

ately informed him, they meant if possible to persuade old Mr. O'Rourke to retire from the board of directors, Van Cleve was to have that seat too. Nobody could have been kinder, or declared in warmer terms his belief in his young friend's uprightness and business ability than the president of the National Loan; and one might have looked for Van to show some

gratification at this recognition, even to have been decorously elated over his prospects. On the contrary, Mr. Kendrick went about his work with the same dour energy as before, no more gay or agreeable than he had ever been. The duties of his new position must have weighed heavily on him, or else his private cares, for he was very thoughtful and absorbed those days.

*(To be continued.)*

## JEAN LOUIS

BY A. HUGH FISHER

IN the café of the hotel the mayor was playing cards with the notary, the chemist, and the landlord. Outside, the geese waddled between the double row of elms and the old wooden *halles*. It was twilight and growing rapidly darker. You could only just make out the figure on the Calvary, though the decorator, who had come to the town to paint a new tobacco shop, had given it a coat of fresh color, with fine crimson for the wounds, and the limbs gleamed a little in the dusk.

Jean Louis sat down on the low stone wall that goes around the elms. His clothes were old but very strong, as they were made of cloth woven on a hand-loom at a neighboring village. His hair was long and hung over his shoulders in white locks. Jean Louis took out his pipe. It was a little black clay pipe, such as Charles Keene would have loved, with a bowl less than half an inch across. It burned for a very little time, but the filling and lighting were

long operations. The tobacco had to be cut from a small hard nob, and the light to be got from flint and steel. The tinder-box, filled with tiny fragments of charred wood, was made out of part of a cow's horn and had a copper lid fastened with a little steel chain to prevent its being lost.

A stranger who had come out of the café of the Croix d'Or had strolled across the mud, and after looking searchingly at Jean Louis had taken a seat near him on the wall.

'What a great many things an old man like you must remember,' he remarked presently.

Jean Louis looked at him and answered slowly, 'The chief thing I remember is that I always smoke a pipe when I have any tobacco.' Then, after a pause, he added as an afterthought, 'I have worked hard and I do not think often.'

'What is your work, old man?' asked the stranger.

'I chop wood for many people and I drag the roots of dead trees from the earth to put in a sack for myself. They burn well and cook my soup and potatoes. In the summer I cut the *blé noir* for the farmers, and the grass to feed their horses in winter. I make soup from the grass, too, for myself; for fifty years I have done these things — ever since my service was over.'

'But things must have happened sometimes — in your life?'

'That is true — I have had joys — often I have had miseries also. If I seek in my memory I do not know whether I remember truly or not, and what does it matter? As a child I played at the *gailloche*. I was a great wrestler when I was a lad. No one could throw me. I threw once the greatest wrestler of this country. With a twist of my foot I threw him as he gripped my shoulder; but a fight — no — I never had a fight with any one in my life. One gains nothing by that fighting.'

'But in your years in the army did you not fight?'

'In my seven years of service I traveled much and saw great places — Paris — Africa — Italy — Nantes; but I never saw any war. I was in the 41st of the line. General Chappuis had the division, a fine man altogether.'

It was the season of weddings, and out of the darkness came the sound of a *biniau* playing.

'There will be dancing,' said Jean Louis; 'I found dancing good when I was young, and the girls liked me. Singing is good, too, such as I have

heard in the towns where I traveled as a soldier. It is there you hear the good singing: mounted on a table they sing, and when they have finished everyone claps the hands and shouts bravo!'

'But in all the world what do you like best?'

'Good health,' answered Jean Louis, 'and next to that the blessing of the *bon Dieu*.'

'Tell me about your family,' said the stranger, 'did you not marry and have children?'

'Yes — I married — but who cares to know about that? I had only one son.'

'Tell me about your wife and your son then.'

'But my wife died ten years ago now. She was a good wife and there is no more to tell about her. She worked hard and knitted always. All her life she had gone with nothing but a little straw in the sabots. When she was dying she begged me that she should be carried to the *bon Dieu* with a pair of the stockings on her own feet. It was a great extravagance but it was done. It was in the month of June she died.'

'And your son?'

Jean Louis was again silent for a while; then he said, 'My son went away when he was a young lad — he would not fight for France and he went away — we did not hear more of him — there is no need to speak of my son.'

'My father, I have come back — I am your son.'

'I do not believe it,' said Jean Louis.

# THY TABLE

BY MARGARET SHERWOOD

I ~~SEEK~~ thy table, Lord,  
To break my bread with thee;  
Yet still afar, past hill and star  
It vanishes from me.

Though folk along the way  
Call it an idle dream,  
By sea and sedge, at earth's faint edge,  
Ever I see it gleam.

There thy beloved are,  
Close gathered, soul to soul;  
And there thy face, in hallowed space,  
Shines as my distant goal.

Late, weary and forspent,  
I near the holy spot,  
Where they are met, thy table set,  
But still I find thee not.

They pledge their fellowship  
In words that are not thine;  
Though here they sup, with sacred cup,  
Not this thy bread and wine.

Ah, Lord, the nations yearn  
To gather at thy feet;  
Thou bidst to feast both great and least  
With simple words and sweet.

Our faith — that love enfold  
The living and the dead;  
Our creed — a prayer that thou be there  
To share the wine and bread.