

Legend of Moulin Huet eBook

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Page 1

LIZZIE A. FREETH

Author Of *The Adventures of Carl Skinflint among the Fairies*

Guernsey: Le Lievre, Printer, Star-Office,
10, Bordage Street.

1872

*Dedicated to
"The Conway boys."*

DEDICATION.

Though the story contained in the following pages has no connection with them, yet it is my wish to dedicate this little work to "The Conway Boys," and all those connected with that most invaluable institution, "H.M.S. Conway," lying at Rockferry, Birkenhead.

I have particular reason to speak well of the "Conway," as any "Boy" may know who may have been on board for the last five or six years, from the fact that two of my brothers, after passing a successful career under the careful teaching of the Rev. Henry O'Brien; L.L.D., Cork, continued to build on the good foundation laid, and left the "Conway" with credit both to their teachers and themselves. I shall always have pleasure in meeting with any "Conway Boy," and hearing of the good old ship to which I wish a long continuance of her success in preparing Boys creditably for one of the great sources of our national strength and wealth—"Our Merchant Navy."

I must just add a word of thanks to my friends in Guernsey and elsewhere, who so kindly encouraged and supported me when publishing on a former occasion, and whom I see, by reference to the subscription list, coming forward again—among some new friends—with a repetition of their kindness.

Montpelier, Guernsey, 1872.

CHAPTER I.

In the year 165-, when Cromwell had gained ascendancy in England and over the greater portion of the Channel Islands, there lived in Guernsey, at the Bay of Moulin Huet, a miller of the name of Pierre Moullin. Unlike his class generally, he was a very morose man, hard in his dealings with the poor around him, and exceedingly unsympathizing in all his domestic relations, as will appear as our story unwinds itself. Before speaking of the family surroundings of Pierre Moullin we will glance at the



circumstance which forms the basis of the present tale. Visitors to the Bay of Moulin Huet, as well as to other parts of this and the surrounding Islands, may have observed a crimson appearance on the rocks, suggesting very sanguinary ideas, but for which, geologists doubtless, would be able to account in a very satisfactory manner. Looking at a portion of the original gully through which the water runs after passing through the mill wheel, we find that this crimson appearance is very visible, and as our purpose is not to raise scientific enquiries, we will take one of the fanciful reasons (of which there are two or three in existence), for this coloring on by the hand of Nature, which has so abundantly bedecked Guernsey in general, and Moulin Huet in particular. Dipping into the Fairy lore of that part of the island, we find that many believe that some mischievous Fairies who annoyed the miller much with their nightly pranks were ground to pieces by the mill wheel becoming unfastened, and that their blood remains there to this day, as a warning to all others among the “good people” who might wish to vent their superfluous mischief in a like manner.



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So much for the Fairy lore in the Moulin Huet Chronicles; but we must turn our attention elsewhere to find out whose blood it was that thus dyed the watercourse of the Moulin Huet Mill.

At the time of which we are speaking, (the opening of the year 165-) Pierre Moullin and his two children, a son and a daughter, lived in a house adjoining the mill, in fact, the same roof covered both mill and house, which were built facing the sea. The stream of water which turned the wheel was far more powerful than the present, as the old marks (still partially visible) denote. Pierre Moullin, like many of his fellow-islanders, was a strong adherent of Cromwell; his son Hirzel was also,—though perhaps he did not go quite as far as his father in his hatred of the Royalist party. He had nevertheless acquaintances among the Royalist soldiers who were quartered in the strong fortress at Jerbourg. One in particular he had made a great friend of—Charlie Heyward. Old Pierre often used to say he knew harm would come of this friendship, and felt his words were being proved true when he discovered that an attachment was springing up between his daughter Marguerite and the young soldier. On becoming aware of this his rage was unbounded, and he repeatedly said he would be the death of Charlie if he could manage it. He tried in every way to bring his son to his way of thinking, but though Hirzel did not much like the idea of his sister marrying a Royalist soldier, and besides which another friend and fellow-countryman of his Jacques Gaultier, was also much attached to the fair Marguerite, and had long persecuted her with his unwelcome attentions, still Hirzel would have done anything rather than have injured his friend Charlie, whom he liked well, though he did not like his principles. In Jacques Gaultier the old miller saw a ready tool towards gaining his wicked end of destroying Charlie. The latter did not think Pierre's hatred reached the extent it did, at the same time he was still aware there was no chance of his ever gaining the old man's consent to his marrying Marguerite.

One night Pierre sent his son to bring Jacques Gaultier saying, he wished to speak to him about taking some flour into the town next day. Jacques was only too delighted to get any excuse for going to the mill, and immediately said he would accompany Hirzel if he "would wait until he got something which he had been making for Marguerite."

"All right, Jacques, my boy, but look sharp, as the old man seems impatient to-night."

"Thy tone and way of speaking savour far more of the style of that base soldiery which our island is burdened with, than the tone of thy father's son should be," replied Jacques.

"Very well," said Hirzel, "I will promise to mend my ways, but do be quick, as I promised to walk with my sister at seven, and now it is nigh on half-past; and she says she needs my counsel much on a matter."



“Ah! thou art an impatient lad, but it would be worse with me were I in thy case; long till she’d ask me to walk with her, not I warrant were I dying for a look at her sweet face.”



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“Don’t be down-hearted, Jacques, how know’st thou but that my sister may change her mind and look kindly on thee yet; wait till the Redcoats have gone down to the Castle, and then perhaps thy fishers’ garb may find favour in her sight, but what hast thou got there? Some woman’s trifles, which thou seem’st to understand better than I have yet learned.”

“I made these sore against my will, for I would rather see thy sister reading some edifying book than passing her time on such vanities as these are used for, they are bobbins, lad.”

“Ha, Ha,” laughed Hirzel, “were I to go into the market to-morrow and say that stern Jacques Gaultier spent his hours carving out lace bobbins, who would believe me?”

“Don’t laugh at me, Hirzel, perhaps one of these fine days thou wilt do something more foolish: when thy nineteen summers shall have ripened like mine to thirty thou wilt have different thoughts.”

“Time enough to speak when it comes. Now I love my boat better than anything else! But how we are wasting this fine evening. My Father will think we are lost or gone to be soldiers, eh Jacques? Come along, and we will see what Marguerite thinks of those little sticks of thine.”

CHAPTER II.

On the same evening of which we have been speaking Marguerite was sitting just outside the door, employed as she generally was in her leisure time at lace work, of the style which had been so fashionable during the reign of the late murdered King. How Marguerite had first learnt this “unedifying work,” we know not but as she used to work for the family of one of the King’s officers, and had seen the ladies do it, she soon with very little instruction learnt to do it well. Very pretty Marguerite looked bending over her “lace pillow,” weaving sweet thoughts into her work, if we may judge from the expression of her face which was one of those that “made one feel good to look at,” as Charlie often said, and indeed it was a good thing for him to take the remembrance of such a face through his Barrack life, which at least was a rough one.

Marguerite had not long been enjoying the quiet of her own society when she heard her Father call her. She immediately obeyed his summons with that strange feeling at her heart—that strange foreshadowing of evil—to which we have all been subject at some time in our lives. “Again at that silly work, girl; better for thee to get something to do about the house than waste thy time over that useless finery; I’ll warrant me when thou art Jacques Gaultier’s wife he will find thee other work—mending his nets, mayhap!”



“My dear Father, I will never be Jacques Gaultier’s wife. I have told him so oft: I doubt if he will ever speak to me on the subject again; he will not risk hearing rude words from me, I fancy.”

“I tell thee thou *shalt* be Jacques Gaultier’s wife, and that before long; he is coming here to-night, and I will tell him he can have thee with my full consent. Spite of thy love for red coats, thou wilt settle down here as a fisher’s wife.”



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“Father, I have promised to marry Charlie and no other, and I will do so; you used to like him ere ‘my Lord Protector Cromwell’ turned the heads, if not gained the hearts, of nearly all but the loyal soldiery! And now I will never marry any one but Charlie. You have made me speak thus to you Father; I don’t think you ought to try to make me marry one whom in my heart I despise; and who you know well is not a good man.”

“Ah! that is thy spirit, is it? Well, we’ll see; I doubt if thou wilt find that fine soldier of thine alive much longer; it would be a good and commendable deed to sweep all such from the face of the earth.”

“Yes, surely, commendable, but only in the eyes of those who murdered our poor King, Father; but we will speak no more of these things. You are tired with your day’s work, and are not like yourself to-night. I hear Hirzel’s voice, so I will go and meet him; we are to have a walk this evening, and you can talk quietly with Jacques, but not a word about me; you know what my thoughts are now, Father.”

Having thus spoken, Marguerite left the house, and after going through the garden gate, she entered a pretty lane which was abundantly blessed by Nature with a quantity of ferns and wild flowers. It was just beginning to grow dusk, and she saw not far off Jacques Gaultier and her brother. The latter was singing in his native *patois* a gay song, much to the horror of Jacques, who thought it was dreadful to do such a thing. Dropping his usual air of hypocritical stiffness (adopted by so many to fall in with the custom of the times), he hastened forward to meet Marguerite, and with a show of politeness, wonderful for the rough Jacques, raised his hat and said, “Good evening, Marguerite; it is my fault that thy brother is late; I kept him while I was getting ready some bobbins which I have made in the hope that thou wilt take them from me.”

“I thank thee, Jacques Gaultier, but I do not want thy bobbins; keep them for some other girl: I am teaching many this same work, and no doubt you will find some one glad to get them. I am going to-night where I shall get a set made by some one whom I like better than Jacques Gaultier. My father is waiting, so go to him; come Hirzel, don’t delay me longer.”

Jacques moved off muttering to himself, and with a most murderous look on his dark face. Poor Charlie would have fared badly had he been in this man’s power just now!

CHAPTER III.

We will follow Gaultier into the mill, leaving Marguerite and her brother to pursue their intention of having a walk, and hear what old Pierre has to say. On Jacques entering the room he found the old man in a state of great disquietude—in fact, in a very great rage. He had by no means recovered his daughter’s assertion that she would never marry anyone but Charles Heyward.



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“Good evening, Jacques, I sent for thee on a matter of great importance to thyself. I know thou did’st love my girl Marguerite, and that thou had’st a desire to marry her. Art thou still of that mind?” Jacques was somewhat surprised both at the old man’s manner and at this opening address, but replied, “Truly I am, but I fear she will never consent to take me for her husband; she hates me, and loves that soldier with red cheeks and bold forward air. I wish he were far from here; but perhaps she would still think of him and never look on me. Even to-night she had not a civil word for me, though I stayed at home to make these things for her and lost my place at market.”

“And serve thee right. What business hast thou to encourage the girl in her vanities? But thou said’st just now thou would’st like to have that fellow out of this. So would I, and the whole lot of those lawless soldiers. Can’st thou not think of some means to catch him”?

“Well, Father Pierre, I wouldn’t like—

“Wouldn’t like *what!*” shouted the old man, “perhaps thou art afraid of the popinjay in his red coat—eh, thou chicken-hearted fellow? Thou art not the man I took thee for. I wonder not at Marguerite speaking as she does.”

“Those are hard words and I like them not,” replied Jacques sulkily. He felt the hit contained in Pierre’s words all the more as he was not quite innocent of fear of the red coat. “I was going to say,” he continued, “I wouldn’t like Marguerite to know I was watching for her soldier, as she might warn him and put him on his guard. Ah! the hateful fellow, I wish I had my hands at his throat now.”

“Gently, gently, my good Jacques,” replied the elder hypocrite, “such language becomes not a follower of our Lord Protector Cromwell. But let us understand one another. Charlie Heyward—the name hath but an ill savour to me—must be put out of the way, and Marguerite, like her sex, will doubtless forget that he ever existed, and marry thee. I wonder where they meet? It must be somewhere near here, but I cannot find out. Now that he knows he is unwelcome to me, he comes not in here.”

“I will try and find out, Father Pierre, and then we must devise means for putting him out of the way, as thou seem’st to desire it, and, mind, my reward is Marguerite, whether she be willing or not.”

“Yea, my son, and here is my hand on it.”

After shaking hands over this black bargain, Jacques arose and said he must go, and wishing old Pierre “Good night,” he left the mill. Turning round when he had gone a few steps from the door, he clenched his hand and said, “Thou tempt’st me to commit murder, but I’ll take care that thou doest the deed thyself; bad as I am I could not take Marguerite’s hand in mine after such a foul deed.”



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It was now getting rather late, but as Jacques had no business of his own on hand, but rather wished, like so many others to be about business that was *not* his, instead of going home he thought he would go up the cliffs by a path which swept round the side of the hill till it came to fields that led to the Jerbourg fortress. On coming to a corner where the path turned up the hill, he paused to look at the scene before him, which was a lovely one: the moon was very brilliant, and the light of it made a broad pathway across the bay—such a pathway as always makes one wish to walk along in the calm to find a place of rest.

Perhaps the dark rocks which rose with a sort of sullen majesty straight up from the water side, were more to Jacques' fancy than the moon path on the water, for he was gazing intently across the bay at them, while apparently the rest of the beautiful scene was lost on him. So intent was his gaze at the rocks—on the summit of which was the Jerbourg fortress—that he did not observe the presence of two persons who were coming slowly towards him. Evidently they had not remarked him either, which was not so much to be wondered at as they were no other than Marguerite and Charlie!

Suddenly Jacques' attention was drawn to them by a merry laugh from Marguerite. On looking round and seeing who were there he ground his teeth in jealous rage and muttered to himself. "Ha! now I may discover something," and going a few steps round the corner, he turned himself into some bushes that overhung the path and bent down his head, prepared to listen to the conversation of the pair coming along. Ah! Marguerite; Ah, Charlie! how careful you would be did you know of the presence of that dark-faced Jacques with his evil designs.

Unconsciously Jacques had placed himself in an excellent position to hear and see all that was going on, as immediately beneath the bushes in which he had hidden himself there was a large block of granite on which the lovers sat down to await Hirzel, who was coming up from the bay. Little they knew what power they were putting in the hands of one who would not scruple to use it to the utmost.

"So your father is still against me, Marguerite?"

"Yes, Charlie; and that dreadful Jacques is persecuting me as much as ever with his impertinent attentions. Only this evening he brought me some bobbins which I told him he might take elsewhere."

"That reminds me I have brought with me those I have been making; perhaps, though, you prefer those made by our dark friend, eh! Marguerite?"

"Don't jest about him, Charlie; it frightens me even to think of him. I am sure he would work you a mischief if he could."



“Ah! Marguerite, don’t alarm yourself. The worst mischief he can work is to bring a shade on your sweet face. All this evening I have noticed a troubled look in those grey eyes of yours, which must be banished ere I see you again. You surely do not think I am frightened at what such a fellow as that can do! But what have I done with the bobbins? I hope I have not dropped them. Ah! well! I suppose I did not bring them with me after all, but I promise you shall have them two nights hence.”



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“No, Charlie, you must not come near here again for some time, as I am certain there is danger, and I would far rather wait to see you until you can come with safety. I feel there is something wrong going on between my father and Jacques.”

“Nonsense, Marguerite; you really must not have these idle fancies. I shall come over in the evening after dark. You come up this path, and show the light of a lantern three times if all is well. Then I will start from our barracks, and come as quickly round the cliffs as I can. You return to the mill, and go to the granary; I will climb up the mill wheel. If I remember rightly, the granary window is just over the wheel. Then I shall be able to speak to you for a few minutes, and bring the precious little bobbins.”

“Halloo! Charlie, where are you, and what have you done with my sister?”

“Oh! there is Hirzel. How he frightened me,” exclaimed Marguerite, who evidently feared everything to-night.

“She is all right, old fellow. Come along, you are just in time to take her home; I must be off, or black hole for me.”

Hirzel now appeared from the midst of the ferns and gorse, and came up on the path and joined his sister and Charlie.

“The fish won’t bite to-night, somehow; *they* are not so easily caught by a dazzling bait as some other things I could mention. Ha! Marguerite, you seem to take it to yourself. Well, perhaps I mean you, and perhaps I don’t; but come along, Father will think you are lost.”

Hirzel said “Good night” to Charlie, and moved off discreetly, leaving his sister to follow.

“Don’t forget Wednesday night, Marguerite; I shall look for your signal about eight, and if all’s well, I’ll be round by nine. I will get leave to stay out later than usual that night.”

“Well, Charlie, I won’t prevent your coming this once, but my heart sadly misgives me. I hope nothing will happen to you.”

“Don’t be foolish, Marguerite, but run away after your brother; he is looking impatient, and you know this is nicer for me than for him! He is a brave good lad, worthy of having such a sister as he has. Good bye till Wednesday. Mind, don’t forget the signal. Good night, Hirzel.”

“Well! time you said it old fellow,” shouted Hirzel, “I have knocked about all the stones in the neighbourhood with my stick, so was beginning to be at a loss for employment. Come quickly. Marguerite.”



On the way home Marguerite told her brother how Charlie was to come and see her on Wednesday, and they arranged that Hirzel should stop about the house so fearful of some violence occurring was Marguerite.

CHAPTER IV.



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When Hirzel and his sister were out of sight, Jacques got down from his hiding place and walked after them with the intention of telling old Pierre what he had heard, and also to reveal to him a plan which had suggested itself to his evil mind for destroying the young soldier when he came to visit Marguerite on the following Wednesday evening. Jacques changed his mind about going in when he came near the mill. He saw through the open door Pierre talking with his children; he thought he should not be able to see the old man alone that night, and besides, he had a feeling which kept him back from entering Marguerite's presence when he was plotting against her happiness in such a deadly manner. So Gaultier turned his steps homeward, revolving in his mind the plan he had laid out which was briefly this. The mill wheel was secured by a rope which passed round the corner of the house and into a room behind the granary, where it was fastened to a rafter. Now Gaultier thought that when Charlie was standing on the wheel, if he could get old Pierre to unfasten the rope, the sudden starting round of the wheel would precipitate Charlie into the stream below, where he must inevitably be dashed to pieces. Well thought of, Jacques Gaultier; but it is a pity thy ingenuity had not been turned to better account!

Jacques spent a most restless night, for the awfulness of the crime which he was meditating presented itself unceasingly to his mind; but, on the other hand, he pictured to himself Marguerite Charlie's wife, therefore lost to him. Not only did he hate Charlie on this score, but political feeling, as well as the frank pleasant manner of the young soldier, assisted in making Jacques look hardly on him. He could not but remark the different manner in which he was treated. People rather avoided than courted the society of "Dark Jacques Gaultier," as he was called by the boys round his neighbourhood, with the disagreeable honesty of "small boy" youth.

Jacques was one of those unhappy beings who live with their blinds down and windows shut, morally speaking; and yet who wonder that they don't get the bright light and pure air into their minds, which cause some of their brethren to be such refreshing bits in the way through life. One of these was Charlie: he went happily through life, carrying sunshine with him wherever he went: he felt sorry for Jacques, and would willingly have been friends with him, but in their relative positions this was impossible. All his overtures were received with decided rudeness on the part of Jacques, when they received any notice at all, so Charlie gave up, and took the situation as inevitable. When morning came Jacques rose very early and went down to the mill. He judged the early morning to be the best time to see the old man by himself. In this he was correct, for when he got there he found Pierre was the only one down. He was standing in the little garden in the front of the house. After they had exchanged the customary greetings of the place, the old miller asked Jacques "what had brought him out so early."



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The latter told him all he had overheard the preceding evening, and then he unfolded his plan, for Charlie's destruction, but tried to impress on the old man that he had better loosen the rope himself.

This Pierre would not listen to; said his courage might fail him; then pleaded his age, failing strength, and many other things; finally, he said, he would not do it, adding, "One would think I wanted the girl for my wife; no, do thy own business unless thou art very anxious to give Marguerite to this fine soldier. I warrant me that will be the end of it."

"Father Pierre, thou well know'st I would sooner die a thousand times than *he* should have her, so I will do the thing myself; but how shall I give reason for my presence here? Marguerite, for days, even weeks past, has been looking at me with suspicion in her eyes, as though she divined my thoughts towards that lover of hers?"

"Leave all to me. Can I not have whom I like in my own house? I see that though thou may'st not dread other things, thou art well frightened at a woman's looks. Well, well, there's something in that, too."

"Yes, Father Pierre, there is; much sometimes."

"But leave looks to mind themselves now, and I will show you what to do, and where to go. You can well be in the room behind the granary, as one or two of the rafters need mending. Let Marguerite see you leave your work and start for home; then when she goes to show her light say 'All is well,' thou can'st come back and be ready for the bird with his bright plumage. Ha! he would go elsewhere and pipe his song, did he know the manner in which we are preparing his perch!"

"That is all well; the popinjay can't escape us now."

"Come in, Jacques, and have some breakfast with us; I think I hear Marguerite busy at it now."

"Marguerite will not have a welcome for me, I know; but as she is to be my wife, she may as well get used to my presence now."

When they entered Marguerite turned round wondering who could be with her Father at such an early hour. On seeing who it was, her face clouded, and she immediately experienced that same feeling of fear come over her as she always had of late when she saw her Father and Jacques Gaultier together. She said "good morning" to them, and then resumed the preparation for the morning meal. Jacques' dark eyes followed her all about the room; doubtless he was thinking of the time when she would be performing the same duties under his roof, while she—Well, we will not penetrate into her thoughts; no doubt she would prefer keeping them to herself, so we will let her, in the certainty that the train of thought was very different to that of Jacques Gaultier.



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Hirzel now appeared, announcing that he was ready to eat up all, his sister included. Breakfast being ready, they all drew their chairs near the table, Marguerite begging Hirzel to come and sit near her, as she wanted to speak to him. The boy saw that she wished to keep Gaultier off, and with his usual teasing way, he made signs behind that worthy's back to the effect that his sister ought to ask him to sit by her. However, when Hirzel saw that his sister looked really troubled, he came immediately like a good brother and did what his sister wished. All this was not lost on that wretched Jacques, who between present circumstances, and his own thoughts of what must come before he gained Marguerite, had by no means an enviable position.

During the repast Pierre informed Hirzel that on the afternoon of the following day he had a particular message to send him on, as it was one some way off, he might take the cart or ride if he preferred it.

"Very well, Father, I'll go for you; riding is best if I have nothing to carry."

"And thou, Jacques," said old Pierre, "will come after thy fishing is past and mend the rafters I told thee of in the room behind the granary." "But Father," said Hirzel, "why not let me do that work for you? I would like to, and ride for this message the day after."

Hirzel said this, because he remembered his sister's arrangement with Charlie, and he knew that she particularly wished him to be at home, especially now that there was some chance of Jacques being about.

"Thou would'st like to work indoors? Why what has come to thee Hirzel?"

"You had better do what Father wishes Hirzel," said Marguerite. She saw her brother was troubled as to what was best to be done; also, she was very much afraid lest he should say something to betray matters. So she thought she would settle it quietly, especially when she remembered that Charlie would not come until she had shown the light, which she firmly resolved should not be shown until Jacques was well out of the place.

Breakfast being over, Jacques took his leave, and the others dispersed to their various occupations—each of the four with very different thoughts and hopes as to what the morrow might bring forth, but at present, like all the rest of mankind, their first business was to get through "to-day" as well as they could.

CHAPTER V.

The morning following the events recorded in the last chapter was ushered in with bright sunshine, and everything pleasant, so far as outward appearances went, in and out of the mill, though some hearts were restless or uneasy as to how it would be when the sun rose to run his accustomed course the next morning. Charlie was perhaps the

happiest of all those whose fortunes we are now following. He had but slight clouds to dim his horizon; at least his horizon as seen by his own eyes. He went cheerfully and gladly through



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his duties that morning, and never did he more fully merit the name of "Happy Charlie" bestowed on him by his comrades in the gallant 22nd than he did on the morning in question. The truth was he was beginning to tire of old Pierre Moullin's determined refusal to have anything to say to him in the character of son-in-law. He had made up his mind (and being of a hopeful nature, considered more than half the battle was fought in consequence), that come what might, he would prevail on Marguerite to marry him at once, and trust to gain her Father's forgiveness when the deed was done beyond recall. And so our friend Charlie whistled and sang through this day, building all sorts of pleasant castles about his future life, little thinking what a train was being laid, to which, if the match were applied, he and his castles would be blown up in a more sanguinary, if not more decisive manner, than these airy fabrications generally have to yield to!

Hirzel had been detained on various pretexts by his Father; in consequence he was rather late in starting for this important business on which he was to be despatched. From the time he managed to get off, it was not at all likely that he could be back before 10 o'clock. Marguerite's heart quite misgave her when she heard this, but as time moved on, and it came to half-past 7, she was re-assured to find that Jacques Gaultier was putting away his tools, and finally left the house, saying that he had "work for himself at home, but would return the following morning to finish repairing those rafters that had so suddenly got out of repair."

Matters seemed better still when her Father said he did not feel at all himself that night, and that he thought he would go off to bed. Marguerite wished him "Good night;" and at 8 o'clock found herself alone and mistress of her own actions. She might now have brought Charlie into the house, but that she remembered her Father's prohibition of such a thing; and at least she thought it best and fittest to leave him master in his own house, at the same time reserving to herself liberty to control her own actions. This was fair enough.

At about 8 o'clock, as agreed on, Marguerite took her little lantern, and going round the path to where they had been standing two evenings before, she flashed the light three times trusting that Charlie would be able to see it. Meanwhile Jacques had come out from one of the mill sheds, where he had been concealed, and went quickly up to the room behind the granary, only pausing on his way to tell old Pierre that he was there.

We will leave him waiting for his prey, with a dark sardonic smile on his ill-favoured countenance, and return to Marguerite, who is waiting in the granary for her lover, confident that "all is well," and having no thoughts but pleasant ones concerning the coming meeting. Even the remembrance of Hirzel's absence brings no disquietude with it. Her thoughts shape themselves into a blessing when her brother's bright manly face comes before her, and then she bends all her attention to listen for Charlie's approach.



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She had been waiting for rather more than an hour, when she heard her name called softly; then up Charlie scrambled, and when standing on the wheel his head comes just half way up the window.

“Well, here I am, Marguerite; I hope you were not alarmed at the time I have taken, but I was on duty when I saw your signal, and it was some little time before I could get away.”

“I was getting a little anxious, Charlie, but ‘all is well’ now that you have come.”

“Ah, that is right! but how are you to-night, little woman—all the fancies fled?”

“Almost Charlie, but still not quite; you will think me very foolish, I know, but everything was so beautifully arranged for my seeing you easily to-night that I can’t help thinking that some one else has been arranging too for some purpose of his own.”

“Come, come, you little croaker, try and put such thoughts out of your pretty head, and remember I ‘deserve the fair’ after having been so ‘brave’ as to mount this rickety wheel, but I wish you would take this parcel from me; the bobbins are in it, which I have perilled my life to bring! I hope you see my devotion clearly, eh?”

“I do, indeed, Charlie, and now I shall work all the better and be more in earnest; I don’t mean you to have all the work on your shoulders when we marry; I know I shall be able to get sale for my lace amongst the beautiful ladies you tell me of in England.”

“Ah, Marguerite, that is just what I wanted to speak to you about; I suppose your Father still wishes you to marry that rascal Gaultier? By the way, I believe he or some one very like him was sneaking round the cliffs on Monday night. After I left you, I fancied I saw him; it might be *only* fancy. Did you see anything of him?”

“I wish—.”

* * * * *

Alas! poor Charlie! Will you speak again to finish that sentence and tell what you wish? For suddenly the mill wheel has turned round with a tremendous crash, and the brave young soldier has been hurled down! And Marguerite, what of her? With one agonized cry she rushed to the door intending to run outside to see if anything could be done for Charlie, when she came face to face with Jacques Gaultier! In an instant it all flashed on her that he must have wrought this terrible work, and, overcome by grief and horror, she sank down in a deadly faint. Bad man as he was, Jacques was really overcome at the consequences of his act, for he thought he had also killed Marguerite. He called loudly to her Father, who came up hurriedly. He was also seriously alarmed when his gaze rested on his child lying like one dead on the floor. Between them they carried her downstairs and laid her on her bed. They applied such restoratives as suggested



themselves, but as everything was for sometime quite unavailing, a more miserable pair it would have been difficult to discover.

Hirzel now came in. He was running upstairs to the granary when his Father called him in to see if he could do anything for his poor sister.



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“A pretty night’s work this,” he said, when he came into the room and saw his sister lying there.

At this moment she opened her eyes, and he went close to her and raised her in his arms. With an expression of deep thankfulness, Marguerite’s first words were to send that murderer, Jacques Gaultier, away out of her sight. Hirzel ordered him to leave the room, with more fierceness in his tone than anyone had heard there before.

“Oh! Hirzel, what shall I do without Charlie? Stay with me, only you, and I will tell you all.”

Hearing this her Father left the room, and Hirzel bent down and whispered to her—

“Charlie is alive and well. He told me to tell you this himself.”

“Oh! Hirzel, you are deceiving me. How could he be alive after such a dreadful fall? It was terrible.”

Here Marguerite’s fortitude gave way, and she indulged in a flood of tears, while Hirzel looked at her with the masculine helplessness usual on such occasions, and indeed it seemed to cost the fine tender-hearted fellow an effort to keep from joining in them too. At last he said, “Well Marguerite, if you don’t stop, I’ll go off, and tell Charlie you only cried after you heard he was alive and well.”

“Ah! Hirzel, is that not the way with our sex. Sometimes, to cry over the best and happiest times while the worst is bravely borne?”

Hirzel then told Marguerite how he had met Charlie just outside at the foot of the lane, considerably bruised and knocked about, though without any internal injuries. How he escaped was nothing short of a miracle, one of those things which occasionally happen, perhaps, to show what can be done when there is the will to do it.

There was an iron loop which projected about a foot from the walls, this Charlie made a spring at after the manner of a gymnast; he caught it, and although it came away in his grasp, yet it broke his fall, and what was of more importance, changed the direction of his course to the brickwork alongside the wheel, instead of the water under it. Once on the brickwork he jumped down into the garden, and went out into the lane, where he met Hirzel.

Charlie did not for a moment suspect that there was anything but pure accident in what had happened, and as he met Hirzel just at that moment he judged it wisest not to return near the house in case he should get Marguerite into trouble; but after telling Hirzel to assure his sister that he was safe, he set off to the fortress, little thinking he was supposed to be lying dead at the foot of the Moulin Huet cliffs, carried there by the mill stream.



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Marguerite now told to her brother, her suspicions of how all had happened. He wished to go immediately and tax Jacques with the crime; but, in deference to his sister's wishes, remained where he was. The noise of the mill wheel turning round suddenly ceased, and on Hirzel's going up to ascertain the cause, he found his Father tying up the rope in the room behind the granary. This rope passed out of a small round hole in the wall of this room, and round the corner of the house where it was attached to the wheel. The window through which Charlie and Marguerite had been talking was rather a large one, but had some iron bars across which had prevented Marguerite leaning out to see what had become of Charlie. This perhaps was as well, for at best his descent would have been extremely trying to look at.

The next morning did not bring Jacques to finish his work, but in the evening he appeared, after vainly trying to induce Marguerite to speak to him, which naturally she was very loath to do, went and commenced his work, which he went steadily on with, though he was very much fatigued by having no rest the preceding night, and now had been out fishing all day. He sat down to rest for a few minutes when he fell asleep. After dark old Pierre came round to lock all the doors, as was his nightly custom. Looking in and not seeing Jacques he supposed he had gone and locked that door also. Pierre then went to rest himself, and all were buried in slumber, with the exception of Hirzel, who had gone over to Jerbourg to acquaint Charlie with all that had happened. About 9 o'clock, as Charlie and Hirzel were coming out of the barracks, they saw flames rising in the direction of the mill. It was but the work of a moment for Charlie to run back and get leave for some of his comrades to come with him, and off they set for the mill. On arriving there they found their surmises correct: both house and mill were enveloped in flames. Marguerite and her Father were safely out, but the latter was in a dreadful state of misery at seeing all his property go like this. Charlie went up to him after he had spoken to Marguerite, and said he would try and save the wheel for future murders. Seeing Charlie, whom he fully thought to be dead, and hearing these words, the old man shrank back with horror. He fell on his knees and begged Charlie to forgive him, adding that it was not he who had done it, but Jacques. Charlie raised the old man, saying all should be forgiven and forgotten on one condition. That condition we need hardly state was permission to marry Marguerite without further trouble. Until Pierre had said so Charlie, had no idea that he knew any thing of his intended destruction. It saddened him very much and made him very sorry for the old man; however, he had other things to think of, so he set all the other soldiers to hand up water from the mill stream, which was now running for some little time. Suddenly a shout from one of the soldiers called Charlie's

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attention, and on going to see what it was, he found him dragging a body out of the mill stream. With some difficulty he recognized Jacques Gaultier, as it was rather dark just there. Jacques revived a little, and told Charlie how on waking he had found the room full of smoke, and finding the door locked he broke it down, but the door of the granary resisted all his efforts, so he put all his strength towards tearing the bars from the window. He succeeded in this and got out on the wheel, but directly he tried to get down the rope—which doubtless had been much charred by the flames—gave way, and down he went. He had seen from the window, Charlie and his comrades coming, and this endued him with further strength, but all to no purpose. He implored Charlie's forgiveness, and turning over with a groan he died.

Little now remains to be told. Owing to the exertions of the soldiers some of the machinery was saved, but the old man never made any use of it; he had too great a horror of anything like a mill after his past experiences. Charlie and Marguerite were soon married. They lived at Castle Cornet for some time, and after the restoration went with the Regiment to England, where Marguerite could display her loyalty undisturbed. Hirzel remained heart-whole to the last we hear of him, and after his Father's death went and lived with his sister in England, to see for himself some of the wonders which Charlie had described to him in his own little Island home.

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