

**THAT WINTER NIGHT OR
LOVE'S VICTORY;
ARROWSMITH'S BRISTOL
LIBRARY, VOL. XVIII**

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That Winter Night or Love's Victory; Arrowsmith's Bristol Library, Vol. XVIII by Robert Buchanan

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ROBERT BUCHANAN

**THAT WINTER NIGHT OR
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THAT WINTER NIGHT

OR

LOVE'S VICTORY

BY

ROBERT BUCHANAN

AUTHOR OF

"THE SHADOW OF THE SWORD," "THE MASTER OF THE MINE"
ETC.

Arrowsmith's Bristol Library

VOL. XVIII.

BRISTOL

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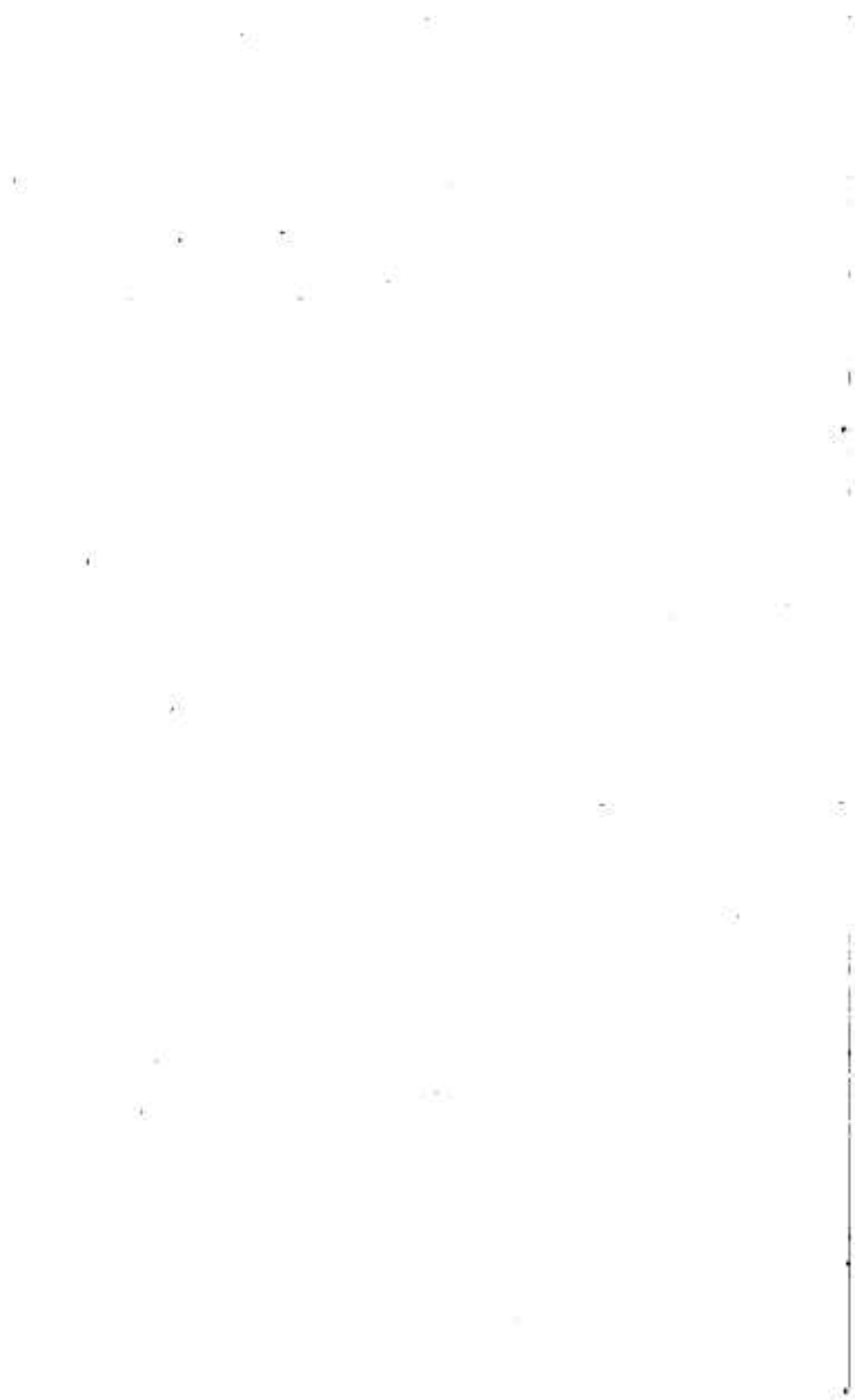
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. *The leading incident in this story is founded on a circumstance which, I am informed, actually occurred in Normandy, and which has formed the subject of a short poem by M. François Coppée.*

R. B.

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That Winter Night;

OR,

LOVE'S VICTORY.

CHAPTER I.

The Gathering Storm.

 **O**N a sunny Sabbath afternoon, in the month of October, 1870, the Chevalier de Gavrolles and his only daughter Blanche, a beautiful young girl between seventeen and eighteen years of age, attended service in the Chapel of Our Lady, in the little village of Étretat, situated some ten or twelve English miles from the seaport town of Havre, in Normandy.

There was a scanty congregation, consisting for the most part of peasant women, who, during the religious ceremonies, whispered much among themselves, and otherwise paid unusually little attention to the ministrations of Father André, the curé.

The service over, all seemed greatly relieved, and pressed rapidly out into the open air, to find the churchyard thronged with eager groups of villagers, who were excitedly discussing news just communicated by telegraph from the seat of war.

The Chevalier and his daughter were almost the last to leave. As they lingered in the porch, they were joined by Father André, who saluted them with friendly respect.

Seen thus face to face, the Chevalier and the little priest offered a striking contrast ; for the former was a tall, powerfully-built man of forty-five, with erect military carriage, and a face still preserving much of the freshness of youth ; while the latter, short, plump, and rotund, was well on in the sixties, with a head that drooped between his shoulders, and hair frosted over with silver rime.

“Bad news, Chevalier!” cried Father André, nodding nervously at the groups in the churchyard. “You have heard, of course?”

“Yes, Father,” was the reply ; “the

Germans are rapidly advancing, and we are soon to taste the horrors of defeat in grim earnest."

As he spoke, he glanced somewhat wistfully at the fair face of the girl, looking eagerly and wonderingly into his—a spiritualised and softened reflection of his own face, without the lines left by time or sorrow.

"Grim earnest, as you say!" cried the little priest, with a pugnacious toss of the head. "But let them look to it—let them take care; they may go a step too far, these Germans. Our bayonets will dig their graves, though they were twenty times as many!"

The Chevalier sighed as he responded:

"After all, they are but paying an old debt. We overran their country, as they are overrunning ours."

"But it is different—it is widely different. The great Napoleon——"

"Sowed desolation and misery far and wide," interrupted the Chevalier.

"He was a great man, a miraculous soldier!"