow and spoke in the gentlest friendly tones.

"It is enough. It is a charming name, Mademoiselle Alise. I believe I shall now think it the most charming name in France."

"She has more of a name than that, however, Monsieur," and Francis stepped across the grass and stood by the little girl, her knight, unconscious of the part he played. "It is a very grand name, the other one. For our seigneur, the father of Alise, is Monsieur the Baron Gaspard Gourgaud, a general of Napoleon himself; was inducted with the Emperor at St. Helena."

Francis had no false modesty, no self-consciousness; he felt that he had placed Alise's standing now in the best light possible. The strange boy felt it, too, it seemed, for he started as Francis spoke of Napoleon; his reserved face brightened and his cap was off and sweeping low as he bowed again to Alise more deeply. Francis was delighted. It was in him to enjoy dramatic effect, as it is in most Frenchmen. He faced about to Pietro.

"This one, Monsieur," he went on, much taken with himself as master of



"I Am Louis Bonaparte."

ceremonies, "Is Monsieur the Marquis Zappi of Italy. His father also fought for the great captain."

The quiet strange boy interrupted swiftly. "I know," he said. "Of the Italian corps under Prince Eugene; also on the staff of Lannes. I know the name well," and he had Pietro's hand in a firm grasp and was looking into the lad's embarrassed face with his dreamy keen eyes.

The children, surprised, were yet too young to wonder that a boy scarcely older than themselves should have the army of Napoleon at his fingers' ends; he gave them no time to think about it.

"One seen, without names, that you are of the noblesse," he said simply, embracing the three in his sleepy glance. He turned to Francis. "And you, Monsieur the spokesman? You are also of a great Bonapartist house?" Francis stood straight and slim; his well-knit young body in his military dress was carried with all the

assurance of an aristocrat. He smiled, his brilliant exquisite smile into the older boy's face.

"Me—I am a peasant," he said cheerfully. "I have no house."

"He is a peasant—yes. But he is our brother, Pietro's and mine, and no prince is better than Francis—not one."

"Or half so good," Pietro put in with his slow tones.

"You are likely right," the stranger agreed laconically.

And then without questions asked, in rapid eager sentences, the three had told him how it was; how Francis, refusing to leave the cottage, was yet the son of the castle. With that they were talking about the village of Vieques, and its antiquity, and then of the old chateau; and one told the legend of the treasure and of the guardian dog.

"Just over the wall there is the opening where he appeared to old Pierre Tremblay," Francis pointed out.

"I think I should like to climb the wall," the stranger said.

And he did. The others watching anxiously, he crawled out on the uncertain pile ten feet in air. A big stone crashed behind him; he crawled on. Then there was a hoarse rumble of loosened masonry, and down came the great blocks close to his hands—he was slipping! And, above, the wall swayed. Then, in the instant of time before the catastrophe, Francis had sprung like a cat into the center of danger and pushed the other boy, violently reeling, across the grass out of harm's way.

Alise screamed once sharply. Francis lay motionless on his face and the great stones rained around him. It was all over in a moment; in a moment more a shout of joy rose from Pietro, for Francis lifted his head and began crawling difficultly, with Pietro's help, out of the debris.

"I have to thank you for my life, Monsieur the peasant," the stranger said, and held out his hand. "Moreover, it is seldom that a prophecy is so quickly fulfilled. You said a few minutes ago that you should one day do a thing worth while for a Bonaparte. You have done it. You have saved my life."

Francis's hand crept to his cap and he pulled it off and stood bareheaded.

"Monsieur, who are you?" he brought out.

The strange boy's vanishing smile brightened his face a second. "I am Louis Bonaparte," he said quietly. The little court of three stood about the young Prince, silent. And in a moment, in a few sentences, he had told them how, the day before, he had been seized with a hunger for the air of France, which he had not breathed since, as a boy of seven, his mother had escaped with him from Paris during the Hundred Days. He told them how the desire to stand on French soil had possessed him, till at last he had run away from his tutor and had found the path from his exiled home, the castle of Arenenberg, in the canton of Thurgovie, in Switzerland, over the mountains into the Jura valley.

"It is imprudent," he finished the tale calmly. "The government would turn on all its big engines in an uproar to catch one schoolboy, if it was known. But I had to do it. He threw back his head and filled his lungs with a great breath. "The air of France," he whispered in an ecstasy.

For two hours more they told stories and played games through the soft old ruins of the savage old stronghold, as light-heartedly, as carelessly as if there were no wars or intrigues or politics or plots which had been and were to be close to the lives of all of them. Till, as the red round sun went down behind the mountain of the Rose, Francis's quick eye caught sight of a figure swinging rapidly down the mountain road where the Prince had come.

"But look, Louis," he called from behind the rock where he was preparing, as a robber baron, to swoop down on Prince Louis conveying Alise as an escaped nun to Pietro's monastery in another corner.

And the boy Prince, suddenly grave, shaded his eye with his hand and gazed up the mountain. Then his hand fell and he sighed. "The adventure is over," he said. "I must go back to the Prince business. It is Monsieur Lebas."

Monsieur Lebas, the tutor, arrived shortly in anything but a playful humor. The boy's mother, Queen Hortense, was in Rome, and he was responsible; he had been frightened to the verge of madness by the prince's escapade.

The playmates were separated swiftly. Monsieur Lebas refused to say anything like horror the eager suggestion that he and his charge should spend the night at the chateau. The Prince must be gotten off French ground without a moment's delay.

CHAPTER X.

The Promise.

"Mon Dieu!" said the general.

It was six years later. At the new chateau not a blade of grass seemed changed. The general stood in the

midst of close-cropped millions of blades of grass as he stopped short on the sloping lawn which led down to the white stone steps which led to the sunken garden. Alise, in her riding habit, with a feather in her hat, and gauntleted gloves on her hands, was so lovely as to be startling. She looked at the ground, half shy, half laughing, and beat the grass with her riding-whip. Francis was leaning toward her and talking, and the general, coming slowly down the lawn, felt a flood of pride rise in him as he looked at this successful picture of a boy which he had done so much to

fashion. The two had been riding together, and Francis appeared, as most men do, at his best in riding clothes. With that, as the general marched slowly down the velvet slope, unseen by them, regarding them his girl and his boy, this happy sister and brother—with that the brother lifted his sister's hand and, bending over it, kissed it slowly, in a manner unmistakably unbrotherly.

"Mon Dieu!" gasped the general, and turned on his heel and marched back to his library.

All that afternoon he stayed shut up in the library. At dinner he was taciturn.

The next morning the general sent for Francis to come to him in the library. A letter had been brought a short time before and was lying open on the table by his hand.

"Francis," began the general in his deep abrupt tones, "I am in trouble. Will you help me?"

"Yes, my Seigneur," said Francis quickly.

The general glared at him, frowning. "We shall see," he said again, and then—suddenly as a shot from a cannon—"Does Alise love you, Francis?"

"I—I think not, my Seigneur," he answered in a low voice.

"I am hurting you," the deep voice said—and only one or two people in the world had heard that voice so full of tenderness. "I am hurting my son. But listen, Francis. I was the dearest wish of Pietro's father—it has been my dearest wish for years—that Alise and Pietro should one day be married. It is that which would be the crown of a friendship forged in the fires of battle-fields, tempered in the freezing starving snow fields of Russia, finished—I hope never finished for all eternity."

Francis's head bent, his eyes on the general's hand which held his, answered very quietly. "I see," he said. "You would not take her from Pietro, who, I am sure, loves her?"

Francis looked up sharply, but the general did not notice. He spoke slowly. "I promised Pietro's father—the boy seemed to be out of breath—to be Pietro's friend—always," he said.

The general smiled then and let the fingers go, and turned to the letter on the table before him. "Good!" he said. "You are always what I wish, Francis," and it was quite evident that the load was off his mind.

## CHAPTER XI.

## With All My Soul.

The general swung round to the lad. "Francis, this letter is about you." He tapped the rustling paper. "Pietro wants you to come to him as his secretary."

Francis's large eyes lifted to the general's face, inquiring, startled, childlike. "Pietro?" he said slowly. "I had not thought of that."

"Yet you knew that Pietro was heart and soul in the plots of the Italian patriots?"

"But you had not thought of going to help him fight?"

"No, my seigneur. I had thought only of the fight for which I must be ready here."

"This Italian business will be good practice," said the general, as a man of today might speak of a tennis tournament. "And you and Pietro will be enchanted to be together again."

Francis smiled, and something in the smile wrung the general's heart.

"Francis, you are not going to be unhappy about little Alise?"

Quickly Francis threw back, as if he had not heard the question: "My Seigneur, I will go to Pietro; it will be the best thing possible—action and training, and good old Pietro for a comrade. My Seigneur, may I go tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow!" The general was startled now. "A thousand thanks, but you are a sudden lad! Yet it will be no harder to give you up tomorrow than it would be next month. Yes, tomorrow, then, let it be."

Francis stood up, slim, young, alert and steady, yet somehow not as the boy who had come in to the general an hour before; more, perhaps, as a man who had been through a battle and come out very tired, with the noise of the fighting in his ears.

"I will go to the farm tonight, to my mother and my father. And this afternoon I will ride with Alise, if you do not want me for the book, my Seigneur—and if she will go. May I ask you not to tell Alise of this—to leave it to me to tell her?"

"Yes," agreed the general doubtfully. "But you will be careful not to—upset her, Francis?"

"I will be careful."

"And—and you will do what you can to help Pietro, will you not, my son?"

A quick contraction twisted Francis's sensitive mouth and was gone, but this time the general saw. "You may trust me, my Seigneur," the boy said, and moved to the door; but the general called to him as his hand touched the latch.

"Francis!"

"Yes, my Seigneur." He faced about, steady and grave, and stood holding the door.

"Francis, my son—I have not hurt you—very much? You do not love Alise—deeply? Do you love her, Francis?"

There was a shock of stillness in the old dim library. Through the window—where the children's shouts had come in ten years before to the marquis and the general—one heard now in the quiet the sudden staccato of a late cricket. The general, breathing anxiously, looked at Francis, Francis standing like a statue. The general repeated his question softly, breathlessly. "Do you love her, Francis?"

With that the great eyes blazed and the whole face of the boy lighted as if a fire had flamed inside a lantern. He threw back his head.

"With all my soul," he said. "And forever."

A rushing mountain stream—white-veiled in the falling, black-brown in the foam-flecked pools—tumbled, splashed, brawled down the mountain; the mountain hung over, shadowy; banks of fern held the rampant brook in chains of green. Alise and Francis, riding slowly in the coolness of the road below, looked up and saw it all, familiar, beautiful, full of old associations.

"One misses Pietro," Francis said. "He always wanted to ride past the 'Trou du Gouverneur.'"

A Roman legend had given this name to the deep pool of the brook by the road; it was said that the cruel old governor had used it, two thousand years back, for drowning refractory peasants. Alise gazed steadily at the dark murmuring water.

"Yes, one misses him. Is life like that, do you suppose, Francis? One grows up with people, and they get to be as much a part of living as the air, or one's hands—and then, suddenly, one is told that they are going away. And that ends it. One must do without air, without hands. What a world, Francis!"

"We are not meant to like it too much, I believe, Alise," said Francis sunnily. "It is just on passant, this world, when you stop to consider. This is school, this life, I gather. My mother says it is not very important if one has a good seat in the school-room or a bad; if one sits near one's playmates or is sent to another corner so long as one is a good child and works heartily at one's lessons. It is only for a day—and then we go home, where all that is made right. Not a bad idea of my mother's, is it, Alise?"

"Your mother is a wonderful woman."

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## STOPPED TRAFFIC FOR PUSSY

Business on New York Thoroughfare Interrupted While Mother Cat Crossed the Street.

It was a busy day in Fulton street. Lines of trucks were backing each other east and west, when out from a produce store came a cat, and dangle from her mouth was a kitten, with which she essayed to cross the street. Each time she started she had to turn back because of a truck, and her efforts soon attracted a crowd of idlers.

Down from the corner came a policeman. He soon saw what was the matter, and while there was nothing in the traffic regulations to cover point, it took the bluecoat only a moment to decide what to do.

Going into the street he raised his hands in the way that truckmen have learned means "Stop." They stopped. The cat, seeing her opportunity, took a firm hold on the nose of her prodigy, and then, holding it high to keep its curved tail out of the mud, she slowly and deliberately picked her way across and disappeared in a cellar.

## Important to Mothers

Examine carefully every bottle of CASTORIA, a safe and sure remedy for infants and children, and see that it bears the

Signature of *Dr. J. C. Fletcher* In Use For Over 30 Years. Children Cry for Fletcher's Castoria

## Useful Relative.

"Yes, my mother-in-law can make herself very useful at times."

"Glad you are fair enough to admit it."

"Of course I'll admit it. Why, just the other morning she was so provoked at me because I didn't get up and chop the ice off the front steps that she went out herself with a broom and ice pick. She is a stout lady, and when she slipped on the top step and bumped herself all the way to the sidewalk she fell so hard that she cracked the ice on every step. Then her language regarding my shortcomings was so warm that it melted all the fragments and left the steps as clean and smooth as they ever are in July."

Constipation causes and aggravates many serious diseases. It is thoroughly cured by Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets. The favorite family laxative. Adv.

## Nimble-Footed.

The preacher was a young man and nervous, but interesting. He was making an eloquent plea for the home life, and was decanting eloquently on the evils of the club, telling his congregation that married men in particular should spend their evenings at home with their wives and children.

"Think, my hearers," said he, "of a poor, neglected wife, all alone in the great, dreary house, rocking the cradle of her sleeping baby with one foot and wiping away the tears with the other!"

Be thrifty on little things like bluing. Don't accept water for bluing. Ask for Red Cross Ball Blue, the extra good value blue. Adv.

## It Would Be Apparent.

Mrs. Bleecher (upstairs)—Bridget, have you turned the gas on in the parlor, as I told you