

**PICCIOLA**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649478521

Picciola by Joseph Xavier Boniface & Abby L. Alger

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**JOSEPH XAVIER BONIFACE & ABBY L. ALGER**

# **PICCIOLA**





# PICCIOLA

BY

JOSEPH XAVIER BONIFACE

(KNOWN UNDER THE NAME OF X. B. SAINTINE)

TRANSLATED AND EDITED

BY

ABBY L. ALGER

---

BOSTON, U.S.A.

GINN & COMPANY, PUBLISHERS

*The Athenæum Press*

1902

PQ 2392  
55152  
1899

## P R E F A C E.

---

*Picciola*, the touching story of a prisoner and a flower, is always new and fresh, although it has been reprinted in the original French more than twoscore times, and has been translated into every language of Europe since it first appeared in 1836.

Such success was little expected by its modest author, who wrote it for his own satisfaction alone, but was finally persuaded to print it by a friend, who took up the manuscript by chance and could not lay it down until he had read it through.

Saintine received the Monthyon prize from the French Academy and the ribbon of the Legion of Honor in recognition of the merits of *Picciola*, but these honors did not give him such pleasure as the thought that some real prisoner might find consolation in his book. This hope was fulfilled when Louis Napoleon wrote to him from the fortress of Ham, where he was imprisoned, that *Picciola* had been both a lesson and a solace to him, had shown him that a philosopher has hidden treasures in his heart which may enable him to enjoy happiness under any circumstances.

In his own preface to the work the author says: "My book is neither a drama nor a romance.

"My story is a simple one, so simple that perhaps no writer ever tried his hand on a subject of such narrow limits. My heroine is such a little thing! Not that I would throw the blame on her in advance in case of failure; Heaven forbid! Do you lay any value upon the truth of facts? I assure you that my tale is a true one, and I offer this as some recompense for all that you may miss in it.

"You remember that kind and gracious lady who died not long ago, — the Countess de Charney, — an incredible mixture of sweetness and audacity, of gentleness and resolution; she was a terrible lioness, whom a child could calm with a word; she was a timid dove, capable of enduring tempest and storm to defend her loved ones.

"Such as I knew her, others knew her long before I did. It is with lively pleasure that I tell you of this noble creature; I shall but too seldom have opportunity to speak of her again. She is not the chief heroine of this story.

"During your one visit to her at Belleville, where she made her permanent home, for her husband's tomb is there (and her own, too, now), several things must have struck you as strange. For instance, the presence of a white-haired old man-servant seated beside her at table. You seemed amazed to hear this person, with his uncouth gestures, his common manners, address the daughter of the Countess so familiarly, and to hear the elegant and high-bred young woman, beautiful as her mother before her, answer the old man with deference and respect, calling him godfather; she is indeed his goddaughter.

"Then, perhaps you remember a withered, faded flower, contained in a rich case; and when you asked its history,



do you recall the sad look which swept over the poor widow's face? I think she even let your question go unanswered: it would have taken too long to answer it, and the story could not be told to indifferent ears.

"I will give you your answer now.

"Honored by the affection of that rare woman, I have more than once sat between her and her faithful old servant, face to face with that precious relic, listening to long and detailed accounts which moved me strangely. I have long had in my possession the manuscripts of the Count, his correspondence, and the double journal of his prison, on linen and on paper. I have not lacked documentary proof and historic evidence.

"I treasured those stories in my memory; I studied those manuscripts attentively; I copied precious extracts from that correspondence; from that journal I derived my inspiration, and, if I succeed in transmitting to your soul the emotion which seized me at the sight of all these tokens of the prisoner, I need not fear for the fate of my book.

"One word more. Here are no stirring incidents, no thrilling love tale. And yet there is love in what I am about to relate; but it is only the love of a man for . . . Shall I tell you? . . . No, read, and you will learn."

The supreme lesson of the story, brought out by the author with cumulative skill and force, is the marvellous power of quietude, loneliness, and concentration in developing the affections of the soul. At liberty in the varied intercourse of the world, attention and sympathy scattered fugitively over a thousand shifting objects become careless, superficial, frivolous, and transient. But when one is

shut up in the enforced solitude of a prison, his spirit first recoils upon itself from the dreadful monotony, and then grows conscious of its unfathomable capacity and demand for fellowship. Under these circumstances, give it even the simplest and humblest object around which to entwine the yearning tendrils of its love, and it will idealize that object until it grows divine and calls forth an incredible wealth of devotion. This great truth *Picciola* teaches with a charm equally emphatic and persuasive. This of itself alone lends the work extraordinary value as an educational influence of the highest moral order.

A. L. A.

# CONTENTS.

## *BOOK FIRST.*

	PAGE
CHAPTER I . . . . .	1
CHAPTER II . . . . .	7
CHAPTER III . . . . .	15
CHAPTER IV . . . . .	23
CHAPTER V . . . . .	30
CHAPTER VI . . . . .	35
CHAPTER VII . . . . .	41
CHAPTER VIII . . . . .	48
CHAPTER IX . . . . .	52
CHAPTER X . . . . .	58
CHAPTER XI . . . . .	66
CHAPTER XII . . . . .	73
CHAPTER XIII . . . . .	76
CHAPTER XIV . . . . .	80
CHAPTER XV . . . . .	86

## *BOOK SECOND.*

CHAPTER I . . . . .	91
CHAPTER II . . . . .	95
CHAPTER III . . . . .	104
CHAPTER IV . . . . .	108
CHAPTER V . . . . .	111
CHAPTER VI . . . . .	114
CHAPTER VII . . . . .	118
CHAPTER VIII . . . . .	123