

About The Monk Amador

Honore de Balzac

About the Monk Amador, Who was a Glorious Abbot of Turpenay

One day that it was drizzling with rain--a time when the ladies remain gleefully at home, because they love the damp, and can have at their apron strings the men who are not disagreeable to them--the queen was in her chamber, at the castle of Amboise, against the window curtains. There, seated in her chair, she was working at a piece of tapestry to amuse herself, but was using her needle heedlessly, watching the rain fall into the Loire, and was lost in thought, where her ladies were following her example. The king was arguing with those of his court who had accompanied him from the chapel--for it was a question of returning to dominical vespers. His arguments, statements, and reasonings finished, he looked at the queen, saw that she was melancholy, saw that the ladies were melancholy also, and noted the fact that they were all acquainted with the mysteries of matrimony.

"Did I not see the Abbot of Turpenay here just now?" said he.

Hearing these words, there advanced towards the king the monk, who, by his constant petitions, rendered himself so obnoxious to Louis the Eleventh, that that monarch seriously commanded his provost-royal to remove him from his sight; and it has been related in the first volume of these Tales, how the monk was saved through the mistake of Sieur Tristan. The monk was at this time a man whose qualities had grown rapidly, so much so that his wit had communicated a jovial hue to his face. He was a great favourite with the ladies, who crammed him with wine, confectioneries, and dainty dishes at the dinners, suppers, and merry-makings, to which they invited him, because every host likes those cheerful guests of God with nimble jaws, who say as many words as they put away tit-bits. This abbot was a pernicious fellow, who would relate to the ladies many a merry tale, at which they were only offended when they had heard them; since, to judge them, things must be heard.

"My reverend father," said the king, "behold the twilight hour, in which ears feminine may be regaled with certain pleasant stories, for the ladies can laugh without blushing, or blush without laughing, as it suits them best. Give us a good story--a regular monk's story. I shall listen to it, i'faith, with pleasure, because I want to be amused, and so do the ladies."

"We only submit to this, in order to please your lordship," said the queen; "because our good friend the abbot goes a little too far."

"Then," replied the king, turning towards the monk, "read us some Christian admonition, holy father, to amuse madame."

"Sire, my sight is weak, and the day is closing."

"Give us a story, then, that stops at the girdle."

"Ah, sire!" said the monk, smiling, "the one I am thinking of stops there; but it commences

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at the feet."

The lords present made such gallant remonstrances and supplications to the queen and her ladies, that, like the good Bretonne that she was, she gave the monk a gentle smile, and said--

"As you will, my father; but you must answer to God for our sins."

"Willingly, madame; if it be your pleasure to take mine, you will be a gainer."

Everyone laughed, and so did queen. The king went and sat by his dear wife, well beloved by him, as everyone knows. The courtiers received permission to be seated--the old courtiers, of course, understood; for the young ones stood, by the ladies' permission, beside their chairs, to laugh at the same time as they did. Then the Abbot of Turpenay gracefully delivered himself of the following tale, the risky passages of which he gave in a low, soft, flute-like voice:--

About a hundred years ago at the least, there occurred great quarrels in Christendom because there were two popes at Rome, each one pretending to be legitimately elected, which caused great annoyance to the monasteries, abbeys, and bishoprics, since, in order to be recognised by as many as possible, each of the two popes granted titles and rights to each adherent, the which made double owners everywhere. Under these circumstances, the monasteries and abbeys that were at war with their neighbours would not recognise both the popes, and found themselves much embarrassed by the other, who always gave the verdict to the enemies of the Chapter. This wicked schism brought about considerable mischief, and proved abundantly that error is worse in Christianity than the adultery of the Church.

Now at this time, when the devil was making havoc among our possessions, the most illustrious abbey of Turpenay, of which I am at present the unworthy ruler, had a heavy trial on concerning the settlements of certain rights with the redoubtable Sire de Cande, an idolatrous infidel, a relapsed heretic, and most wicked lord. This devil, sent upon earth in the shape of a nobleman, was, to tell the truth, a good soldier, well received at court, and a friend of the Sieur Bureau de la Riviere; who was a person to whom the king was exceedingly partial--King Charles the Fifth, of glorious memory. Beneath the shelter of the favour of this Sieur de la Riviere, Lord of Cande did exactly as he pleased in the valley of the Indre, where he used to be master of everything, from Montbazou to Usse. You may be sure that his neighbours were terribly afraid of him, and to save their skulls let him have his way. They would, however, have preferred him under the ground to above it, and heartily wished him bad luck; but he troubled himself little about that. In the whole valley the noble abbey alone showed fight to this demon, for it has always been a doctrine of the Church to take into her lap the weak and suffering, and use every effort to protect the oppressed, especially those whose rights and privileges are menaced.

For this reason this rough warrior hated monks exceedingly, especially those of Turpenay, who would not allow themselves to be robbed of their rights either by force or stratagem. He was well pleased at the ecclesiastical schism, and waited the decision of our abbey, concerning which pope they should choose, to pillage them, being quite ready to recognise the one to whom the abbot of Turpenay should refuse his obedience. Since his return to his castle, it was his custom to torment and annoy the priests whom he encountered upon his

domains in such a manner, that a poor monk, surprised by him on his private road, which was by the water-side, perceived no other method of safety then to throw himself into the river, where, by a special miracle of the Almighty, whom the good man fervently invoked, his gown floated him on the Indre, and he made his way comfortably to the other side, which he attained in full view of the lord of Cande, who was not ashamed to enjoy the terrors of a servant of God. Now you see of what stuff this horrid man was made. The abbot, to whom at that time, the care of our glorious abbey was committed, led a most holy life, and prayed to God with devotion; but he would have saved his own soul ten times, of such good quality was his religion, before finding a chance to save the abbey itself from the clutches of this wretch. Although he was very perplexed, and saw the evil hour at hand, he relied upon God for succour, saying that he would never allow the property of the Church to be touched, and that He who had raised up the Princess Judith for the Hebrews, and Queen Lucretia for the Romans, would keep his most illustrious abbey of Turpenay, and indulged in other equally sapient remarks. But his monks, who--to our shame I confess it--were unbelievers, reproached him with his happy-go-lucky way of looking at things, and declared that, to bring the chariot of Providence to the rescue in time, all the oxen in the province would have to be yoked it; that the trumpets of Jericho were no longer made in any portion of the world; that God was disgusted with His creation, and would have nothing more to do with it: in short, a thousand and one things that were doubts and contumelies against God.

At this desperate juncture there rose up a monk named Amador. This name had been given him by way of a joke, since his person offered a perfect portrait of the false god Aegipan. He was like him, strong in the stomach; like him, had crooked legs; arms hairy as those of a saddler, a back made to carry a wallet, a face as red as the phiz of a drunkard, glistening eyes, a tangled beard, was hairy faced, and so puffed out with fat and meat that you would have fancied him in an interesting condition. You may be sure that he sung his matins on the steps of the wine-cellar, and said his vespers in the vineyards of Lord. He was as fond of his bed as a beggar with sores, and would go about the valley fuddling, faddling, blessing the bridals, plucking the grapes, and giving them to the girls to taste, in spite of the prohibition of the abbot. In fact, he was a pilferer, a loiterer, and a bad soldier of the ecclesiastical militia, of whom nobody in the abbey took any notice, but let him do as he liked from motives of Christian charity, thinking him mad.

Amador, knowing that it was a question of the ruin of the Abbey, in which he was as snug as a bug in a rug, put up his bristles, took notice of this and of that, went into each of the cells, listened in the refectory, shivered in his shoes, and declared that he would attempt to save the abbey. He took cognisance of the contested points, received from the abbot permission to postpone the case, and was promised by the whole Chapter the Office of sub-prior if he succeeded in putting an end to the litigation. Then he set off across the country, heedless of the cruelty and ill-treatment of the Sieur de Cande, saying that he had that within his gown which would subdue him. He went his way with nothing but the said gown for his viaticum: but then in it was enough fat to feed a dwarf. He selected to go to the chateau, a day when it rained hard enough to fill the tubs of all the housewives, and arrived without meeting a soul, in sight of Cande, and looking like a drowned dog, stepped bravely into the courtyard, and took shelter under a sty-roof to wait until the fury of the elements had calmed down, and placed himself boldly in front of the room where the owner of the chateau should be. A servant perceiving him while laying the supper, took pity on him, and told him to make himself scarce, otherwise his master would give him a horsewhipping, just to open the conversation, and asked him what made him so bold as to enter a house

where monks were hated more than a red leper.

"Ah!" said Amador, "I am on my way to Tours, sent thither by my lord abbot. If the lord of Cande were not so bitter against the poor servant of God, I should not be kept during such a deluge in the courtyard, but in the house. I hope that he will find mercy in his hour of need."

The servant reported these words to his master, who at first wished to have the monk thrown into the big trough of the castle among the other filth. But the lady of Cande, who had great authority over her spouse, and was respected by him, because through her he expected a large inheritance, and because she was a little tyrannical, reprimanded him, saying, that it was possible this monk was a Christian; that in such weather thieves would succour an officer of justice; that, besides, it was necessary to treat him well to find out to what decision the brethren of Turpenay had come with regard to the schism business, and that her advice was put an end by kindness and not by force to the difficulties arisen between the abbey and the domain of Cande, because no lord since the coming of Christ had ever been stronger than the Church, and that sooner or later the abbey would ruin the castle; finally, she gave utterance to a thousand wise arguments, such as ladies use in the height of the storms of life, when they have had about enough of them. Amador's face was so piteous, his appearance so wretched, and so open to banter, that the lord, saddened by the weather, conceived the idea of enjoying a joke at his expense, tormenting him, playing tricks on him, and of giving him a lively recollection of his reception at the chateau. Then this gentleman, who had secret relations with his wife's maid, sent this girl, who was called Perrotte, to put an end to his ill-will towards the luckless Amador. As soon as the plot had been arranged between them, the wench, who hated monks, in order to please her master, went to the monk, who was standing under the pigsty, assuming a courteous demeanour in order the better to please him, said--

"Holy father, the master of the house is ashamed to see a servant of God out in the rain when there is room for him indoors, a good fire in the chimney, and a table spread. I invite you in his name and that of the lady of the house to step in."

"I thank the lady and lord, not for their hospitality which is a Christian thing, but for having sent as an ambassador to me, a poor sinner, an angel of such delicate beauty that I fancy I see the Virgin over our altar."

Saying which, Amador raised his nose in the air, and saluted with the two flakes of fire that sparkled in his bright eyes the pretty maidservant, who thought him neither so ugly nor so foul, nor so bestial; when, following Perrotte up the steps, Amador received on the nose, cheeks, and other portions of his face a slash of the whip, which made him see all the lights of the Magnificat, so well was the dose administered by the Sieur de Cande, who, busy chastening his greyhounds pretended not see the monk. He requested Amador to pardon him this accident, and ran after the dogs who had caused the mischief to his guest. The laughing servant, who knew what was coming, had dexterously kept out of the way. Noticing this business, Amador suspected the relations of Perrotte and the chevalier, concerning whom it is possible that the lasses of the valley had already whispered something into his ear. Of the people who were then in the room not one made room for the man of God, who remained right in the draught between the door and the window, where he stood freezing until the moment when the Sieur de Cande, his wife, and his aged sister, Mademoiselle de Cande, who had the charge of the young heiress of the house, aged about

sixteen years, came and sat in their chairs at the head of the table, far from the common people, according to the old custom usual among the lords of the period, much to their discredit.

The Sieur de Cande, paying no attention to the monk, let him sit at the extreme end of the table, in a corner, where two mischievous lads had orders to squeeze and elbow him. Indeed these fellows worried his feet, his body, and his arms like real torturers, poured white wine into his goblet for water, in order to fuddle him, and the better to amuse themselves with him; but they made him drink seven large jugfuls without making belch, break wind, sweat or snort, which horrified them exceedingly, especially as his eye remained as clear as crystal. Encouraged, however, by a glance from their lord, they still kept throwing, while bowing to him, gravy into his beard, and wiping it dry in a manner to tear every hair of it out. The varlet who served a caudle baptised his head with it, and took care to let the burning liquor trickle down poor Amador's backbone. All this agony he endured with meekness, because the spirit of God was in him, and also the hope of finishing the litigation by holding out in the castle. Nevertheless, the mischievous lot burst out into such roars of laughter at the warm baptism given by the cook's lad to the soaked monk, even the butler making jokes at his expense, that the lady of Cande was compelled to notice what was going on at the end of the table. Then she perceived Amador, who had a look of sublime resignation upon his face, and was endeavouring to get something out of the big beef bones that had been put upon his pewter platter. At this moment the poor monk, who had administered a dexterous blow of the knife to a big ugly bone, took it into his hairy hands, snapped it in two, sucked the warm marrow out of it, and found it good.

"Truly," said she to herself, "God has put great strength into this monk!"

At the same time she seriously forbade the pages, servants, and others to torment the poor man, to whom out of mockery they had just given some rotten apples and maggoty nuts. He, perceiving that the old lady and her charge, the lady and the servants had seen him manoeuvring the bone, pushed back his sleeve, showed the powerful muscles of his arm, placed nuts near his wrist on the bifurcation of the veins, and crushed them one by one by pressing them with the palm of his hand so vigorously that they appeared like ripe medlars. He also crunched them between his teeth, white as the teeth of a dog, husk, shell, fruit, and all, of which he made in a second a mash which he swallowed like honey. He crushed them between two fingers, which he used like scissors to cut them in two without a moment's hesitation.

You may be sure that the women were silent, that the men believed the devil to be in the monk; and had it not been for his wife and the darkness of the night, the Sieur de Cande, having the fear of God before his eyes, would have kicked him out of the house. Everyone declared that the monk was a man capable of throwing the castle into the moat. Therefore, as soon as everyone had wiped his mouth, my lord took care to imprison this devil, whose strength was terrible to behold, and had him conducted to a wretched little closet where Perrotte had arranged her machine in order to annoy him during the night. The tom-cats of the neighbourhood had been requested to come and confess to him, invited to tell him their sins in embryo towards the tabbies who attracted their affections, and also the little pigs for whom fine lumps of tripe had been placed under the bed in order to prevent them becoming monks, of which they were very desirous, by disgusting them with the style of libera, which the monk would sing to them. At every movement of poor Amador, who would find short

horse-hair in the sheets, he would bring down cold water on to the bed, and a thousand other tricks were arranged, such are usually practised in castles. Everyone went to bed in expectation of the nocturnal revels of the monk, certain that they would not be disappointed, since he had been lodged under the tiles at the top of a little tower, the guard of the door of which was committed to dogs who howled for a bit of him. In order to ascertain what language the conversations with the cats and pigs would be carried on, the Sire came to stay with his dear Perrotte, who slept in the next room.

As soon as he found himself thus treated, Amador drew from his bag a knife, and dexterously extricated himself. Then he began to listen in order to find out the ways of the place, and heard the master of the house laughing with his maid-servant. Suspecting their manoeuvres, he waited till the moment when the lady of the house should be alone in bed, and made his way into her room with bare feet, in order that his sandals should not be in his secrets. He appeared to her by the light of the lamp in the manner in which monks generally appear during the night--that is, in a marvellous state, which the laity find it difficult long to sustain; and the thing is an effect of the frock, which magnifies everything. Then having let her see that he was all a monk, he made the following little speech--

"Know, madame, that I am sent by Jesus and the Virgin Mary to warn you to put an end to the improper perversities which are taking place--to the injury of your virtue, which is treacherously deprived of your husband's best attention, which he lavishes upon your maid. What is the use of being a lady if the seigneurial dues are received elsewhere. According to this, your servant is the lady and you are the servant. Are not all the joys bestowed upon her due to you? You will find them all amassed in our Holy Church, which is the consolation of the afflicted. Behold in me the messenger, ready to pay these debts if you do not renounce them."

Saying this, the good monk gently loosened his girdle in which he was incommoded, so much did he appear affected by the sight of those beauties which the Sieur de Cande disdained.

"If you speak truly, my father, I will submit to your guidance," said she, springing lightly out of bed. "You are for sure, a messenger of God, because you have been in a single day that which I had not noticed here for a long time."

Then she went, accompanied by Amador, whose holy robe she did not fail to run her hand over, and was so struck when she found it real, that she hoped to find her husband guilty; and indeed she heard him talking about the monk in her servant's bed. Perceiving this felony, she went into a furious rage and opened her mouth to resolve it into words-- which is the usual method of women--and wished to kick up the devil's delight before handing the girl over to justice. But Amador told her that it would be more sensible to avenge herself first, and cry out afterwards.

"Avenge me quickly, then, my father," said she, "that I may begin to cry out."

Thereupon the monk avenged her most monastically with a good and ample vengeance, that she indulged in as a drunkard who puts his lips to the bunghole of a barrel; for when a lady avenges herself, she should get drunk with vengeance, or not taste it at all. And the chatelaine was revenged to that degree that she could not move; since nothing agitates,

takes away the breath, and exhausts, like anger and vengeance. But although she were avenged, and doubly and trebly avenged, yet would she not forgive, in order that she might reserve the right of avenging herself with the monk, now here, now there. Perceiving this love for vengeance, Amador promised to aid her in it as long as her ire lasted, for he informed her that he knew in his quality of a monk, constrained to meditate long on the nature of things, an infinite number of modes, methods, and manners of practicing revenge.

Then he pointed out to her canonically what a Christian thing it is to revenge oneself, because all through the Holy Scriptures God declares Himself, above all things, to be a God of vengeance; and moreover, demonstrates to us, by his establishment in the infernal regions, how royally divine a thing vengeance is, since His vengeance is eternal. From which it followed, that women with monks ought to revenge themselves, under pain of not being Christians and faithful servants of celestial doctrines.

This dogma pleased the lady much, and she confessed that she had never understood the commandments of the Church, and invited her well- beloved monk to enlighten her thoroughly concerning them. Then the chatelaine, whose vital spirits had been excited by the vengeance which had refreshed them, went into the room where the jade was amusing herself, and by chance found her with her hand where she, the chatelaine, often had her eye--like the merchants have on their most precious articles, in order to see that they were not stolen. They were--according to President Lizet, when he was in a merry mood--a couple taken in flagrant delectation, and looked dumbfounded, sheepish and foolish. The sight that met her eyes displeased the lady beyond the power of words to express, as it appeared by her discourse, of which to roughness was similar to that of the water of a big pond when the sluice-gates were opened. It was a sermon in three heads, accompanied with music of a high gamut, varied in tones, with many sharps among the keys.

"Out upon virtue! my lord; I've had my share of it. You have shown me that religion in conjugal faith is an abuse; this is then the reason that I have no son. How many children have you consigned to this common oven, this poor-box, this bottomless alms-purse, this leper's porringer, the true cemetery of the House of Cande? I will know if I am childless from a constitutional defect, or through your fault. I will have handsome cavaliers, in order that I may have an heir. You can get the bastards, I the legitimate children."

"My dear," said the bewildered lord, "don't shout so."

"But," replied the lady, "I will shout, and shout to make myself heard, heard by the archbishop, heard by the legate, by the king, by my brothers, who will avenge this infamy for me."

"Do not dishonour your husband!"

"This is dishonour then? You are right; but, my lord, it is not brought about by you, but by this hussy, whom I will have sewn up in a sack, and thrown into the Indre; thus your dishonour will be washed away. Hi! there," she called out.

"Silence, madame!" said the sire, as shamefaced as a blind man's dog; because this great warrior, so ready to kill others, was like a child in the hands of his wife, a state of affairs to which soldiers are accustomed, because in them lies the strength and is found all the dull

carnality of matter; while, on the contrary, in woman is a subtle spirit and a scintillation of perfumed flame that lights up paradise and dazzles the male. This is the reason that certain women govern their husbands, because mind is the master of matter.

(At this the ladies began to laugh, as did also the king).

"I will not be silent," said the lady of Cande (said the abbot, continuing his tale); "I have been too grossly outraged. This, then, is the reward of the wealth that I brought you, and of my virtuous conduct! Did I ever refuse to obey you even during Lent, and on fast days? Am I so cold as to freeze the sun? Do you think that I embrace by force, from duty, or pure kindness of heart! Am I too hallowed for you to touch? Am I a holy shrine? Was there need of a papal brief to kiss me? God's truth! have you had so much of me that you are tired? Am I not to your taste? Do charming wenches know more than ladies? Ha! perhaps it is so, since she has let you work in the field without sowing. Teach me the business; I will practice it with those whom I take into my service, for it is settled that I am free. That is as we should be. Your society was wearisome, and the little pleasure I derived from it cost me too dear. Thank God! I am quit of you and your whims, because I intend to retire to a monastery." . . . She meant to say a convent, but this avenging monk had perverted her tongue.

"And I shall be more comfortable in this monastery with my daughter, than in this place of abominable wickedness. You can inherit from your wench. Ha, ha! The fine lady of Cande! Look at her!"

"What is the matter?" said Amador, appearing suddenly upon the scene.

"The matter is, my father," replied she, "that my wrongs cry aloud for vengeance. To begin with, I shall have this trollop thrown into the river, sewn up in a sack, for having diverted the seed of the House of Cande from its proper channel. It will be saving the hangman a job. For the rest I will--"

"Abandon your anger, my daughter," said the monk. "It is commanded us by the Church to forgive those who trespass against us, if we would find favour in the side of Heaven, because you pardon those who also pardon others. God avenges himself eternally on those who have avenged themselves, but keeps in His paradise those who have pardoned. From that comes the jubilee, which is a day of great rejoicing, because all debts and offences are forgiven. Thus it is a source of happiness to pardon. Pardon! Pardon! To pardon is a most holy work. Pardon Monseigneur de Cande, who will bless you for your gracious clemency, and will henceforth love you much; This forgiveness will restore to you the flower of youth; and believe, my dear sweet young lady, that forgiveness is in certain cases the best means of vengeance. Pardon your maid-servant, who will pray heaven for you. Thus God, supplicated by all, will have you in His keeping, and will bless you with male lineage for this pardon."

Thus saying, the monk took the hand of the sire, placed it in that of the lady, and added--

"Go and talk over the pardon."

And then he whispered into the husband's ears this sage advice--

"My lord, use your best argument, and you will silence her with it, because a woman's mouth it is only full of words when she is empty elsewhere. Argue continually, and thus you will always have the upper hand of your wife."

"By the body of the Jupiter! There's good in this monk after all," said the seigneur, as he went out.

As soon as Amador found himself alone with Perrotte he spoke to her, as follows--

"You are to blame, my dear, for having wished to torment a poor servant of God; therefore are you now the object of celestial wrath, which will fall upon you. To whatever place you fly it will always follow you, will seize upon you in every limb, even after your death, and will cook you like a pasty in the oven of hell, where you will simmer eternally, and every day you will receive seven hundred thousand million lashes of the whip, for the one I received through you."

"Ah! holy Father," said the wench, casting herself at the monk's feet, "you alone can save me, for in your gown I should be sheltered from the anger of God."

Saying this, she raised the robe to place herself beneath it, and exclaimed--

"By my faith! monks are better than knights."

"By the sulphur of the devil! You are not acquainted with the monks?"

"No," said Perrotte.

"And you don't know the service that monks sing without saying a word?"

"No."

Thereupon the monk went through this said service for her, as it is sung on great feast days, with all the grand effects used in monasteries, the psalms well chanted in f major, the flaming tapers, and the choristers, and explained to her the /Introit/, and also the /ite missa est/, and departed, leaving her so sanctified that the wrath of heaven would have great difficulty in discovering any portion of the girl that was not thoroughly monasticated.

By his orders, Perrotte conducted him to Mademoiselle de Cande, the lord's sister, to whom he went in order to learn if it was her desire to confess to him, because monks came so rarely to the castle. The lady was delighted, as would any good Christian have been, at such a chance of clearing out her conscience. Amador requested her to show him her conscience, and she having allowed him to see that which he considered the conscience of old maids, he found it in a bad state, and told her that the sins of women were accomplished there; that to be for the future without sin it was necessary to have the conscience corked up by a monk's indulgence. The poor ignorant lady having replied that she did not know where these indulgences were to be had, the monk informed her that he had a relic with him which enabled him to grant one, that nothing was more indulgent than this relic, because without saying a word it produced infinite pleasures, which is the true, eternal and primary character of an indulgence. The poor lady was so pleased with this relic, the virtue of which she tried

in various ways, that her brain became muddled, and she had so much faith in it that she indulged as devoutly in indulgences as the Lady of Cande had indulged in vengeance. This business of confession woke up the younger Demoiselle de Cande, who came to watch the proceedings. You may imagine that the monk had hoped for this occurrence, since his mouth had watered at the sight of this fair blossom, whom he also confessed, because the elder lady could not hinder him from bestowing upon the younger one, who wished it, what remained of the indulgences. But, remember, this pleasure was due to him for the trouble he had taken. The morning having dawned, the pigs having eaten their tripe, and the cats having become disenchanted with love, and having watered all the places rubbed with herbs, Amador went to rest himself in his bed, which Perrotte had put straight again. Every one slept, thanks to the monk, so long, that no one in the castle was up before noon, which was the dinner hour. The servants all believed the monk to be a devil who had carried off the cats, the pigs, and also their masters. In spite of these ideas however, every one was in the room at meal time.

"Come, my father," said the chatelaine, giving her arm to the monk, whom she put at her side in the baron's chair, to the great astonishment of the attendants, because the Sire of Cande said not a word. "Page, give some of this to Father Amador," said madame.

"Father Amador has need of so and so," said the Demoiselle de Cande.

"Fill up Father Amador's goblet," said the sire.

"Father Amador has no bread," said the little lady.

"What do you require, Father Amador?" said Perrotte.

It was Father Amador here, and Father Amador there. He was regaled like a little maiden on her wedding night.

"Eat, father," said madame; "you made such a bad meal yesterday."

"Drink, father," said the sire. "you are, s'blood! the finest monk I have ever set eyes on."

"Father Amador is a handsome monk," said Perrotte.

"An indulgent monk," said the demoiselle.

"A beneficent monk," said the little one.

"A great monk," said the lady.

"A monk who well deserves his name," said the clerk of the castle.

Amador munched and chewed, tried all the dishes, lapped up the hypocras, licked his chops, sneezed, blew himself out, strutted and stamped about like a bull in a field. The others regarded him with great fear, believing him to be a magician. Dinner over, the Lady of Cande, the demoiselle, and the little one, besought the Sire of Cande with a thousand fine arguments, to terminate the litigation. A great deal was said to him by madame, who

pointed out to him how useful a monk was in a castle; by mademoiselle, who wished for the future to polish up her conscience every day; by the little one, who pulled her father's beard, and asked that this monk might always be at Cande. If ever the difference were arranged, it would be by the monk: the monk was of a good understanding, gentle and virtuous as a saint; it was a misfortune to be at enmity with a monastery containing such monks. If all the monks were like him, the abbey would always have everywhere the advantage of the castle, and would ruin it, because this monk was very strong. Finally, they gave utterance to a thousand reasons, which were like a deluge of words, and were so pluvially showered down that the sire yielded, saying, that there would never be a moment's peace in the house until matters were settled to the satisfaction of the women. Then he sent for the clerk, who wrote down for him, and also for the monk. Then Amador surprised them exceedingly by showing them the charters and the letters of credit, which would prevent the sire and his clerk delaying this agreement. When the Lady of Cande saw them about to put an end to this old case, she went to the linen chest to get some fine cloth to make a new gown for her dear Amador. Every one in the house had noticed how this old gown was worn, and it would have been a great shame to leave such a treasure in such a worn-out case. Everyone was eager to work at the gown. Madame cut it, the servant put the hood on, the demoiselle sewed it, and the little demoiselle worked at the sleeves. And all set so heartily to work to adorn the monk, that the robe was ready by supper time, as was also the charter of agreement prepared and sealed by the Sire de Cande.

"Ah, my father!" said the lady, "if you love us, you will refresh yourself after your merry labour by washing yourself in a bath that I have had heated by Perrotte."

Amador was then bathed in scented water. When he came out he found a new robe of fine linen and lovely sandals ready for him, which made him appear the most glorious monk in the world.

Meanwhile the monks of Turpenay fearing for Amador, had ordered two of their number to spy about the castle. These spies came round by the moat, just as Perrotte threw Amador's greasy old gown, with other rubbish, into it. Seeing which, they thought that it was all over with the poor madman. They therefore returned, and announced that it was certain Amador had suffered martyrdom in the service of the abbey. Hearing which the abbot ordered them to assemble in the chapel and pray to God, in order to assist this devoted servant in his torments. The monk having supped, put his charter into his girdle, and wished to return to Turpenay. Then he found at the foot of the steps madame's mare, bridled and saddled, and held ready for him by a groom. The lord had ordered his men-at-arms to accompany the good monk, so that no accident might befall him. Seeing which, Amador pardoned the tricks of the night before, and bestowed his benediction upon every one before taking his departure from this converted place. Madame followed him with her eyes, and proclaimed him a splendid rider. Perrotte declared that for a monk he held himself more upright in the saddle than any of the men-at-arms. Mademoiselle de Cande sighed. The little one wished to have him for her confessor.

"He has sanctified the castle," said they, when they were in the room again.

When Amador and his suite came to the gates of the abbey, a scene of terror ensued, since the guardian thought that the Sire de Cande had had his appetite for monks whetted by the blood of poor Amador, and wished to sack the abbey. But Amador shouted with his fine

bass voice, and was recognised and admitted into the courtyard; and when he dismounted from madame's mare there was enough uproar to make the monks as wild as April moons. They gave vent to shouts of joy in the refectory, and all came to congratulate Amador, who waved the charter over his head. The men-at-arms were regaled with the best wine in the cellars, which was a present made to the monks of Turpenay by those of Marmoustier, to whom belonged the lands of Vouvray. The good abbot having had the document of the Sieur de Cande read, went about saying--

"On these divine occasions there always appears the finger of God, to whom we should render thanks."

As the good abbot kept on at the finger of God, when thanking Amador, the monk, annoyed to see the instrument of their delivery thus diminished, said to him--

"Well, say that it is the arm, my father, and drop the subject."

The termination of the trial between the Sieur de Cande and the abbey of Turpenay was followed by a blessing which rendered him devoted to the Church, because nine months after he had a son. Two years afterwards Amador was chosen as abbot by the monks, who reckoned upon a merry government with a madcap. But Amador become an abbot, became steady and austere, because he had conquered his evil desires by his labours, and recast his nature at the female forge, in which is that fire which is the most perfecting, persevering, persistent, perdurable, permanent, perennial, and permeating fire that there ever was in the world. It is a fire to ruin everything, and it ruined so well the evil that was in Amador, that it left only that which it could not eat--that is, his wit, which was as clear as a diamond, which is, as everyone knows, a residue of the great fire by which our globe was formerly carbonised. Amador was then the instrument chosen by Providence to reform our illustrious abbey, since he put everything right there, watched night and day over his monks, made them all rise at the hours appointed for prayers, counted them in chapel as a shepherd counts his sheep, kept them well in hand, and punished their faults severely, that he made them most virtuous brethren.

This teaches us to look upon womankind more as the instruments of our salvation than of our pleasure. Besides which, this narrative teaches us that we should never attempt to struggle with the Churchmen.

The king and the queen had found this tale in the best taste; the courtiers confessed that they had never heard a better; and the ladies would all willingly have been the heroines of it.

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