

## CHAPTER XI

### JULIETTE'S FAREWELL

When Godfrey returned to the Maison Blanche, wearing a handsome gold watch, which had been presented to him with an effusive letter of thanks by the gentleman whom he had rescued and his relatives, he found himself quite a celebrity. Most of the Pasteur's congregation met him when he descended from the diligence, and waved their hats, but as he thanked heaven, did not "jodel."

Leaving the Pasteur to make some acknowledgment, he fled to the house, only to find Madame, Juliette, a number of friends, to say nothing of Jean, the cook and the servant girl, awaiting him there. Madame beamed, and looked as though she were about to kiss him; the fresh and charming Juliette shook his hand, and murmured into his ear that she had no idea he was so brave, also that every night she thanked the Bon Dieu for his escape; while the others said something appropriate--or the reverse.

Once more he fled, this time to his bedroom. There upon his dressing-table lay two letters, one from his father and one addressed in a curious pointed hand-writing, which he did not know. This he opened at once. It was in French, and ran, as translated:

"Ah! Little Brother,--I know all that has happened to you, nor did your godmother need to wait to read about it in the journals.

Indeed, I saw it in my crystal before it happened; you with the man hanging to your arm and the rest. But then a cloud came over the crystal, and I could not see the end. I hoped that he would pull you over the edge, so that in one short minute you became nothing but a red plum-pudding at the bottom of the gulf. For you know that the sweetest-tempered fairy godmother can be made cross by wicked ingratitude and evil treatment. Do not think, little Brother, that I have forgiven you for bringing that old pasteur-fool to insult and threaten me. Not so. I pray the speerits night and day to pay you back in your own coin, you who have insulted them also. Indeed, it was they who arranged this little incident, but they tell me that some other speerit interfered at the last moment and saved you. If so, better luck next time, for do not think you shall escape me and them. Had you been true to us you should have had great good fortune and everything you desire in life, including, perhaps, something that you desire most of all. As it is, you shall have much trouble and lose what you desire most of all. Have you been kissing that pretty Mademoiselle again and trying to make her as bad as her mother? Well, I hope you will, because it will hurt that old fool-pasteur. Wherever you go, remember that eyes follow you, mine and those of the speerits. Hate and bad luck to you, my little Brother, from your dear godmamma, whose good heart you have so outraged. So fare ill till you hear from me again, yes and always. Now you will guess my name, so I need not sign it.

"P.S.--Eleanor also sends you her hate from another sphere."

This precious epistle, filled with malignity, reaching him in the midst of so many congratulations, struck upon Godfrey like a blast of icy wind at the zenith of a summer day. To tell the truth also, it frightened him.

He had tried to forget all about Madame Riennes and now here she was stabbing him from afar, for the letter bore a Venice postmark. It may be foolish, but few of us care to be the object of a concentrated, personal hate. Perhaps this is due to the inherited superstitions of our race, not long emerged from the blackness of barbarism, but at least we still feel as our forefathers did; as though the will to work evil had the power to bring about the evil desired. It is nonsense, since were it true, none could escape the direst misfortune, as every one of us is at some time or another the object of the hate or jealousy of other human beings. Moreover, as most of us believe, there is a being, not human, that hates us individually and collectively, and certainly would compass our destruction, had he the power, which happily he has not, unless we ourselves give it to him.

Godfrey comforted himself with this reflection, also, with another; that in this instance the issue of his peril had been far different from what his enemy desired. Yet, with his nerves still shaken both by his spiritualistic experiences, and by those of the danger which he had passed, the letter undoubtedly did affect him in the way that it was

meant to do, and the worst of it was that he could not consult his friend and guide, the Pasteur, because of the allusion to the scene with Juliette.

Throwing it down as though it were a venomous snake, which indeed, it was, he opened that from his father, which was brief. It congratulated him coldly on his escape, whereof Mr. Knight said he had heard, not in the way that he would have expected, from himself, but through the papers. This, it may be explained, was not strange, since the account was telegraphed long before Godfrey had time to write. As a matter of fact, however, he had not written, for who cares to indite epistles to an unsympathetic and critical recipient? Most people only compose letters for the benefit of those who like to receive them and, by intuition, read in them a great deal more than the sender records in black and white. For letter-writing, at its best, is an allusive art, something that suggests rather than describes. It was because Godfrey appreciated this truth in a half unconscious fashion, that he did not care to undertake an active correspondence with his father. It is the exception also, for young men to care to correspond with their fathers; the respective outlooks, and often, the respective interests, are too diverse. With mothers it is different, at any rate, sometimes, for in their case the relationship is more intimate. In the instance of the male parent, throughout the realm of nature, it is apt to have an accidental aspect or to acquire one as time goes by.

The letter went on to request that he would climb no more Alps, since

he had been sent to Switzerland, to scale not mountains, but the peaks of knowledge. It added, with that naive selfishness from which sometimes even the most pious are not exempt, "had you been killed, in addition to losing your own life, which would not so much have mattered, since I trust that you would have passed to a better, you would have done a wrong to your family. In that event, as you are not yet of age, I believe the money which your friend left to you recently, would have returned to her estate instead of going to benefit your natural heirs."

Godfrey pondered over the words "natural heirs," wondering who these might be. Coming finally to the conclusion that he had but one, namely his father, which accounted for the solicitude expressed so earnestly in the letter, he uttered an expletive, which should not have passed his youthful lips, and threw it down upon the top of that of Madame Riennes.

After this he left the room much depressed, and watching his opportunity, for the merry party in the salon who had gathered to greet him were still there drinking heavy white wine, he slipped through the back door to walk in the woods. These woods were lonely, but then they suited his mood. In truth, never had he felt more alone in his life. His father and he were utterly different, and estranged, and he had no other relatives. In friends he was equally lacking. Miss Ogilvy, whom he had begun to love, was dead, and a friend in heaven is some way off, although he did think he had heard her voice when he was

so near to joining her.

There remained no one save the Pasteur, of whom he was growing truly fond, so much so, that he wished that the old gentleman had been appointed to be his father according to the flesh. The rest of the world was a blank to him, except for Isobel, who had deserted him.

Besides, some new sentiment had entered into his relations with Isobel, whereby these were half spoiled. Of course, although he did not altogether understand it, this was the eternal complication of sex which curses more than it blesses in the world; of sex, the eating fire that is so beautiful but burns. For when that fire has passed over the flowers of friendship, they are changed into some new growth, that however gorgeous it may be, yet always smells of flame. Sex being the origin of life is necessarily also the origin of trouble, since life and trouble are inseparable, and devours the gentle joys of friendship, as a kite devours little singing birds. These go to its sustenance, it is true, and both are birds, but the kite is a very different creature from the nightingale or the lark. One of the great advantages of matrimony, if it endures long enough, is that when the sex attraction, which was its cause, has faded, or practically died, once more it makes friendship possible.

Perhaps the best thing of the little we have been told about heaven, is that in it there will be no sex. If there were, it is doubtful whether it could remain heaven, as we define that state, since then must come

desires, and jealousies, and selfishness, and disappointment; also births and deaths, since we cannot conceive sex-love without an object, or a beginning without an end. From all of which troubles we learn that the angels are relieved.

Now this wondrous, burning mantle of sex had fallen on Godfrey and Isobel, as he had learned when he saw her with the knight in armour in the garden, and everything was changed beneath its fiery, smothering folds, and for him there was no Isobel. His friend had gone, and he was left wandering alone. His distress was deep, and since he was too young to mask his feelings, as people must learn to do in life, it showed itself upon his face. At supper that night, all of the little party observed it, for he who should have been gay, was sad and spoke little. Afterwards, when the Pasteur and Godfrey went to the observatory to resume their astronomical studies, the former looked at him a while, and said:

"What is the matter, Godfrey? Tell me."

"I cannot," he replied, colouring.

"Is it so bad as that then? I thought that perhaps you had only received a letter, or letters."

"I received two of them. One was from my father, who scolds me because I was nearly killed."

"Indeed. He seems fond of scolding, your father. But that is no new thing, and one to which you should be used. How about the other letter? Was it, perchance, from Madame Riennes?"

"It is not signed, but I think so."

"Really. It is odd, but, I too, have had a letter from Madame Riennes, also unsigned, and I think, after reading it, that you may safely show me yours, and then tell me the truth of all these accusations she makes concerning you and Juliette."

Now Godfrey turned crimson.

"How can I?" he murmured. "For myself I do not care, but it seems like betraying--someone else."

"It is difficult, my boy, to betray that which is already well known, to me, among others. Had this letter, perchance, something to do with an expedition which you two young people made to search for flowers, and nothing else? Ah! I see it is so. Then you may safely show it to me, since I know all about that expedition."

So Godfrey produced the epistle, for at the moment he forgot that it contained allusions to Madame also, and holding it gingerly between his thumb and finger, handed it to him. The Pasteur read it through without



showing the slightest emotion.

"Ah!" he said, when he had finished, "in her way she is quite magnificent, that old witch. But, surely, one day, unless she repents, she will be accommodated with some particular hell of her own, since there are few worthy to share it with her. You see, my boy, what she says about Madame. Well, as I think I told her, that dear wife of mine may have had her foolish moments, like most others, if all the truth were known. But note this--there is a great difference between those who have foolish moments, of whatever sort, and those who make it their business to seek such moments; further, between those who repent of their errors and those who glory in, and try to continue them. If you have any doubt of that study the Bible, and read amongst others, of David, who lived to write the Psalms, and of Mary Magdalene, who became a saint. Also, although this did not occur to that tiger of a woman, I may have known of those moments, and even done my best to help my wife out of them, and been well rewarded"--here his kind old face beamed like the sun--"oh! yes, most gloriously rewarded. So a fig for the old witch and her tales of Madame! And now tell me the truth about yourself and Juliette, with a mind at ease, for Juliette has told it to me already, and I wish to compare the stories."

So Godfrey told him everything, and a ridiculous little tale it was.

When he had finished the Pasteur burst out laughing.

"You are indeed sinners, you two," he said, "so great, that surely you

should stand dressed in white sheets, one on either side of the altar, with the crushed flower in the middle. Ah! that is what I regret, this flower, for it is very rare. Only once have I found it in all my life, and then, as there was no lady present, I left it where it grew.

Hearken, all this is a pack of nonsense.

"Hearken again, Godfrey. Everybody things me an old fool. How can it be helped with such a face as mine, and these blue spectacles, which I must wear? But even an old fool sees things sometimes. Thus, I have seen that Madame, who had once plenty of money to play with, and longs, poor dear, for the fine things of life, is very anxious that her Juliette should make a good marriage. I have seen, too, that she has thought of you, whom she thinks much richer than you are, as a good match for Juliette, and has done her best to make Juliette think as she does, all of which is quite natural in her, and indeed, praiseworthy, especially if she likes and respects the young man. But, my boy, it is the greatest nonsense. To begin with, you do not, and never will, care for Juliette, and she does not, and never will, care for you. Your natures, ah! they are quite different. You have something big in the you, and Juliette--well, she has not. Marriage with her would be for you a misery, and for Juliette a misery also, since what have you in common? Besides, even if it were otherwise, do you think I would allow such a thing, with you so young and in my charge? Bah! be good friends with that pretty girl, and go hunt for flowers with her as much as you like, for nothing will ever come of it. Only, bet no more in kisses, for they are dangerous, and sparks sometimes set fire to haystacks."

"Indeed, I will not," exclaimed Godfrey with fervour.

"There, then, that trouble is finished." (Here, although he did not know it, the Pasteur was mistaken.) "And now, as to the rest of this letter. It is malignant, malignant, and its writer will always seek to do you ill, and perhaps, sometimes succeed. It is the price which you must pay for having mixed with such a person who mixes with the devil, though that was no fault of yours, my boy. Still, always, always in the world we are suffering from the faults of others. It is a law, the law of vicarious sacrifice, which runs through everything, why, we do not know. Still, be not afraid, for it is you who will win at the last, not she. For the rest, soon you will go away from here, since the year for which you came is almost finished, and you must turn your mind to the bigger life. I pray you when you do, not to forget me, for, my boy, I, who have no son, have learned to love you like a son, better perhaps, than had you been one, since often I have observed that it is not always fathers and sons that love each other most, frequently the other way, indeed.

"Also I pray another thing of you--that if you think I have any wisdom, or any little light in the lamp of this ugly, old body of mine, you will always take me for a counsellor, and write to me concerning your troubles, (as indeed, you must do, for remember I am your trustee of this property,) and perhaps pay attention to the advice I may give. And now let us get to our stars; they are much more amusing than Madame

Riennes. It is strange to think that the same God who made the stars also made Madame Riennes. Truly He is a charitable and tolerant God!"

"Perhaps the devil made her," suggested Godfrey.

"It may be so, it may be so, but is it not said in the Book of Proverbs, I believe, that He makes both good and evil for His own infinite ends, though what these may be, I, worm that I am, cannot pretend to understand. And now to our stars that are far away and pure, though who knows but that if one were near to them, they would prove as full of foulness as the earth?"

The Pasteur was right when he said that Madame Riennes would not cease from attempts to do evil to Godfrey, and therefore wrong when he added that the trouble she had caused was finished. Of this, that young man was made painfully aware, when a fortnight or so later another letter from his father reached him. It informed him that Mr. Knight had received an anonymous communication which stated that he, Godfrey, was leading an evil life in Lucerne, also that he was being entrapped into a marriage with Mademoiselle Boiset, whom he had been seen embracing behind some rocks. The letter ended:

"Lacking proof, I do not accept these stories as facts, although, as there is no smoke without fire, I think it probable that there

is something in them and that you are drifting into undesirable companionships. At any rate I am sure that the time has come for you to return home and to commence your studies for the Church. I have to request, therefore, that you will do this at once as I am entering your name at my own college for the next term and have so informed the trustees under Miss Ogilvy's will, who will no doubt meet the expense and give you a suitable allowance. I am writing to the Pasteur Boiset to the same effect. Looking forward to seeing you, when we can discuss all these matters in more detail, --I am, your affectionate father,  
"Richard Knight."

In dismay Godfrey took this letter to the Pasteur. For the last thing Godfrey wished to do was to leave Kleindorf and the house in which he was so welcome and so well treated, in order to return to the stony bosom of Monk's Acre Abbey.

"I have also received a letter," said Monsieur Boiset; "it seems that you and I always receive disagreeable letters together. The last were from the witch-woman Riennes, and these are from your father. He has an unpleasant way of writing, this father of yours, although he is a good man, for here he suggests that I am trying to trap you for a son-in-law, wherein I see the fat finger of that witch Riennes, who has so great a passion for the anonymous epistle. Well, if he had said that I wished to trap you for a son, he would have shot nearer to the bulls'-eye, but for a son-in-law, as you know, it is not so. Still, you

must go; indeed, it is time that you went, now that you talk French so well, and have, I hope, learnt other things also, you to whom the big world opens. But see, your father talks of your entering the Church. Tell me, is this so? If so, of course, I shall be happy."

"No," said Godfrey, shaking his head.

"Then," replied the Pasteur, "I may say that I am equally happy. It is not everyone that has a call for this vocation, and there are more ways of doing good in the world than from the floor of a pulpit. Myself, I have wondered sometimes--but let that be; it is the lot of certain of us, who think in our vanity that we could have done great things, to be obliged to do the small things, because God has so decreed. To one He gives the ten talents, to the other only one talent, or even but a franc. Whatever it be, of it we must make the best, and so long as we do not bury it, we have done well. I can only say that I have tried to use my franc, or my fifty centimes, to such advantage as I could, and hope that in some other place and time I may be entrusted with a larger sum. Oh! my boy, we are all of us drawn by the horses of Circumstance, but, as I believe, those horses have a driver who knows whither he is guiding us."

A few days later Godfrey went. His last midday meal at the Maison Blanche, before he departed to catch the night train for Paris, was rather a melancholy function. Madame, who had grown fond of him in her somewhat frivolous way, openly dropped tears into her soup. Juliette

looked sad and distraite, though inwardly supported by the knowledge that her distant cousin, the notary Jules, was arriving on the morrow to spend his vacation at the Maison Blanche, so that Godfrey's room would not be without an occupant. Indeed, in her pretty little head she was already planning certain alterations in the arrangement of the furniture, to make it more comfortable to the very different tastes of the new comer.

Still, she was truly sorry to lose her friend the Hibou, although she had not been able to fulfil her mother's wish, and make him fall in love with her, or even to fall in love with him herself. As she explained to Madame Boiset, it was of no use to try, since between their natures there were fixed not only a great gulf, but several whole ranges of the Alps, and whereas the Hibou sat gazing at the stars from their topmost peak, she was picking flowers in the plain and singing as she picked them.

The Pasteur did not make matters better by the extremely forced gaiety of his demeanour. He told stories and cracked bad jokes in the intervals of congratulating Godfrey at his release from so dull a place as Kleindorf. Godfrey said little or nothing, but reflected to himself that the Pasteur did not know Monk's Acre.

At last the moment came, and he departed with a heavy heart, for he had learned to love these simple, kindly folk, especially the Pasteur. How glad he was when it was over and he had lost sight of the handkerchiefs

that were being waved at him from the gate as the hired vehicle rolled away. Not that it was quite over, for the Pasteur accompanied him to the station, in order, as he said, to take his last instructions about the Villa Ogilvy, although, in truth, Godfrey had none to give.

"Please do what you think best," was all that he could say. Also, when several miles further on, they came to a turn in the road, there, panting on a rock, stood Juliette, who had reached the place, running at full speed, by a short cut through the woods. They had no time to stop, because the Pasteur thought that they were late for the train, which, as a matter of fact, did not leave for half-an-hour after they reached the station. So they could only make mutual signals of recognition and farewell. Juliette, who looked as though she were crying, kissed her hand to him, calling out:

"Adieu, adieu! cher ami," while he sought refuge in the Englishman's usual expedient of taking off his hat.

"It is nothing, nothing," said the Pasteur, who had also noted Juliette's tear-swollen eyes, "to-morrow she will have Jules to console her, a most worthy young man, though me he bores."

Here, it may be added, that Jules consoled her so well, that within a year they were married, and most happily.

Yet Godfrey was destined never to see that graceful figure and gay



little face again, since long before he revisited Lucerne Juliette died on the birth of her third child. And soon, who thought of Juliette except perhaps Godfrey, for her husband married again very shortly, as a worthy and domestic person of the sort would do. Her children were too young to remember her, and her mother, not long afterwards, was carried off by a sudden illness, pneumonia, to join her in the Shades. Except the Pasteur himself none was left.

Well, such is the way of this sad world of change and death. But Godfrey never forgot the picture of her standing breathless on the rock and kissing her slim hand to him. It was one of those incidents which, when they happen to a man in his youth, remain indelibly impressed upon his mind.

At the station there were more farewells, for here was the notary, who had managed Miss Ogilvy's Swiss affairs and now, under the direction of Monsieur Boiset, attended to those of Godfrey. Also such of the servants were present as had been kept on at the Villa, while among those walking about the platform he saw Brother Josiah Smith and Professor Petersen, who had come evidently to see the last of him, and make report to a certain quarter.

The Pasteur talked continually, in his high, thin voice, to cover up his agitation, but what it was all about Godfrey could never remember. All he recollected of the parting was being taken into those long arms, embraced upon the forehead, and most fervently blessed.

Then the train steamed off, and he felt glad that all was over.