

yards from letting their farms: the tenant might too easily secure the harvest of years, and exhaust the plants while pruning them apparently for his own crop. But as the labour, when fairly done, is quite one of routine, a foreman only is required to the most extensive vineyards. Each proprietor farming his own land knows how many diggings it ought to have, and what ought to be the charge for each: and each one knows how many barrels of wine each acre, or measure of land as they call it, and it is about the same, ought to produce. The value of the produce of a good acre of vineyard was about £30.

But complaints were then as loud amongst the wine growers as they are now. Bread was then so dear, that M. de Peyronnet complained to me that the people could not afford to buy the inferior coarse wines, such as the people only drink and such alone as his lands produced. He was a pleasant man, this Comte de Peyronnet, ex-minister of Charles X, who is said alike to have instigated and to have disapproved the ordonnances that caused his sovereign to be expelled from France. I met

him, and was first introduced to him at a dinner party at the palace of the Archbishop of Bordeaux, now Cardinal Donnet. On entering I observed a very gentlemanly, good-looking man of between sixty and seventy, who, clad in tights and pumps, was affectionately nursing his left leg on his right knee: people were asking him about his lameness, and, when I was introduced to him, he explained to me, as to a stranger, how it had chanced.

“I had told my servant,” he said, “to put in my bedroom a footbath full of warm water, as I wished to soak my feet: what did the fellow do but set it full of boiling water! I suspected nothing of this, and pulled off my stocking and plunged my foot in. The water was boiling, but, *ma foi*, I was not the man to retreat, ‘*je ne voulais pas broncher*,’ and so, as it was in, I e’en left it there. When I took it out, all the skin came off in the towel.”

“Just the kind of obstinacy which cost his sovereign the throne of France,” I thought.

“What a fool!” exclaimed a sensible Englishman, to whom I repeated the anecdote.

I never tasted such a variety of wines, nor

heard so much talk on their several merits, as at this dinner party at the Archbishop's. This was naturally the case. Amongst twenty-four people whose revenues were dependant upon wine, what subject could be so interesting? They tasted as farmers and connoisseurs: no one committed the slightest excess in quantity.

The Archbishop of Bordeaux, since made a Cardinal, had been brought to my house by the Curé of our parish, one day when he administered Confirmation in the church of Talence. Several members of my family had received the Sacrament from his hands, and so rare are English residents in that neighbourhood, that he could not but feel interested in us. I know not whether he was gratified or not by the extra homage we paid him by bending the knee and asking for his blessing when we were presented to him; but I found that modern France denies such honour to its Bishops. It is a question of etiquette. They had been preaching a mission, as it is called, at Talence; that is to say, for some weeks the Curé had been instructing his flock with extra care, and preparing them for the Confirma-

tion ; and, for the last fortnight, he had called in a priest from a distance to help him. The church had been crowded ; for this was a new man, and was rather celebrated as a preacher. He not only discoursed well on his subject, but he tore it into tatters, and exhausted it and himself with his own vehemence : so different was his style from the sensible, argumentative, familiar, and sometimes impassioned though quiet eloquence of our own Curé, that all run after him, as a matter of course. M. le Curé was one of the cleverest and most exemplary of the many good parish priests I have ever met with. He was learned without pedantry ; cheerful without levity ; friendly with his flock, without familiarity. He was very fond of music, and selected a goodly number of boys and girls whom he assiduously taught to sing, while he accompanied them himself on a seraphine. He introduced a great deal of singing of *Cantiques* in French into the service, and he thus not only drew people to his church by giving them the pleasure of hearing their own sweet voices uplifted in verses which they understood, but he made the very *Cantiques* them-

selves popular throughout the district, to the exclusion of the profane ballads which they supplanted. I own I have been greatly surprised to hear noisy parties of men at the country wine shops, all joining in chorus and singing our Curé's *Cantiques* over their cups. Nay, the Archbishop himself, when he took us to see his country seat near Bordeaux, which he was very anxious we should rent, constantly forgot himself and began humming the Talence *Cantiques* as he wandered from tree to tree, noting the blossoms and the chances of a crop of fruit from his orchard.

They were contented men, the Curé and the Archbishop: the latter would have suffered from the failure of his little crops but that the Government paid him 6,000 francs (or £240 a-year) as an archiepiscopal revenue; and the Curé must have starved outright, but that the Government allowed him, in his quality of Curé, 800 francs (or £32) a-year. On these incomes, they were contented and merry. The Curé was rebuilding his pretty little church, and the Archbishop kept up all the state proper to his high rank.