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Miscellaneous.

The Miser of Marseilles.

CHAPTER I.

"Yes, you have been very ill," said Madame Guyot, as she held the mug to the boy's lips.

"I can only remember that I seemed to be burning up; and my mouth is so dry and parched!" replied Jacques.

"You called continually for water, and would sometimes scream at the top of your voice. But thank heaven, you are better now, dear; and the doctor thinks you will soon be well again."

"I am so thirsty! and I do not believe another cup of water would do any harm," said the lad.

"No, Jacques, not now," answered the mother, soothingly. "You must wait a while."

There was a knock at the front door. Madame Guyot left the chamber, and found the doctor waiting to be admitted. After conversing a few moments about the invalid, she asked, "Is there no means of alleviating his intense suffering from thirst?"

"You may allow him to drink freely now," returned the physician. "But the water is exhausted; and the authorities dole it out but once a day."

The doctor paused thoughtfully, and said, "They are compelled to do so. The drought continues; and it is feared the supply will soon be wholly cut off."

"Jean thinks the fire last night might have been arrested, but for the scarcity of water."

"No doubt of it," said the other curiously, as they went to the room in which the patient lay.

Many days passed, and Jacques was still confined to the house. His thirst continued unabated; and at last Madame Guyot told him the reason she was unable to satisfy it. He remained silent a long time, and at last inquired thoughtfully, "Mamma, does every one suffer so much from thirst as I do?"

"A great many persons do, my son," rejoined the mother, "especially the poor."

"Why, mamma, I thought water was free to all, like air and light! Do people have to buy it, like houses, and things to eat?"

"Not exactly," she returned, a little puzzled. It was evidently a new thought to her. After a minute she continued: "Water is free, Jacques; but the labor of procuring it has to be paid for. The rich can afford to dig wells; and you know a few of the wealthier class have aqueducts, which bring water from springs or lakes in the country. When there is a drought, they are amply supplied; while the poor depend on the public wells, and these always give out first."

"Why is there no public aqueduct?" asked the lad.

"Because those who feel the need of it haven't the means to build one."

"Mamma," said Jacques, after a pause, "you once told me that papa was rich."

"Yes, dear; but his factory was burned down at the time of the great conflagration, ten years ago."

"Why didn't papa build an aqueduct for the poor when he was able?" asked the boy.

"It would cost a great deal of money, my child," she replied; "and we did not feel the need of it then."

"If there had been plenty of water, couldn't his factory have been saved?"

"Perhaps it might," said the mother; "for it was believed at the time that the fire could have been extinguished, if there had been a sufficient supply of water. There

had been a severe drought that summer and autumn; and the rich were afraid to allow the firemen to use their reservoirs." At that moment Jean Guyot entered; and, as he conversed with his wife on household matters, Jacques reclined on a lounge by the open window, absorbed in thought.

Jacques' recovery was slow; and his suffering made a deep and lasting impression on his mind. Finally they were compelled to use water so muddy and brackish, that even the swine would hardly accept it, save in the last extremity. The boy's moral power came to his aid, after the conversation above related; and he struggled manfully to conquer by patience what appeared to have no other immediate remedy.

CHAPTER II.

A dozen years have elapsed since the events recorded in the last chapter. Jean Guyot is dead. His son is now a young man of twenty-three, and is standing by the very bed in the little chamber where we first made his acquaintance. Madame Guyot is lying on the couch; and the old doctor is at Jacques' side.

"Dear Jacques, I am going," she murmured, almost inaudibly; "and yet I would gladly have seen you and Annette married before my death; but heaven's will be done." The son did not reply. He knelt by the bedside, and held his mother's hand in his.

"It was your father's wish," she continued. "You were betrothed in early childhood. Her parents died soon after; and she went to live with her uncle, who has never favored your union." Jacques was still silent, and she proceeded: "Since your illness, the year of the last great drought, you are much changed in character. You have grown melancholy, and I have tried in vain to bring back your naturally cheerful temper. Remember my last request, Jacques; remember your duty to Annette."

In a few days all was over, and the young man was alone in the world; and yet why should he remain so? He had a comfortable house to live in; and his prospects were better than those of his class, for he was both industrious and economical. In fact, he was already known as penurious; and people said he was constantly growing like his uncle—an old miser who had lived in a garret for fifty years, and died very rich, before Jacques' was born.

"He'll be a perfect old curmudgeon," said M. Pardee to his wife, as Annette was entering the house in company with a handsome young man. Jacques had just left, and was still visible, walking away from the house.

"What a contrast!" said Madame Pardee. "And I think Victor is much attached to the girl."

"Attached!" exclaimed the husband: "of course he is. And he will soon become a partner in the establishment where he is now employed. Guyot is a slow, timid fellow, who will never be worth anything, because he is afraid to branch out."

"Uncle," said Annette, coming into the room. "I have almost made up my mind that you are right. Jacques is so slow, and says he cannot afford to be married for a year or two. The other girls are all getting married; and they say I am a fool to be so patient."

"Whenever you do make up your mind, just let us know," said the uncle, sternly.

Nothing after Jacques received the following note:—

"Dear Sir—Our water is exhausted. Annette wishes me to say that your last conversation with her has brought her to a decision; and that your visits will be no

longer agreeable, unless you conclude to be married during the present year.

"Very truly yours,
"JULES PARDEE.

"Poor child!" said Jacques to himself, "I fear she is very weak, and has been led away by the fine words of that spend-thrift." He paced the room nervously, and then threw himself on the lounge.

"I had not the courage," he said, "to give her up, and with her the hope of a happy home. But it is her own choice; and now I can devote my whole life to that one purpose formed so long ago."

CHAPTER III.

"Here comes old dry-bones!" cried a ragged boy to his mates, as they were at play by the roadside. It was a good many years after Annette's marriage.

"Give it to him!" shouted another, as he picked up a handful of mud, and, after rolling it into a ball, threw it at an old man who was passing by. At this all the boys began to follow the example of their leader. Some threw sticks; some, sand and dirt; and one or two sent stones whizzing through the air.

"He's an old miser!" exclaimed one of the boys. "Mamma says he is."

"He's too mean and stingy to live," said one boy, better dressed than the others. "My grandmother says he starved his mother fifty years ago, and has hated everybody ever since."

A crowd of urchins had now gathered around the old man, and some of them had picked up long sticks with which they annoyed him. One lad had knocked off his hat; and, as the man stooped to pick it up, the well-dressed boy struck his cane, and knocked it into the gutter. Several dogs were in the crowd; and the boys set them on the old man. At this juncture a carriage came up; and in it there were two young ladies, a man in the prime of life, and an old lady.

"Papa," said one of the girls, "can't you make those rude boys let the old man alone?" The gentleman looked out of the window, and said, "For shame lads, to trouble a helpless old man!"

"He's an old miser!" "He robs the poor!" "He lives in a garret!" "He hates everybody!" shouted many eager voices. The old lady looked out, and exclaimed:

"Poor Jacques! for he it is, I am sure; how changed! But the boys are right; he is a miser, and never speaks to any one, if he can avoid it."

"Do you know him, grandma?" said one of the young ladies.

"Yes, my dear," replied Annette; for it was she. "We were playmates when we were children. But Jacques had a fever, and after that grew very odd and melancholy. At last he began to grow penurious; and for many years he has been known as 'the miser.' I have not spoken with him since my marriage—which was just fifty years ago to-day—and have only seen him occasionally on the street."

Two days later a crowd of persons—men, women and children—might have been seen in front of the little dwelling-house where we first introduced our reader to Jacques Guyot and his mother.

"I live next door there," said a carpenter, in his shirt-sleeves, and without a hat on his head; "and my wife has seen no one about the house these two days."

"He promised to call at my store yesterday," said a grocer, "to pay me some money; and he is always prompt in such matters."
"And he said he would call at my shop to collect the rent," re-

marked a tailor; "and he has not been near me since."

"That's not like him," added another. "Something's wrong when Jacques Guyot isn't on hand to receive money."

An officer had arrived, and they proceeded to force the lock of the front door. There was a strong iron bolt inside; and the entrance was affected with some difficulty. Nothing was found in the first room but a parrot, which seemed to be delighted to see the new-comers.

"Poor Jacques!" it said, "poor Jacques!" Then, on seeing two or three boys in the crowd, the bird screamed, "Bad boys; poor Jacques!"

For a minute or two, there was a profound silence, not a stir or whisper broke the stillness. The officers then approached the chamber, the door of which stood slightly ajar. It was pushed open; and eagerly the crowd gazed into the room. There was the old man kneeling in front of a great iron chest, his head bent forward, and one hand on the edge of the box, while the other grasped an old brown-looking piece of paper. Then the authorities were sent for, an investigation made, and a process verbal drawn up, to the effect that the delinquent had come to his death by heart-disease.

The paper he held was a very old document, and so faded, that it was scarcely legible. The deceased had, apparently, taken it out to examine it; and he had written down at the close of the will—for such it was—the amount of his property, and the manner in which it was invested.

The officer who directed the proceedings was a man far advanced in years. He had been a comrade of Jacques' in their boyhood, but had lost sight of him for many years. There were tears in the old man's eyes as he held up the instrument, and said, in a shrill and broken voice, to the motley group which had assembled:

"My friends and townsmen, here lies the body of a man whom the whole city ridiculed and despised as a heartless miser. The boys hooted at him in the streets, and pelted him with dirt and stones. People taught their very dogs to bark at him as he passed. The poor upbraided him; and the rich sneered and pointed the finger of scorn at him as they rode by in their coaches. Let me read you his will."

He paused to wipe his spectacles, and then began in a measured tone:

MARSEILLES, Aug. 1, 1775.

When I was a child, I fell ill of a fever, and during my recovery suffered much from thirst. There had been a severe drought for many months; and the water, always poor in quality, was almost wholly exhausted. At that time my mother told me that many hundreds of the poorer class suffered in the same way. She also told me that my father and many others had lost their property by fire, chiefly because there was an insufficient supply of water to extinguish the flames. For these reasons, I bequeath all my property of every kind, after the payment of my just debts, and of my funeral expenses, to my native city of Marseilles, for the purpose of providing water-works which shall supply the entire community free of expense.

JACQUES GUYOT.

After a slight pause, the officer continued, "This is the original document, and is much faded. What I shall now read was apparently written on the day of his death, and is very brief."

By economy and industry I have acquired a fortune of more than four

million francs; and I hereby give and bequeath the same to the object above named.

JACQUES GUYOT.

Such is the pathetic story of Jacques Guyot, the miser of Marseilles.—*Old and New for June.*

FRUIT AND HEALTH.—Dr. Hunt said at a recent meeting of the Warsaw Horticultural Society, that "an absence of fruit implies doctors' bills." We have urged for many years the importance of a regular supply of ripe fruit to prevent disease and insisted that the best medicine chest which an emigrating family could carry to a newly settled country would be a box of early bearing fruit trees, currant, gooseberry and raspberry bushes, and strawberry plants. We knew a family who moved West, and took with them a very large supply of dried fruit, which lasted them throughout the first summer. None of them were sick, although disease prevailed all about them that year; but the next year, with more comforts and less privations, but with no fruit, they suffered much from sickness. Other western residents have told us that so long as they could have ripe fruit, they have been free from all disease resulting from malaria.

A correspondent of the *Herald* expresses himself in regard to cremation as follows: "Among the nation heathen and the fire-worshippers this abnormal custom, at once so shocking and revolting to sensitive natures, may have well found favor; but with us, who live in a more advanced age, and have all the advantages of free schools, lager beer, the proposed Brooklyn Bridge, the Committee of Fifty, the Grange movement, currency inflation, the temperance woman, the Arkansas muddle, the Tichborne claimant, the French Republic, and other truly beneficent blessings, I should say that the man who could deliberately offer his *corpus* a willing sacrifice to the exemplification of the Darwinian theory." Connection here is not easy to establish—but no matter.

SPONGE CAKE.—For one large loaf, beat three eggs together two minutes, add one and one-half cups of sugar and beat five minutes, add one cup of flour, one and one-half cup of water and beat two minutes, one-half teaspoonful of soda and one teaspoonful of cream of tartar, or two teaspoonfuls of baking powder in one cup of flour, salt and flavor.

TO MAKE GOOD YEAST.—Take five or six potatoes—grate fine. Then add two tablespoonfuls of sugar and one of salt. Take one quart of water and a handful of hops. Boil a few minutes, strain and stir into potatoes. Set on the stove and stir until thick. When cool add one cup of yeast.

"My son, you look like a boy who has been brought up by affectionate parents," said a kindly stranger to a golden-haired child, and the latter in an excited tone exclaimed: "Do! Just look at my back!"