

## THE POPPIES IN THE CORN.

When the mist in pearl columns  
Rises o'er the hilltops gray,  
And the dews of early dawning  
In the grasses melt away,  
Then the sun in softened splendor  
Sheds his first rays thru' the morn,  
Lo, they kiss the si'opy faces  
Of the poppies in the corn.

O'er the scene there falls a sil'nee,  
All the twittering song-birds still—  
As the lark, his far flight taking,  
Circles toward the distant hill,  
Up and upward, flies triumphant,  
Earth-born warbler, heaven-born,  
Till a long steals down from cloudland  
O'er the poppies in the corn.

Slowly comes the lurch of morn,  
Not a leaf sways on the tree,  
Not a dew-drop on the grasses,  
Not the whisper of a bee,  
Glow the sun in scorching fury,  
One wee butterfly torn  
Panting fails in dying struggles  
On the poppies in the corn.

Soft a breeze comes rustling vir,  
Sighing thru' the cedar tall,  
Stirs the grapes in hanging clusters  
On the mold'ring vine-clad wall,  
Sinks the sun in amber glory,  
Dies the day as night is born,  
One wee star peeps through the tw light  
At the poppies in the corn.

—Maud E. Kendrick, in *Bos' Globe*.

## JEAN DE THOMMERAY.

It was in the country, near the forest not far from the Seine, in the modest villa where I hoped to spend my old age, that I saw Jean de Thommeray for the first time. He was scarcely twenty-two. Some pages signed with my name had won his heart to me, and he presented himself with no other recommendation than his good appearance and his desire to know me. The sympathy of the young has an irresistible attraction. It is very sweet to be able to draw them when one is approaching the autumn of life. I was the more willing to give him a welcome that I could do so without an effort, for he was really charming. I see him now as he stood at my gate, a slender, noble-looking fellow, his face shadowed with the down of youth; straight nose, blue eyes, fair forehead; his hair, fine and of an ayst blonde, waved above the temples. His ease of manner and language, the elegant simplicity that showed in his dress, everything reflected credit on the fireside by which he had grown up.

It was a clear April day; we walked together in the woods of Meudon. Though many years divided us, we conversed like two friends. He had generous impulses, holy illusions, all the happy and ardent feelings of his age. He believed in the good, he admired the beautiful, he dreamed of love and glory. Where did he come from? In what latitude was he born? What star had shone over his cradle? Who and what was this Jean de Thommeray, who at the end of an hour's talk had spoken neither of women, nor horses, nor yet of his friends' incomes?

Thanks to the confidences he gave me without my asking, I soon found out all about him. His father, who came of a good old Breton family, had studied in Paris in the days when patriotism and liberty ranked as high as letters and arts among the young men of modern ideas. The Breton gentleman felt the influences of this awakening in the flood of thought, and, without giving up the traditions of honor in his family, he set sail with the current. He loved, with a pure, delicate, romantic love, a poor, young girl of good family, of Irish descent, and married her. When his studies ended, he went back to Brittany. The hereditary domain that sheltered their tenderness was in one of the wild and quiet valleys of Old America. It consisted of a farm and manor, of a castle, which was protected by an old grove from the winds that swept across the valley from the mountains. Here Monsieur de Thommeray lived, like his forefathers, the life of a country gentleman, hunting, riding horseback, visiting neighbors, improving his land; while his wife "la belle Irlandaise" as they called her, gave herself up to domestic affairs and governed her household with grace and authority. Though he had taken root in this primitive life, he was faithful to the tastes and inclinations of his youthful days. He never went beyond the circle of his remembrances, and for him nothing beyond them seemed to exist. Time, which never stops, seemed to have forgotten him on the way. It was a happy family—he, his wife, and three sons. The elder and the second son showed no taste for study or literature, but Jean, the little one, more delicate than his brothers, grew up under his mother's gentle wing with a strong sense of the beauties and harmonies of creation and a love of books. While his brothers walked and rode over the farm and led a lively, rustic life, Jean, read, dreamed, or composed little Breton poems that his mother proudly compared to "Moore's Irish Melodies," and that excited the admiration of his father. His brothers, too, were proud of his gifts and his charming ways, and even of his weakness when a little fellow, for that seemed to claim their protection. But one morning, not long before the time I first met him, Jean embraced them all and set out for Paris, filled with the same illusions that his father had had before him.

Two or three years passed. I did not know what had become of Jean. I supposed that he must have left Paris, and that he was living peacefully in his father's home. He had evidently forgotten me. I was not surprised at that. As for me, I thought of him from time to time. A journey I made into Brittany revived in my heart the memory of my young friend, when I learned one day that I was only a few leagues from the Manor of Thommeray. I arrived at nightfall at the house I loved to think of as the asylum of happiness. I found the family assembled, and, not seeing Jean, naturally I asked for him. M. de Thommeray answered me briefly. "Monsieur," he said, "we have only two sons now—these whom you see. We never speak of the one we have lost."

Was Jean dead? No; the attitude of M. de Thommeray, his voice, his language and his gesture were not those of a father who has buried his son. During my visit his mother found an opportunity of speaking to me alone. She told of her son and of the sorrow he had brought upon them—how he had compromised himself, falling lower and lower from day to day, in the wicked world of Paris, and how his family no longer looked upon him as their own. She made me promise to go to see him, to write to her and to let her know how he lived, to hide nothing from her. Could this be the same Jean de Thommeray whom I had known? How could he have fallen so low from the heights where I had left him?

I went back to Paris. I found him living in richly furnished apartments, and held out my hand to me with an easy grace, as if he had not a pang in the world—if the luxury, in the midst of which I had surprised him, had been bought by the efforts of a glorious and honest labor, instead of the fruits of the gaming table. He began to excuse himself for having so long neglected me.

"All that is excused," I said. "I have living from Brittany where I saw your parents, and as you have always spoken of them with respect, I am only fulfilling a duty when I come to tell you of the sad state in which I found them."

"Thanks, Monsieur, you need not go on." He interrupted me calmly and with a tone of great urbanity. "It is nothing new you tell me. My way of living is a subject of scandal and trouble to my family. My brothers disown me, my mother weeps in secret, my father no longer knows me. Well, sir, be my judge. I am not a saint. Not being able to reform the age as I once thought of doing, you remember, I have ended by adopting its ways and wearing its livery. It seems to me that, in a society where money is a god, not to be rich would be an impiety. I have played, I do not deny it, and I have always won. By my skillful playing I keep up the state of the house and its belongings. I won by my luck. My parents lived according to the manners of their time. I live according to the ways of my own."

It was sad to hear this young man exult in his fall and glory in his ruin. All about him betrayed the habits of the life he now led. His very smile, once so sweet and clear, had a cold expression like the hard luster of steel. He told me his story—how he had been basely deceived and robbed of his last centime by a woman whom he thought deserving of his heart's devotion, in spite of his mother's penetration, which had sounded the depths of unworthiness in the character hidden beneath the charms of beauty and an artless manner; how, when he came to his senses, his youth was dead, and a new and a worse man had come to live within him. He believed no more in anything good.

"There are no longer any women!" he said.

"You are mistaken," I replied. "We have mothers, sisters, friends, wives, who every day and every hour quietly accomplish miracles of goodness, devotion and charity. Society is not so bad as you think it, but you, you, sir, are much worse than I feared. Still, why not return to your family, who are grieving for you? Your youth is not dead; it is waiting for you there."

"It is too late!" I must confess to you that since my sojourn at Baden the gambling fever has never left me. Let us live and enjoy ourselves—after us the deluge! It is now my hour for the bourse, and to my regret I am obliged to leave you."

"One word more," I said, rising. "Until now you have been successful; but fortune will not always be on your side. What will you do when she betrays you? For that day will surely come."

"Let it come. I am ready."

"You will kill yourself," I said. He did not answer. "And God—and your mother?" After a moment's hesitation he held out his hand. I took it.

"You have fallen low indeed, my boy. This explains the sorrow of your family. I understand it, and I share it. But, even now, do not give you up!" He smiled sadly and I left him.

A few days after this I wrote to Madame de Thommeray and gave an account of my interview with Jean. I did not try to see him again. Other thoughts occupied me. War was declared. The enemy was already marching on Paris; the world was filled with the noise of our disasters.

Whoever did not see Paris during the last days of the siege cannot form an idea of the physiognomy of the city at that time. The confusion and flight brought on by the first news of our defeat gave way to many thoughts and noble resolves. Every one was ready for great sacrifices. A current of heroism ran through all hearts. Men watched the ramparts; citizens, transformed into soldiers, drilled in the squares and gardens with their muskets and rifles; all classes mingled and fused together, forming only one soul—the soul of their country. I lived in the streets during those feverish days, attracted by every noise, mingling in the crowd, gathering all the news. One morning on the Quai Voltaire, between the Pont-Royal and the Bridge des Saints-Pères, I met Jean, fair, frank, and rustic life, Jean, read, dreamed, or composed little Breton poems that his mother proudly compared to "Moore's Irish Melodies," and that excited the admiration of his father. His brothers, too, were proud of his gifts and his charming ways, and even of his weakness when a little fellow, for that seemed to claim their protection. But one morning, not long before the time I first met him, Jean embraced them all and set out for Paris, filled with the same illusions that his father had had before him.

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which we were accustomed. Jean leaned against the parapet. I saw that he was very pale. In the meantime, the confused mass approached nearer and nearer, and became less and less confused. Now, I recognized the *chant de la Bretagne* and then sound of the *binioù*; the *garde mobiles* of Finistère were entering Paris. The tuft or ermine in their military caps, the gray cloth uniforms, the knapsack strapped behind, tell all about them as they advance with a correct and firm step; marching by platoons and filling the whole width of the *quai*. At their head on horseback rides the chief of the battalion; behind him, the chaplain and two lieutenants. The head of the column is now only a few steps from us. It is my turn to be startled. I look at Jean. His hand falls upon mine. "My father! My two brothers!" he says in a low voice. And he sees passing before him, under their most striking forms, the eternal truths that he has so long disowned or forgotten—God, country, duty and family! The long pageant of his honest and noble days defiles before him singing as the troops go by. I give him the last blow. One of the balconies of the *quai* I have just seen his mother.

"You unfortunate fellow!" I exclaim. "You said there were no longer any women. Look, there is one; do you recognize her?"

Madeleine de Thommeray waves her handkerchief, the Brontë chanted redoubles in fervor, and the chief of the battalion, with the courtesy of a knightly gentleman, bows in his saddle and salutes her with his sword. Mute and motionless, with sad eyes and dry eyelids, Jean seems turned to stone. I leave him to the mercy of God.

The next day, in the courtyard of the Louvre, the Commandant de Thommeray called the roll of his battalion. The call finished, he passed down the ranks, when a soldier stepped out and said:

"Commandant, one of your men was forgotten."

"What is your name?"

"My name is Jean," answered the volunteer, lowering his eyes.

"Who are you?"

"A man who has lived badly."

"What do you wish?"

"To die well."

"Are you rich or poor?"

"Yesterday I possessed an ill-gotten fortune. I have resigned it voluntarily. Now I have only my musket and my knapsack."

"That is well." And with a gesture he ordered the young man to return to the ranks. There was a long silence. The Commandant had again taken his place in front of the battalion. "Jean de Thommeray!" he called out. A manly voice answered: "Present!"—[From the French of Jules Sandeau.]

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