

The Complete Celebrated Crimes

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CELEBRATED CRIMES, COMPLETE

BY ALEXANDRE DUMAS, PERE

IN EIGHT VOLUMES

CONTENTS:

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STUART KARL-LUDWIG SAND URBAIN GRANDIER NISIDA DERUES
LA CONSTANTIN JOAN OF NAPLES THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK (The
Essay, not the Novel) MARTIN GUERRE ALI PACHA THE COUNTESS DE
SAINT GERAN MURAT THE MARQUISE DE BRINVILLIERS VANINKA
THE MARQUISE DE GANGES

CELEBRATED CRIMES VOLUME 1(of 8), Part 1

BY ALEXANDER DUMAS, PERE

NOTE:

Dumas's 'Celebrated Crimes' was not written for children. The novelist has spared no language—has minced no words—to describe the violent scenes of a violent time.

In some instances facts appear distorted out of their true perspective, and in others the author makes unwarranted charges. It is not within our province to edit the historical side of Dumas, any more than it would be to correct the obvious errors in Dickens's Child's History of England. The careful, mature

reader, for whom the books are intended, will recognize, and allow for, this fact.

INTRODUCTION

The contents of these volumes of 'Celebrated Crimes', as well as the motives which led to their inception, are unique. They are a series of stories based upon historical records, from the pen of Alexandre Dumas, pere, when he was not "the elder," nor yet the author of D'Artagnan or Monte Cristo, but was a rising young dramatist and a lion in the literary set and world of fashion.

Dumas, in fact, wrote his 'Crimes Celebres' just prior to launching upon his wonderful series of historical novels, and they may therefore be considered as source books, whence he was to draw so much of that far-reaching and intimate knowledge of inner history which has perennially astonished his readers. The Crimes were published in Paris, in 1839-40, in eight volumes, comprising eighteen titles—all of which now appear in the present carefully translated text. The success of the original work was instantaneous. Dumas laughingly said that he thought he had exhausted the subject of famous crimes, until the work was off the press, when he immediately became deluged with letters from every province in France, supplying him with material upon other deeds of violence! The subjects which he has chosen, however, are of both historic and dramatic importance, and they have the added value of giving the modern reader a clear picture of the state of semi-lawlessness which existed in Europe, during the middle ages. "The Borgias, the Cenci, Urbain Grandier, the Marchioness of Brinvilliers, the Marchioness of Ganges, and the rest—what subjects for the pen of Dumas!" exclaims Garnett.

Space does not permit us to consider in detail the material here collected, although each title will be found to present points of special interest. The first volume comprises the annals of the Borgias and the Cenci. The name of the noted and notorious Florentine family has become a synonym for intrigue and violence, and yet the Borgias have not been without staunch defenders in history.

Another famous Italian story is that of the Cenci. The beautiful Beatrice Cenci—celebrated in the painting of Guido, the sixteenth century romance of Guerrazi, and the poetic tragedy of Shelley, not to mention numerous succeeding works inspired by her hapless fate—will always remain a shadowy figure and one of infinite pathos.

The second volume chronicles the sanguinary deeds in the south of France, carried on in the name of religion, but drenching in blood the fair country round about Avignon, for a long period of years.

The third volume is devoted to the story of Mary Queen of Scots, another woman who suffered a violent death, and around whose name an endless controversy has waged. Dumas goes carefully into the dubious episodes of her stormy career, but does not allow these to blind his sympathy for her fate. Mary, it should be remembered, was closely allied to France by education and marriage, and the French never forgave Elizabeth the part she played in the tragedy.

The fourth volume comprises three widely dissimilar tales. One of the strangest stories is that of Urbain Grandier, the innocent victim of a cunning and relentless religious plot. His story was dramatised by Dumas, in 1850. A famous German crime is that of Karl-Ludwig Sand, whose murder of Kotzebue, Councillor of the Russian Legation, caused an international upheaval which was not to subside for many years.

An especially interesting volume is number six, containing, among other material, the famous "Man in the Iron Mask." This unsolved puzzle of history was later incorporated by Dumas in one of the D'Artagnan Romances a section of the Vicomte de Bragelonne, to which it gave its name. But in this later form, the true story of this singular man doomed to wear an iron vizor over his features during his entire lifetime could only be treated episodically. While as a special subject in the Crimes, Dumas indulges his curiosity, and that of his reader, to the full. Hugo's unfinished tragedy, 'Les Jumeaux', is on the same subject; as also are others by Fournier, in French, and Zschokke, in German.

Other stories can be given only passing mention. The beautiful poisoner, Marquise de Brinvilliers, must have suggested to Dumas his later portrait of Miladi, in the Three Musketeers, the most celebrated of his woman characters. The incredible cruelties of Ali Pacha, the Turkish despot, should not be charged entirely to Dumas, as he is said to have been largely aided in this by one of his "ghosts," Mallefille.

"Not a mere artist"—writes M. de Villemessant, founder of the Figaro,—“he has nevertheless been able to seize on those dramatic effects which have so much distinguished his theatrical career, and to give those sharp and distinct

reproductions of character which alone can present to the reader the mind and spirit of an age. Not a mere historian, he has nevertheless carefully consulted the original sources of information, has weighed testimonies, elicited theories, and ... has interpolated the poetry of history with its most thorough prose.”

THE BORGHIAS

PROLOGUE

On the 8th of April, 1492, in a bedroom of the Carneggi Palace, about three miles from Florence, were three men grouped about a bed whereon a fourth lay dying.

The first of these three men, sitting at the foot of the bed, and half hidden, that he might conceal his tears, in the gold-brocaded curtains, was Ermolao Barbaro, author of the treatise 'On Celibacy', and of 'Studies in Pliny': the year before, when he was at Rome in the capacity of ambassador of the Florentine Republic, he had been appointed Patriarch of Aquileia by Innocent VIII.

The second, who was kneeling and holding one hand of the dying man between his own, was Angelo Poliziano, the Catullus of the fifteenth century, a classic of the lighter sort, who in his Latin verses might have been mistaken for a poet of the Augustan age.

The third, who was standing up and leaning against one of the twisted columns of the bed-head, following with profound sadness the progress of the malady which he read in the face of his departing friend, was the famous Pico della Mirandola, who at the age of twenty could speak twenty-two languages, and who had offered to reply in each of these languages to any seven hundred questions that might be put to him by the twenty most learned men in the whole world, if they could be assembled at Florence.

The man on the bed was Lorenzo the Magnificent, who at the beginning of the year had been attacked by a severe and deep-seated fever, to which was added the gout, a hereditary ailment in his family. He had found at last that the draughts containing dissolved pearls which the quack doctor, Leoni di Spoleto, prescribed for him (as if he desired to adapt his remedies rather to the riches of his patient than to his necessities) were useless and unavailing, and so he had come to understand that he must part from those gentle-tongued women of his, those sweet-voiced poets, his palaces and their rich hangings; therefore he had summoned to give him absolution for his sins—in a man of less high place they might perhaps have been called crimes—the Dominican, Giralamo Francesco Savonarola.

It was not, however, without an inward fear, against which the praises of his

friends availed nothing, that the pleasure-seeker and usurper awaited that severe and gloomy preacher by whose word's all Florence was stirred, and on whose pardon henceforth depended all his hope far another world.

Indeed, Savonarola was one of those men of stone, coming, like the statue of the Commandante, to knock at the door of a Don Giovanni, and in the midst of feast and orgy to announce that it is even now the moment to begin to think of Heaven. He had been born at Ferrara, whither his family, one of the most illustrious of Padua, had been called by Niccolo, Marchese d'Este, and at the age of twenty-three, summoned by an irresistible vocation, had fled from his father's house, and had taken the vows in the cloister of Dominican monks at Florence. There, where he was appointed by his superiors to give lessons in philosophy, the young novice had from the first to battle against the defects of a voice that was both harsh and weak, a defective pronunciation, and above all, the depression of his physical powers, exhausted as they were by too severe abstinence.

Savonarola from that time condemned himself to the most absolute seclusion, and disappeared in the depths of his convent, as if the slab of his tomb had already fallen over him. There, kneeling on the flags, praying unceasingly before a wooden crucifix, fevered by vigils and penances, he soon passed out of contemplation into ecstasy, and began to feel in himself that inward prophetic impulse which summoned him to preach the reformation of the Church.

Nevertheless, the reformation of Savonarola, more reverential than Luther's, which followed about five-and-twenty years later, respected the thing while attacking the man, and had as its aim the altering of teaching that was human, not faith that was of God. He did not work, like the German monk, by reasoning, but by enthusiasm. With him logic always gave way before inspiration: he was not a theologian, but a prophet. Yet, although hitherto he had bowed his head before the authority of the Church, he had already raised it against the temporal power. To him religion and liberty appeared as two virgins equally sacred; so that, in his view, Lorenzo in subjugating the one was as culpable as Pope Innocent VIII in dishonouring the other. The result of this was that, so long as Lorenzo lived in riches, happiness, and magnificence, Savonarola had never been willing, whatever entreaties were made, to sanction by his presence a power which he considered illegitimate. But Lorenzo on his deathbed sent for him, and that was another matter. The austere preacher set forth at once, bareheaded and barefoot, hoping to save not only the soul of the dying man but

also the liberty of the republic.

Lorenzo, as we have said, was awaiting the arrival of Savonarola with an impatience mixed with uneasiness; so that, when he heard the sound of his steps, his pale face took a yet more deathlike tinge, while at the same time he raised himself on his elbow and ordered his three friends to go away. They obeyed at once, and scarcely had they left by one door than the curtain of the other was raised, and the monk, pale, immovable, solemn, appeared on the threshold. When he perceived him, Lorenzo dei Medici, reading in his marble brow the inflexibility of a statue, fell back on his bed, breathing a sigh so profound that one might have supposed it was his last.

The monk glanced round the room as though to assure himself that he was really alone with the dying man; then he advanced with a slow and solemn step towards the bed. Lorenzo watched his approach with terror; then, when he was close beside him, he cried:

“O my father, I have been a very great sinner!”

“The mercy of God is infinite,” replied the monk; “and I come into your presence laden with the divine mercy.”

“You believe, then, that God will forgive my sins?” cried the dying man, renewing his hope as he heard from the lips of the monk such unexpected words.

“Your sins and also your crimes, God will forgive them all,” replied Savonarola. “God will forgive your vanities, your adulterous pleasures, your obscene festivals; so much for your sins. God will forgive you for promising two thousand florins reward to the man who should bring you the head of Dietisalvi, Nerone Nigi, Angelo Antinori, Niccolo Soderini, and twice the money if they were handed over alive; God will forgive you for dooming to the scaffold or the gibbet the son of Papi Orlandi, Francesco di Brisighella, Bernardo Nardi, Jacopo Frescobaldi, Amoretto Baldovinetti, Pietro Balducci, Bernardo di Banding, Francesco Frescobaldi, and more than three hundred others whose names were none the less dear to Florence because they were less renowned; so much for your crimes.” And at each of these names which Savonarola pronounced slowly, his eyes fixed on the dying man, he replied with a groan which proved the monk’s memory to be only too true. Then at last, when he had finished, Lorenzo asked in a doubtful tone:

“Then do you believe, my father, that God will forgive me everything, both my sins and my crimes?”

“Everything,” said Savonarola, “but on three conditions.”

“What are they?” asked the dying man.

“The first,” said Savonarola, “is that you feel a complete faith in the power and the mercy of God.”

“My father,” replied Lorenzo eagerly, “I feel this faith in the very depths of my heart.”

“The second,” said Savonarola, “is that you give back the property of others which you have unjustly confiscated and kept.”

“My father, shall I have time?” asked the dying man.

“God will give it to you,” replied the monk.

Lorenzo shut his eyes, as though to reflect more at his ease; then, after a moment’s silence, he replied:

“Yes, my father, I will do it.”

“The third,” resumed Savonarola, “is that you restore to the republic her ancient independence and her former liberty.”

Lorenzo sat up on his bed, shaken by a convulsive movement, and questioned with his eyes the eyes of the Dominican, as though he would find out if he had deceived himself and not heard aright. Savonarola repeated the same words.

“Never! never!” exclaimed Lorenzo, falling back on his bed and shaking his head,—“never!”

The monk, without replying a single word, made a step to withdraw.

“My father, my father,” said the dying man, “do not leave me thus: have pity on me!”

“Have pity on Florence,” said the monk.

“But, my father,” cried Lorenzo, “Florence is free, Florence is happy.”

“Florence is a slave, Florence is poor,” cried Savonarola, “poor in genius, poor in money, and poor in courage; poor in genius, because after you, Lorenzo, will come your son Piero; poor in money, because from the funds of the republic you have kept up the magnificence of your family and the credit of your business houses; poor in courage, because you have robbed the rightful magistrates of the authority which was constitutionally theirs, and diverted the citizens from the double path of military and civil life, wherein, before they were enervated by your luxuries, they had displayed the virtues of the ancients; and therefore, when the day shall dawn which is not far distant,” continued the monk, his eyes fixed and glowing as if he were reading in the future, “whereon the barbarians shall descend from the mountains, the walls of our towns, like those of Jericho, shall fall at the blast of their trumpets.”

“And do you desire that I should yield up on my deathbed the power that has made the glory of my whole life?” cried Lorenzo dei Medici.

“It is not I who desire it; it is the Lord,” replied Savonarola coldly.

“Impossible, impossible!” murmured Lorenzo.

“Very well; then die as you have lived!” cried the monk, “in the midst of your courtiers and flatterers; let them ruin your soul as they have ruined your body! “And at these words, the austere Dominican, without listening to the cries of the dying man, left the room as he had entered it, with face and step unaltered; far above human things he seemed to soar, a spirit already detached from the earth.

At the cry which broke from Lorenzo dei Medici when he saw him disappear, Ermolao, Poliziano, and Pico della Mirandola, who had heard all, returned into the room, and found their friend convulsively clutching in his arms a magnificent crucifix which he had just taken down from the bed-head. In vain did they try to reassure him with friendly words. Lorenzo the Magnificent only replied with sobs; and one hour after the scene which we have just related, his lips clinging to the feet of the Christ, he breathed his last in the arms of these three men, of whom the most fortunate— though all three were young—was not destined to survive him more than two years. “Since his death was to bring about many calamities,” says Niccolò Machiavelli, “it was the will of Heaven to show this by omens only too certain: the dome of the church of Santa Reparata was

struck by lightning, and Roderigo Borgia was elected pope.”

CHAPTER I

Towards the end of the fifteenth century—that is to say, at the epoch when our history opens the Piazza of St. Peter's at Rome was far from presenting so noble an aspect as that which is offered in our own day to anyone who approaches it by the Piazza dei Rusticucci.

In fact, the Basilica of Constantine existed no longer, while that of Michael Angelo, the masterpiece of thirty popes, which cost the labour of three centuries and the expense of two hundred and sixty millions, existed not yet. The ancient edifice, which had lasted for eleven hundred and forty-five years, had been threatening to fall in about 1440, and Nicholas V, artistic forerunner of Julius II and Leo X, had had it pulled down, together with the temple of Probus Anicius which adjoined it. In their place he had had the foundations of a new temple laid by the architects Rossellini and Battista Alberti; but some years later, after the death of Nicholas V, Paul II, the Venetian, had not been able to give more than five thousand crowns to continue the project of his predecessor, and thus the building was arrested when it had scarcely risen above the ground, and presented the appearance of a still-born edifice, even sadder than that of a ruin.

As to the piazza itself, it had not yet, as the reader will understand from the foregoing explanation, either the fine colonnade of Bernini, or the dancing fountains, or that Egyptian obelisk which, according to Pliny, was set up by the Pharaoh at Heliopolis, and transferred to Rome by Caligula, who set it up in Nero's Circus, where it remained till 1586. Now, as Nero's Circus was situate on the very ground where St. Peter's now stands, and the base of this obelisk covered the actual site where the vestry now is, it looked like a gigantic needle shooting up from the middle of truncated columns, walls of unequal height, and half-carved stones.

On the right of this building, a ruin from its cradle, arose the Vatican, a splendid Tower of Babel, to which all the celebrated architects of the Roman school contributed their work for a thousand years: at this epoch the two magnificent chapels did not exist, nor the twelve great halls, the two-and-twenty courts, the thirty staircases, and the two thousand bedchambers; for Pope Sixtus V, the sublime swineherd, who did so many things in a five years' reign, had not yet been able to add the immense building which on the eastern side towers above

the court of St. Damasius; still, it was truly the old sacred edifice, with its venerable associations, in which Charlemagne received hospitality when he was crowned emperor by Pope Leo III.

All the same, on the 9th of August, 1492, the whole of Rome, from the People's Gate to the Coliseum and from the Baths of Diocletian to the castle of Sant' Angelo, seemed to have made an appointment on this piazza: the multitude thronging it was so great as to overflow into all the neighbouring streets, which started from this centre like the rays of a star. The crowds of people, looking like a motley moving carpet, were climbing up into the basilica, grouping themselves upon the stones, hanging on the columns, standing up against the walls; they entered by the doors of houses and reappeared at the windows, so numerous and so densely packed that one might have said each window was walled up with heads. Now all this multitude had its eyes fixed on one single point in the Vatican; for in the Vatican was the Conclave, and as Innocent VIII had been dead for sixteen days, the Conclave was in the act of electing a pope.

Rome is the town of elections: since her foundation down to our own day—that is to say, in the course of nearly twenty-six centuries— she has constantly elected her kings, consuls, tribunes, emperors, and popes: thus Rome during the days of Conclave appears to be attacked by a strange fever which drives everyone to the Vatican or to Monte Cavallo, according as the scarlet-robed assembly is held in one or the other of these two palaces: it is, in fact, because the raising up of a new pontiff is a great event for everybody; for, according to the average established in the period between St. Peter and Gregory XVI, every pope lasts about eight years, and these eight years, according to the character of the man who is elected, are a period either of tranquillity or of disorder, of justice or of venality, of peace or of war.

Never perhaps since the day when the first successor of St. Peter took his seat on the pontifical throne until the interregnum which now occurred, had so great an agitation been shown as there was at this moment, when, as we have shown, all these people were thronging on the Piazza of St. Peter and in the streets which led to it. It is true that this was not without reason; for Innocent VIII—who was called the father of his people because he had added to his subjects eight sons and the same number of daughters—had, as we have said, after living a life of self-indulgence, just died, after a death-struggle during which, if the journal of Stefano Infessura may be believed, two hundred and twenty murders were committed in the streets of Rome. The authority had then devolved in the

customary way upon the Cardinal Camerlengo, who during the interregnum had sovereign powers; but as he had been obliged to fulfil all the duties of his office—that is, to get money coined in his name and bearing his arms, to take the fisherman's ring from the finger of the dead pope, to dress, shave and paint him, to have the corpse embalmed, to lower the coffin after nine days' obsequies into the provisional niche where the last deceased pope has to remain until his successor comes to take his place and consign him to his final tomb; lastly, as he had been obliged to wall up the door of the Conclave and the window of the balcony from which the pontifical election is proclaimed, he had not had a single moment for busying himself with the police; so that the assassinations had continued in goodly fashion, and there were loud cries for an energetic hand which should make all these swords and all these daggers retire into their sheaths.

Now the eyes of this multitude were fixed, as we have said, upon the Vatican, and particularly upon one chimney, from which would come the first signal, when suddenly, at the moment of the 'Ave Maria'—that is to say, at the hour when the day begins to decline—great cries went up from all the crowd mixed with bursts of laughter, a discordant murmur of threats and raillery, the cause being that they had just perceived at the top of the chimney a thin smoke, which seemed like a light cloud to go up perpendicularly into the sky. This smoke announced that Rome was still without a master, and that the world still had no pope; for this was the smoke of the voting tickets which were being burned, a proof that the cardinals had not yet come to an agreement.

Scarcely had this smoke appeared, to vanish almost immediately, when all the innumerable crowd, knowing well that there was nothing else to wait for, and that all was said and done until ten o'clock the next morning, the time when the cardinals had their first voting, went off in a tumult of noisy joking, just as they would after the last rocket of a firework display; so that at the end of one minute nobody was there where a quarter of an hour before there had been an excited crowd, except a few curious laggards, who, living in the neighbourhood or on the very piazza itself; were less in a hurry than the rest to get back to their homes; again, little by little, these last groups insensibly diminished; for half-past nine had just struck, and at this hour the streets of Rome began already to be far from safe; then after these groups followed some solitary passer-by, hurrying his steps; one after another the doors were closed, one after another the windows were darkened; at last, when ten o'clock struck, with the single exception of one window in the Vatican where a lamp might be seen keeping obstinate vigil, all

the houses, piazzas, and streets were plunged in the deepest obscurity.

At this moment a man wrapped in a cloak stood up like a ghost against one of the columns of the uncompleted basilica, and gliding slowly and carefully among the stones which were lying about round the foundations of the new church, advanced as far as the fountain which, formed the centre of the piazza, erected in the very place where the obelisk is now set up of which we have spoken already; when he reached this spot he stopped, doubly concealed by the darkness of the night and by the shade of the monument, and after looking around him to see if he were really alone, drew his sword, and with its point rapping three times on the pavement of the piazza, each time made the sparks fly. This signal, for signal it was, was not lost: the last lamp which still kept vigil in the Vatican went out, and at the same instant an object thrown out of the window fell a few paces off from the young man in the cloak: he, guided by the silvery sound it had made in touching the flags, lost no time in laying his hands upon it in spite of the darkness, and when he had it in his possession hurried quickly away.

Thus the unknown walked without turning round half-way along the Borgo Vecchio; but there he turned to the right and took a street at the other end of which was set up a Madonna with a lamp: he approached the light, and drew from his pocket the object he had picked up, which was nothing else than a Roman crown piece; but this crown unscrewed, and in a cavity hollowed in its thickness enclosed a letter, which the man to whom it was addressed began to read at the risk of being recognised, so great was his haste to know what it contained.

We say at the risk of being recognised, for in his eagerness the recipient of this nocturnal missive had thrown back the hood of his cloak; and as his head was wholly within the luminous circle cast by the lamp, it was easy to distinguish in the light the head of a handsome young man of about five or six and twenty, dressed in a purple doublet slashed at the shoulder and elbow to let the shirt come through, and wearing on his head a cap of the same colour with a long black feather falling to his shoulder. It is true that he did not stand there long; for scarcely had he finished the letter, or rather the note, which he had just received in so strange and mysterious a manner, when he replaced it in its silver receptacle, and readjusting his cloak so as to hide all the lower part of his face, resumed his walk with a rapid step, crossed Borgo San Spirito, and took the street of the Longara, which he followed as far as the church of Regina Coeli.

When he arrived at this place, he gave three rapid knocks on the door of a house of good appearance, which immediately opened; then slowly mounting the stairs he entered a room where two women were awaiting him with an impatience so unconcealed that both as they saw him exclaimed together:

“Well, Francesco, what news?”

“Good news, my mother; good, my sister,” replied the young man, kissing the one and giving his hand to the other. “Our father has gained three votes to-day, but he still needs six to have the majority.”

“Then is there no means of buying them?” cried the elder of the two women, while the younger, instead of speaking, asked him with a look.

“Certainly, my mother, certainly,” replied the young man; “and it is just about that that my father has been thinking. He is giving Cardinal Orsini his palace at Rome and his two castles of Monticello and Soriano; to Cardinal Colonna his abbey of Subiaca; he gives Cardinal Sant’ Angelo the bishopric of Porto, with the furniture and cellar; to the Cardinal of Parma the town of Nepi; to the Cardinal of Genoa the church of Santa Maria-in-Via-Lata; and lastly, to Cardinal Savelli the church of Santa Maria Maggiore and the town of Civita Castellana; as to Cardinal Ascanio-Sforza, he knows already that the day before yesterday we sent to his house four mules laden with silver and plate, and out of this treasure he has engaged to give five thousand ducats to the Cardinal Patriarch of Venice.”

“But how shall we get the others to know the intentions of Roderigo?” asked the elder of the two women.

“My father has provided for everything, and proposes an easy method; you know, my mother, with what sort of ceremonial the cardinals’ dinner is carried in.”

“Yes, on a litter, in a large basket with the arms of the cardinal for whom the meal is prepared.”

“My father has bribed the bishop who examines it: tomorrow is a feast-day; to the Cardinals Orsini, Colonna, Savelli, Sant’ Angelo, and the Cardinals of Parma and of Genoa, chickens will be sent for hot meat, and each chicken will contain a deed of gift duly drawn up, made by me in my father’s name, of the houses,

palaces, or churches which are destined for each.”

“Capital!” said the elder of the two women; “now, I am certain, all will go well.”

“And by the grace of God,” added the younger, with a strangely mocking smile, “our father will be pope.”

“Oh, it will be a fine day for us!” cried Francesco.

“And for Christendom,” replied his sister, with a still more ironical expression.

“Lucrezia, Lucrezia,” said the mother, “you do not deserve the happiness which is coming to us.”

“What does that matter, if it comes all the same? Besides, you know the proverb; mother: ‘Large families are blessed of the Lord’; and still more so our family, which is so patriarchal.”

At the same time she cast on her brother a look so wanton that the young man blushed under it: but as at the moment he had to think of other things than his illicit loves, he ordered that four servants should be awakened; and while they were getting armed to accompany him, he drew up and signed the six deeds of gift which were to be carried the next day to the cardinals; for, not wishing to be seen at their houses, he thought he would profit by the night-time to carry them himself to certain persons in his confidence who would have them passed in, as had been arranged, at the dinner-hour. Then, when the deeds were quite ready and the servants also, Francesco went out with them, leaving the two women to dream golden dreams of their future greatness.

From the first dawn of day the people hurried anew, as ardent and interested as on the evening before, to the Piazza of the Vatican, where; at the ordinary time, that is, at ten o’clock in the morning, —the smoke rose again as usual, evoking laughter and murmuring, as it announced that none of the cardinals had secured the majority. A report, however, began to be spread about that the chances were divided between three candidates, who were Roderigo Borgia, Giuliano delta Rovera, and Ascanio Sforza; for the people as yet knew nothing of the four mules laden with plate and silver which had been led to Sforza’s house, by reason of which he had given up his own votes to his rival. In the midst of the agitation excited in the crowd by this new report a solemn chanting was heard; it proceeded from a procession, led by the Cardinal Camerlengo, with the object of

obtaining from Heaven the speedy election of a pope: this procession, starting from the church of Ara Coeli at the Capitol, was to make stations before the principal Madannas and the most frequented churches. As soon as the silver crucifix was perceived which went in front, the most profound silence prevailed, and everyone fell on his knees; thus a supreme calm followed the tumult and uproar which had been heard a few minutes before, and which at each appearance of the smoke had assumed a more threatening character: there was a shrewd suspicion that the procession, as well as having a religious end in view, had a political object also, and that its influence was intended to be as great on earth as in heaven. In any case, if such had been the design of the Cardinal Camerlengo, he had not deceived himself, and the effect was what he desired: when the procession had gone past, the laughing and joking continued, but the cries and threats had completely ceased.

The whole day passed thus; for in Rome nobody works. You are either a cardinal or a lacquey, and you live, nobody knows how. The crowd was still extremely numerous, when, towards two o'clock in the afternoon, another procession, which had quite as much power of provoking noise as the first of imposing silence, traversed in its turn the Piazza of St. Peter's: this was the dinner procession. The people received it with the usual bursts of laughter, without suspecting, for all their irreverence, that this procession, more efficacious than the former, had just settled the election of the new pope.

The hour of the Ave Maria came as on the evening before; but, as on the evening before, the waiting of the whole day was lost; for, as half-past eight struck, the daily smoke reappeared at the top of the chimney. But when at the same moment rumours which came from the inside of the Vatican were spread abroad, announcing that, in all probability, the election would take place the next day, the good people preserved their patience. Besides, it had been very hot that day, and they were so broken with fatigue and roasted by the sun, these dwellers in shade and idleness, that they had no strength left to complain.

The morning of the next day, which was the 11th of August, 1492, arose stormy and dark; this did not hinder the multitude from thronging the piazzas, streets, doors, houses, churches. Moreover, this disposition of the weather was a real blessing from Heaven; for if there were heat, at least there would be no sun. Towards nine o'clock threatening storm-clouds were heaped up over all the Trastevere; but to this crowd what mattered rain, lightning, or thunder? They were preoccupied with a concern of a very different nature; they were waiting

for their pope: a promise had been made them for to-day, and it could be seen by the manner of all, that if the day should pass without any election taking place, the end of it might very well be a riot; therefore, in proportion as the time advanced, the agitation grew greater. Nine o'clock, half-past nine, a quarter to ten struck, without anything happening to confirm or destroy their hopes. At last the first stroke of ten was heard; all eyes turned towards the chimney: ten o'clock struck slowly, each stroke vibrating in the heart of the multitude. At last the tenth stroke trembled, then vanished shuddering into space, and, a great cry breaking simultaneously from a hundred thousand breasts followed the silence "Non v'e fumo! There is no smoke!" In other words, "We have a pope."

At this moment the rain began to fall; but no one paid any attention to it, so great were the transports of joy and impatience among all the people. At last a little stone was detached from the walled window which gave on the balcony and upon which all eyes were fixed: a general shout saluted its fall; little by little the aperture grew larger, and in a few minutes it was large enough to allow a man to come out on the balcony.

The Cardinal Ascanio Sforza appeared; but at the moment when he was on the point of coming out, frightened by the rain and the lightning, he hesitated an instant, and finally drew back: immediately the multitude in their turn broke out like a tempest into cries, curses, howls, threatening to tear down the Vatican and to go and seek their pope themselves. At this noise Cardinal Sforza, more terrified by the popular storm than by the storm in the heavens, advanced on the balcony, and between two thunderclaps, in a moment of silence astonishing to anyone who had just heard the clamour that went before, made the following proclamation:

"I announce to you a great joy: the most Eminent and most Reverend Signor Roderigo Lenzuolo Borgia, Archbishop of Valencia, Cardinal-Deacon of San Nicolao-in-Carcere, Vice-Chancellor of the Church, has now been elected Pope, and has assumed the name of Alexander VI."

The news of this nomination was received with strange joy. Roderigo Borgia had the reputation of a dissolute man, it is true, but libertinism had mounted the throne with Sixtus IV and Innocent VIII, so that for the Romans there was nothing new in the singular situation of a pope with a mistress and five children. The great thing for the moment was that the power fell into strong hands; and it was more important for the tranquillity of Rome that the new pope inherited the

sword of St. Paul than that he inherited the keys of St. Peter.

And so, in the feasts that were given on this occasion, the dominant character was much more warlike than religious, and would have appeared rather to suit with the election of some young conqueror than the exaltation of an old pontiff: there was no limit to the pleasantries and prophetic epigrams on the name of Alexander, which for the second time seemed to promise the Romans the empire of the world; and the same evening, in the midst of brilliant illuminations and bonfires, which seemed to turn the town into a lake of flame, the following epigram was read, amid the acclamation of the people:

“Rome under Caesar’s rule in ancient story
At home and o’er the world
victorious trod; But Alexander still extends his glory:
Caesar was man, but
Alexander God.”

As to the new pope, scarcely had he completed the formalities of etiquette which his exaltation imposed upon him, and paid to each man the price of his simony, when from the height of the Vatican he cast his eyes upon Europe, a vast political game of chess, which he cherished the hope of directing at the will of his own genius.

CHAPTER II

The world had now arrived at one of those supreme moments of history when every thing is transformed between the end of one period and the beginning of another: in the East Turkey, in the South Spain, in the West France, and in the North German, all were going to assume, together with the title of great Powers, that influence which they were destined to exert in the future over the secondary States. Accordingly we too, with Alexander VI, will cast a rapid glance over them, and see what were their respective situations in regard to Italy, which they all coveted as a prize.

Constantine, Palaeologos Dragozes, besieged by three hundred thousand Turks, after having appealed in vain for aid to the whole of Christendom, had not been willing to survive the loss of his empire, and had been found in the midst of the dead, close to the Tophana Gate; and on the 30th of May, 1453, Mahomet II had made his entry into Constantinople, where, after a reign which had earned for him the surname of 'Fatile', or the Conqueror, he had died leaving two sons, the elder of whom had ascended the throne under the name of Bajazet II.

The accession of the new sultan, however, had not taken place with the tranquillity which his right as elder brother and his father's choice of him should have promised. His younger brother, D'jem, better known under the name of Zizimeh, had argued that whereas he was born in the purple—that is, born during the reign of Mahomet—Bajazet was born prior to his epoch, and was therefore the son of a private individual. This was rather a poor trick; but where force is all and right is naught, it was good enough to stir up a war. The two brothers, each at the head of an army, met accordingly in Asia in 1482. D'jem was defeated after a seven hours' fight, and pursued by his brother, who gave him no time to rally his army: he was obliged to embark from Cilicia, and took refuge in Rhodes, where he implored the protection of the Knights of St. John. They, not daring to give him an asylum in their island so near to Asia, sent him to France, where they had him carefully guarded in one of their commanderies, in spite of the urgency of Cait Bey, Sultan of Egypt, who, having revolted against Bajazet, desired to have the young prince in his army to give his rebellion the appearance of legitimate warfare. The same demand, moreover, with the same political object, had been made successively by Mathias Corvinus, King of Hungary, by Ferdinand, King of Aragon and Sicily, and by Ferdinand, King of Naples.

On his side Bajazet, who knew all the importance of such a rival, if he once allied himself with any one of the princes with whom he was at war, had sent ambassadors to Charles VIII, offering, if he would consent to keep D'jem with him, to give him a considerable pension, and to give to France the sovereignty of the Holy Land, so soon as Jerusalem should be conquered by the Sultan of Egypt. The King of France had accepted these terms.

But then Innocent VIII had intervened, and in his turn had claimed D'jem, ostensibly to give support by the claims of the refugee to a crusade which he was preaching against the Turks, but in reality to appropriate the pension of 40,000 ducats to be given by Bajazet to any one of the Christian princes who would undertake to be his brother's gaoler. Charles VIII had not dared to refuse to the spiritual head of Christendom a request supported by such holy reasons; and therefore D'jem had quitted France, accompanied by the Grand Master d'Aubusson, under whose direct charge he was; but his guardian had consented, for the sake of a cardinal's hat, to yield up his prisoner. Thus, on the 13th of March, 1489, the unhappy young man, cynosure of so many interested eyes, made his solemn entry into Rome, mounted on a superb horse, clothed in a magnificent oriental costume, between the Prior of Auvergne, nephew of the Grand Master d'Aubusson, and Francesco Cibo, the son of the pope.

After this he had remained there, and Bajazet, faithful to promises which it was so much his interest to fulfil, had punctually paid to the sovereign pontiff a pension of 40,000 ducats.

So much for Turkey.

Ferdinand and Isabella were reigning in Spain, and were laying the foundations of that vast power which was destined, five-and-twenty years later, to make Charles V declare that the sun never set on his dominions. In fact, these two sovereigns, on whom history has bestowed the name of Catholic, had reconquered in succession nearly all Spain, and driven the Moors out of Granada, their last entrenchment; while two men of genius, Bartolome Diaz and Christopher Columbus, had succeeded, much to the profit of Spain, the one in recovering a lost world, the other in conquering a world yet unknown. They had accordingly, thanks to their victories in the ancient world and their discoveries in the new, acquired an influence at the court of Rome which had never been enjoyed by any of their predecessors.

So much for Spain.

In France, Charles VIII had succeeded his father, Louis XI, on the 30th of August, 1483. Louis by dint of executions, had tranquillised his kingdom and smoothed the way for a child who ascended the throne under the regency of a woman. And the regency had been a glorious one, and had put down the pretensions of princes of the blood, put an end to civil wars, and united to the crown all that yet remained of the great independent fiefs. The result was that at the epoch where we now are, here was Charles VIII, about twenty-two years of age, a prince (if we are to believe La Tremouille) little of body but great of heart; a child (if we are to believe Commines) only now making his first flight from the nest, destitute of both sense and money, feeble in person, full of self-will, and consorting rather with fools than with the wise; lastly, if we are to believe Guicciardini, who was an Italian, might well have brought a somewhat partial judgment to bear upon the subject, a young man of little wit concerning the actions of men, but carried away by an ardent desire for rule and the acquisition of glory, a desire based far more on his shallow character and impetuosity than on any consciousness of genius: he was an enemy to all fatigue and all business, and when he tried to give his attention to it he showed himself always totally wanting in prudence and judgment. If anything in him appeared at first sight to be worthy of praise, on a closer inspection it was found to be something nearer akin to vice than to virtue. He was liberal, it is true, but without thought, with no measure and no discrimination. He was sometimes inflexible in will; but this was through obstinacy rather than a constant mind; and what his flatterers called goodness deserved far more the name of insensibility to injuries or poverty of spirit.

As to his physical appearance, if we are to believe the same author, it was still less admirable, and answered marvellously to his weakness of mind and character. He was small, with a large head, a short thick neck, broad chest, and high shoulders; his thighs and legs were long and thin; and as his face also was ugly—and was only redeemed by the dignity and force of his glance—and all his limbs were disproportionate with one another, he had rather the appearance of a monster than a man. Such was he whom Fortune was destined to make a conqueror, for whom Heaven was reserving more glory than he had power to carry.

So much for France.

The Imperial throne was occupied by Frederic III, who had been rightly named the Peaceful, not for the reason that he had always maintained peace, but because, having constantly been beaten, he had always been forced to make it. The first proof he had given of this very philosophical forbearance was during his journey to Rome, whither he betook himself to be consecrated. In crossing the Apennines he was attacked by brigands. They robbed him, but he made no pursuit. And so, encouraged by example and by the impunity of lesser thieves, the greater ones soon took part in the robberies. Amurath seized part of Hungary. Mathias Corvinus took Lower Austria, and Frederic consoled himself for these usurpations by repeating the maxim, Forgetfulness is the best cure for the losses we suffer. At the time we have now reached, he had just, after a reign of fifty-three years, affianced his son Maximilian to Marie of Burgundy and had put under the ban of the Empire his son-in-law, Albert of Bavaria, who laid claim to the ownership of the Tyrol. He was therefore too full of his family affairs to be troubled about Italy. Besides, he was busy looking for a motto for the house of Austria, an occupation of the highest importance for a man of the character of Frederic III. This motto, which Charles V was destined almost to render true, was at last discovered, to the great joy of the old emperor, who, judging that he had nothing more to do on earth after he had given this last proof of sagacity, died on the 19th of August, 1493; leaving the empire to his son Maximilian.

This motto was simply founded on the five vowels, a, e, i, o, u, the initial letters of these five words

“AUSTRIAE EST IMPERARE ORBI UNIVERSO.”

This means

“It is the destiny of Austria to rule over the whole world.”

So much for Germany.

Now that we have cast a glance over the four nations which were on the way, as we said before, to become European Powers, let us turn our attention to those secondary States which formed a circle more contiguous to Rome, and whose business it was to serve as armour, so to speak, to the spiritual queen of the world, should it please any of these political giants whom we have described to make encroachments with a view to an attack, on the seas or the mountains, the Adriatic Gulf or the Alps, the Mediterranean or the Apennines.

These were the kingdom of Naples, the duchy of Milan, the magnificent republic of Florence, and the most serene republic of Venice.

The kingdom of Naples was in the hands of the old Ferdinand, whose birth was not only illegitimate, but probably also well within the prohibited degrees. His father, Alfonso of Aragon, received his crown from Giovanna of Naples, who had adopted him as her successor. But since, in the fear of having no heir, the queen on her deathbed had named two instead of one, Alfonso had to sustain his rights against Rene. The two aspirants for some time disputed the crown. At last the house of Aragon carried the day over the house of Anjou, and in the course of the year 1442, Alfonso definitely secured his seat on the throne. Of this sort were the claims of the defeated rival which we shall see Charles VIII maintaining later on. Ferdinand had neither the courage nor the genius of his father, and yet he triumphed over his enemies, one after another he had two rivals, both far superior in merit to him self. The one was his nephew, the Count of Viana, who, basing his claim on his uncle's shameful birth, commanded the whole Aragonese party; the other was Duke John of Calabria, who commanded the whole Angevin party. Still he managed to hold the two apart, and to keep himself on the throne by dint of his prudence, which often verged upon duplicity. He had a cultivated mind, and had studied the sciences—above all, law. He was of middle height, with a large handsome head, his brow open and admirably framed in beautiful white hair, which fell nearly down to his shoulders. Moreover, though he had rarely exercised his physical strength in arms, this strength was so great that one day, when he happened to be on the square of the Mercato Nuovo at Naples, he seized by the horns a bull that had escaped and stopped him short, in spite of all the efforts the animal made to escape from his hands. Now the election of Alexander had caused him great uneasiness, and in spite of his usual prudence he had not been able to restrain himself from saying before the bearer of the news that not only did he fail to rejoice in this election, but also that he did not think that any Christian could rejoice in it, seeing that Borgia, having always been a bad man, would certainly make a bad pope. To this he added that, even were the choice an excellent one and such as would please everybody else, it would be none the less fatal to the house of Aragon, although Roderigo was born her subject and owed to her the origin and progress of his fortunes; for wherever reasons of state come in, the ties of blood and parentage are soon forgotten, and, 'a fortiori', relations arising from the obligations of nationality.

Thus, one may see that Ferdinand judged Alexander VI with his usual

perspicacity; this, however, did not hinder him, as we shall soon perceive, from being the first to contract an alliance with him.

The duchy of Milan belonged nominally to John Galeazzo, grandson of Francesco Sforza, who had seized it by violence on the 26th of February, 1450, and bequeathed it to his son, Galeazzo Maria, father of the young prince now reigning; we say nominally, because the real master of the Milanese was at this period not the legitimate heir who was supposed to possess it, but his uncle Ludovico, surnamed 'il Moro', because of the mulberry tree which he bore in his arms. After being exiled with his two brothers, Philip who died of poison in 1479, and Ascanio who became the cardinal, he returned to Milan some days after the assassination of Galeazzo Maria, which took place on the 26th of December 1476, in St. Stephen's Church, and assumed the regency for the young duke, who at that time was only eight years old. From now onward, even after his nephew had reached the age of two-and-twenty, Ludovico continued to rule, and according to all probabilities was destined to rule a long time yet; for, some days after the poor young man had shown a desire to take the reins himself, he had fallen sick, and it was said, and not in a whisper, that he had taken one of those slow but mortal poisons of which princes made so frequent a use at this period, that, even when a malady was natural, a cause was always sought connected with some great man's interests. However it may have been, Ludovico had relegated his nephew, now too weak to busy himself henceforward with the affairs of his duchy, to the castle of Pavia, where he lay and languished under the eyes of his wife Isabella, daughter of King Ferdinand of Naples.

As to Ludovico, he was an ambitious man, full of courage and astuteness, familiar with the sword and with poison, which he used alternately, according to the occasion, without feeling any repugnance or any predilection for either of them; but quite decided to be his nephew's heir whether he died or lived.

Florence, although she had preserved the name of a republic, had little by little lost all her liberties, and belonged in fact, if not by right, to Piero dei Medici, to whom she had been bequeathed as a paternal legacy by Lorenzo, as we have seen, at the risk of his soul's salvation.

The son, unfortunately, was far from having the genius of his father: he was handsome, it is true, whereas Lorenzo, on the contrary, was remarkably ugly; he had an agreeable, musical voice, whereas Lorenzo had always spoken through his nose; he was instructed in Latin and Greek, his conversation was pleasant

and easy, and he improvised verses almost as well as the so-called Magnificent; but he was both ignorant of political affairs and haughtily insolent in his behaviour to those who had made them their study. Added to this, he was an ardent lover of pleasure, passionately addicted to women, incessantly occupied with bodily exercises that should make him shine in their eyes, above all with tennis, a game at which he very highly excelled: he promised himself that, when the period of mourning was past, he would occupy the attention not only of Florence but of the whole of Italy, by the splendour of his courts and the renown of his fetes. Piero dei Medici had at any rate formed this plan; but Heaven decreed otherwise.

As to the most serene republic of Venice, whose doge was Agostino Barbarigo, she had attained, at the time we have reached, to her highest degree of power and splendour. From Cadiz to the Palus Maeotis, there was no port that was not open to her thousand ships; she possessed in Italy, beyond the coastline of the canals and the ancient duchy of Venice, the provinces of Bergamo, Brescia, Crema, Verona, Vicenza, and Padua; she owned the marches of Treviso, which comprehend the districts of Feltre, Belluno, Cadore, Polesella of Rovigo, and the principality of Ravenna; she also owned the Friuli, except Aquileia; Istria, except Trieste; she owned, on the east side of the Gulf, Zara, Spalatra, and the shore of Albania; in the Ionian Sea, the islands of Zante and Corfu; in Greece, Lepanto and Patras; in the Morea, Morone, Corone, Neapolis, and Argos; lastly, in the Archipelago, besides several little towns and stations on the coast, she owned Candia and the kingdom of Cyprus.

Thus from the mouth of the Po to the eastern extremity of the Mediterranean, the most serene republic was mistress of the whole coastline, and Italy and Greece seemed to be mere suburbs of Venice.

In the intervals of space left free between Naples, Milan, Florence, and Venice, petty tyrants had arisen who exercised an absolute sovereignty over their territories: thus the Colonnas were at Ostia and at Nettuna, the Montefeltri at Urbino, the Manfredi at Faenza, the Bentivogli at Bologna, the Malatesta family at Rimini, the Vitelli at Citta di Castello, the Baglioni at Perugia, the Orsini at Vicovaro, and the princes of Este at Ferrara.

Finally, in the centre of this immense circle, composed of great Powers, of secondary States, and of little tyrannies, Rome was set on high, the most exalted, yet the weakest of all, without influence, without lands, without an army, without

gold. It was the concern of the new pope to secure all this: let us see, therefore, what manner of man was this Alexander VI, for undertaking and accomplishing such a project.

CHAPTER III

RODERIGO LENZUOLO was born at Valencia, in Spain, in 1430 or 1431, and on his mother's side was descended, as some writers declare, of a family of royal blood, which had cast its eyes on the tiara only after cherishing hopes of the crowns of Aragon and Valencia. Roderigo from his infancy had shown signs of a marvellous quickness of mind, and as he grew older he exhibited an intelligence extremely apt for the study of sciences, especially law and jurisprudence: the result was that his first distinctions were gained in the law, a profession wherein he soon made a great reputation by his ability in the discussion of the most thorny cases. All the same, he was not slow to leave this career, and abandoned it quite suddenly for the military profession, which his father had followed; but after various actions which served to display his presence of mind and courage, he was as much disgusted with this profession as with the other; and since it happened that at the very time he began to feel this disgust his father died, leaving a considerable fortune, he resolved to do no more work, but to live according to his own fancies and caprices. About this time he became the lover of a widow who had two daughters. The widow dying, Roderigo took the girls under his protection, put one into a convent, and as the other was one of the loveliest women imaginable, made her his mistress. This was the notorious Rosa Vanozza, by whom he had five children—Francesco, Caesar, Lucrezia, and Goffredo; the name of the fifth is unknown.

Roderigo, retired from public affairs, was given up entirely to the affections of a lover and a father, when he heard that his uncle, who loved him like a son, had been elected pope under the name of Calixtus III. But the young man was at this time so much a lover that love imposed silence on ambition; and indeed he was almost terrified at the exaltation of his uncle, which was no doubt destined to force him once more into public life. Consequently, instead of hurrying to Rome, as anyone else in his place would have done, he was content to indite to His Holiness a letter in which he begged for the continuation of his favours, and wished him a long and happy reign.

This reserve on the part of one of his relatives, contrasted with the ambitious schemes which beset the new pope at every step, struck Calixtus III in a singular way: he knew the stuff that was in young Roderigo, and at a time when he was besieged on all sides by mediocrities, this powerful nature holding modestly

aside gained new grandeur in his eyes so he replied instantly to Roderigo that on the receipt of his letter he must quit Spain for Italy, Valencia for Rome.

This letter uprooted Roderigo from the centre of happiness he had created for himself, and where he might perhaps have slumbered on like an ordinary man, if fortune had not thus interposed to drag him forcibly away. Roderigo was happy, Roderigo was rich; the evil passions which were natural to him had been, if not extinguished,—at least lulled; he was frightened himself at the idea of changing the quiet life he was leading for the ambitious, agitated career that was promised him; and instead of obeying his uncle, he delayed the preparations for departure, hoping that Calixtus would forget him. It was not so: two months after he received the letter from the pope, there arrived at Valencia a prelate from Rome, the bearer of Roderigo's nomination to a benefice worth 20,000 ducats a year, and also a positive order to the holder of the post to come and take possession of his charge as soon as possible.

Holding back was no longer feasible: so Roderigo obeyed; but as he did not wish to be separated from the source whence had sprung eight years of happiness, Rosa Vanozza also left Spain, and while he was going to Rome, she betook herself to Venice, accompanied by two confidential servants, and under the protection of a Spanish gentleman named Manuel Melchior.

Fortune kept the promises she had made to Roderigo: the pope received him as a son, and made him successively Archbishop of Valencia, Cardinal-Deacon, and Vice-Chancellor. To all these favours Calixtus added a revenue of 20,000 ducats, so that at the age of scarcely thirty-five Roderigo found himself the equal of a prince in riches and power.

Roderigo had had some reluctance about accepting the cardinalship, which kept him fast at Rome, and would have preferred to be General of the Church, a position which would have allowed him more liberty for seeing his mistress and his family; but his uncle Calixtus made him reckon with the possibility of being his successor some day, and from that moment the idea of being the supreme head of kings and nations took such hold of Roderigo, that he no longer had any end in view but that which his uncle had made him entertain.

From that day forward, there began to grow up in the young cardinal that talent for hypocrisy which made of him the most perfect incarnation of the devil that has perhaps ever existed; and Roderigo was no longer the same man: with words

of repentance and humility on his lips, his head bowed as though he were bearing the weight of his past sins, disparaging the riches which he had acquired and which, according to him, were the wealth of the poor and ought to return to the poor, he passed his life in churches, monasteries, and hospitals, acquiring, his historian tells us, even in the eyes of his enemies, the reputation of a Solomon for wisdom, of a Job for patience, and of a very Moses for his promulgation of the word of God: Rosa Vanozza was the only person in the world who could appreciate the value of this pious cardinal's conversion.

It proved a lucky thing for Roderigo that he had assumed this pious attitude, for his protector died after a reign of three years three months and nineteen days, and he was now sustained by his own merit alone against the numerous enemies he had made by his rapid rise to fortune: so during the whole of the reign of Pius II he lived always apart from public affairs, and only reappeared in the days of Sixtus IV, who made him the gift of the abbacy of Subiaco, and sent him in the capacity of ambassador to the kings of Aragon and Portugal. On his return, which took place during the pontificate of Innocent VIII, he decided to fetch his family at last to Rome: thither they came, escorted by Don Manuel Melchior, who from that moment passed as the husband of Rosa Vanozza, and took the name of Count Ferdinand of Castile. The Cardinal Roderigo received the noble Spaniard as a countryman and a friend; and he, who expected to lead a most retired life, engaged a house in the street of the Lungara, near the church of Regina Coeli, on the banks of the Tiber. There it was that, after passing the day in prayers and pious works, Cardinal Roderigo used to repair each evening and lay aside his mask. And it was said, though nobody could prove it, that in this house infamous scenes passed: Report said the dissipations were of so dissolute a character that their equals had never been seen in Rome. With a view to checking the rumours that began to spread abroad, Roderigo sent Caesar to study at Pisa, and married Lucrezia to a young gentleman of Aragon; thus there only remained at home Rosa Vanozza and her two sons: such was the state of things when Innocent VIII died and Roderigo Borgia was proclaimed pope.

We have seen by what means the nomination was effected; and so the five cardinals who had taken no part in this simony—namely, the Cardinals of Naples, Sierra, Portugal, Santa Maria-in-Porticu, and St. Peter-in-Vinculis—protested loudly against this election, which they treated as a piece of jobbery; but Roderigo had none the less, however it was done, secured his majority; Roderigo was none the less the two hundred and sixtieth successor of St. Peter.

Alexander VI, however, though he had arrived at his object, did not dare throw off at first the mask which the Cardinal Borgia had worn so long, although when he was apprised of his election he could not dissimulate his joy; indeed, on hearing the favourable result of the scrutiny, he lifted his hands to heaven and cried, in the accents of satisfied ambition, "Am I then pope? Am I then Christ's vicar? Am I then the keystone of the Christian world?"

"Yes, holy father," replied Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, the same who had sold to Roderigo the nine votes that were at his disposal at the Conclave for four mules laden with silver; "and we hope by your election to give glory to God, repose to the Church, and joy to Christendom, seeing that you have been chosen by the Almighty Himself as the most worthy among all your brethren."

But in the short interval occupied by this reply, the new pope had already assumed the papal authority, and in a humble voice and with hands crossed upon his breast, he spoke:

"We hope that God will grant us His powerful aid, in spite of our weakness, and that He will do for us that which He did for the apostle when aforesaid He put into his hands the keys of heaven and entrusted to him the government of the Church, a government which without the aid of God would prove too heavy a burden for mortal man; but God promised that His Spirit should direct him; God will do the same, I trust, for us; and for your part we fear not lest any of you fail in that holy obedience which is due unto the head of the Church, even as the flock of Christ was bidden to follow the prince of the apostles."

Having spoken these words, Alexander donned the pontifical robes, and through the windows of the Vatican had strips of paper thrown out on which his name was written in Latin. These, blown by the wind, seemed to convey to the whole world the news of the great event which was about to change the face of Italy. The same day couriers started for all the courts of Europe.

Caesar Borgia learned the news of his father's election at the University of Pisa, where he was a student. His ambition had sometimes dreamed of such good fortune, yet his joy was little short of madness. He was then a young man, about twenty-two or twenty-four years of age, skilful in all bodily exercises, and especially in fencing; he could ride barebacked the most fiery steeds, could cut off the head of a bull at a single sword-stroke; moreover, he was arrogant, jealous, and insincere. According to Tammasi, he was great among the godless,

as his brother Francesco was good among the great. As to his face, even contemporary authors have left utterly different descriptions; for some have painted him as a monster of ugliness, while others, on the contrary, extol his beauty. This contradiction is due to the fact that at certain times of the year, and especially in the spring, his face was covered with an eruption which, so long as it lasted, made him an object of horror and disgust, while all the rest of the year he was the sombre, black-haired cavalier with pale skin and tawny beard whom Raphael shows us in the fine portrait he made of him. And historians, both chroniclers and painters, agree as to his fixed and powerful gaze, behind which burned a ceaseless flame, giving to his face something infernal and superhuman. Such was the man whose fortune was to fulfil all his desires. He had taken for his motto, 'Aut Caesar, aut nihil': Caesar or nothing.

Caesar posted to Rome with certain of his friends, and scarcely was he recognised at the gates of the city when the deference shown to him gave instant proof of the change in his fortunes: at the Vatican the respect was twice as great; mighty men bowed down before him as before one mightier than themselves. And so, in his impatience, he stayed not to visit his mother or any other member of his family, but went straight to the pope to kiss his feet; and as the pope had been forewarned of his coming, he awaited him in the midst of a brilliant and numerous assemblage of cardinals, with the three other brothers standing behind him. His Holiness received Caesar with a gracious countenance; still, he did not allow himself any demonstration of his paternal love, but, bending towards him, kissed him on the forehead, and inquired how he was and how he had fared on his journey. Caesar replied that he was wonderfully well, and altogether at the service of His Holiness: that, as to the journey, the trifling inconveniences and short fatigue had been compensated, and far more than compensated, by the joy which he felt in being able to adore upon the papal throne a pope who was so worthy. At these words, leaving Caesar still on his knees, and reseating himself—for he had risen from his seat to embrace him—the pope assumed a grave and composed expression of face, and spoke as follows, loud enough to be heard by all, and slowly enough for everyone present to be able to ponder and retain in his memory even the least of his words:

“We are convinced, Caesar, that you are peculiarly rejoiced in beholding us on this sublime height, so far above our deserts, whereto it has pleased the Divine goodness to exalt us. This joy of yours is first of all our due because of the love we have always borne you and which we bear you still, and in the second place is prompted by your own personal interest, since henceforth you may feel sure of

receiving from our pontifical hand those benefits which your own good works shall deserve. But if your joy—and this we say to you as we have even now said to your brothers—if your joy is founded on ought else than this, you are very greatly mistaken, Caesar, and you will find yourself sadly deceived. Perhaps we have been ambitious—we confess this humbly before the face of all men—passionately and immoderately ambitious to attain to the dignity of sovereign pontiff, and to reach this end we have followed every path that is open to human industry; but we have acted thus, vowing an inward vow that when once we had reached our goal, we would follow no other path but that which conduces best to the service of God and to the advancement of the Holy See, so that the glorious memory of the deeds that we shall do may efface the shameful recollection of the deeds we have already done. Thus shall we, let us hope, leave to those who follow us a track where upon if they find not the footsteps of a saint, they may at least tread in the path of a true pontiff. God, who has furthered the means, claims at our hands the fruits, and we desire to discharge to the full this mighty debt that we have incurred to Him; and accordingly we refuse to arouse by any deceit the stern rigour of His judgments. One sole hindrance could have power to shake our good intentions, and that might happen should we feel too keen an interest in your fortunes. Therefore are we armed beforehand against our love, and therefore have we prayed to God beforehand that we stumble not because of you; for in the path of favouritism a pope cannot slip without a fall, and cannot fall without injury and dishonour to the Holy See. Even to the end of our life we shall deplore the faults which have brought this experience home to us; and may it please God that our uncle Calixtus of blessed memory bear not this day in purgatory the burden of our sins, more heavy, alas, than his own! Ah, he was rich in every virtue, he was full of good intentions; but he loved too much his own people, and among them he loved me chief. And so he suffered this love to lead him blindly astray, all this love that he bore to his kindred, who to him were too truly flesh of his flesh, so that he heaped upon the heads of a few persons only, and those perhaps the least worthy, benefits which would more fittingly have rewarded the deserts of many. In truth, he bestowed upon our house treasures that should never have been amassed at the expense of the poor, or else should have been turned to a better purpose. He severed from the ecclesiastical State, already weak and poor, the duchy of Spoleto and other wealthy properties, that he might make them fiefs to us; he confided to our weak hands the vice-chancellorship, the vice-prefecture of Rome, the generalship of the Church, and all the other most important offices, which, instead of being monopolised by us, should have been conferred on those who were most meritorious. Moreover, there were persons who were raised on our recommendation to posts of great

dignity, although they had no claims but such as our undue partiality accorded them; others were left out with no reason for their failure except the jealousy excited in us by their virtues. To rob Ferdinand of Aragon of the kingdom of Naples, Calixtus kindled a terrible war, which by a happy issue only served to increase our fortune, and by an unfortunate issue must have brought shame and disaster upon the Holy See. Lastly, by allowing himself to be governed by men who sacrificed public good to their private interests, he inflicted an injury, not only upon the pontifical throne and his own reputation, but what is far worse, far more deadly, upon his own conscience. And yet, O wise judgments of God! hard and incessantly though he toiled to establish our fortunes, scarcely had he left empty that supreme seat which we occupy to-day, when we were cast down from the pinnacle whereon we had climbed, abandoned to the fury of the rabble and the vindictive hatred of the Roman barons, who chose to feel offended by our goodness to their enemies. Thus, not only, we tell you, Caesar, not only did we plunge headlong from the summit of our grandeur, losing the worldly goods and dignities which our uncle had heaped at our feet, but for very peril of our life we were condemned to a voluntary exile, we and our friends, and in this way only did we contrive to escape the storm which our too good fortune had stirred up against us. Now this is a plain proof that God mocks at men's designs when they are bad ones. How great an error is it for any pope to devote more care to the welfare of a house, which cannot last more than a few years, than to the glory of the Church, which will last for ever! What utter folly for any public man whose position is not inherited and cannot be bequeathed to his posterity, to support the edifice of his grandeur on any other basis than the noblest virtue practised for the general good, and to suppose that he can ensure the continuance of his own fortune otherwise than by taking all precautions against sudden whirlwinds which are wont to arise in the midst of a calm, and to blow up the storm-clouds I mean the host of enemies. Now any one of these enemies who does his worst can cause injuries far more powerful than any help that is at all likely to come from a hundred friends and their lying promises. If you and your brothers walk in the path of virtue which we shall now open for you, every wish of your heart shall be instantly accomplished; but if you take the other path, if you have ever hoped that our affection will wink at disorderly life, then you will very soon find out that we are truly pope, Father of the Church, not father of the family; that, vicar of Christ as we are, we shall act as we deem best for Christendom, and not as you deem best for your own private good. And now that we have come to a thorough understanding, Caesar, receive our pontifical blessing." And with these words, Alexander VI rose up, laid his hands upon his son's head, for Caesar was still kneeling, and then retired into his apartments, without inviting him to

follow.

The young man remained awhile stupefied at this discourse, so utterly unexpected, so utterly destructive at one fell blow to his most cherished hopes. He rose giddy and staggering like a drunken man, and at once leaving the Vatican, hurried to his mother, whom he had forgotten before, but sought now in his despair. Rosa Vanozza possessed all the vices and all the virtues of a Spanish courtesan; her devotion to the Virgin amounted to superstition, her fondness for her children to weakness, and her love for Roderigo to sensuality. In the depth of her heart she relied on the influence she had been able to exercise over him for nearly thirty years; and like a snake, she knew how to envelop him in her coils when the fascination of her glance had lost its power. Rosa knew of old the profound hypocrisy of her lover, and thus she was in no difficulty about reassuring Caesar.

Lucrezia was with her mother when Caesar arrived; the two young people exchanged a lover-like kiss beneath her very eyes: and before he left Caesar had made an appointment for the same evening with Lucrezia, who was now living apart from her husband, to whom Roderigo paid a pension in her palace of the Via del Pelegrino, opposite the Campo dei Fiori, and there enjoying perfect liberty.

In the evening, at the hour fixed, Caesar appeared at Lucrezia's; but he found there his brother Francesco. The two young men had never been friends. Still, as their tastes were very different, hatred with Francesco was only the fear of the deer for the hunter; but with Caesar it was the desire for vengeance and that lust for blood which lurks perpetually in the heart of a tiger. The two brothers none the less embraced, one from general kindly feeling, the other from hypocrisy; but at first sight of one another the sentiment of a double rivalry, first in their father's and then in their sister's good graces, had sent the blood mantling to the cheek of Francesco, and called a deadly pallor into Caesar's. So the two young men sat on, each resolved not to be the first to leave, when all at once there was a knock at the door, and a rival was announced before whom both of them were bound to give way: it was their father.

Rosa Vanazza was quite right in comforting Caesar. Indeed, although Alexander VI had repudiated the abuses of nepotism, he understood very well the part that was to be played for his benefit by his sons and his daughter; for he knew he could always count on Lucrezia and Caesar, if not on Francesco and Goffredo. In

these matters the sister was quite worthy of her brother. Lucrezia was wanton in imagination, godless by nature, ambitious and designing: she had a craving for pleasure, admiration, honours, money, jewels, gorgeous stuffs, and magnificent mansions. A true Spaniard beneath her golden tresses, a courtesan beneath her frank looks, she carried the head of a Raphael Madonna, and concealed the heart of a Messalina. She was dear to Roderigo both as daughter and as mistress, and he saw himself reflected in her as in a magic mirror, every passion and every vice. Lucrezia and Caesar were accordingly the best beloved of his heart, and the three composed that diabolical trio which for eleven years occupied the pontifical throne, like a mocking parody of the heavenly Trinity.

Nothing occurred at first to give the lie to Alexander's professions of principle in the discourse he addressed to Caesar, and the first year of his pontificate exceeded all the hopes of Rome at the time of his election. He arranged for the provision of stores in the public granaries with such liberality, that within the memory of man there had never been such astonishing abundance; and with a view to extending the general prosperity to the lowest class, he organised numerous doles to be paid out of his private fortune, which made it possible for the very poor to participate in the general banquet from which they had been excluded for long enough. The safety of the city was secured, from the very first days of his accession, by the establishment of a strong and vigilant police force, and a tribunal consisting of four magistrates of irreproachable character, empowered to prosecute all nocturnal crimes, which during the last pontificate had been so common that their very numbers made impunity certain: these judges from the first showed a severity which neither the rank nor the purse of the culprit could modify. This presented such a great contrast to the corruption of the last reign,—in the course of which the vice-chamberlain one day remarked in public, when certain people were complaining of the venality of justice, "God wills not that a sinner die, but that he live and pay,"—that the capital of the Christian world felt for one brief moment restored to the happy days of the papacy. So, at the end of a year, Alexander VI had reconquered that spiritual credit, so to speak, which his predecessors lost. His political credit was still to be established, if he was to carry out the first part of his gigantic scheme. To arrive at this, he must employ two agencies—alliances and conquests. His plan was to begin with alliances. The gentleman of Aragon who had married Lucrezia when she was only the daughter of Cardinal Roderigo Borgia was not a man powerful enough, either by birth and fortune or by intellect, to enter with any sort of effect into the plots and plans of Alexander VI; the separation was therefore changed into a divorce, and Lucrezia Borgia was now free to remarry. Alexander opened

up two negotiations at the same time: he needed an ally to keep a watch on the policy of the neighbouring States. John Sforza, grandson of Alexander Sforza, brother of the great Francis I, Duke of Milan, was lord of Pesaro; the geographical situation of this place, on the coast, on the way between Florence and Venice, was wonderfully convenient for his purpose; so Alexander first cast an eye upon him, and as the interest of both parties was evidently the same, it came about that John Sforza was very soon Lucrezia's second husband.

At the same time overtures had been made to Alfonso of Aragon, heir presumptive to the crown of Naples, to arrange a marriage between Dana Sancia, his illegitimate daughter, and Goffreda, the pope's third son; but as the old Ferdinand wanted to make the best bargain he could out of it; he dragged on the negotiations as long as possible, urging that the two children were not of marriageable age, and so, highly honoured as he felt in such a prospective alliance, there was no hurry about the engagement. Matters stopped at this point, to the great annoyance of Alexander VI, who saw through this excuse, and understood that the postponement was nothing more or less than a refusal. Accordingly Alexander and Ferdinand remained in statu quo, equals in the political game, both on the watch till events should declare for one or other. The turn of fortune was for Alexander.

Italy, though tranquil, was instinctively conscious that her calm was nothing but the lull which goes before a storm. She was too rich and too happy to escape the envy of other nations. As yet the plains of Pisa had not been reduced to marshlands by the combined negligence and jealousy of the Florentine Republic, neither had the rich country that lay around Rome been converted into a barren desert by the wars of the Colonna and Orsini families; not yet had the Marquis of Marignan razed to the ground a hundred and twenty villages in the republic of Siena alone; and though the Maremma was unhealthy, it was not yet a poisonous marsh: it is a fact that Flavio Blando, writing in 1450, describes Ostia as being merely less flourishing than in the days of the Romans, when she had numbered 50,000 inhabitants, whereas now in our own day there are barely 30 in all.

The Italian peasants were perhaps the most blest on the face of the earth: instead of living scattered about the country in solitary fashion, they lived in villages that were enclosed by walls as a protection for their harvests, animals, and farm implements; their houses—at any rate those that yet stand—prove that they lived in much more comfortable and beautiful surroundings than the ordinary townsman of our day. Further, there was a community of interests, and many

people collected together in the fortified villages, with the result that little by little they attained to an importance never acquired by the boorish French peasants or the German serfs; they bore arms, they had a common treasury, they elected their own magistrates, and whenever they went out to fight, it was to save their common country.

Also commerce was no less flourishing than agriculture; Italy at this period was rich in industries—silk, wool, hemp, fur, alum, sulphur, bitumen; those products which the Italian soil could not bring forth were imported, from the Black Sea, from Egypt, from Spain, from France, and often returned whence they came, their worth doubled by labour and fine workmanship. The rich man brought his merchandise, the poor his industry: the one was sure of finding workmen, the other was sure of finding work.

Art also was by no means behindhand: Dante, Giotto, Brunelleschi, and Donatello were dead, but Ariosto, Raphael, Bramante, and Michael Angelo were now living. Rome, Florence, and Naples had inherited the masterpieces of antiquity; and the manuscripts of AEschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides had come (thanks to the conquest of Mahomet II) to rejoin the statue of Xanthippus and the works of Phidias and Praxiteles. The principal sovereigns of Italy had come to understand, when they let their eyes dwell upon the fat harvests, the wealthy villages, the flourishing manufactories, and the marvellous churches, and then compared with them the poor and rude nations of fighting men who surrounded them on all sides, that some day or other they were destined to become for other countries what America was for Spain, a vast gold-mine for them to work. In consequence of this, a league offensive and defensive had been signed, about 1480, by Naples, Milan, Florence, and Ferrara, prepared to take a stand against enemies within or without, in Italy or outside. Ludovico Sforza, who was more than anyone else interested in maintaining this league, because he was nearest to France, whence the storm seemed to threaten, saw in the new pope's election means not only of strengthening the league, but of making its power and unity conspicuous in the sight of Europe.

CHAPTER IV

On the occasion of each new election to the papacy, it is the custom for all the Christian States to send a solemn embassy to Rome, to renew their oath of allegiance to the Holy Father. Ludovico Sforza conceived the idea that the ambassadors of the four Powers should unite and make their entry into Rome on the same day, appointing one of their envoy, *viz.* the representative of the King of Naples, to be spokesman for all four. Unluckily, this plan did not agree with the magnificent projects of Piero dei Medici. That proud youth, who had been appointed ambassador of the Florentine Republic, had seen in the mission entrusted to him by his fellow-citizens the means of making a brilliant display of his own wealth. From the day of his nomination onwards, his palace was constantly filled with tailors, jewellers, and merchants of priceless stuffs; magnificent clothes had been made for him, embroidered with precious stones which he had selected from the family treasures. All his jewels, perhaps the richest in Italy, were distributed about the liveries of his pages, and one of them, his favourite, was to wear a collar of pearls valued by itself at 100,000 ducats, or almost, a million of our francs. In his party the Bishop of Arezzo, Gentile, who had once been Lorenzo dei Medici's tutor, was elected as second ambassador, and it was his duty to speak. Now Gentile, who had prepared his speech, counted on his eloquence to charm the ear quite as much as Piero counted on his riches to dazzle the eye. But the eloquence of Gentile would be lost completely if nobody was to speak but the ambassador of the King of Naples; and the magnificence of Piero dei Medici would never be noticed at all if he went to Rome mixed up with all the other ambassadors. These two important interests, compromised by the Duke of Milan's proposition, changed the whole face of Italy.

Ludovico Sforza had already made sure of Ferdinand's promise to conform to the plan he had invented, when the old king, at the solicitation of Piero, suddenly drew back. Sforza found out how this change had come about, and learned that it was Piero's influence that had overmastered his own. He could not disentangle the real motives that had promised the change, and imagined there was some secret league against himself: he attributed the changed political programme to the death of Lorenzo dei Medici. But whatever its cause might be, it was evidently prejudicial to his own interests: Florence, Milan's old ally, was abandoning her for Naples. He resolved to throw a counter weight into the scales; so, betraying to Alexander the policy of Piero and Ferdinand, he

proposed to form a defensive and offensive alliance with him and admit the republic of Venice; Duke Hercules III of Ferrara was also to be summoned to pronounce for one or other of the two leagues. Alexander VI, wounded by Ferdinand's treatment of himself, accepted Ludovico Sforza's proposition, and an Act of Confederation was signed on the 22nd of April, 1493, by which the new allies pledged themselves to set on foot for the maintenance of the public peace an army of 20,000 horse and 6,000 infantry.

Ferdinand was frightened when he beheld the formation of this league; but he thought he could neutralise its effects by depriving Ludovico Sforza of his regency, which he had already kept beyond the proper time, though as yet he was not strictly an usurper. Although the young Galeazzo, his nephew, had reached the age of two-and-twenty, Ludovico Sforza none the less continued regent. Now Ferdinand definitely proposed to the Duke of Milan that he should resign the sovereign power into the hands of his nephew, on pain of being declared an usurper.

This was a bold stroke; but there was a risk of inciting Ludovico Sforza to start one of those political plots that he was so familiar with, never recoiling from any situation, however dangerous it might be. This was exactly what happened: Sforza, uneasy about his duchy, resolved to threaten Ferdinand's kingdom.

Nothing could be easier: he knew the warlike nations of Charles VIII, and the pretensions of the house of France to the kingdom of Naples. He sent two ambassadors to invite the young king to claim the rights of Anjou usurped by Aragon; and with a view to reconciling Charles to so distant and hazardous an expedition, offered him a free and friendly passage through his own States.

Such a proposition was welcome to Charles VIII, as we might suppose from our knowledge of his character; a magnificent prospect was opened to him as by an enchanter: what Ludovico Sforza was offering him was virtually the command of the Mediterranean, the protectorship of the whole of Italy; it was an open road, through Naples and Venice, that well might lead to the conquest of Turkey or the Holy Land, if he ever had the fancy to avenge the disasters of Nicapolis and Mansourah. So the proposition was accepted, and a secret alliance was signed, with Count Charles di Belgiojosa and the Count of Cajazza acting for Ludovico Sforza, and the Bishop of St. Malo and Seneschal de Beaucaire for Charles VIII. By this treaty it was agreed:—

That the King of France should attempt the conquest of the kingdom of Naples;

That the Duke of Milan should grant a passage to the King of France through his territories, and accompany him with five hundred lances;

That the Duke of Milan should permit the King of France to send out as many ships of war as he pleased from Genoa;

Lastly, that the Duke of Milan should lend the King of France 200,000 ducats, payable when he started.

On his side, Charles VIII agreed:—

To defend the personal authority of Ludowico Sforza over the duchy of Milan against anyone who might attempt to turn him out;

To keep two hundred French lances always in readiness to help the house of Sforza, at Asti, a town belonging to the Duke of Orleans by the inheritance of his mother, Valentina Visconti;

Lastly, to hand over to his ally the principality of Tarentum immediately after the conquest of Naples was effected.

This treaty was scarcely concluded when Charles VIII, who exaggerated its advantages, began to dream of freeing himself from every let or hindrance to the expedition. Precautions were necessary; for his relations with the great Powers were far from being what he could have wished.

Indeed, Henry VII had disembarked at Calais with a formidable army, and was threatening France with another invasion.

Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, if they had not assisted at the fall of the house of Anjou, had at any rate helped the Aragon party with men and money.

Lastly, the war with the emperor acquired a fresh impetus when Charles VIII sent back Margaret of Burgundy to her father Maximilian, and contracted a marriage with Anne of Brittany.

By the treaty of Etaples, on the 3rd of November, 1492, Henry VII cancelled the alliance with the King of the Romans, and pledged himself not to follow his

conquests.

This cost Charles VIII 745,000 gold crowns and the expenses of the war with England.

By the treaty of Barcelona, dated the 19th of January, 1493, Ferdinand the Catholic and Isabella agreed never to grant aid to their cousin, Ferdinand of Naples, and never to put obstacles in the way of the French king in Italy.

This cost Charles VIII Perpignan, Roussillon, and the Cerdagne, which had all been given to Louis XI as a hostage for the sum of 300,000 ducats by John of Aragon; but at the time agreed upon, Louis XI would not give them up for the money, for the old fox knew very well how important were these doors to the Pyrenees, and proposed in case of war to keep them shut.

Lastly, by the treaty of Senlis, dated the 23rd of May, 1493, Maximilian granted a gracious pardon to France for the insult her king had offered him.

It cost Charles VIII the counties of Burgundy, Artois, Charalais, and the seigniory of Noyers, which had come to him as Margaret's dowry, and also the towns of Aire, Hesdin, and Bethune, which he promised to deliver up to Philip of Austria on the day he came of age.

By dint of all these sacrifices the young king made peace with his neighbours, and could set on foot the enterprise that Ludavico Sforza had proposed. We have already explained that the project came into Sforza's mind when his plan about the deputation was refused, and that the refusal was due to Piero dei Medici's desire to make an exhibition of his magnificent jewels, and Gentile's desire to make his speech.

Thus the vanity of a tutor and the pride of his scholar together combined to agitate the civilized world from the Gulf of Tarentum to the Pyrenees.

Alexander VI was in the very centre of the impending earthquake, and before Italy had any idea that the earliest shocks were at hand he had profited by the perturbed preoccupation of other people to give the lie to that famous speech we have reported. He created cardinal John Borgia, a nephew, who during the last pontificate had been elected Archbishop of Montreal and Governor of Rome. This promotion caused no discontent, because of John's antecedents; and Alexander, encouraged by the success of this, promised to Caesar Borgia the

archbishopric of Valencia, a benefice he had himself enjoyed before his elevation to the papacy. But here the difficulty arose on the side of the recipient. The young man, full-blooded, with all the vices and natural instincts of a captain of condottieri, had very great trouble in assuming even the appearance of a Churchman's virtue; but as he knew from his own father's mouth that the highest secular dignities were reserved for his elder brother, he decided to take what he could get, for fear of getting nothing; but his hatred for Francesco grew stronger, for from henceforth he was doubly his rival, both in love and ambition.

Suddenly Alexander beheld the old King Ferdinand returning to his side, and at the very moment when he least expected it. The pope was too clever a politician to accept a reconciliation without finding out the cause of it; he soon learned what plots were hatching at the French court against the kingdom of Naples, and the whole situation was explained.

Now it was his turn to impose conditions.

He demanded the completion of a marriage between Goffreda, his third son, and Dada Sancia, Alfonso's illegitimate daughter.

He demanded that she should bring her husband as dowry the principality of Squillace and the county of Cariati, with an income of 10,000 ducats and the office of protonotary, one of the seven great crown offices which are independent of royal control.

He demanded for his eldest son, whom Ferdinand the Catholic had just made Duke of Gandia, the principality of Tricarico, the counties of Chiaramonte, Lauria, and Carinola, an income of 12,000 ducats, and the first of the seven great offices which should fall vacant.

He demanded that Virginio Orsini, his ambassador at the Neapolitan court, should be given a third great office, *viz.* that of Constable, the most important of them all.

Lastly, he demanded that Giuliano della Rovere, one of the five cardinals who had opposed his election and was now taking refuge at Ostia, where the oak whence he took his name and bearings is still to be seen carved on all the walls, should be driven out of that town, and the town itself given over to him.

In exchange, he merely pledged himself never to withdraw from the house of

Aragon the investiture of the kingdom of Naples accorded by his predecessors. Ferdinand was paying somewhat dearly for a simple promise; but on the keeping of this promise the legitimacy of his power wholly depended. For the kingdom of Naples was a fief of the Holy See; and to the pope alone belonged the right of pronouncing on the justice of each competitor's pretensions; the continuance of this investiture was therefore of the highest conceivable importance to Aragon just at the time when Anjou was rising up with an army at her back to dispossess her.

For a year after he mounted the papal throne, Alexander VI had made great strides, as we see, in the extension of his temporal power. In his own hands he held, to be sure, only the least in size of the Italian territories; but by the marriage of his daughter Lucrezia with the lord of Pesaro he was stretching out one hand as far as Venice, while by the marriage of the Prince of Squillace with Dona Sancia, and the territories conceded to the Duke of Sandia, he was touching with the other hand the boundary of Calabria.

When this treaty, so advantageous for himself, was duly signed, he made Caesar Cardinal of Santa Maria Novella, for Caesar was always complaining of being left out in the distribution of his father's favours.

Only, as there was as yet no precedent in Church history for a bastard's donning the scarlet, the pope hunted up four false witnesses who declared that Caesar was the son of Count Ferdinand of Castile; who was, as we know, that valuable person Don Manuel Melchior, and who played the father's part with just as much solemnity as he had played the husband's.

The wedding of the two bastards was most splendid, rich with the double pomp of Church and King. As the pope had settled that the young bridal pair should live near him, Caesar Borgia, the new cardinal, undertook to manage the ceremony of their entry into Rome and the reception, and Lucrezia, who enjoyed at her father's side an amount of favour hitherto unheard of at the papal court, desired on her part to contribute all the splendour she had it in her power to add. He therefore went to receive the young people with a stately and magnificent escort of lords and cardinals, while she awaited them attended by the loveliest and noblest ladies of Rome, in one of the halls of the Vatican. A throne was there prepared for the pope, and at his feet were cushions for Lucrezia and Dona Sancia. "Thus," writes Tommaso Tommasi, "by the look of the assembly and the sort of conversation that went on for hours, you would suppose you were present

at some magnificent and voluptuous royal audience of ancient Assyria, rather than at the severe consistory of a Roman pontiff, whose solemn duty it is to exhibit in every act the sanctity of the name he bears. But," continues the same historian, "if the Eve of Pentecost was spent in such worthy functions, the celebrations of the coming of the Holy Ghost on the following day were no less decorous and becoming to the spirit of the Church; for thus writes the master of the ceremonies in his journal:

"The pope made his entry into the Church of the Holy Apostles, and beside him on the marble steps of the pulpit where the canons of St. Peter are wont to chant the Epistle and Gospel, sat Lucrezia his daughter and Sancia his son's wife: round about them, a disgrace to the Church and a public scandal, were grouped a number of other Roman ladies far more fit to dwell in Messalina's city than in St. Peter's."

So at Rome and Naples did men slumber while ruin was at hand; so did they waste their time and squander their money in a vain display of pride; and this was going on while the French, thoroughly alive, were busy laying hands upon the torches with which they would presently set Italy on fire.

Indeed, the designs of Charles VIII for conquest were no longer for anybody a matter of doubt. The young king had sent an embassy to the various Italian States, composed of Perrone dei Baschi, Brigonnet, d'Aubigny, and the president of the Provençal Parliament. The mission of this embassy was to demand from the Italian princes their cooperation in recovering the rights of the crown of Naples for the house of Anjou.

The embassy first approached the Venetians, demanding aid and counsel for the king their master. But the Venetians, faithful to their political tradition, which had gained for them the sobriquet of "the Jews of Christendom," replied that they were not in a position to give any aid to the young king, so long as they had to keep ceaselessly on guard against the Turks; that, as to advice, it would be too great a presumption in them to give advice to a prince who was surrounded by such experienced generals and such able ministers.

Perrone dei Baschi, when he found he could get no other answer, next made for Florence. Piero dei Medici received him at a grand council, for he summoned on this occasion not only the seventy, but also the gonfalonieri who had sat for the last thirty-four years in the Signoria. The French ambassador put forward his

proposal, that the republic should permit their army to pass through her States, and pledge herself in that case to supply for ready money all the necessary victual and fodder. The magnificent republic replied that if Charles VIII had been marching against the Turks instead of against Ferdinand, she would be only too ready to grant everything he wished; but being bound to the house of Aragon by a treaty, she could not betray her ally by yielding to the demands of the King of France.

The ambassadors next turned their steps to Siena. The poor little republic, terrified by the honour of being considered at all, replied that it was her desire to preserve a strict neutrality, that she was too weak to declare beforehand either for or against such mighty rivals, for she would naturally be obliged to join the stronger party. Furnished with this reply, which had at least the merit of frankness, the French envoys proceeded to Rome, and were conducted into the pope's presence, where they demanded the investiture of the kingdom of Naples for their king.

Alexander VI replied that, as his predecessors had granted this investiture to the house of Aragon, he could not take it away, unless it were first established that the house of Anjou had a better claim than the house that was to be dispossessed. Then he represented to Perrone dei Baschi that, as Naples was a fief of the Holy See, to the pope alone the choice of her sovereign properly belonged, and that in consequence to attack the reigning sovereign was to attack the Church itself.

The result of the embassy, we see, was not very promising for Charles VIII; so he resolved to rely on his ally Ludovico Sforza alone, and to relegate all other questions to the fortunes of war.

A piece of news that reached him about this time strengthened him in this resolution: this was the death of Ferdinand. The old king had caught a severe cold and cough on his return from the hunting field, and in two days he was at his last gasp. On the 25th of January, 1494, he passed away, at the age of seventy, after a thirty-six years' reign, leaving the throne to his elder son, Alfonso, who was immediately chosen as his successor.

Ferdinand never belied his title of "the happy ruler." His death occurred at the very moment when the fortune of his family was changing.

The new king, Alfonso, was not a novice in arms: he had already fought

successfully against Florence and Venice, and had driven the Turks out of Otranto; besides, he had the name of being as cunning as his father in the tortuous game of politics so much in vogue at the Italian courts. He did not despair of counting among his allies the very enemy he was at war with when Charles VIII first put forward his pretensions, we mean Bajazet II. So he despatched to Bajazet one of his confidential ministers, Camillo Pandone, to give the Turkish emperor to understand that the expedition to Italy was to the King of France nothing but a blind for approaching the scene of Mahomedan conquests, and that if Charles VIII were once at the Adriatic it would only take him a day or two to get across and attack Macedonia; from there he could easily go by land to Constantinople. Consequently he suggested that Bajazet for the maintenance of their common interests should supply six thousand horse and six thousand infantry; he himself would furnish their pay so long as they were in Italy. It was settled that Pandone should be joined at Tarentum by Giorgia Bucciarda, Alexander VI's envoy, who was commissioned by the pope to engage the Turks to help him against the Christians. But while he was waiting for Bajazet's reply, which might involve a delay of several months, Alfonso requested that a meeting might take place between Piero dei Medici, the pope, and himself, to take counsel together about important affairs. This meeting was arranged at Vicovaro, near Tivoli, and the three interested parties duly met on the appointed day.

The intention of Alfonso, who before leaving Naples had settled the disposition of his naval forces, and given his brother Frederic the command of a fleet that consisted of thirty-six galleys, eighteen large and twelve small vessels, with injunctions to wait at Livorno and keep a watch on the fleet Charles VIII was getting ready at the port of Genoa, was above all things to check with the aid of his allies the progress of operations on land. Without counting the contingent he expected his allies to furnish, he had at his immediate disposal a hundred squadrons of heavy cavalry, twenty men in each, and three thousand bowmen and light horse. He proposed, therefore, to advance at once into Lombardy, to get up a revolution in favour of his nephew Galeazzo, and to drive Ludovico Sforza out of Milan before he could get help from France; so that Charles VIII, at the very time of crossing the Alps, would find an enemy to fight instead of a friend who had promised him a safe passage, men, and money.

This was the scheme of a great politician and a bold commander; but as everybody had come in pursuit of his own interests, regardless of the common this plan was very coldly received by Piero dei Medici, who was afraid lest in

the war he should play only the same poor part he had been threatened with in the affair of the embassy; by Alexander VI it was rejected, because he reckoned on employing the troops of Alfonso on his own account. He reminded the King of Naples of one of the conditions of the investiture he had promised him, viz. that he should drive out the Cardinal Giuliano delta Rovere from the town of Ostia, and give up the town to him, according to the stipulation already agreed upon. Besides, the advantages that had accrued to Virginio Orsini, Alexander's favourite, from his embassy to Naples had brought upon him the ill-will of Prospero and Fabrizio Colonna, who owned nearly all the villages round about Rome. Now the pope could not endure to live in the midst of such powerful enemies, and the most important matter was to deliver him from all of them, seeing that it was really of moment that he should be at peace who was the head and soul of the league whereof the others were only the body and limbs.

Although Alfonso had clearly seen through the motives of Piero's coldness, and Alexander had not even given him the trouble of seeking his, he was none the less obliged to bow to the will of his allies, leaving the one to defend the Apennines against the French, and helping the other to shake himself free of his neighbours in the Romagna. Consequently he, pressed on the siege of Ostia, and added to Virginio's forces, which already amounted to two hundred men of the papal army, a body of his own light horse; this little army was to be stationed round about Rome, and was to enforce obedience from the Colonnas. The rest of his troops Alfonso divided into two parties: one he left in the hands of his son Ferdinand, with orders to scour the Romagna and worry the petty princes into levying and supporting the contingent they had promised, while with the other he himself defended the defiles of the Abruzzi.

On the 23rd of April, at three o'clock in the morning, Alexander VI was freed from the first and fiercest of his foes; Giuliano delta Rovere, seeing the impossibility of holding out any longer against Alfonso's troops, embarked on a brigantine which was to carry him to Savona.

From that day forward Virginio Orsini began that famous partisan warfare which reduced the country about Rome to the most pathetic desolation the world has ever seen. During all this time Charles VIII was at Lyons, not only uncertain as to the route he ought to take for getting into Italy, but even beginning to reflect a little on the chances and risks of such an expedition. He had found no sympathy anywhere except with Ludovico Sforza; so it appeared not unlikely that he would have to fight not the kingdom of Naples alone, but the whole of Italy to

boot. In his preparations for war he had spent almost all the money at his disposal; the Lady of Beaujeu and the Duke of Bourbon both condemned his enterprise; Bricconnet, who had advised it, did not venture to support it now; at last Charles, more irresolute than ever, had recalled several regiments that had actually started, when Cardinal Giuliano delta Rovere, driven out of Italy by the pope, arrived at Lyons, and presented himself before the king.

The cardinal, full of hatred, full of hope, hastened to Charles, and found him on the point of abandoning that enterprise on which, as Alexander's enemy, delta Rovere rested his whole expectation of vengeance. He informed Charles of the quarrelling among his enemies; he showed him that each of them was seeking his own ends—Piero dei Medici the gratification of his pride, the pope the aggrandisement of his house. He pointed out that armed fleets were in the ports of Villefranche, Marseilles, and Genoa, and that these armaments would be lost; he reminded him that he had sent Pierre d'Urfe, his grand equerry, on in advance, to have splendid accommodation prepared in the Spinola and Doria palaces. Lastly, he urged that ridicule and disgrace would fall on him from every side if he renounced an enterprise so loudly vaunted beforehand, for whose successful execution, moreover, he had been obliged to sign three treaties of peace that were all vexatious enough, viz. with Henry VII, with Maximilian, and with Ferdinand the Catholic. Giuliano della Rovere had exercised true insight in probing the vanity of the young king, and Charles did not hesitate for a single moment. He ordered his cousin, the Duke of Orleans (who later on became Louis XII) to take command of the French fleet and bring it to Genoa; he despatched a courier to Antoine de Bessay, Baron de Tricastel, bidding him take to Asti the 2000 Swiss foot-soldiers he had levied in the cantons; lastly, he started himself from Vienne, in Dauphine, on the 23rd of August, 1494, crossed the Alps by Mont Genevre, without encountering a single body of troops to dispute his passage, descended into Piedmont and Monferrato, both just then governed by women regents, the sovereigns of both principalities being children, Charles John Aime and William John, aged respectively six and eight.

The two regents appeared before Charles VIII, one at Turin, one at Casale, each at the head of a numerous and brilliant court, and both glittering with jewels and precious stones. Charles, although he quite well knew that for all these friendly demonstrations they were both bound by treaty to his enemy, Alfonso of Naples, treated them all the same with the greatest politeness, and when they made protestations of friendship, asked them to let him have a proof of it, suggesting that they should lend him the diamonds they were covered with. The two regents

could do no less than obey the invitation which was really a command. They took off necklaces, rings, and earrings. Charles VIII gave them a receipt accurately drawn up, and pledged the jewels for 20,000 ducats. Then, enriched by this money, he resumed his journey and made his way towards Asti. The Duke of Orleans held the sovereignty of Asti, as we said before, and hither came to meet Charles both Ludovico Sforza and his father-in-law, Hercules d'Este, Duke of Ferrara. They brought with them not only the promised troops and money, but also a court composed of the loveliest women in Italy.

The balls, fetes, and tourneys began with a magnificence surpassing anything that Italy had ever seen before. But suddenly they were interrupted by the king's illness. This was the first example in Italy of the disease brought by Christopher Columbus from the New World, and was called by Italians the French, by Frenchmen the Italian disease. The probability is that some of Columbus's crew who were at Genoa or thereabouts had already brought over this strange and cruel complaint that counter balanced the gains of the American gold-mines.

The king's indisposition, however, did not prove so grave as was at first supposed. He was cured by the end of a few weeks, and proceeded on his way towards Pavia, where the young Duke John Galeazzo lay dying. He and the King of France were first cousins, sons of two sisters of the house of Savoy. So Charles VIII was obliged to see him, and went to visit him in the castle where he lived more like prisoner than lord. He found him half reclining on a couch, pale and emaciated, some said in consequence of luxurious living, others from the effects of a slow but deadly poison. But whether or not the poor young man was desirous of pouring out a complaint to Charles, he did not dare say a word; for his uncle, Ludovico Sforza, never left the King of France for an instant. But at the very moment when Charles VIII was getting up to go, the door opened, and a young woman appeared and threw herself at the king's feet; she was the wife of the unlucky John Galeazzo, and came to entreat his cousin to do nothing against her father Alfonso, nor against her brother Ferdinand. At sight of her; Sforza scowled with an anxious and threatening aspect, far he knew not what impression might be produced on his ally by this scene. But he was soon reassured; for Charles replied that he had advanced too far to draw back now, and that the glory of his name was at stake as well as the interests of his kingdom, and that these two motives were far too important to be sacrificed to any sentiment of pity he might feel, however real and deep it might be and was. The poor young woman, who had based her last hope on this appeal, then rose from her knees and threw herself sobbing into her husband's arms. Charles VIII

and Ludavico Sforza, took their leave: John Galeazzo was doomed.

Two days after, Charles VIII left for Florence, accompanied by his ally; but scarcely had they reached Parma when a messenger caught them up, and announced to Ludovico that his nephew was just dead: Ludovico at once begged Charles to excuse his leaving him to finish the journey alone; the interests which called him back to Milan were so important, he said, that he could not under the circumstances stay away a single day longer. As a fact he had to make sure of succeeding the man he had assassinated.

But Charles VIII continued his road not without some uneasiness. The sight of the young prince on his deathbed had moved him deeply, for at the bottom of his heart he was convinced that Ludovico Sforza was his murderer; and a murderer might very well be a traitor. He was going forward into an unfamiliar country, with a declared enemy in front of him and a doubtful friend behind: he was now at the entrance to the mountains, and as his army had no store of provisions and only lived from hand to mouth, a forced delay, however short, would mean famine. In front of him was Fivizzano, nothing, it is true, but a village surrounded by walls, but beyond Fivizzano lay Sarzano and Pietra Santa, both of them considered impregnable fortresses; worse than this, they were coming into a part of the country that was especially unhealthy in October, had no natural product except oil, and even procured its own corn from neighbouring provinces; it was plain that a whole army might perish there in a few days either from scarcity of food or from the unwholesome air, both of which were more disastrous than the impediments offered at every step by the nature of the ground. The situation was grave; but the pride of Piero dei Medici came once more to the rescue of the fortunes of Charles VIII.

CHAPTER V

PIERO DEI MEDICI had, as we may remember, undertaken to hold the entrance to Tuscany against the French; when, however, he saw his enemy coming down from the Alps, he felt less confident about his own strength, and demanded help from the pope; but scarcely had the rumour of foreign invasion began to spread in the Romagna, than the Colonna family declared themselves the French king's men, and collecting all their forces seized Ostia, and there awaited the coming of the French fleet to offer a passage through Rome. The pope, therefore, instead of sending troops to Florence, was obliged to recall all his soldiers to be near the capital; the only promise he made to Piero was that if Bajazet should send him the troops that he had been asking for, he would despatch that army for him to make use of. Piero dei Medici had not yet taken any resolution or formed any plan, when he suddenly heard two startling pieces of news. A jealous neighbour of his, the Marquis of Torderiovo, had betrayed to the French the weak side of Fivizzano, so that they had taken it by storm, and had put its soldiers and inhabitants to the edge of the sword; on another side, Gilbert of Montpensier, who had been lighting up the sea-coast so as to keep open the communications between the French army and their fleet, had met with a detachment sent by Paolo Orsini to Sarzano, to reinforce the garrison there, and after an hour's fighting had cut it to pieces. No quarter had been granted to any of the prisoners; every man the French could get hold of they had massacred.

This was the first occasion on which the Italians, accustomed as they were to the chivalrous contests of the fifteenth century, found themselves in contact with savage foreigners who, less advanced in civilisation, had not yet come to consider war as a clever game, but looked upon it as simply a mortal conflict. So the news of these two butcheries produced a tremendous sensation at Florence, the richest city in Italy, and the most prosperous in commerce and in art. Every Florentine imagined the French to be like an army of those ancient barbarians who were wont to extinguish fire with blood. The prophecies of Savonarola, who had predicted the foreign invasion and the destruction that should follow it, were recalled to the minds of all; and so much perturbation was evinced that Piero dei Medici, bent on getting peace at any price, forced a decree upon the republic whereby she was to send an embassy to the conqueror; and obtained leave, resolved as he was to deliver himself in person into the hands of the French monarch, to act as one of the ambassadors. He accordingly quitted Florence,

accompanied by four other messengers, and on his arrival at Pietra Santa, sent to ask from Charles VIII a safe-conduct for himself alone. The day after he made this request, Brigonet and de Piennes came to fetch him, and led him into the presence of Charles VIII.

Piero dei Medici, in spite of his name and influence, was in the eyes of the French nobility, who considered it a dishonourable thing to concern oneself with art or industry, nothing more than a rich merchant, with whom it would be absurd to stand upon any very strict ceremony. So Charles VIII received him on horseback, and addressing him with a haughty air, as a master might address a servant, demanded whence came this pride of his that made him dispute his entrance into Tuscany. Piero dei Medici replied, that, with the actual consent of Louis XI, his father Lorenzo had concluded a treaty of alliance with Ferdinand of Naples; that accordingly he had acted in obedience to prior obligations, but as he did, not wish to push too far his devotion to the house of Aragon or his opposition to France, he was ready to do whatever Charles VIII might demand of him. The king, who had never looked for such humility in his enemy, demanded that Sarzano should be given up to him: to this Piero dei Medici at once consented. Then the conqueror, wishing to see how far the ambassador of the magnificent republic would extend his politeness, replied that this concession was far from satisfying him, and that he still must have the keys of Pietra Santa, Pisa, Librafatta, and Livorno. Piero saw no more difficulty about these than about Sarzano, and consented on Charles's mere promise by word of mouth to restore the town when he had achieved the conquest of Naples. At last Charles VIII, seeing that this man who had been sent out to negotiate with him was very easy to manage, exacted as a final condition, a 'sine qua non', however, of his royal protection, that the magnificent republic should lend him the sum of 200,000 florins. Piero found it no harder to dispose of money than of fortresses, and replied that his fellow-citizens would be happy to render this service to their new ally. Then Charles VIII set him on horseback, and ordered him to go on in front, so as to begin to carry out his promises by yielding up the four fortresses he had insisted on having. Piero obeyed, and the French army, led by the grandson of Cosimo the Great and the son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, continued its triumphal march through Tuscany.

On his arrival at Lucca, Piero dei Medici learnt that his concessions to the King of France were making a terrible commotion at Florence. The magnificent republic had supposed that what Charles VIII wanted was simply a passage through her territory, so when the news came there was a general feeling of

discontent, which was augmented by the return of the other ambassadors, whom Piero had not even consulted when he took action as he did. Piero considered it necessary that he should return, so he asked Charles's permission to precede him to the capital. As he had fulfilled all his promises, except the matter of the loan, which could not be settled anywhere but at Florence, the king saw no objection, and the very evening after he quitted the French army Piero returned incognito to his palace in the Via Largo.

The next day he proposed to present himself before the Signoria, but when he arrived at the Piazza del Palazzo Vecchio, he perceived the gonfaloniere Jacopo de Nerli coming towards him, signalling to him that it was useless to attempt to go farther, and pointing out to him the figure of Luca Corsini standing at the gate, sword in hand: behind him stood guards, ordered, if need-were, to dispute his passage. Piero dei Medici, amazed by an opposition that he was experiencing for the first time in his life, did not attempt resistance. He went home, and wrote to his brother-in-law, Paolo Orsini, to come and help him with his gendarmes. Unluckily for him, his letter was intercepted. The Signoria considered that it was an attempt at rebellion. They summoned the citizens to their aid; they armed hastily, sallied forth in crowds, and thronged about the piazza of the palace. Meanwhile Cardinal Gian dei Medici had mounted on horseback, and under the impression that the Orsini were coming to the rescue, was riding about the streets of Florence, accompanied by his servants and uttering his battle cry, "Palle, Palle." But times had changed: there was no echo to the cry, and when the cardinal reached the Via dei Calizaioli, a threatening murmur was the only response, and he understood that instead of trying to arouse Florence he had much better get away before the excitement ran too high. He promptly retired to his own palace, expecting to find there his two brothers, Piero and Giuliano. But they, under the protection of Orsini and his gendarmes, had made their escape by the Porto San Gallo. The peril was imminent, and Gian dei Medici wished to follow their example; but wherever he went he was met by a clamour that grew more and more threatening. At last, as he saw that the danger was constantly increasing, he dismounted from his horse and ran into a house that he found standing open. This house by a lucky chance communicated with a convent of Franciscans; one of the friars lent the fugitive his dress, and the cardinal, under the protection of this humble incognito, contrived at last to get outside Florence, and joined his two brothers in the Apennines.

The same day the Medici were declared traitors and rebels, and ambassadors were sent to the King of France. They found him at Pisa, where he was granting

independence to the town which eighty-seven years ago had fallen under the rule of the Florentines. Charles VIII made no reply to the envoys, but merely announced that he was going to march on Florence.

Such a reply, one may easily understand, terrified the republic. Florence, had no time to prepare a defence, and no strength in her present state to make one. But all the powerful houses assembled and armed their own servants and retainers, and awaited the issue, intending not to begin hostilities, but to defend themselves should the French make an attack. It was agreed that if any necessity should arise for taking up arms, the bells of the various churches in the town should ring a peal and so serve as a general signal. Such a resolution was perhaps of more significant moment in Florence than it could have been in any other town. For the palaces that still remain from that period are virtually fortresses and the eternal fights between Guelphs and Ghibellines had familiarised the Tuscan people with street warfare.

The king appeared, on the 17th of November, in the evening, at the gate of San Friano. He found there the nobles of Florence clad in their most magnificent apparel, accompanied by priests chanting hymns, and by a mob who were full of joy at any prospect of change, and hoped for a return of liberty after the fall of the Medici. Charles VIII stopped for a moment under a sort of gilded canopy that had been prepared for him, and replied in a few evasive words to the welcoming speeches which were addressed to him by the Signoria; then he asked for his lance, he set it in rest, and gave the order to enter the town, the whole of which he paraded with his army following him with arms erect, and then went down to the palace of the Medici, which had been prepared for him.

The next day negotiations commenced; but everyone was out of his reckoning. The Florentines had received Charles VIII as a guest, but he had entered the city as a conqueror. So when the deputies of the Signoria spoke of ratifying the treaty of Piero dei Medici, the king replied that such a treaty no longer existed, as they had banished the man who made it; that he had conquered Florence, as he proved the night before, when he entered lance in hand; that he should retain the sovereignty, and would make any further decision whenever it pleased him to do so; further, he would let them know later on whether he would reinstate the Medici or whether he would delegate his authority to the Signoria: all they had to do was to come back the next day, and he would give them his ultimatum in writing.

This reply threw Florence into a great state of consternation; but the Florentines were confirmed in their resolution of making a stand. Charles, for his part, had been astonished by the great number of the inhabitants; not only was every street he had passed through thickly lined with people, but every house from garret to basement seemed overflowing with human beings. Florence indeed, thanks to her rapid increase in population, could muster nearly 150,000 souls.

The next day, at the appointed hour, the deputies made their appearance to meet the king. They were again introduced into his presence, and the discussion was reopened. At last, as they were coming to no sort of understanding, the royal secretary, standing at the foot of the throne upon which Charles viii sat with covered head, unfolded a paper and began to read, article by article, the conditions imposed by the King of France. But scarcely had he read a third of the document when the discussion began more hotly than ever before. Then Charles VIII said that thus it should be, or he would order his trumpets to be sounded. Hereupon Piero Capponi, secretary to the republic, commonly called the Scipio of Florence, snatched from the royal secretary's hand the shameful proposal of capitulation, and tearing it to pieces, exclaimed:—

“Very good, sire; blow your trumpets, and we will ring our bells.”

He threw the pieces in the face of the amazed reader, and dashed out of the room to give the terrible order that would convert the street of Florence into a battlefield.

Still, against all probabilities, this bold answer saved the town. The French supposed, from such audacious words, addressed as they were to men who so far had encountered no single obstacle, that the Florentines were possessed of sure resources, to them unknown: the few prudent men who retained any influence over the king advised him accordingly to abate his pretensions; the result was that Charles VIII offered new and more reasonable conditions, which were accepted, signed by both parties, and proclaimed on the 26th of November during mass in the cathedral of Santa Maria Del Fiore.

These were the conditions:

The Signoria were to pay to Charles VIII, as subsidy, the sum of 120,000 florins, in three instalments;

The Signoria were to remove the sequestration imposed upon the property of the

Medici, and to recall the decree that set a price on their heads;

The Signoria were to engage to pardon the Pisans, on condition of their again submitting to the rule of Florence;

Lastly, the Signoria were to recognise the claims of the Duke of Milan over Sarzano and Pietra Santa, and these claims thus recognised, were to be settled by arbitration.

In exchange for this, the King of France pledged himself to restore the fortresses that had been given up to him, either after he had made himself master of the town of Naples, or when this war should be ended by a peace or a two years' truce, or else when, for any reason whatsoever, he should have quitted Italy.

Two days after this proclamation, Charles VIII, much to the joy of the Signoria, left Florence, and advanced towards Rome by the route of Poggibondi and Siena.

The pope began to be affected by the general terror: he had heard of the massacres of Fivizzano, of Lunigiane, and of Imola; he knew that Piero dei Medici had handed over the Tuscan fortresses, that Florence had succumbed, and that Catherine Sforza had made terms with the conqueror; he saw the broken remnants of the Neapolitan troops pass disheartened through Rome, to rally their strength in the Abruzzi, and thus he found himself exposed to an enemy who was advancing upon him with the whole of the Romagna under his control from one sea to the other, in a line of march extending from Piombina to Ancona.

It was at this juncture that Alexander VI received his answer from Bajazet II: the reason of so long a delay was that the pope's envoy and the Neapolitan ambassador had been stopped by Gian della Rovere, the Cardinal Giuliano's brother, just as they were disembarking at Sinigaglia. They were charged with a verbal answer, which was that the sultan at this moment was busied with a triple war, first with the Sultan of Egypt, secondly with the King of Hungary, and thirdly with the Greeks of Macedonia and Epirus; and therefore he could not, with all the will in the world, help His Holiness with armed men. But the envoys were accompanied by a favourite of the sultan's bearing a private letter to Alexander VI, in which Bajazet offered on certain conditions to help him with money. Although, as we see, the messengers had been stopped on the way, the Turkish envoy had all the same found a means of getting his despatch sent to the pope: we give it here in all its naivete.

“Bajazet the Sultan, son of the Sultan Mahomet II, by the grace of God Emperor of Asia and Europe, to the Father and Lord of all the Christians, Alexander VI, Roman pontiff and pope by the will of heavenly Providence, first, greetings that we owe him and bestow with all our heart. We make known to your Highness, by the envoy of your Mightiness, Giorgio Bucciarda, that we have been apprised of your convalescence, and received the news thereof with great joy and comfort. Among other matters, the said Bucciarda has brought us word that the King of France, now marching against your Highness, has shown a desire to take under his protection our brother D’jem, who is now under yours—a thing which is not only against our will, but which would also be the cause of great injury to your Highness and to all Christendom. In turning the matter over with your envoy Giorgio we have devised a scheme most conducive to peace and most advantageous and honourable for your Highness; at the same time satisfactory to ourselves personally; it would be well if our aforesaid brother D’jem, who being a man is liable to death, and who is now in the hands of your Highness, should quit this world as soon as possible, seeing that his departure, a real good to him in his position, would be of great use to your Highness, and very conducive to your peace, while at the same time it would be very agreeable to us, your friend. If this proposition is favourably received, as we hope, by your Highness, in your desire to be friendly towards us, it would be advisable both in the interests of your Highness and for our own satisfaction that it should occur rather sooner than later, and by the surest means you might be pleased to employ; so that our said brother D’jem might pass from the pains of this world into a better and more peaceful life, where at last he may find repose. If your Highness should adapt this plan and send us the body of our brother, We, the above-named Sultan Bajazet, pledge ourselves to send to your Highness, wheresoever and by whatsoever hands you please, the sum of 300,000 ducats, With which sum you could purchase some fair domain for your children. In order to facilitate this purchase, we would be willing, while awaiting the issue, to place the 300,000 ducats in the hands of a third party, so that your Highness might be quite certain of receiving the money on an appointed day, in return for the despatch of our brother’s body. Moreover, we promise your Highness herewith, for your greater satisfaction, that never, so long as you shall remain on the pontifical throne, shall there be any hurt done to the Christians, neither by us, nor by our servants, nor by any of our compatriots, of whatsoever kind or condition they may be, neither on sea nor on land. And for the still further satisfaction of your Highness, and in order that no doubt whatever may remain concerning the fulfilment of our promises, we have sworn and affirmed in the presence of Bucciarda, your envoy, by the true God whom we adore and by our holy Gospels, that they shall be

faithfully kept from the first point unto the last. And now for the final and complete assurance of your Highness, in order that no doubt may still remain in your heart, and that you may be once again and profoundly convinced of our good faith, we the aforesaid Sultan Bajazet do swear by the true God, who has created the heavens and the earth and all that therein is, that we will religiously observe all that has been above said and declared, and in the future will do nothing and undertake nothing that may be contrary to the interests of your Highness.

“Given at Constantinople, in our palace, on the 12th of September A.D. 1494.”

This letter was the cause of great joy to the Holy Father: the aid of four or five thousand Turks would be insufficient under the present circumstances, and would only serve to compromise the head of Christendom, while the sum of 300,000 ducats—that is, nearly a million francs—was good to get in any sort of circumstances. It is true that, so long as D’jem lived, Alexander was drawing an income of 180,000 livres, which as a life annuity represented a capital of nearly two millions; but when one needs ready mangy, one ought to be able to make a sacrifice in the way of discount. All the same, Alexander formed no definite plan, resolved on acting as circumstances should indicate.

But it was a more pressing business to decide how he should behave to the King of France: he had never anticipated the success of the French in Italy, and we have seen that he laid all the foundations of his family’s future grandeur upon his alliance with the house of Aragon. But here was this house tattering, and a volcano more terrible than her own Vesuvius was threatening to swallow up Naples. He must therefore change his policy, and attach himself to the victor,—no easy matter, for Charles VIII was bitterly annoyed with the pope for having refused him the investiture and given it to Aragon.

In consequence, he sent Cardinal Francesco Piccolomini as an envoy to the king. This choice looked like a mistake at first, seeing that the ambassador was a nephew of Pius II, who had vigorously opposed the house of Anjou; but Alexander in acting thus had a second design, which could not be discerned by those around him. In fact, he had divined that Charles would not be quick to receive his envoy, and that, in the parleyings to which his unwillingness must give rise, Piccolomini would necessarily be brought into contact with the young

king's advisers. Now, besides his ostensible mission to the king, Piccalamini had also secret instructions for the more influential among his counsellors. These were Briconnet and Philippe de Luxembourg; and Piccolomini was authorised to promise a cardinal's hat to each of them. The result was just what Alexander had foreseen: his envoy could not gain admission to Charles, and was obliged to confer with the people about him. This was what the pope wished. Piccolomini returned to Rome with the king's refusal, but with a promise from Briconnet and Philippe de Luxembourg that they would use all their influence with Charles in favour of the Holy Father, and prepare him to receive a fresh embassy.

But the French all this time were advancing, and never stopped more than forty-eight hours in any town, so that it became more and more urgent to get something settled with Charles. The king had entered Siena and Viterbo without striking a blow; Yves d' Alegre and Louis de Ligny had taken over Ostia from the hands of the Colonnas; Civita Vecchia and Corneto had opened their gates; the Orsini had submitted; even Gian Sforza, the pope's son-in-law, had retired from the alliance with Aragon. Alexander accordingly judged that the moment had come to abandon his ally, and sent to Charles the Bishops of Concordia and Terni, and his confessor, Mansignore Graziano. They were charged to renew to Briconnet and Philippe de Luxembourg the promise of the cardinalship, and had full powers of negotiation in the name of their master, both in case Charles should wish to include Alfonso II in the treaty, and in case he should refuse to sign an agreement with any other but the pope alone. They found the mind of Charles influenced now by the insinuation of Giuliano della Ravere, who, himself a witness of the pope's simony, pressed the king to summon a council and depose the head of the Church, and now by the secret support given him by the Bishops of Mans and St. Malo. The end of it was that the king decided to form his own opinion about the matter and settle nothing beforehand, and continued this route, sending the ambassadors back to the pope, with the addition of the Marechal de Gie, the Seneschal de Beaucaire, and Jean de Gannay, first president of the Paris Parliament. They were ordered to say to the pope—

- (1) That the king wished above all things to be admitted into Rome without resistance; that, an condition of a voluntary, frank, and loyal admission, he would respect the authority of the Holy Father and the privileges of the Church;
- (2) That the king desired that D'jem should be given up to him, in order that he might make use of him against the sultan when he should carry the war into Macedonia or Turkey or the Holy Land;

(3) That the remaining conditions were so unimportant that they could be brought forward at the first conference.

The ambassadors added that the French army was now only two days distant from Rome, and that in the evening of the day after next Charles would probably arrive in person to demand an answer from His Holiness.

It was useless to think of parleying with a prince who acted in such expeditious fashion as this. Alexander accordingly warned Ferdinand to quit Rome as soon as possible, in the interests of his own personal safety. But Ferdinand refused to listen to a word, and declared that he would not go out at one gate while Charles VIII came in at another. His sojourn was not long. Two days later, about eleven o'clock in the morning, a sentinel placed on a watchtower at the top of the Castle S. Angelo, whither the pope had retired, cried out that the vanguard of the enemy was visible on the horizon. At once Alexander and the Duke of Calabria went up on the terrace which tops the fortress, and assured themselves with their own eyes that what the soldier said was true. Then, and not till then, did the duke of Calabria mount on horseback, and, to use his own words, went out at the gate of San Sebastiana, at the same moment that the French vanguard halted five hundred feet from the Gate of the People. This was on the 31st of December 1494.

At three in the afternoon the whole army had arrived, and the vanguard began their march, drums beating, ensigns unfurled. It was composed, says Paolo Giove, an eye-witness (book ii, p. 41 of his History), of Swiss and German soldiers, with short tight coats of various colours: they were armed with short swords, with steel edges like those of the ancient Romans, and carried ashen lances ten feet long, with straight and sharp iron spikes: only one-fourth of their number bore halberds instead of lances, the spikes cut into the form of an axe and surmounted by a four-cornered spike, to be used both for cutting like an axe and piercing like a bayonet: the first row of each battalion wore helmets and cuirasses which protected the head and chest, and when the men were drawn up for battle they presented to the enemy a triple array of iron spikes, which they could raise or lower like the spines of a porcupine. To each thousand of the soldiery were attached a hundred fusiliers: their officers, to distinguish them from the men, wore lofty plumes on their helmets.

After the Swiss infantry came the archers of Gascony: there were five thousand of them, wearing a very simple dress, that contrasted with the rich costume of

the Swiss soldiers, the shortest of whom would have been a head higher than the tallest of the Gascons. But they were excellent soldiers, full of courage, very light, and with a special reputation for quickness in stringing and drawing their iron bows.

Behind them rode the cavalry, the flower of the French nobility, with their gilded helmets and neck bands, their velvet and silk surcoats, their swords each of which had its own name, their shields each telling of territorial estates, and their colours each telling of a lady-love. Besides defensive arms, each man bore a lance in his hand, like an Italian gendarme, with a solid grooved end, and on his saddle bow a quantity of weapons, some for cutting and some for thrusting. Their horses were large and strong, but they had their tails and ears cropped according to the French custom. These horses, unlike those of the Italian gendarmes, wore no caparisons of dressed leather, which made them more exposed to attack. Every knight was followed by three horses—the first ridden by a page in armour like his own, the two others by equerries who were called lateral auxiliaries, because in a fray they fought to right and left of their chief. This troop was not only the most magnificent, but the most considerable in the whole army; for as there were 2500 knights, they formed each with their three followers a total of 10,000 men. Five thousand light horse rode next, who carried huge wooden bows, and shot long arrows from a distance like English archers. They were a great help in battle, for moving rapidly wherever aid was required, they could fly in a moment from one wing to another, from the rear to the van, then when their quivers were empty could go off at so swift a gallop that neither infantry or heavy cavalry could pursue them. Their defensive armour consisted of a helmet and half-cuirass; some of them carried a short lance as well, with which to pin their stricken foe to the ground; they all wore long cloaks adorned with shoulder-knots, and plates of silver whereon the arms of their chief were emblazoned.

At last came the young king's escort; there were four hundred archers, among whom a hundred Scots formed a line on each side, while two hundred of the most illustrious knights marched on foot beside the prince, carrying heavy arms on their shoulders. In the midst of this magnificent escort advanced Charles VIII, both he and his horse covered with splendid armour; on his right and left marched Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, the Duke of Milan's brother, and Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, of whom we have spoken so often, who was afterwards Pope Julius II. The Cardinals Colonna and Savelli followed immediately after, and behind them came Prospero and Fabrizio Colonna, and all the Italian princes

and generals who had thrown in their lot with the conqueror, and were marching intermingled with the great French lords.

For a long time the crowd that had collected to see all these foreign soldiers go by, a sight so new and strange, listened uneasily to a dull sound which got nearer and nearer. The earth visibly trembled, the glass shook in the windows, and behind the king's escort thirty-six bronze cannons were seen to advance, bumping along as they lay on their gun-carriages. These cannons were eight feet in length; and as their mouths were large enough to hold a man's head, it was supposed that each of these terrible machines, scarcely known as yet to the Italians, weighed nearly six thousand pounds. After the cannons came culverins sixteen feet long, and then falconets, the smallest of which shot balls the size of a grenade. This formidable artillery brought up the rear of the procession, and formed the hindmost guard of the French army.

It was six hours since the front guard entered the town; and as it was now night and for every six artillerymen there was a torch-bearer, this illumination gave to the objects around a more gloomy character than they would have shown in the sunlight. The young king was to take up his quarters in the Palazzo di Venezia, and all the artillery was directed towards the plaza and the neighbouring streets. The remainder of the army was dispersed about the town. The same evening, they brought to the king, less to do honour to him than to assure him of his safety, the keys of Rome and the keys of the Belvedere Garden just the same thing had been done for the Duke of Calabria.

The pope, as we said, had retired to the Castle S. Angelo with only six cardinals, so from the day after his arrival the young king had around him a court of very different brilliance from that of the head of the Church. Then arose anew the question of a convocation to prove Alexander's simony and proceed to depose him; but the king's chief counsellors, gained over, as we know, pointed out that this was a bad moment to excite a new schism in the Church, just when preparations were being made for war against the infidels. As this was also the king's private opinion, there was not much trouble in persuading him, and he made up his mind to treat with His Holiness.

But the negotiations had scarcely begun when they had to be broken off; for the first thing Charles VIII demanded was the surrender of the Castle S. Angelo, and as the pope saw in this castle his only refuge, it was the last thing he chose to give up. Twice, in his youthful impatience, Charles wanted to take by force what

he could not get by goodwill, and had his cannons directed towards the Holy Father's dwelling-place; but the pope was unmoved by these demonstrations; and obstinate as he was, this time it was the French king who gave way.

This article, therefore, was set aside, and the following conditions were agreed upon:

That there should be from this day forward between His Majesty the King of France and the Holy Father a sincere friendship and a firm alliance;

Before the completion of the conquest of the kingdom of Naples, the King of France should occupy, for the advantage and accommodation of his army, the fortresses of Civita Vecchia, Terracina, and Spoleto;

Lastly, the Cardinal Valentino (this was now the name of Caesar Borgia, after his archbishopric of Valencia) should accompany the king in the capacity of apostolic ambassador, really as a hostage.

These conditions fixed, the ceremonial of an interview was arranged. The king left the Palazzo di Venezia and went to live in the Vatican. At the appointed time he entered by the door of a garden that adjoined the palace, while the pope, who had not had to quit the Castle S. Angelo, thanks to a corridor communicating between the two palaces, came down into the same garden by another gate. The result of this arrangement was that the king the next moment perceived the pope, and knelt down, but the pope pretended not to see him, and the king advancing a few paces, knelt a second time; as His Holiness was at that moment screened by some masonry, this supplied him with another excuse, and the king went on with the performance, got up again, once more advanced several steps, and was on the point of kneeling down the third time face to face, when the Holy Father at last perceived him, and, walking towards him as though he would prevent him from kneeling, took off his own hat, and pressing him to his heart, raised him up and tenderly kissed his forehead, refusing to cover until the king had put his cap upon his head, with the aid of the pope's own hands. Then, after they had stood for a moment, exchanging polite and friendly speeches, the king lost no time in praying His Holiness to be so good as to receive into the Sacred College William Bricannet, the Bishop of St. Malo. As this matter had been agreed upon beforehand by that prelate and His Holiness, though the king was not aware of it, Alexander was pleased to get credit by promptly granting the request; and he instantly ordered one of his attendants to go to the house of his son, Cardinal

Valentino, and fetch a cape and hat. Then taking the king by the hand, he conducted him into the hall of Papagalli, where the ceremony was to take place of the admission of the new cardinal. The solemn oath of obedience which was to be taken by Charles to His Holiness as supreme head of the Christian Church was postponed till the following day.

When that solemn day arrived, every person important in Rome, noble, cleric, or soldier, assembled around His Holiness. Charles, on his side, made his approach to the Vatican with a splendid following of princes, prelates, and captains. At the threshold of the palace he found four cardinals who had arrived before him: two of them placed themselves one on each side of him, the two others behind him, and all his retinue following, they traversed a long line of apartments full of guards and servants, and at last arrived in the reception-room, where the pope was seated on his throne, with his son, Caesar Borgia; behind him. On his arrival at the door, the King of France began the usual ceremonial, and when he had gone on from genuflexions to kissing the feet, the hand, and the forehead, he stood up, while the first president of the Parliament of Paris, in his turn stepping forward, said in a loud voice:

“Very Holy Father, behold my king ready to offer to your Holiness that oath of obedience that he owes to you; but in France it is customary that he who offers himself as vassal to his lord shall receive in exchange therefor such boons as he may demand. His Majesty, therefore, while he pledges himself for his own part to behave unto your Holiness with a munificence even greater than that wherewith your Holiness shall behave unto him, is here to beg urgently that you accord him three favours. These favours are: first, the confirmation of privileges already granted to the king, to the queen his wife, and to the dauphin his son; secondly, the investiture, for himself and his successors, of the kingdom of Naples; lastly, the surrender to him of the person of the sultan D’jem, brother of the Turkish emperor.”

At this address the pope was for a moment stupefied, for he did not expect these three demands, which were moreover made so publicly by Charles that no manner of refusal was possible. But quickly recovering his presence of mind, he replied to the king that he would willingly confirm the privileges that had been accorded to the house of France by his predecessors; that he might therefore consider his first demand granted; that the investiture of the kingdom was an affair that required deliberation in a council of cardinals, but he would do all he possibly could to induce them to accede to the king’s desire; lastly, he must defer

the affair of the sultan's brother till a time more opportune for discussing it with the Sacred College, but would venture to say that, as this surrender could not fail to be for the good of Christendom, as it was demanded for the purpose of assuring further the success of a crusade, it would not be his fault if on this point also the king should not be satisfied.

At this reply, Charles bowed his head in sign of satisfaction, and the first president stood up, uncovered, and resumed his discourse as follows.

“Very Holy Father, it is an ancient custom among Christian kings, especially the Most Christian kings of France, to signify, through their ambassadors, the respect they feel for the Holy See and the sovereign pontiffs whom Divine Providence places thereon; but the Most Christian king, having felt a desire to visit the tombs of the holy apostles, has been pleased to pay this religious debt, which he regards as a sacred duty, not by ambassadors or by delegates, but in his own person. This is why, Very Holy Father, His Majesty the King of France is here to acknowledge you as the true vicar of Christ, the legitimate successor of the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and with promise and vow renders you that filial and respectful devotion which the kings his predecessors have been accustomed to promise and vow, devoting himself and all his strength to the service of your Holiness and the interests of the Holy See.”

The pope arose with a joyful heart; for this oath, so publicly made, removed all his fears about a council; so inclined from this moment to yield to the King of France anything he might choose to ask, he took him by his left hand and made him a short and friendly reply, dubbing him the Church's eldest son. The ceremony over, they left the hall, the pope always holding the king's hand in his, and in this way they walked as far as the room where the sacred vestments are put off; the pope feigned a wish to conduct the king to his own apartments, but the king would not suffer this, and, embracing once more, they separated, each to retire to his own domicile.

The king remained eight days longer at the Vatican, then returned to the Palazzo San Marco. During these eight days all his demands were debated and settled to his satisfaction. The Bishop of Mans was made cardinal; the investiture of the kingdom of Naples was promised to the conqueror; lastly, it was agreed that on his departure the King of France should receive from the pope's hand the brother of the Emperor of Constantinople, for a sum of 120,000 livres. But—the pope, desiring to extend to the utmost the hospitality he had been bestowing, invited

D'jem to dinner on the very day that he was to leave Rome with his new protector.

When the moment of departure arrived, Charles mounted his horse in full armour, and with a numerous and brilliant following made his way to the Vatican; arrived at the door, he dismounted, and leaving his escort at the Piazza of St. Peter, went up with a few gentlemen only. He found His Holiness waiting for him, with Cardinal Valentino on his right, and on his left D'jem, who, as we said before, was dining with him, and round the table thirteen cardinals. The king at once, bending on his knee, demanded the pope's benediction, and stooped to kiss his feet. But this Alexander would not suffer; he took him in his arms, and with the lips of a father and heart of an enemy, kissed him tenderly on his forehead. Then the pope introduced the son of Mahomet II, who was a fine young man, with something noble and regal in his air, presenting in his magnificent oriental costume a great contrast in its fashion and amplitude to the narrow, severe cut of the Christian apparel. D'jem advanced to Charles without humility and without pride, and, like an emperor's son treating with a king, kissed his hand and then his shoulder; then, turning towards the Holy Father, he said in Italian, which he spoke very well, that he entreated he would recommend him to the young king, who was prepared to take him under his protection, assuring the pontiff that he should never have to repent giving him his liberty, and telling Charles that he hoped he might some day be proud of him, if after taking Naples he carried out his intention of going on to Greece. These words were spoken with so much dignity and at the same time with such gentleness, that the King of France loyally and frankly grasped the young sultan's hand, as though he were his companion-in-arms. Then Charles took a final farewell of the pope, and went down to the piazza. There he was awaited by Cardinal Valentino, who was about to accompany him, as we know, as a hostage, and who had remained behind to exchange a few words with his father. In a moment Caesar Borgia appeared, riding on a splendidly harnessed mule, and behind him were led six magnificent horses, a present from the Holy Father to the King of France. Charles at once mounted one of these, to do honour to the gift. The pope had just conferred on him, and leaving Rome with the rest of his troops, pursued his way towards Marino, where he arrived the same evening.

He learned there that Alfonso, belying his reputation as a clever politician and great general, had just embarked with all his treasures in a flotilla of four galleys, leaving the care of the war and the management of his kingdom to his son Ferdinand. Thus everything went well for the triumphant march of Charles: the

gates of towns opened of themselves at his approach, his enemies fled without waiting for his coming, and before he had fought a single battle he had won for himself the surname of Conqueror.

The day after at dawn the army started once more, and after marching the whole day, stopped in the evening at Velletri. There the king, who had been on horseback since the morning, with Cardinal Valentine and D'jem, left the former at his lodging, and taking D'jem with him, went on to his own. Then Caesar Borgia, who among the army baggage had twenty very heavy waggons of his own, had one of these opened, took out a splendid cabinet with the silver necessary for his table, and gave orders for his supper to be prepared, as he had done the night before. Meanwhile, night had come on, and he shut himself up in a private chamber, where, stripping off his cardinal's costume, he put on a groom's dress. Thanks to this disguise, he issued from the house that had been assigned for his accommodation without being recognised, traversed the streets, passed through the gates, and gained the open country. Nearly half a league outside the town, a servant awaited him with two swift horses. Caesar, who was an excellent rider, sprang to the saddle, and he and his companion at full gallop retraced the road to Rome, where they arrived at break of day. Caesar got down at the house of one Flores, auditor of the rota, where he procured a fresh horse and suitable clothes; then he flew at once to his mother, who gave a cry of joy when she saw him; for so silent and mysterious was the cardinal for all the world beside, and even for her, that he had not said a word of his early return to Rome. The cry of joy uttered by Rosa Vanozza when she beheld her son was far more a cry of vengeance than of love. One evening, while everybody was at the rejoicings in the Vatican, when Charles VIII and Alexander VI were swearing a friendship which neither of them felt, and exchanging oaths that were broken beforehand, a messenger from Rosa Vanozza had arrived with a letter to Caesar, in which she begged him to come at once to her house in the Via delta Longara. Caesar questioned the messenger, but he only replied that he could tell him nothing, that he would learn all he cared to know from his mother's own lips. So, as soon as he was at liberty, Caesar, in layman's dress and wrapped in a large cloak, quitted the Vatican and made his way towards the church of Regina Coeli, in the neighbourhood of which, it will be remembered, was the house where the pope's mistress lived.

As he approached his mother's house, Caesar began to observe the signs of strange devastation. The street was scattered with the wreck of furniture and strips of precious stuffs. As he arrived at the foot of the little flight of steps that

led to the entrance gate, he saw that the windows were broken and the remains of torn curtains were fluttering in front of them. Not understanding what this disorder could mean, he rushed into the house and through several deserted and wrecked apartments. At last, seeing light in one of the rooms, he went in, and there found his mother sitting on the remains of a chest made of ebony all inlaid with ivory and silver. When she saw Caesar, she rose, pale and dishevelled, and pointing to the desolation around her, exclaimed:

“Look, Caesar; behold the work of your new friends.”

“But what does it mean, mother?” asked the cardinal. “Whence comes all this disorder?”

“From the serpent,” replied Rosa Vanozza, gnashing her teeth,—“from the serpent you have warmed in your bosom. He has bitten me, fearing no doubt that his teeth would be broken on you.”

“Who has done this?” cried Caesar. “Tell me, and, by Heaven, mother, he shall pay, and pay indeed!”

“Who?” replied Rosa. “King Charles VIII has done it, by the hands of his faithful allies, the Swiss. It was well known that Melchior was away, and that I was living alone with a few wretched servants; so they came and broke in the doors, as though they were taking Rome by storm, and while Cardinal Valentino was making holiday with their master, they pillaged his mother’s house, loading her with insults and outrages which no Turks or Saracens could possibly have improved upon.”

“Very good, very good, mother,” said Caesar; “be calm; blood shall wash out disgrace. Consider a moment; what we have lost is nothing compared with what we might lose; and my father and I, you may be quite sure, will give you back more than they have stolen from you.”

“I ask for no promises,” cried Rosa; “I ask for revenge.”

“My mother,” said the cardinal, “you shall be avenged, or I will lose the name of son.”

Having by these words reassured his mother, he took her to Lucrezia’s palace, which in consequence of her marriage with Pesaro was unoccupied, and himself

returned to the Vatican, giving orders that his mother's house should be refurnished more magnificently than before the disaster. These orders were punctually executed, and it was among her new luxurious surroundings, but with the same hatred in her heart, that Caesar on this occasion found his mother. This feeling prompted her cry of joy when she saw him once more.

The mother and son exchanged a very few words; then Caesar, mounting on horseback, went to the Vatican, whence as a hostage he had departed two days before. Alexander, who knew of the flight beforehand, and not only approved, but as sovereign pontiff had previously absolved his son of the perjury he was about to commit, received him joyfully, but all the same advised him to lie concealed, as Charles in all probability would not be slow to reclaim his hostage:

Indeed, the next day, when the king got up, the absence of Cardinal Valentino was observed, and as Charles was uneasy at not seeing him, he sent to inquire what had prevented his appearance. When the messenger arrived at the house that Caesar had left the evening before, he learned that he had gone out at nine o'clock in the evening and not returned since. He went back with this news to the king, who at once suspected that he had fled, and in the first flush of his anger let the whole army know of his perjury. The soldiers then remembered the twenty waggons, so heavily laden, from one of which the cardinal, in the sight of all, had produced such magnificent gold and silver plate; and never doubting that the cargo of the others was equally precious, they fetched them down and broke them to pieces; but inside they found nothing but stones and sand, which proved to the king that the flight had been planned a long time back, and incensed him doubly against the pope. So without loss of time he despatched to Rome Philippe de Bresse, afterwards Duke of Savoy, with orders to intimate to the Holy Father his displeasure at this conduct. But the pope replied that he knew nothing whatever about his son's flight, and expressed the sincerest regret to His Majesty, declaring that he knew nothing of his whereabouts, but was certain that he was not in Rome. As a fact, the pope was speaking the truth this time, for Caesar had gone with Cardinal Orsino to one of his estates, and was temporarily in hiding there. This reply was conveyed to Charles by two messengers from the pope, the Bishops of Nepi and of Sutri, and the people also sent an ambassador in their own behalf. He was Monsignore Porcari, dean of the rota, who was charged to communicate to the king the displeasure of the Romans when they learned of the cardinal's breach of faith. Little as Charles was disposed to content himself with empty words, he had to turn his attention to more serious affairs; so he continued his march to Naples without stopping, arriving there on

Sunday, the 22nd of February, 1495.

Four days later, the unlucky D'jem, who had fallen sick at Capua died at Castel Nuovo. When he was leaving, at the farewell banquet, Alexander had tried on his guest the poison he intended to use so often later on upon his cardinals, and whose effects he was destined to feel himself,—such is poetical justice. In this way the pope had secured a double haul; for, in his twofold speculation in this wretched young man, he had sold him alive to Charles for 120,000 livres and sold him dead to Bajazet for 300,00 ducats....

But there was a certain delay about the second payment; for the Turkish emperor, as we remember, was not bound to pay the price of fratricide till he received the corpse, and by Charles's order the corpse had been buried at Gaeta.

When Caesar Borgia learned the news, he rightly supposed that the king would be so busy settling himself in his new capital that he would have too much to think of to be worrying about him; so he went to Rome again, and, anxious to keep his promise to his mother, he signalled his return by a terrible vengeance.

Cardinal Valentino had in his service a certain Spaniard whom he had made the chief of his bravoës; he was a man of five-and-thirty or forty, whose whole life had been one long rebellion against society's laws; he recoiled from no action, provided only he could get his price. This Don Michele Correglia, who earned his celebrity for bloody deeds under the name of Michelotto, was just the man Caesar wanted; and whereas Michelotto felt an unbounded admiration for Caesar, Caesar had unlimited confidence in Michelotto. It was to him the cardinal entrusted the execution of one part of his vengeance; the other he kept for himself.

Don Michele received orders to scour the Campagna and cut every French throat he could find. He began his work at once; and very few days elapsed before he had obtained most satisfactory results: more than a hundred persons were robbed or assassinated, and among the last the son of Cardinal de St. Malo, who was en his way back to France, and on whom Michelotto found a sum of 3000 crowns.

For himself, Caesar reserved the Swiss; for it was the Swiss in particular who had despoiled his mother's house. The pope had in his service about a hundred and fifty soldiers belonging to their nation, who had settled their families in Rome, and had grown rich partly by their pay and partly in the exercise of

various industries. The cardinal had every one of them dismissed, with orders to quit Rome within twenty-four hours and the Roman territories within three days. The poor wretches had all collected together to obey the order, with their wives and children and baggage, on the Piazza of St. Peter, when suddenly, by Cardinal Valentino's orders, they were hemmed in on all sides by two thousand Spaniards, who began to fire on them with their guns and charge them with their sabres, while Caesar and his mother looked down upon the carnage from a window. In this way they killed fifty or perhaps sixty; but the rest coming up, made a charge at the assassins, and then, without suffering any loss, managed to beat a retreat to a house, where they stood a siege, and made so valiant a defense that they gave the pope time—he knew nothing of the author of this butchery—to send the captain of his guard to the rescue, who, with a strong detachment, succeeded in getting nearly forty of them safely out of the town: the rest had been massacred on the piazza or killed in the house.

But this was no real and adequate revenge; for it did not touch Charles himself, the sole author of all the troubles that the pope and his family had experienced during the last year. So Caesar soon abandoned vulgar schemes of this kind and busied himself with loftier concerns, bending all the force of his genius to restore the league of Italian princes that had been broken by the defection of Sforza, the exile of Piero dei Medici, and the defeat of Alfonso. The enterprise was more easily accomplished than the pope could have anticipated. The Venetians were very uneasy when Charles passed so near, and they trembled lest, when he was once master of Naples, he might conceive the idea of conquering the rest of Italy. Ludovico Sforza, on his side, was beginning to tremble, seeing the rapidity with which the King of France had dethroned the house of Aragon, lest he might not make much difference between his allies and his enemies. Maximilian, for his part, was only seeking an occasion to break the temporary peace which he had granted for the sake of the concession made to him. Lastly, Ferdinand and Isabella were allies of the dethroned house. And so it came about that all of them, for different reasons, felt a common fear, and were soon in agreement as to the necessity of driving out Charles VIII, not only from Naples, but from Italy, and pledged themselves to work together to this end, by every means in their power, by negotiations, by trickery, or by actual force. The Florentines alone refused to take part in this general levy of arms, and remained faithful to their promises.

According to the articles of the treaty agreed upon by the confederates, the alliance was to last for five-and-twenty years, and had for ostensible object the

upholding of the majority of the pope, and the interests of Christendom; and these preparations might well have been taken for such as would precede a crusade against the Turks, if Bajazet's ambassador had not always been present at the deliberations, although the Christian princes could not have dared for very shame to admit the sultan by name into their league. Now the confederates had to set on foot an army of 30,000 horse and 20,000 infantry, and each of them was taxed for a contingent; thus the pope was to furnish 4000 horse, Maximilian 6000, the King of Spain, the Duke of Milan, and the republic of Venice, 8000 each. Every confederate was, in addition to this, to levy and equip 4000 infantry in the six weeks following the signature of the treaty. The fleets were to be equipped by the Maritime States; but any expenses they should incur later on were to be defrayed by all in equal shares.

The formation of this league was made public on the 12th of April, 1495, Palm Sunday, and in all the Italian States, especially at Rome, was made the occasion of fetes and immense rejoicings. Almost as soon as the publicly known articles were announced the secret ones were put into execution. These obliged Ferdinand and Isabella to send a fleet of sixty galleys to Ischia, where Alfonso's son had retired, with six hundred horsemen on board and five thousand infantry, to help him to ascend the throne once more. Those troops were to be put under the command of Gonzalvo of Cordova, who had gained the reputation of the greatest general in Europe after the taking of Granada. The Venetians with a fleet of forty galleys under the command of Antonio Grimani, were to attack all the French stations on the coast of Calabria and Naples. The Duke of Milan promised for his part to check all reinforcements as they should arrive from France, and to drive the Duke of Orleans out of Asti.

Lastly, there was Maximilian, who had promised to make invasions on the frontiers, and Bajazet, who was to help with money, ships, and soldiers either the Venetians or the Spaniards, according as he might be appealed to by Barberigo or by Ferdinand the Catholic.

This league was all the more disconcerting for Charles, because of the speedy abatement of the enthusiasm that had hailed his first appearance. What had happened to him was what generally happens to a conqueror who has more good luck than talent; instead of making himself a party among the great Neapolitan and Calabrian vassals, whose roots would be embedded in the very soil, by confirming their privileges and augmenting their power, he had wounded their feelings by bestowing all the titles, offices, and fiefs on those alone who had

followed him from France, so that all the important positions in the kingdom were filled by strangers.

The result was that just when the league was made known, Tropea and Amantea, which had been presented by Charles to the Seigneur de Precy, rose in revolt and hoisted the banner of Aragon; and the Spanish fleet had only to present itself at Reggio, in Calabria, for the town to throw open its gates, being more discontented with the new rule than the old; and Don Federiga, Alfonso's brother and Ferdinand's uncle, who had hitherto never quitted Brindisi, had only to appear at Tarentum to be received there as a liberator.

CHAPTER VI

Charles learned all this news at Naples, and, tired of his late conquests, which necessitated a labour in organisation for which he was quite unfitted, turned his eyes towards France, where victorious fetes and rejoicings were awaiting the victor's return. So he yielded at the first breath of his advisers, and retraced his road to his kingdom, threatened, as was said, by the Germans on the north and the Spaniards on the south. Consequently, he appointed Gilbert de Montpensier, of the house of Bourbon, viceroy; d'Aubigny, of the Scotch Stuart family, lieutenant in Calabria; Etienne de Vese, commander at Gaeta; and Don Juliano, Gabriel de Montfaucon, Guillaume de Villeneuve, George de Lilly, the bailiff of Vitry, and Graziano Guerra respectively governors of Sant' Angelo, Manfredonia, Trani, Catanzaro, Aquila, and Sulmone; then leaving behind in evidence of his claims the half of his Swiss, a party of his Gascons, eight hundred French lances, and about five hundred Italian men-at-arms, the last under the command of the prefect of Rome, Prospero and Fabrizio Colonna, and Antonio Savelli, he left Naples on the 20th of May at two o'clock in the afternoon, to traverse the whole of the Italian peninsula with the rest of his army, consisting of eight hundred French lances, two hundred gentlemen of his guard, one hundred Italian men-at-arms, three thousand Swiss infantry, one thousand French and one thousand Gascon. He also expected to be joined by Camillo Vitelli and his brothers in Tuscany, who were to contribute two hundred and fifty men-at-arms.

A week before he left Naples, Charles had sent to Rome Monseigneur de Saint-Paul, brother of Cardinal de Luxembourg; and just as he was starting he despatched thither the new Archbishop of Lyons. They both were commissioned to assure Alexander that the King of France had the most sincere desire and the very best intention of remaining his friend. In truth, Charles wished for nothing so much as to separate the pope from the league, so as to secure him as a spiritual and temporal support; but a young king, full of fire, ambition, and courage, was not the neighbour to suit Alexander; so the latter would listen to nothing, and as the troops he had demanded from the doge and Ludavico Sforza had not been sent in sufficient number for the defense of Rome, he was content with provisioning the castle of S. Angelo, putting in a formidable garrison, and leaving Cardinal Sant' Anastasio to receive Charles while he himself withdrew with Caesar to Orvieto. Charles only stayed in Rome three days, utterly

depressed because the pope had refused to receive him in spite of his entreaties. And in these three days, instead of listening to Giuliano delta Rovere, who was advising him once more to call a council and depose the pope, he rather hoped to bring the pope round to his side by the virtuous act of restoring the citadels of Terracina and Civita Vecchia to the authorities of the Romagna, only keeping for himself Ostia, which he had promised Giuliano to give back to him. At last, when the three days had elapsed, he left Rome, and resumed his march in three columns towards Tuscany, crossed the States of the Church, and on the 13th reached Siena, where he was joined by Philippe de Commines, who had gone as ambassador extraordinary to the Venetian Republic, and now announced that the enemy had forty thousand men under arms and were preparing for battle. This news produced no other effect on the king and the gentlemen of his army than to excite their amusement beyond measure; for they had conceived such a contempt for their enemy by their easy conquest, that they could not believe that any army, however numerous, would venture to oppose their passage.

Charles, however, was forced to give way in the face of facts, when he heard at San Teranza that his vanguard, commanded by Marechal de Gie, and composed of six hundred lances and fifteen hundred Swiss, when it arrived at Fornova had come face to face with the confederates, who had encamped at Guiarole. The marechal had ordered an instant halt, and he too had pitched his tents, utilising for his defence the natural advantages of the hilly ground. When these first measures had been taken, he sent out, first, a herald to the enemy's camp to ask from Francesco di Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, generalissimo of the confederate troops, a passage for his king's army and provisions at a reasonable price; and secondly, he despatched a courier to Charles VIII, pressing him to hurry on his march with the artillery and rearguard. The confederates had given an evasive answer, for they were pondering whether they ought to jeopardise the whole Italian force in a single combat, and, putting all to the hazard, attempt to annihilate the King of France and his army together, so overwhelming the conqueror in the ruins of his ambition. The messenger found Charles busy superintending the passage of the last of his cannon over the mountain of Pontremoli. This was no easy matter, seeing that there was no sort of track, and the guns had to be lifted up and lowered by main force, and each piece needed the arms of as many as two hundred men. At last, when all the artillery had arrived without accident on the other side of the Apennines, Charles started in hot haste for Fornovd, where he arrived with all his following on the morning of the next day.

From the top of the mountain where the Marechai de Gie had pitched his tents, the king beheld both his own camp and the enemy's. Both were on the right bank of the Taro, and were at either end of a semicircular chain of hills resembling an amphitheatre; and the space between the two camps, a vast basin filled during the winter floods by the torrent which now only marked its boundary, was nothing but a plain covered with gravel, where all manoeuvres must be equally difficult for horse and infantry. Besides, on the western slope of the hills there was a little wood which extended from the enemy's army to the French, and was in the possession of the Stradiotes, who, by help of its cover, had already engaged in several skirmishes with the French troops during the two days of halt while they were waiting for the king.

The situation was not reassuring. From the top of the mountain which overlooked Fornovo, one could get a view, as we said before, of the two camps, and could easily calculate the numerical difference between them. The French army, weakened by the establishment of garrisons in the various towns and fortresses they had won in Italy, were scarcely eight thousand strong, while the combined forces of Milan and Venice exceeded a total of thirty-five thousand. So Charles decided to try once more the methods of conciliation, and sent Commines, who, as we know, had joined him in Tuscany, to the Venetian 'proveditori', whose acquaintance he had made when on his embassy; he having made a great impression on these men, thanks to a general high opinion of his merits. He was commissioned to tell the enemy's generals, in the name of the King of France, that his master only desired to continue his road without doing or receiving any harm; that therefore he asked to be allowed a free passage across the fair plains of Lombardy, which he could see from the heights where he now stood, stretching as far as the eye could reach, away to the foot of the Alps. Commines found the confederate army deep in discussion: the wish of the Milanese and Venetian party being to let the king go by, and not attack him; they said they were only too happy that he should leave Italy in this way, without causing any further harm; but the ambassadors of Spain and Germany took quite another view. As their masters had no troops in the army, and as all the money they had promised was already paid, they must be the gainer in either case from a battle, whichever way it went: if they won the day they would gather the fruits of victory, and if they lost they would experience nothing of the evils of defeat. This want of unanimity was the reason why the answer to Commines was deferred until the following day, and why it was settled that on the next day he should hold another conference with a plenipotentiary to be appointed in the course of that night. The place of this conference was to be between the two

armies.

The king passed the night in great uneasiness. All day the weather had threatened to turn to rain, and we have already said how rapidly the Taro could swell; the river, fordable to-day, might from tomorrow onwards prove an insurmountable obstacle; and possibly the delay had only been asked for with a view to putting the French army in a worse position. As a fact the night had scarcely come when a terrible storm arose, and so long as darkness lasted, great rumblings were heard in the Apennines, and the sky was brilliant with lightning. At break of day, however, it seemed to be getting a little calmer, though the Taro, only a streamlet the day before, had become a torrent by this time, and was rapidly rising. So at six in the morning, the king, ready armed and on horseback, summoned Commines and bade him make his way to the rendezvous that the Venetian 'proveditori' had assigned. But scarcely had he contrived to give the order when loud cries were heard coming from the extreme right of the French army. The Stradiotes, under cover of the wood stretching between the two camps, had surprised an outpost, and first cutting the soldiers' throats, were carrying off their heads in their usual way at the saddlebow. A detachment of cavalry was sent in pursuit; but, like wild animals, they had retreated to their lair in the woods, and there disappeared.

This unexpected engagement, in all probability arranged beforehand by the Spanish and German envoys, produced on the whole army the effect of a spark applied to a train of gunpowder. Commines and the Venetian 'proveditori' each tried in vain to arrest the combat on either side. Light troops, eager for a skirmish, and, in the usual fashion of those days, prompted only by that personal courage which led them on to danger, had already come to blows, rushing down into the plain as though it were an amphitheatre where they might make a fine display of arms. For a moment the young king, drawn on by example, was on the point of forgetting the responsibility of a general in his zeal as a soldier; but this first impulse was checked by Marechal de Gie, Messire Claude de la Chatre de Guise, and M. de la Trimaille, who persuaded Charles to adopt the wiser plan, and to cross the Taro without seeking a battle,—at the same time without trying to avoid it, should the enemy cross the river from their camp and attempt to block his passage. The king accordingly, following the advice of his wisest and bravest captains, thus arranged his divisions.

The first comprised the van and a body of troops whose duty it was to support them. The van consisted of three hundred and fifty men-at-arms, the best and

bravest of the army, under the command of Marechal de Gie and Jacques Trivulce; the corps following them consisted of three thousand Swiss, under the command of Engelbert der Cleves and de Larnay, the queen's grand equerry; next came three hundred archers of the guard, whom the king had sent to help the cavalry by fighting in the spaces between them.

The second division, commanded by the king in person and forming the middle of the army, was composed of the artillery, under Jean de Lagrange, a hundred gentlemen of the guard with Gilles Carrone for standard-bearer, pensioners of the king's household under Aymar de Prie, some Scots, and two hundred cross-bowmen on horseback, with French archers besides, led by M. de Crussol.

Lastly, the third division, *i.e.* the rear, preceded by six thousand beasts of burden bearing the baggage, was composed of only three hundred men-at-arms, commanded by de Guise and by de la Trimouille: this was the weakest part of the army.

When this arrangement was settled, Charles ordered the van to cross the river, just at the little town of Fornovo. This was done at once, the riders getting wet up to their knees, and the footmen holding to the horses' tails. As soon as he saw the last soldiers of his first division on the opposite bank, he started himself to follow the same road and cross at the same ford, giving orders to de Guise and de la Trimouille to regulate the march of the rear guard by that of the centre, just as he had regulated their march by that of the van. His orders were punctually carried out; and about ten o'clock in the morning the whole French army was on the left bank of the Taro: at the same time, when it seemed certain from the enemy's arrangements that battle was imminent, the baggage, led by the captain, Odet de Reberac, was separated from the rear guard, and retired to the extreme left.

Now, Francisco de Gonzaga, general-in-chief of the confederate troops, had modelled his plans on those of the King of France; by his orders, Count de Cajazzo, with four hundred men-at-arms and two thousand infantry, had crossed the Taro where the Venetian camp lay, and was to attack the French van; while Gonzaga himself, following the right bank as far as Fornovo, would go over the river by the same ford that Charles had used, with a view to attacking his rear. Lastly, he had placed the Stradiotes between these two fords, with orders to cross the river in their turn, so soon as they saw the French army attacked both in van and in the rear, and to fall upon its flank. Not content with offensive measures,

Gonzaga had also made provision for retreat by leaving three reserve corps on the right bank, one to guard the camp under the instruction of the Venetian 'provveditori', and the other two arranged in echelon to support each other, the first commanded by Antonio di Montefeltro, the second by Annibale Bentivoglio.

Charles had observed all these arrangements, and had recognised the cunning Italian strategy which made his opponents the finest generals in the world; but as there was no means of avoiding the danger, he had decided to take a sideway course, and had given orders to continue the match; but in a minute the French army was caught between Count di Cajazzo, barring the way with his four hundred men-at-arms and his two thousand infantry, and Gonzaga in pursuit of the rear, as we said before; leading six hundred men-at-arms, the flower of his army, a squadron of Stradiotes, and more than five thousand infantry: this division alone was stronger than the whole of the French army.

When, however, M. de Guise and M. de la Trimouille found themselves pressed in this way, they ordered their two hundred men-at-arms to turn right about face, while at the opposite end—that is, at the head of the army—Marechal de Gie and Trivulce ordered a halt and lances in rest. Meanwhile, according to custom, the king, who, as we said, was in the centre, was conferring knighthood on those gentlemen who had earned the favour either by virtue of their personal powers or the king's special friendship.

Suddenly there was heard a terrible clash behind it was the French rearguard coming to blows with the Marquis of Mantua. In this encounter, where each man had singled out his own foe as though it were a tournament, very many lances were broken, especially those of the Italian knights; for their lances were hollowed so as to be less heavy, and in consequence had less solidity. Those who were thus disarmed at once seized their swords. As they were far more numerous than the French, the king saw them suddenly outflanking his right wing and apparently prepared to surround it; at the same moment loud cries were heard from a direction facing the centre: this meant that the Stradiotes were crossing the river to make their attack.

The king at once ordered his division into two detachments, and giving one to Bourbon the bastard, to make head against the Stradiotes, he hurried with the second to the rescue of the van, flinging himself into the very midst of the melee, striking out like a king, and doing as steady work as the lowest in rank of his

captains. Aided by the reinforcement, the rearguard made a good stand, though the enemy were five against one, and the combat in this part continued to rage with wonderful fury.

Obeying his orders, Bourbon had thrown himself upon the Stradiotes; but unfortunately, carried off by his horse, he had penetrated so far into the enemy's ranks that he was lost to sight: the disappearance of their chief, the strange dress of their new antagonists, and the peculiar method of their fighting produced a considerable effect on those who were to attack them; and for the moment disorder was the consequence in the centre, and the horse men scattered instead of serrying their ranks and fighting in a body. This false move would have done them serious harm, had not most of the Stradiotes, seeing the baggage alone and undefended, rushed after that in hope of booty, instead of following up their advantage. A great part of the troop nevertheless stayed behind to fight, pressing on the French cavalry and smashing their lances with their fearful scimitars. Happily the king, who had just repulsed the Marquis of Mantua's attack, perceived what was going on behind him, and riding back at all possible speed to the succour of the centre, together with the gentlemen of his household fell upon the Stradiotes, no longer armed with a lance, for that he had just broken, but brandishing his long sword, which blazed about him like lightning, and—either because he was whirled away like Bourbon by his own horse, or because he had allowed his courage to take him too far—he suddenly found himself in the thickest ranks of the Stradiotes, accompanied only by eight of the knights he had just now created, one equerry called Antoine des Ambus, and his standard-bearer. “France, France!” he cried aloud, to rally round him all the others who had scattered; they, seeing at last that the danger was less than they had supposed, began to take their revenge and to pay back with interest the blows they had received from the Stradiotes. Things were going still better, for the van, which the Marquis de Cajazzo was to attack; for although he had at first appeared to be animated with a terrible purpose, he stopped short about ten or twelve feet from the French line and turned right about face without breaking a single lance. The French wanted to pursue, but the Marechal de Gie, fearing that this flight might be only a trick to draw off the vanguard from the centre, ordered every man to stay in his place. But the Swiss, who were German, and did not understand the order, or thought it was not meant for them, followed upon their heels, and although on foot caught them up and killed a hundred of them. This was quite enough to throw them into disorder, so that some were scattered about the plain, and others made a rush for the water, so as to cross the river and rejoin their camp.

When the Marechal de Gie saw this, he detached a hundred of his own men to go to the aid of the king, who was continuing to fight with unheard-of courage and running the greatest risks, constantly separated as he was from his gentlemen, who could not follow him; for wherever there was danger, thither he rushed, with his cry of "France," little troubling himself as to whether he was followed or not. And it was no longer with his sword that he fought; that he had long ago broken, like his lance, but with a heavy battle-axe, whose every blow was mortal whether cut or pierced. Thus the Stradiotes, already hard pressed by the king's household and his pensioners, soon changed attack for defence and defence for flight. It was at this moment that the king was really in the greatest danger; for he had let himself be carried away in pursuit of the fugitives, and presently found himself all alone, surrounded by these men, who, had they not been struck with a mighty terror, would have had nothing to do but unite and crush him and his horse together; but, as Commines remarks, "He whom God guards is well guarded, and God was guarding the King of France."

All the same, at this moment the French were sorely pressed in the rear; and although de Guise and de la Trimouille held out as firmly as it was possible to hold, they would probably have been compelled to yield to superior numbers had not a double aid arrived in time: first the indefatigable Charles, who, having nothing more to do among the fugitives, once again dashed into the midst of the fight, next the servants of the army, who, now that they were set free from the Stradiotes and saw their enemies put to flight, ran up armed with the axes they habitually used to cut down wood for building their huts: they burst into the middle of the fray, slashing at the horses' legs and dealing heavy blows that smashed in the visors of the dismounted horsemen.

The Italians could not hold out against this double attack; the 'furia francese' rendered all their strategy and all their calculations useless, especially as for more than a century they had abandoned their fights of blood and fury for a kind of tournament they chose to regard as warfare; so, in spite of all Gonzaga's efforts, they turned their backs upon the French rear and took to flight; in the greatest haste and with much difficulty they recrossed the torrent, which was swollen even more now by the rain that had been falling during the whole time of the battle.

Some thought fit to pursue the vanquished, for there was now such disorder in

their ranks that they were fleeing in all directions from the battlefield where the French had gained so glorious a victory, blocking up the roads to Parma and Bercetto. But Marechal de Gie and de Guise and de la Trimouille, who had done quite enough to save them from the suspicion of quailing before imaginary dangers, put a stop to this enthusiasm, by pointing out that it would only be risking the loss of their present advantage if they tried to push it farther with men and horses so worn out. This view was adopted in spite of the opinion of Trivulce, Camillo Vitelli, and Francesco Secco, who were all eager to follow up the victory.

The king retired to a little village on the left bank of the Taro, and took shelter in a poor house. There he disarmed, being perhaps among all the captains and all the soldiers the man who had fought best.

During the night the torrent swelled so high that the Italian army could not have pursued, even if they had laid aside their fears. The king did not propose to give the appearance of flight after a victory, and therefore kept his army drawn up all day, and at night went on to sleep at Medesano, a little village only a mile lower down than the hamlet where he rested after the fight. But in the course of the night he reflected that he had done enough for the honour of his arms in fighting an army four times as great as his own and killing three thousand men, and then waiting a day and a half to give them time to take their revenge; so two hours before daybreak he had the fires lighted, that the enemy might suppose he was remaining in camp; and every man mounting noiselessly, the whole French army, almost out of danger by this time, proceeded on their march to Borgo San Donnino.

While this was going on, the pope returned to Rome, where news highly favourable to his schemes was not slow to reach his ears. He learned that Ferdinand had crossed from Sicily into Calabria with six thousand volunteers and a considerable number of Spanish horse and foot, led, at the command of Ferdinand and Isabella, by the famous Gonzalva de Cordova, who arrived in Italy with a great reputation, destined to suffer somewhat from the defeat at Seminara. At almost the same time the French fleet had been beaten by the Aragonese; moreover, the battle of the Taro, though a complete defeat for the confederates, was another victory for the pope, because its result was to open a return to France for that man whom he regarded as his deadliest foe. So, feeling that he had nothing more to fear from Charles, he sent him a brief at Turin, where he had stopped for a short time to give aid to Novara, therein

commanding him, by virtue of his pontifical authority, to depart out of Italy with his army, and to recall within ten days those of his troops that still remained in the kingdom of Naples, on pain of excommunication, and a summons to appear before him in person.

Charles VIII replied:

(1) That he did not understand how the pope, the chief of the league, ordered him to leave Italy, whereas the confederates had not only refused him a passage, but had even attempted, though unsuccessfully, as perhaps His Holiness knew, to cut off his return into France;

(2) That, as to recalling his troops from Naples, he was not so irreligious as to do that, since they had not entered the kingdom without the consent and blessing of His Holiness;

(3) That he was exceedingly surprised that the pope should require his presence in person at the capital of the Christian world just at the present time, when six weeks previously, at the time of his return from Naples, although he ardently desired an interview with His Holiness, that he might offer proofs of his respect and obedience, His Holiness, instead of according this favour, had quitted Rome so hastily on his approach that he had not been able to come up with him by any efforts whatsoever. On this point, however, he promised to give His Holiness the satisfaction he desired, if he would engage this time to wait for him: he would therefore return to Rome so soon as the affairs that brought him back to his own kingdom had been satisfactorily settled.

Although in this reply there was a touch of mockery and defiance, Charles was none the less compelled by the circumstances of the case to obey the pope's strange brief. His presence was so much needed in France that, in spite of the arrival of a Swiss reinforcement, he was compelled to conclude a peace with Ludovico Sforza, whereby he yielded Novara to him; while Gilbert de Montpensier and d'Aubigny, after defending, inch by inch, Calabria, the Basilicate, and Naples, were obliged to sign the capitulation of Atella, after a siege of thirty-two days, on the 20th of July, 1496. This involved giving back to Ferdinand II, King of Naples, all the palaces and fortresses of his kingdom; which indeed he did but enjoy for three months, dying of exhaustion on the 7th of September following, at the Castello della Somma, at the foot of Vesuvius; all the attentions lavished upon him by his young wife could not repair the evil that

her beauty had wrought.

His uncle Frederic succeeded; and so, in the three years of his papacy, Alexander VI had seen five kings upon the throne of Naples, while he was establishing himself more firmly upon his own pontifical seat—Ferdinand I, Alfonso I, Charles VIII, Ferdinand II, and Frederic. All this agitation about his throne, this rapid succession of sovereigns, was the best thing possible for Alexander; for each new monarch became actually king only on condition of his receiving the pontifical investiture. The consequence was that Alexander was the only gainer in power and credit by these changes; for the Duke of Milan and the republics of Florence and Venice had successively recognised him as supreme head of the Church, in spite of his simony; moreover, the five kings of Naples had in turn paid him homage. So he thought the time had now come for founding a mighty family; and for this he relied upon the Duke of Gandia, who was to hold all the highest temporal dignities; and upon Caesar Borgia, who was to be appointed to all the great ecclesiastical offices. The pope made sure of the success of these new projects by electing four Spanish cardinals, who brought up the number of his compatriots in the Sacred College to twenty-two, thus assuring him a constant and certain majority.

The first requirement of the pope's policy was to clear away from the neighbourhood of Rome all those petty lords whom most people call vicars of the Church, but whom Alexander called the shackles of the papacy. We saw that he had already begun this work by rousing the Orsini against the Colonna family, when Charles VIII's enterprise compelled him to concentrate all his mental resources, and also the forces of his States, so as to secure his own personal safety.

It had come about through their own imprudent action that the Orsini, the pope's old friends, were now in the pay of the French, and had entered the kingdom of Naples with them, where one of them, Virginio, a very important member of their powerful house, had been taken prisoner during the war, and was Ferdinand II's captive. Alexander could not let this opportunity escape him; so, first ordering the King of Naples not to release a man who, ever since the 1st of June, 1496, had been a declared rebel, he pronounced a sentence of confiscation against Virginio Orsini and his whole family in a secret consistory, which sat on the 26th of October following—that is to say, in the early days of the reign of Frederic, whom he knew to be entirely at his command, owing to the King's great desire of getting the investiture from him; then, as it was not enough to

declare the goods confiscated, without also dispossessing the owners, he made overtures to the Colonna family, saying he would commission them, in proof of their new bond of friendship, to execute the order given against their old enemies under the direction of his son Francesco, Duke of Gandia. In this fashion he contrived to weaken his neighbours each by means of the other, till such time as he could safely attack and put an end to conquered and conqueror alike.

The Colonna family accepted this proposition, and the Duke of Gandia was named General of the Church: his father in his pontifical robes bestowed on him the insignia of this office in the church of St. Peter's at Rome.

CHAPTER VII

Matters went forward as Alexander had wished, and before the end of the year the pontifical army had, seized a great number of castles and fortresses that belonged to the Orsini, who thought themselves already lost when Charles VIII came to the rescue. They had addressed themselves to him without much hope that he could be of real use to them, with his want of armed troops and his preoccupation with his own affairs. He, however, sent Carlo Orsini, son of Virginio, the prisoner, and Vitellozzo Vitelli, brother of Camillo Vitelli, one of the three valiant Italian condottieri who had joined him and fought for him at the crossing of the Taro: These two captains, whose courage and skill were well known, brought with them a considerable sum of money from the liberal coffers of Charles VIII. Now, scarcely had they arrived at Citta di Castello, the centre of their little sovereignty, and expressed their intention of raising a band of soldiers, when men presented themselves from all sides to fight under their banner; so they very soon assembled a small army, and as they had been able during their stay among the French to study those matters of military organisation in which France excelled, they now applied the result of their learning to their own troops: the improvements were mainly certain changes in the artillery which made their manoeuvres easier, and the substitution for their ordinary weapons of pikes similar in form to the Swiss pikes, but two feet longer. These changes effected, Vitellozzo Vitelli spent three or four months in exercising his men in the management of their new weapons; then, when he thought them fit to make good use of these, and when he had collected more or less help from the towns of Perugia, Todi, and Narni, where the inhabitants trembled lest their turn should come after the Orsini's, as the Orsini's had followed on the Colonnas', he marched towards Bracciano, which was being besieged by the Duke of Urbino, who had been lent to the pope by the Venetians, in virtue of the treaty quoted above.

The Venetian general, when he heard of Vitelli's approach, thought he might as well spare him half his journey, and marched out to confront him: the two armies met in the Soriano road, and the battle straightway began. The pontifical army had a body of eight hundred Germans, on which the Dukes of Urbino and Gandia chiefly relied, as well they might, for they were the best troops in the world; but Vitelli attacked these picked men with his infantry, who, armed with their formidable pikes, ran them through, while they with arms four feet shorter

had no chance even of returning the blows they received; at the same time Vitelli's light troops wheeled upon the flank, following their most rapid movements, and silencing the enemy's artillery by the swiftness and accuracy of their attack. The pontifical troops were put to flight, though after a longer resistance than might have been expected when they had to sustain the attack of an army so much better equipped than their own; with them they bore to Ronciglione the Duke of Gandia, wounded in the face by a pike-thrust, Fabrizio Calonna, and the envoy; the Duke of Urbino, who was fighting in the rear to aid the retreat, was taken prisoner with all his artillery and the baggage of the conquered army. But this success, great as it was, did not so swell the pride of Vitellozza Vitelli as to make him oblivious of his position. He knew that he and the Orsini together were too weak to sustain a war of such magnitude; that the little store of money to which he owed the existence of his army would very soon be expended and his army would disappear with it. So he hastened to get pardoned for the victory by making propositions which he would very likely have refused had he been the vanquished party; and the pope accepted his conditions without demur; during the interval having heard that Trivulce had just recrossed the Alps and reentered Italy with three thousand Swiss, and fearing lest the Italian general might only be the advance guard of the King of France. So it was settled that the Orsini should pay 70,000 florins for the expenses of the war, and that all the prisoners on both sides should be exchanged without ransom with the single exception of the Duke of Urbino. As a pledge for the future payment of the 70,000 florins, the Orsini handed over to the Cardinals Sforza and San Severino the fortresses of Anguillara and Cervetri; then, when the day came and they had not the necessary money, they gave up their prisoner, the Duke of Urbino, estimating his worth at 40,000 ducats—nearly all the sum required—and handed him over to Alexander on account; he, a rigid observer of engagements, made his own general, taken prisoner in his service, pay, to himself the ransom he owed to the enemy.

Then the pope had the corpse of Virginio sent to Carlo Orsini and Vitellozzo Vitelli, as he could not send him alive. By a strange fatality the prisoner had died, eight days before the treaty was signed, of the same malady—at least, if we may judge by analogy—that had carried off Bajazet's brother.

As soon as the peace was signed, Prospero Calonna and Gonzalvo de Cordova, whom the Pope had demanded from Frederic, arrived at Rome with an army of Spanish and Neapolitan troops. Alexander, as he could not utilise these against the Orsini, set them the work of recapturing Ostia, not desiring to incur the

reproach of bringing them to Rome far nothing. Gonzalvo was rewarded for this feat by receiving the Rose of Gold from the pope's hand—that being the highest honour His Holiness can grant. He shared this distinction with the Emperor Maximilian, the King of France, the Doge of Venice, and the Marquis of Mantua.

In the midst of all this occurred the solemn festival of the Assumption; in which Ganzalvo was invited to take part. He accordingly left his palace, proceeded in great pomp in the front of the pontifical cavalry, and took his place on the Duke of Gandia's left hand. The duke attracted all eyes by his personal beauty, set off as it was by all the luxury he thought fit to display at this festival. He had a retinue of pages and servants, clad in sumptuous liveries, incomparable for richness with anything heretofore seen in Rome, that city of religious pomp. All these pages and servants rode magnificent horses, caparisoned in velvet trimmed with silver fringe, and bells of silver hanging down every here and there. He himself was in a robe of gold brocade, and wore at his neck a string of Eastern pearls, perhaps the finest and largest that ever belonged to a Christian prince, while on his cap was a gold chain studded with diamonds of which the smallest was worth more than 20,000 ducats. This magnificence was all the more conspicuous by the contrast it presented to Caesar's dress, whose scarlet robe admitted of no ornaments. The result was that Caesar, doubly jealous of his brother, felt a new hatred rise up within him when he heard all along the way the praises of his fine appearance and noble equipment. From this moment Cardinal Valentino decided in his own mind the fate of this man, this constant obstacle in the path of his pride, his love, and his ambition. Very good reason, says Tommaso, the historian, had the Duke of Gandia to leave behind him an impression on the public mind of his beauty and his grandeur at this fete, for this last display was soon to be followed by the obsequies of the unhappy young man.

Lucrezia also had come to Rome, on the pretext of taking part in the solemnity, but really, as we shall see later, with the view of serving as a new instrument for her father's ambition. As the pope was not satisfied with an empty triumph of vanity and display for his son, and as his war with the Orsini had failed to produce the anticipated results, he decided to increase the fortune of his firstborn by doing the very thing which he had accused Calixtus in his speech of doing for him, viz., alienating from the States of the Church the cities of Benevento, Terracino, and Pontecorvo to form, a duchy as an appanage to his son's house. Accordingly this proposition was put forward in a full consistory, and as the

college of cardinals was entirely Alexander's, there was no difficulty about carrying his point. This new favour to his elder brother exasperated Caesar, although he was himself getting a share of the paternal gifts; for he had just been named envoy 'a latere' at Frederic's court, and was appointed to crown him with his own hands as the papal representative. But Lucrezia, when she had spent a few days of pleasure with her father and brothers, had gone into retreat at the convent of San Sisto. No one knew the real motive of her seclusion, and no entreaties of Caesar, whose love for her was strange and unnatural, had induced her to defer this departure from the world even until the day after he left for Naples. His sister's obstinacy wounded him deeply, for ever since the day when the Duke of Gandia had appeared in the procession so magnificently attired, he fancied he had observed a coldness in the mistress of his illicit affection, and so far did this increase his hatred of his rival that he resolved to be rid of him at all costs. So he ordered the chief of his sbirri to come and see him the same night.

Michelotto was accustomed to these mysterious messages, which almost always meant his help was wanted in some love affair or some act of revenge. As in either case his reward was generally a large one, he was careful to keep his engagement, and at the appointed hour was brought into the presence of his patron.

Caesar received him leaning against a tall chimneypiece, no longer wearing his cardinal's robe and hat, but a doublet of black velvet slashed with satin of the same colour. One hand toyed mechanically with his gloves, while the other rested on the handle of a poisoned dagger which never left his side. This was the dress he kept for his nocturnal expeditions, so Michelotto felt no surprise at that; but his eyes burned with a flame more gloomy than their want, and his cheeks, generally pale, were now livid. Michelotto had but to cast one look upon his master to see that Caesar and he were about to share some terrible enterprise.

He signed to him to shut the door. Michelotto obeyed. Then, after a moment's silence, during which the eyes of Borgia seemed to burn into the soul of the bravo, who with a careless air stood bareheaded before him, he said, in a voice whose slightly mocking tone gave the only sign of his emotion.

"Michelotto, how do you think this dress suits me?"

Accustomed as he was to his master's tricks of circumlocution, the bravo was so far from expecting this question, that at first he stood mute, and only after a few

moments' pause was able to say

“Admirably, monsignore; thanks to the dress, your Excellency has the appearance as well as the true spirit of a captain.”

“I am glad you think so,” replied Caesar. “And now let me ask you, do you know who is the cause that, instead of wearing this dress, which I can only put on at night, I am forced to disguise myself in the daytime in a cardinal’s robe and hat, and pass my time trotting about from church to church, from consistory to consistory, when I ought properly to be leading a magnificent army in the battlefield, where you would enjoy a captain’s rank, instead of being the chief of a few miserable sbirri?”

“Yes, monsignore,” replied Michelotto, who had divined Caesar’s meaning at his first word; “the man who is the cause of this is Francesco, Duke of Gandia, and Benevento, your elder brother.”

“Do you know,” Caesar resumed, giving no sign of assent but a nod and a bitter smile,—“do you know who has all the money and none of the genius, who has the helmet and none of the brains, who has the sword and no hand to wield it?”

“That too is the Duke of Gandia,” said Michelotto.

“Do you know; continued Caesar, “who is the man whom I find continually blocking the path of my ambition, my fortune, and my love?”

“It is the same, the Duke of Gandia,” said Michelotto.

“And what do you think of it?” asked Caesar.

“I think he must die,” replied the man coldly.

“That is my opinion also, Michelotto,” said Caesar, stepping towards him and grasping his hand; “and my only regret is that I did not think of it sooner; for if I had carried a sword at my side in stead of a crosier in my hand when the King of France was marching through Italy, I should now have been master of a fine domain. The pope is obviously anxious to aggrandise his family, but he is mistaken in the means he adopts: it is I who ought to have been made duke, and my brother a cardinal. There is no doubt at all that, had he made me duke, I should have contributed a daring and courage to his service that would have

made his power far weightier than it is. The man who would make his way to vast dominions and a kingdom ought to trample under foot all the obstacles in his path, and boldly grasp the very sharpest thorns, whatever reluctance his weak flesh may feel; such a man, if he would open out his path to fortune, should seize his dagger or his sword and strike out with his eyes shut; he should not shrink from bathing his hands in the blood of his kindred; he should follow the example offered him by every founder of empire from Romulus to Bajazet, both of whom climbed to the throne by the ladder of fratricide. Yes, Michelotto, as you say, such is my condition, and I am resolved I will not shrink. Now you know why I sent for you: am I wrong in counting upon you?"

As might have been expected, Michelotto, seeing his own fortune in this crime, replied that he was entirely at Caesar's service, and that he had nothing to do but to give his orders as to time, place, and manner of execution. Caesar replied that the time must needs be very soon, since he was on the point of leaving Rome for Naples; as to the place and the mode of execution, they would depend on circumstances, and each of them must look out for an opportunity, and seize the first that seemed favourable.

Two days after this resolution had been taken, Caesar learned that the day of his departure was fixed for Thursday the 15th of June: at the same time he received an invitation from his mother to come to supper with her on the 14th. This was a farewell repast given in his honour. Michelotto received orders to be in readiness at eleven o'clock at night.

The table was set in the open air in a magnificent vineyard, a property of Rosa Vanozza's in the neighbourhood of San Piero-in-Vinculis: the guests were Caesar Borgia, the hero of the occasion; the Duke of Gandia; Prince of Squillace; Dona Sancha, his wife; the Cardinal of Monte Reale, Francesco Borgia, son of Calixtus III; Don Roderigo Borgia, captain of the apostolic palace; Don Goffredo, brother of the cardinal; Gian Borgia, at that time ambassador at Perugia; and lastly, Don Alfonso Borgia, the pope's nephew: the whole family therefore was present, except Lucrezia, who was still in retreat, and would not come.

The repast was magnificent: Caesar was quite as cheerful as usual, and the Duke of Gandia seemed more joyous than he had ever been before.

In the middle of supper a man in a mask brought him a letter. The duke

unfastened it, colouring up with pleasure; and when he had read it answered in these words, "I will come": then he quickly hid the letter in the pocket of his doublet; but quick as he was to conceal it from every eye, Caesar had had time to cast a glance that way, and he fancied he recognised the handwriting of his sister Lucrezia. Meanwhile the messenger had gone off with his answer, no one but Caesar paying the slightest attention to him, for at that period it was the custom for have messages to be conveyed by men in domino or by women whose faces were concealed by a veil.

At ten o'clock they rose from the table, and as the air was sweet and mild they walked about a while under the magnificent pine trees that shaded the house of Rosa Vanozza, while Caesar never for an instant let his brother out of his sight. At eleven o'clock the Duke of Gandia bade good-night to his mother. Caesar at once followed suit, alleging his desire to go to the Vatican to bid farewell to the pope, as he would not be able to fulfil this duty on the morrow, his departure being fixed at daybreak. This pretext was all the more plausible since the pope was in the habit of sitting up every night till two or three o'clock in the morning.

The two brothers went out together, mounted their horses, which were waiting for them at the door, and rode side by side as far as the Palazzo Borgia, the present home of Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, who had taken it as a gift from Alexander the night before his election to the papacy. There the Duke of Gandia separated from his brother, saying with a smile that he was not intending to go home, as he had several hours to spend first with a fair lady who was expecting him. Caesar replied that he was no doubt free to make any use he liked best of his opportunities, and wished him a very good night. The duke turned to the right, and Caesar to the left; but Caesar observed that the street the duke had taken led in the direction of the convent of San Sisto, where, as we said, Lucrezia was in retreat; his suspicions were confirmed by this observation, and he directed his horse's steps to the Vatican, found the pope, took his leave of him, and received his benediction.

From this moment all is wrapped in mystery and darkness, like that in which the terrible deed was done that we are now to relate.

This, however, is what is believed.

The Duke of Gandia, when he quitted Caesar, sent away his servants, and in the company of one confidential valet alone pursued his course towards the Piazza

della Giudecca. There he found the same man in a mask who had come to speak to him at supper, and forbidding his valet to follow any farther, he bade him wait on the piazza where they then stood, promising to be on his way back in two hours' time at latest, and to take him up as he passed. And at the appointed hour the duke reappeared, took leave this time of the man in the mask, and retraced his steps towards his palace. But scarcely had he turned the corner of the Jewish Ghetto, when four men on foot, led by a fifth who was on horseback, flung themselves upon him. Thinking they were thieves, or else that he was the victim of some mistake, the Duke of Gandia mentioned his name; but instead of the name checking the murderers' daggers, their strokes were redoubled, and the duke very soon fell dead, his valet dying beside him.

Then the man on horseback, who had watched the assassination with no sign of emotion, backed his horse towards the dead body: the four murderers lifted the corpse across the crupper, and walking by the side to support it, then made their way down the lane that leads to the Church of Santa Maria-in-Monticelli. The wretched valet they left for dead upon the pavement. But he, after the lapse of a few seconds, regained some small strength, and his groans were heard by the inhabitants of a poor little house hard by; they came and picked him up, and laid him upon a bed, where he died almost at once, unable to give any evidence as to the assassins or any details of the murder.

All night the duke was expected home, and all the next morning; then expectation was turned into fear, and fear at last into deadly terror. The pope was approached, and told that the Duke of Gandia had never come back to his palace since he left his mother's house. But Alexander tried to deceive himself all through the rest of the day, hoping that his son might have been surprised by the coming of daylight in the midst of an amorous adventure, and was waiting till the next night to get away in that darkness which had aided his coming thither. But the night, like the day, passed and brought no news. On the morrow, the pope, tormented by the gloomiest presentiments and by the raven's croak of the 'vox populi', let himself fall into the depths of despair: amid sighs and sobs of grief, all he could say to any one who came to him was but these words, repeated a thousand times: "Search, search; let us know how my unhappy son has died."

Then everybody joined in the search; for, as we have said, the Duke of Gandia was beloved by all; but nothing could be discovered from scouring the town, except the body of the murdered man, who was recognised as the duke's valet; of his master there was no trace whatever: it was then thought, not without

reason, that he had probably been thrown into the Tiber, and they began to follow along its banks, beginning from the Via della Ripetta, questioning every boatman and fisherman who might possibly have seen, either from their houses or from their boats, what had happened on the river banks during the two preceding nights. At first all inquiries were in vain; but when they had gone up as high as the Via del Fantanone, they found a man at last who said he had seen something happen on the night of the 14th which might very possibly have some bearing on the subject of inquiry. He was a Slav named George, who was taking up the river a boat laden with wood to Ripetta. The following are his own words:

“Gentlemen,” he said, “last Wednesday evening, when I had set down my load of wood on the bank, I remained in my boat, resting in the cool night air, and watching lest other men should come and take away what I had just unloaded, when, about two o’clock in the morning, I saw coming out of the lane on the left of San Girolamo’s Church two men on foot, who came forward into the middle of the street, and looked so carefully all around that they seemed to have come to find out if anybody was going along the street. When they felt sure that it was deserted, they went back along the same lane, whence issued presently two other men, who used similar precautions to make sure that there was nothing fresh; they, when they found all as they wished, gave a sign to their companions to come and join them; next appeared one man on a dapple-grey horse, which was carrying on the crupper the body of a dead man, his head and arms hanging over on one side and his feet on the other. The two fellows I had first seen exploring were holding him up by the arms and legs. The other three at once went up to the river, while the first two kept a watch on the street, and advancing to the part of the bank where the sewers of the town are discharged into the Tiber, the horseman turned his horse, backing on the river; then the two who were at either side taking the corpse, one by the hands, the other by the feet, swung it three times, and the third time threw it out into the river with all their strength; then at the noise made when the body splashed into the water, the horseman asked, ‘Is it done?’ and the others answered, ‘Yes, sir,’ and he at once turned right about face; but seeing the dead man’s cloak floating, he asked what was that black thing swimming about. ‘Sir,’ said one of the men, ‘it is his cloak’; and then another man picked up some stones, and running to the place where it was still floating, threw them so as to make it sink under; as soon, as it had quite disappeared, they went off, and after walking a little way along the main road, they went into the lane that leads to San Giacomo. That was all I saw, gentlemen, and so it is all I can answer to the questions you have asked me.”

At these words, which robbed of all hope any who might yet entertain it, one of the pope's servants asked the Slav why, when he was witness of such a deed, he had not gone to denounce it to the governor. But the Slav replied that, since he had exercised his present trade on the riverside, he had seen dead men thrown into the Tiber in the same way a hundred times, and had never heard that anybody had been troubled about them; so he supposed it would be the same with this corpse as the others, and had never imagined it was his duty to speak of it, not thinking it would be any more important than it had been before.

Acting on this intelligence, the servants of His Holiness summoned at once all the boatmen and fishermen who were accustomed to go up and down the river, and as a large reward was promised to anyone who should find the duke's body, there were soon more than a hundred ready for the job; so that before the evening of the same day, which was Friday, two men were drawn out of the water, of whom one was instantly recognised as the hapless duke. At the very first glance at the body there could be no doubt as to the cause of death. It was pierced with nine wounds, the chief one in the throat, whose artery was cut. The clothing had not been touched: his doublet and cloak were there, his gloves in his waistband, gold in his purse; the duke then must have been assassinated not for gain but for revenge.

The ship which carried the corpse went up the Tiber to the Castello Sant' Angelo, where it was set down. At once the magnificent dress was fetched from the duke's palace which he had worn on the day of the procession, and he was clothed in it once more: beside him were placed the insignia of the generalship of the Church. Thus he lay in state all day, but his father in his despair had not the courage to come and look at him. At last, when night had fallen, his most trusty and honoured servants carried the body to the church of the Madonna del Papala, with all the pomp and ceremony that Church and State combined could devise for the funeral of the son of the pope.

Meantime the bloodstained hands of Caesar Borgia were placing a royal crown upon the head of Frederic of Aragon.

This blow had pierced Alexander's heart very deeply. As at first he did not know on whom his suspicions should fall, he gave the strictest orders for the pursuit of the murderers; but little by little the infamous truth was forced upon him. He saw that the blow which struck at his house came from that very house itself and then his despair was changed to madness: he ran through the rooms of the Vatican

like a maniac, and entering the consistory with torn garments and ashes on his head, he sobbingly avowed all the errors of his past life, owning that the disaster that struck his offspring through his offspring was a just chastisement from God; then he retired to a secret dark chamber of the palace, and there shut himself up, declaring his resolve to die of starvation. And indeed for more than sixty hours he took no nourishment by day nor rest by night, making no answer to those who knocked at his door to bring him food except with the wailings of a woman or a roar as of a wounded lion; even the beautiful Giulia Farnese, his new mistress, could not move him at all, and was obliged to go and seek Lucrezia, that daughter doubly loved to conquer his deadly resolve. Lucrezia came out from the retreat where she was weeping for the Duke of Gandia, that she might console her father. At her voice the door did really open, and it was only then that the Duke of Segovia, who had been kneeling almost a whole day at the threshold, begging His Holiness to take heart, could enter with servants bearing wine and food.

The pope remained alone with Lucrezia for three days and nights; then he reappeared in public, outwardly calm, if not resigned; for Guicciardini assures us that his daughter had made him understand how dangerous it would be to himself to show too openly before the assassin, who was coming home, the immoderate love he felt for his victim.

CHAPTER VIII

Caesar remained at Naples, partly to give time to the paternal grief to cool down, and partly to get on with another business he had lately been charged with, nothing else than a proposition of marriage between Lucrezia and Don Alfonso of Aragon, Duke of Bicelli and Prince of Salerno, natural son of Alfonso II and brother of Dona Sancha. It was true that Lucrezia was already married to the lord of Pesaro, but she was the daughter of an father who had received from heaven the right of uniting and disuniting. There was no need to trouble about so trifling a matter: when the two were ready to marry, the divorce would be effected. Alexander was too good a tactician to leave his daughter married to a son-in-law who was becoming useless to him.

Towards the end of August it was announced that the ambassador was coming back to Rome, having accomplished his mission to the new king to his great satisfaction. And thither he returned on the 5th of September,—that is, nearly three months after the Duke of Gandia's death,—and on the next day, the 6th, from the church of Santa Maria Novella, where, according to custom, the cardinals and the Spanish and Venetian ambassadors were awaiting him on horseback at the door, he proceeded to the Vatican, where His Holiness was sitting; there he entered the consistory, was admitted by the pope, and in accordance with the usual ceremonial received his benediction and kiss; then, accompanied once more in the same fashion by the ambassadors and cardinals, he was escorted to his own apartments. Thence he proceeded to, the pope's, as soon as he was left alone; for at the consistory they had had no speech with one another, and the father and son had a hundred things to talk about, but of these the Duke of Gandia was not one, as might have been expected. His name was not once spoken, and neither on that day nor afterwards was there ever again any mention of the unhappy young man: it was as though he had never existed.

It was the fact that Caesar brought good news, King Frederic gave his consent to the proposed union; so the marriage of Sforza and Lucrezia was dissolved on a pretext of nullity. Then Frederic authorised the exhumation of D'jem's body, which, it will be remembered, was worth 300,000 ducats.

After this, all came about as Caesar had desired; he became the man who was all-powerful after the pope; but when he was second in command it was soon

evident to the Roman people that their city was making a new stride in the direction of ruin. There was nothing but balls, fetes, masquerades; there were magnificent hunting parties, when Caesar—who had begun to cast off his cardinal's robe,—weary perhaps of the colour, appeared in a French dress, followed, like a king by cardinals, envoys. and bodyguard. The whole pontifical town, given up like a courtesan to orgies and debauchery, had never been more the home of sedition, luxury, and carnage, according to the Cardinal of Viterba, not even in the days of Nero and Heliogabalus. Never had she fallen upon days more evil; never had more traitors done her dishonour or sbirri stained her streets with blood. The number of thieves was so great, and their audacity such, that no one could with safety pass the gates of the town; soon it was not even safe within them. No house, no castle, availed for defence. Right and justice no longer existed. Money, farce, pleasure, ruled supreme.

Still, the gold was melting as in a furnace at these Fetes; and, by Heaven's just punishment, Alexander and Caesar were beginning to covet the fortunes of those very men who had risen through their simony to their present elevation. The first attempt at a new method of coining money was tried upon the Cardinal Cosenza. The occasion was as follows. A certain dispensation had been granted some time before to a nun who had taken the vows: she was the only surviving heir to the throne of Portugal, and by means of the dispensation she had been wedded to the natural son of the last king. This marriage was more prejudicial than can easily be imagined to the interests of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain; so they sent ambassadors to Alexander to lodge a complaint against a proceeding of this nature, especially as it happened at the very moment when an alliance was to be formed between the house of Aragon and the Holy See. Alexander understood the complaint, and resolved that all should be set right. So he denied all knowledge of the papal brief though he had as a fact received 60,000 ducats for signing it—and accused the Archbishop of Cosenza, secretary for apostolic briefs, of having granted a false dispensation. By reason of this accusation, the archbishop was taken to the castle of Sant' Angelo, and a suit was begun.

But as it was no easy task to prove an accusation of this nature, especially if the archbishop should persist in maintaining that the dispensation was really granted by the pope, it was resolved to employ a trick with him which could not fail to succeed. One evening the Archbishop of Cosenza saw Cardinal Valentino come into his prison; with that frank air of affability which he knew well how to assume when it could serve his purpose, he explained to the prisoner the embarrassing situation in which the pope was placed, from which the archbishop

alone, whom His Holiness looked upon as his best friend, could save him.

The archbishop replied that he was entirely at the service of His Holiness.

Caesar, on his entrance, found the captive seated, leaning his elbows on a table, and he took a seat opposite him and explained the pope's position: it was an embarrassing one. At the very time of contracting so important an alliance with the house of Aragon as that of Lucrezia and Alfonso, His Holiness could not avow to Ferdinand and Isabella that, for the sake of a few miserable ducats, he had signed a dispensation which would unite in the husband and wife together all the legitimate claims to a throne to which Ferdinand and Isabella had no right at all but that of conquest. This avowal would necessarily put an end to all negotiations, and the pontifical house would fall by the overthrow of that very pedestal which was to have heightened its grandeur. Accordingly the archbishop would understand what the pope expected of his devotion and friendship: it was a simple and straight avowal that he had supposed he might take it upon himself to accord the dispensation. Then, as the sentence to be passed on such an error would be the business of Alexander, the accused could easily imagine beforehand how truly paternal such a sentence would be. Besides, the reward was in the same hands, and if the sentence was that of a father, the recompense would be that of a king. In fact, this recompense would be no less than the honour of assisting as envoy, with the title of cardinal, at the marriage of Lucrezia and Alfonso—a favour which would be very appropriate, since it would be thanks to his devotion that the marriage could take place.

The Archbishop of Cosenza knew the men he was dealing with; he knew that to save their own ends they would hesitate at nothing; he knew they had a poison like sugar to the taste and to the smell, impossible to discover in food—a poison that would kill slowly or quickly as the poisoner willed and would leave no trace behind; he knew the secret of the poisoned key that lay always on the pope's mantelpiece, so that when His Holiness wished to destroy some one of his intimates, he bade him open a certain cupboard: on the handle of the key there was a little spike, and as the lock of the cupboard turned stiffly the hand would naturally press, the lock would yield, and nothing would have come of it but a trifling scratch: the scratch was mortal. He knew, too, that Caesar wore a ring made like two lions' heads, and that he would turn the stone on the inside when he was shaking hands with a friend. Then the lions' teeth became the teeth of a viper, and the friend died cursing Borgia. So he yielded, partly through fear, partly blinded by the thought of the reward; and Caesar returned to the Vatican

armed with a precious paper, in which the Archbishop of Cosenza admitted that he was the only person responsible for the dispensation granted to the royal nun.

Two days later, by means of the proofs kindly furnished by the archbishop, the pope; in the presence of the governor of Rome, the auditor of the apostolic chamber, the advocate, and the fiscal attorney, pronounced sentence, condemning the archbishop to the loss of all his benefices and ecclesiastical offices, degradation from his orders, and confiscation of his goods; his person was to be handed over to the civil arm. Two days later the civil magistrate entered the prison to fulfil his office as received from the pope, and appeared before the archbishop, accompanied by a clerk, two servants, and four guards. The clerk unrolled the paper he carried and read out the sentence; the two servants untied a packet, and, stripping the prisoner of his ecclesiastical garments, they re clothed him in a dress of coarse white cloth which only reached down to his knees, breeches of the same, and a pair of clumsy shoes. Lastly, the guards took him, and led him into one of the deepest dungeons of the castle of Sant' Angelo, where for furniture he found nothing but a wooden crucifix, a table, a chair, and a bed; for occupation, a Bible and a breviary, with a lamp to read by; for nourishment, two pounds of bread and a little cask of water, which were to be renewed every three days, together with a bottle of oil for burning in his lamp.

At the end of a year the poor archbishop died of despair, not before he had gnawed his own arms in his agony.

The very same day that he was taken into the dungeon, Caesar Borgia, who had managed the affair so ably, was presented by the pope with all the belongings of the condemned prisoner.

But the hunting parties, balls, and masquerades were not the only pleasures enjoyed by the pope and his family: from time to time strange spectacles were exhibited. We will only describe two—one of them a case of punishment, the other no more nor less than a matter of the stud farm. But as both of these give details with which we would not have our readers credit our imagination, we will first say that they are literally translated from Burchard's Latin journal.

“About the same time—that is, about the beginning of 1499—a certain courtesan named La Corsetta was in prison, and had a lover who came to visit her in woman's clothes, a Spanish Moor, called from his disguise ‘the Spanish lady

from Barbary!’ As a punishment, both of them were led through the town, the woman without petticoat or skirt, but wearing only the Moor’s dress unbuttoned in front; the man wore his woman’s garb; his hands were tied behind his back, and the skirt fastened up to his middle, with a view to complete exposure before the eyes of all. When in this attire they had made the circuit of the town, the Corsetta was sent back to the prison with the Moor. But on the 7th of April following, the Moor was again taken out and escorted in the company of two thieves towards the Campo dei Fiori. The three condemned men were preceded by a constable, who rode backwards on an ass, and held in his hand a long pole, on the end of which were hung, still bleeding, the amputated limbs of a poor Jew who had suffered torture and death for some trifling crime. When the procession reached the place of execution, the thieves were hanged, and the unfortunate Moor was tied to a stake piled round with wood, where he was to have been burnt to death, had not rain fallen in such torrents that the fire would not burn, in spite of all the efforts of the executioner.”

This unlooked for accident, taken as a miracle by the people, robbed Lucrezia of the most exciting part of the execution; but her father was holding in reserve another kind of spectacle to console her with later. We inform the reader once more that a few lines we are about to set before him are a translation from the journal of the worthy German Burchard, who saw nothing in the bloodiest or most wanton performances but facts for his journal, which he duly registered with the impassibility of a scribe, appending no remark or moral reflection.

“On the 11th of November a certain peasant was entering Rome with two stallions laden with wood, when the servants of His Holiness, just as he passed the Piazza of St. Peter’s, cut their girths, so that their loads fell on the ground with the pack-saddles, and led off the horses to a court between the palace and the gate; then the stable doors were opened, and four stallions, quite free and unbridled, rushed out and in an instant all six animals began kicking, biting and fighting each other until several were killed. Roderigo and Madame Lucrezia, who sat at the window just over the palace gate, took the greatest delight in the struggle and called their courtiers to witness the gallant battle that was being fought below them.”

Now Caesar’s trick in the matter of the Archbishop of Cosenza had had the desired result, and Isabella and Ferdinand could no longer impute to Alexander the signature of the brief they had complained of: so nothing was now in the way of the marriage of Lucrezia and Alfonso; this certainty gave the pope great joy,

for he attached all the more importance to this marriage because he was already cogitating a second, between Caesar and Dona Carlota, Frederic's daughter.

Caesar had shown in all his actions since his brother's death his want of vocation for the ecclesiastical life; so no one was astonished when, a consistory having been summoned one morning by Alexander, Caesar entered, and addressing the pope, began by saying that from his earliest years he had been drawn towards secular pursuits both by natural inclination and ability, and it had only been in obedience to the absolute commands of His Holiness that he entered the Church, accepted the cardinal's scarlet, other dignities, and finally the sacred order of the diaconate; but feeling that in his situation it was improper to follow his passions, and at his age impossible to resist them, he humbly entreated His Holiness graciously to yield to the desire he had failed to overcome, and to permit him to lay aside the dress and dignities of the Church, and enter once more into the world, thereto contract a lawful marriage; also he entreated the lord cardinals to intercede for him with His Holiness, to whom he would freely resign all his churches, abbeys, and benefices, as well as every other ecclesiastical dignity and preferment that had been accorded him. The cardinals, deferring to Caesar's wishes, gave a unanimous vote, and the pope, as we may suppose, like a good father, not wishing to force his son's inclinations, accepted his resignation, and yielded to the petition; thus Caesar put off the scarlet robe, which was suited to him, says his historian Tommaso Tommasi, in one particular only—that it was the colour of blood.

In truth, the resignation was a pressing necessity, and there was no time to lose. Charles VIII one day after he had come home late and tired from the hunting-field, had bathed his head in cold water; and going straight to table, had been struck down by an apoplectic seizure directly after his supper; and was dead, leaving the throne to the good Louis XII, a man of two conspicuous weaknesses, one as deplorable as the other: the first was the wish to make conquests; the second was the desire to have children. Alexander, who was on the watch for all political changes, had seen in a moment what he could get from Louis XII's accession to the throne, and was prepared to profit by the fact that the new king of France needed his help for the accomplishment of his twofold desire. Louis needed, first, his temporal aid in an expedition against the duchy of Milan, on which, as we explained before, he had inherited claims from Valentina Visconti, his grandmother; and, secondly, his spiritual aid to dissolve his marriage with Jeanne, the daughter of Louis XI; a childless and hideously deformed woman, whom he had only married by reason of the great fear he entertained for her

father. Now Alexander was willing to do all this for Louis XII and to give in addition a cardinal's hat to his friend George d'Amboise, provided only that the King of France would use his influence in persuading the young Dona Carlota, who was at his court, to marry his son Caesar.

So, as this business was already far advanced on the day when Caesar doffed his scarlet and donned a secular garb, thus fulfilling the ambition so long cherished, when the lord of Villeneuve, sent by Louis and commissioned to bring Caesar to France, presented himself before the ex-cardinal on his arrival at Rome, the latter, with his usual extravagance of luxury and the kindness he knew well how to bestow on those he needed, entertained his guest for a month, and did all the honours of Rome. After that, they departed, preceded by one of the pope's couriers, who gave orders that every town they passed through was to receive them with marks of honour and respect. The same order had been sent throughout the whole of France, where the illustrious visitors received so numerous a guard, and were welcomed by a populace so eager to behold them, that after they passed through Paris, Caesar's gentlemen-in-waiting wrote to Rome that they had not seen any trees in France, or houses, or walls, but only men, women and sunshine.

The king, on the pretext of going out hunting, went to meet his guest two leagues outside the town. As he knew Caesar was very fond of the name of Valentine, which he had used as cardinal, and still continued to employ with the title of Count, although he had resigned the archbishopric which gave him the name, he there and then bestowed on him the investiture of Valence, in Dauphine, with the title of Duke and a pension of 20,000 francs; then, when he had made this magnificent gift and talked with him for nearly a couple of hours, he took his leave, to enable him to prepare the splendid entry he was proposing to make.

It was Wednesday, the 18th of December 1498, when Caesar Borgia entered the town of Chinon, with pomp worthy of the son of a pope who is about to marry the daughter of a king. The procession began with four-and-twenty mules, caparisoned in red, adorned with escutcheons bearing the duke's arms, laden with carved trunks and chests inlaid with ivory and silver; after them came four-and-twenty mares, also caparisoned, this time in the livery of the King of France, yellow and red; next after these came ten other mules, covered in yellow satin with red crossbars; and lastly another ten, covered with striped cloth of gold, the stripes alternately raised and flat gold.

Behind the seventy mules which led the procession there pranced sixteen handsome battle-horses, led by equerries who marched alongside; these were followed by eighteen hunters ridden by eighteen pages, who were about fourteen or fifteen years of age; sixteen of them were dressed in crimson velvet, and two in raised gold cloth; so elegantly dressed were these two children, who were also the best looking of the little band, that the sight of them gave rise to strange suspicions as to the reason for this preference, if one may believe what Brantome says. Finally, behind these eighteen horses came six beautiful mules, all harnessed with red velvet, and led by six valets, also in velvet to match.

The third group consisted of, first, two mules quite covered with cloth of gold, each carrying two chests in which it was said that the duke's treasure was stored, the precious stones he was bringing to his fiancée, and the relics and papal bulls that his father had charged him to convey for him to Louis XII. These were followed by twenty gentlemen dressed in cloth of gold and silver, among whom rode Paul Giordano Orsino and several barons and knights among the chiefs of the state ecclesiastic.

Next came two drums, one rebeck, and four soldiers blowing trumpets and silver clarions; then, in the midst of a party of four-and-twenty lacqueys, dressed half in crimson velvet and half in yellow silk, rode Messire George d'Amboise and Monseigneur the Duke of Valentinois. Caesar was mounted on a handsome tall courser, very richly harnessed, in a robe half red satin and half cloth of gold, embroidered all over with pearls and precious stones; in his cap were two rows of rubies, the size of beans, which reflected so brilliant a light that one might have fancied they were the famous carbuncles of the Arabian Nights; he also wore on his neck a collar worth at least 200,000 livres; indeed, there was no part of him, even down to his boots, that was not laced with gold and edged with pearls. His horse was covered with a cuirass in a pattern of golden foliage of wonderful workmanship, among which there appeared to grow, like flowers, nosegays of pearls and clusters of rubies.

Lastly, bringing up the rear of the magnificent cortege, behind the duke came twenty-four mules with red caparisons bearing his arms, carrying his silver plate, tents, and baggage.

What gave to all the cavalcade an air of most wonderful luxury and extravagance was that the horses and mules were shod with golden shoes, and these were so badly nailed on that more than three-quarters of their number, were lost on the

road For this extravagance Caesar was greatly blamed, for it was thought an audacious thing to put on his horses' feet a metal of which king's crowns are made.

But all this pomp had no effect on the lady for whose sake it had been displayed; for when Dona Carlota was told that Caesar Borgia had come to France in the hope of becoming her husband, she replied simply that she would never take a priest for her husband, and, moreover, the son of a priest; a man who was not only an assassin, but a fratricide; not only a man of infamous birth, but still more infamous in his morals and his actions.

But, in default of the haughty lady of Aragon, Caesar soon found another princess of noble blood who consented to be his wife: this was Mademoiselle d'Albret, daughter of the King of Navarre. The marriage, arranged on condition that the pope should pay 200,000 ducats dowry to the bride, and should make her brother cardinal, was celebrated on the 10th of May; and on the Whitsunday following the Duke of Valentinois received the order of St. Michael, an order founded by Louis XI, and esteemed at this period as the highest in the gift of the kings of France. The news of this marriage, which made an alliance with Louis XII certain, was received with great joy by the pope, who at once gave orders for bonfires and illuminations all over the town.

Louis XII was not only grateful to the pope for dissolving his marriage with Jeanne of France and authorizing his union with Anne of Brittany, but he considered it indispensable to his designs in Italy to have the pope as his ally. So he promised the Duke of Valentinois to put three hundred lances at his disposal, as soon as he had made an entry into Milan, to be used to further his own private interests, and against whomsoever he pleased except only the allies of France. The conquest of Milan should be undertaken so soon as Louis felt assured of the support of the Venetians, or at least of their neutrality, and he had sent them ambassadors authorised to promise in his name the restoration of Cremona and Ghiera d'Adda when he had completed the conquest of Lombardy.

CHAPTER IX

Everything from without was favouring Alexander's encroaching policy, when he was compelled to turn his eyes from France towards the centre of Italy: in Florence dwelt a man, neither duke, nor king, nor soldier, a man whose power was in his genius, whose armour was his purity, who owned no offensive weapon but his tongue, and who yet began to grow more dangerous for him than all the kings, dukes, princes, in the whole world could ever be; this man was the poor Dominican monk Girolamo Savonarola, the same who had refused absolution to Lorenzo dei Medici because he would not restore the liberty of Florence.

Girolamo Savonarola had prophesied the invasion of a force from beyond the Alps, and Charles VIII had conquered Naples; Girolamo Savonarola had prophesied to Charles VIII that because he had failed to fulfil the mission of liberator entrusted to him by God, he was threatened with a great misfortune as a punishment, and Charles was dead; lastly, Savonarola had prophesied his own fall like the man who paced around the holy city for eight days, crying, "Woe to Jerusalem!" and on the ninth day, "Woe be on my own head!" None the less, the Florentine reformer, who could not recoil from any danger, was determined to attack the colossal abomination that was seated on St. Peter's holy throne; each debauch, each fresh crime that lifted up its brazen face to the light of day or tried to hide its shameful head beneath the veil of night, he had never failed to paint out to the people, denouncing it as the off spring of the pope's luxurious living and lust of power. Thus had he stigmatised Alexander's new amour with the beautiful Giulia Farnese, who in the preceding April had added another son to the pope's family; thus had he cursed the Duke of Gandia's murderer, the lustful, jealous fratricide; lastly, he had pointed out to the Florentines, who were excluded from the league then forming, what sort of future was in store for them when the Borgias should have made themselves masters of the small principalities and should come to attack the duchies and republics. It was clear that in Savonarola, the pope had an enemy at once temporal and spiritual, whose importunate and threatening voice must be silenced at any cost.

But mighty as the pope's power was, to accomplish a design like this was no

easy matter. Savonarola, preaching the stern principles of liberty, had united to his cause, even in the midst of rich, pleasure-loving Florence, a party of some size, known as the 'Piagnoni', or the Penitents: this band was composed of citizens who were anxious for reform in Church and State, who accused the Medici of enslaving the fatherland and the Borgias of upsetting the faith, who demanded two things, that the republic should return to her democratic principles, and religion to a primitive simplicity. Towards the first of these projects considerable progress had been made, since they had successively obtained, first, an amnesty for all crimes and delinquencies committed under other governments; secondly, the abolition of the 'balia', which was an aristocratic magistracy; thirdly, the establishment of a sovereign council, composed of 1800 citizens; and lastly, the substitution of popular elections for drawing by lot and for oligarchical nominations: these changes had been effected in spite of two other factions, the 'Arrabiati', or Madmen, who, consisting of the richest and noblest youths of the Florentine patrician families, desired to have an oligarchical government; and the 'Bigi', or Greys, so called because they always held their meetings in the shade, who desired the return of the Medici.

The first measure Alexander used against the growing power of Savonarola was to declare him heretic, and as such banished from the pulpit; but Savonarola had eluded this prohibition by making his pupil and friend, Domenico Bonvicini di Pescia, preach in his stead. The result was that the master's teachings were issued from other lips, and that was all; the seed, though scattered by another hand, fell none the less on fertile soil, where it would soon burst into flower. Moreover, Savonarola now set an example that was followed to good purpose by Luther, when, twenty-two years later, he burned Leo X's bull of excommunication at Wittenberg; he was weary of silence, so he declared, on the authority of Pope Pelagius, that an unjust excommunication had no efficacy, and that the person excommunicated unjustly did not even need to get absolution. So on Christmas Day, 1497, he declared that by the inspiration of God he renounced his obedience to a corrupt master; and he began to preach once more in the cathedral, with a success that was all the greater for the interruption, and an influence far more formidable than before, because it was strengthened by that sympathy of the masses which an unjust persecution always inspires.

Then Alexander made overtures to Leonardo dei Medici, vicar of the archbishopric of Florence, to obtain the punishment of the rebel: Leonardo, in obedience to the orders he received, from Rome, issued a mandate forbidding the faithful to attend at Savonarola's sermons. After this mandate, any who should

hear the discourses of the excommunicated monk would be refused communion and confession; and as when they died they would be contaminated with heresy, in consequence of their spiritual intercourse with a heretic, their dead bodies would be dragged on a hurdle and deprived of the rights of sepulture. Savonarola appealed from the mandate of his superior both to the people and to the Signoria, and the two together gave orders to the episcopal vicar to leave Florence within two hours: this happened at the beginning of the year 1498.

The expulsion of Leonard's dei Medici was a new triumph for Savonarola, so, wishing to turn to good moral account his growing influence, he resolved to convert the last day of the carnival, hitherto given up to worldly pleasures, into a day of religious sacrifice. So actually on Shrove Tuesday a considerable number of boys were collected in front of the cathedral, and there divided into bands, which traversed the whole town, making a house-to-house visitation, claiming all profane books, licentious paintings, lutes, harps, cards and dice, cosmetics and perfumes—in a word, all the hundreds of products of a corrupt society and civilisation, by the aid of which Satan at times makes victorious war on God. The inhabitants of Florence obeyed, and came forth to the Piazza of the Duoma, bringing these works of perdition, which were soon piled up in a huge stack, which the youthful reformers set on fire, singing religious psalms and hymns the while. On this pile were burned many copies of Boccaccio and of Margante Maggiore, and pictures by Fro Bartalommeo, who from that day forward renounced the art of this world to consecrate his brush utterly and entirely to the reproduction of religious scenes.

A reform such as this was terrifying to Alexander; so he resolved on fighting Savonarola with his own weapons—that is, by the force of eloquence. He chose as the Dominican's opponent a preacher of recognised talent, called Fra Francesco di Paglia; and he sent him to Florence, where he began to preach in Santa Croce, accusing Savonarola of heresy and impiety. At the same time the pope, in a new brief, announced to the Signaria that unless they forbade the arch-heretic to preach, all the goods of Florentine merchants who lived on the papal territory would be confiscated, and the republic laid under an interdict and declared the spiritual and temporal enemy of the Church. The Signoria, abandoned by France, and aware that the material power of Rome was increasing in a frightful manner, was forced this time to yield, and to issue to Savonarola an order to leave off preaching. He obeyed, and bade farewell to his congregation in a sermon full of strength and eloquence.

But the withdrawal of Savonarola, so far from calming the ferment, had increased it: there was talk about his prophecies being fulfilled; and some zealots, more ardent than their mastery added miracle to inspiration, and loudly proclaimed that Savonarola had offered to go down into the vaults of the cathedral with his antagonist, and there bring a dead man to life again, to prove that his doctrine was true, promising to declare himself vanquished if the miracle were performed by his adversary. These rumours reached the ears of Fra Francesco, and as he was a man of warm blood, who counted his own life as nothing if it might be spent to help his cause, he declared in all humility that he felt he was too great a sinner for God to work a miracle in his behalf; but he proposed another challenge: he would try with Savonarola the ordeal of fire. He knew, he said, that he must perish, but at least he should perish avenging the cause of religion, since he was certain to involve in his destruction the tempter who plunged so many souls beside his own into eternal damnation.

The proposition made by Fra Francesco was taken to Savonarola; but as he had never proposed the earlier challenge, he hesitated to accept the second; hereupon his disciple, Fra Domenico Bonvicini, more confident than his master in his own power, declared himself ready to accept the trial by fire in his stead; so certain was he that God would perform a miracle by the intercession of Savonarola, His prophet.

Instantly the report spread through Florence that the mortal challenge was accepted; Savonarola's partisans, all men of the strongest convictions, felt no doubt as to the success of their cause. His enemies were enchanted at the thought of the heretic giving himself to the flames; and the indifferent saw in the ordeal a spectacle of real and terrible interest.

But the devotion of Fra Bonvicini of Pescia was not what Fra Francesco was reckoning with. He was willing, no doubt, to die a terrible death, but on condition that Savonarola died with him. What mattered to him the death of an obscure disciple like Fra Bonvicini? It was the master he would strike, the great teacher who must be involved in his own ruin. So he refused to enter the fire except with Savonarola himself, and, playing this terrible game in his own person, would not allow his adversary to play it by proxy.

Then a thing happened which certainly no one could have anticipated. In the place of Fra Francesco, who would not tilt with any but the master, two Franciscan monks appeared to tilt with the disciple. These were Fra Nicholas de

Pilly and Fra Andrea Rondinelli. Immediately the partisans of Savonarola, seeing this arrival of reinforcements for their antagonist, came forward in a crowd to try the ordeal. The Franciscans were unwilling to be behindhand, and everybody took sides with equal ardour for one or other party. All Florence was like a den of madmen; everyone wanted the ordeal, everyone wanted to go into the fire; not only did men challenge one another, but women and even children were clamouring to be allowed to try. At last the Signoria, reserving this privilege for the first applicants, ordered that the strange duel should take place only between Fra Domenico Bonvicini and Fra Andrea Rondinelli; ten of the citizens were to arrange all details; the day was fixed for the 7th of April, 1498, and the place the Piazza del Palazzo.

The judges of the field made their arrangements conscientiously. By their orders scaffolding was erected at the appointed place, five feet in height, ten in width, and eighty feet long. This scaffolding was covered with faggots and heath, supported by crossbars of the very driest wood that could be found. Two narrow paths were made, two feet wide at most, their entrance giving on the Loggia dei Lanzi, their exit exactly opposite. The loggia was itself divided into two by a partition, so that each champion had a kind of room to make his preparations in, just as in the theatre every actor has his dressing-room; but in this instance the tragedy that was about to be played was not a fictitious one.

The Franciscans arrived on the piazza and entered the compartment reserved for them without making any religious demonstration; while Savonarola, on the contrary, advanced to his own place in the procession, wearing the sacerdotal robes in which he had just celebrated the Holy Eucharist, and holding in his hand the sacred host for all the world to see, as it was enclosed in a crystal tabernacle. Fra Domenico di Pescia, the hero of the occasion, followed, bearing a crucifix, and all the Dominican monks, their red crosses in their hands, marched behind singing a psalm; while behind them again followed the most considerable of the citizens of their party, bearing torches, for, sure as they were of the triumph of their cause, they wished to fire the faggots themselves. The piazza was so crowded that the people overflowed into all the streets around. In every door and window there was nothing to be seen but heads ranged one above the other; the terraces were covered with people, and curious spectators were observed on the roof of the Duomo and on the top of the Campanile.

But, brought face to face with the ordeal, the Franciscans raised such difficulties that it was very plain the heart of their champion was failing him. The first fear

they expressed was that Fra Bonvicini was an enchanter, and so carried about him some talisman or charm which would save him from the fire. So they insisted that he should be stripped of all his clothes and put on others to be inspected by witnesses. Fra Bonvicini made no objection, though the suspicion was humiliating; he changed shirt, dress, and cowl. Then, when the Franciscans observed that Savonarola was placing the tabernacle in his hands, they protested that it was profanation to expose the sacred host to the risk of burning, that this was not in the bond, and if Bonvicini would not give up this supernatural aid, they for their part would give up the trial altogether. Savonarola replied that it was not astonishing that the champion of religion who put his faith in God should bear in his hands that very God to whom he entrusted his salvation. But this reply did not satisfy the Franciscans, who were unwilling to let go their contention. Savonarola remained inflexible, supporting his own right, and thus nearly four hours passed in the discussion of points which neither party would give up, and affairs remained in 'statu quo'. Meanwhile the people, jammed together in the streets, on the terraces, on the roofs, since break of day, were suffering from hunger and thirst and beginning to get impatient: their impatience soon developed into loud murmurs, which reached even the champions' ears, so that the partisans of Savonarola, who felt such faith in him that they were confident of a miracle, entreated him to yield to all the conditions suggested. To this Savonarola replied that if it were himself making the trial he would be less inexorable; but since another man was incurring the danger; he could not take too many precautions. Two more hours passed, while his partisans tried in vain to combat his refusals. At last, as night was coming on and the people grew ever more and more impatient and their murmurs began to assume a threatening tone, Bonvicini declared that he was ready to walk through the fire, holding nothing in his hand but a crucifix. No one could refuse him this; so Fra Rondinelli was compelled to accept his proposition. The announcement was made to the populace that the champions had come to terms and the trial was about to take place. At this news the people calmed down, in the hope of being compensated at last for their long wait; but at that very moment a storm which had long been threatening broke over Florence with such fury that the faggots which had just been lighted were extinguished by the rain, leaving no possibility of their rekindling. From the moment when the people suspected that they had been fooled, their enthusiasm was changed into derision. They were ignorant from which side the difficulties had arisen that had hindered the trial, so they laid the responsibility on both champions without distinction. The Signoria, foreseeing the disorder that was now imminent, ordered the assembly to retire; but the assembly thought otherwise, and stayed on the piazza, waiting for the departure

of the two champions, in spite of the fearful rain that still fell in torrents. Rondinelli was taken back amid shouts and hootings, and pursued with showers of stones. Savonarola, thanks to his sacred garments and the host which he still carried, passed calmly enough through the midst of the mob—a miracle quite as remarkable as if he had passed through the fire unscathed.

But it was only the sacred majesty of the host that had protected this man, who was indeed from this moment regarded as a false prophet: the crowd allowed Savonarola to return to his convent, but they regretted the necessity, so excited were they by the Arrabbiati party, who had always denounced him as a liar and a hypocrite. So when the next morning, Palm Sunday, he stood up in the pulpit to explain his conduct, he could not obtain a moment's silence for insults, hooting, and loud laughter. Then the outcry, at first derisive, became menacing: Savonarola, whose voice was too weak to subdue the tumult, descended from his pulpit, retired into the sacristy, and thence to his convent, where he shut himself up in his cell. At that moment a cry was heard, and was repeated by everybody present:

“To San Marco, to San Marco!” The rioters, few at first, were recruited by all the populace as they swept along the streets, and at last reached the convent, dashing like an angry sea against the wall.

The doors, closed on Savonarola's entrance, soon crashed before the vehement onset of the powerful multitude, which struck down on the instant every obstacle it met: the whole convent was quickly flooded with people, and Savonarola, with his two confederates, Domenico Bonvicini and Silvestro Maruffi, was arrested in his cell, and conducted to prison amid the insults of the crowd, who, always in extremes, whether of enthusiasm or hatred, would have liked to tear them to pieces, and would not be quieted till they had exacted a promise that the prisoners should be forcibly compelled to make the trial of fire which they had refused to make of their own free will.

Alexander VI, as we may suppose, had not been without influence in bringing about this sudden and astonishing reaction, although he was not present in person; and had scarcely learned the news of Savonarola's fall and arrest when he claimed him as subject to ecclesiastical jurisdiction. But in spite of the grant of indulgences wherewith this demand was accompanied, the Signoria insisted that Savonarola's trial should take place at Florence, adding a request so as not to appear to withdraw the accused completely from the pontifical authority—that

the pope would send two ecclesiastical judges to sit in the Florentine tribunal. Alexander, seeing that he would get nothing better from the magnificent republic, sent as deputies Gioacchino Turriano of Venice, General of the Dominicans, and Francesco Ramolini, doctor in law: they practically brought the sentence with them, declaring Savonarola and his accomplices heretics, schismatics, persecutors of the Church and seducers of the people.

The firmness shown by the Florentines in claiming their rights of jurisdiction were nothing but an empty show to save appearances; the tribunal, as a fact, was composed of eight members, all known to be fervent haters of Savonarola, whose trial began with the torture. The result was that, feeble in body constitutionally nervous and irritable, he had not been able to endure the rack, and, overcome by agony just at the moment when the executioner had lifted him up by the wrists and then dropped him a distance of two feet to the ground, he had confessed, in order to get some respite, that his prophecies were nothing more than conjectures. If it is true that, so soon as he went back to prison, he protested against the confession, saying that it was the weakness of his bodily organs and his want of firmness that had wrested the lie from him, but that the truth really was that the Lord had several times appeared to him in his ecstasies and revealed the things that he had spoken. This protestation led to a new application of the torture, during which Savonarola succumbed once more to the dreadful pain, and once more retracted. But scarcely was he unbound, and was still lying on the bed of torture, when he declared that his confessions were the fault of his torturers, and the vengeance would recoil upon their heads; and he protested yet once more against all he had confessed and might confess again. A third time the torture produced the same avowals, and the relief that followed it the same retractions. The judges therefore, when they condemned him and his two disciples to the flames, decided that his confession should not be read aloud at the stake, according to custom, feeling certain that on this occasion also he would give it the lie, and that publicly, which, as anyone must see who knew the versatile spirit of the public, would be a most dangerous proceeding.

On the 23rd of May, the fire which had been promised to the people before was a second time prepared on the Piazza del Palazzo, and this time the crowd assembled quite certain that they would not be disappointed of a spectacle so long anticipated. And towards eleven o'clock in the morning, Girolamo Savonarola, Domenico Bonvicini, and Silvestro Maruffi were led to the place of execution, degraded of their orders by the ecclesiastical judges, and bound all three to the same stake in the centre of an immense pile of wood. Then the

bishop Pagnanoli told the condemned men that he cut them off from the Church. “Ay, from the Church militant,” said Savonarola, who from that very hour, thanks to his martyrdom, was entering into the Church triumphant. No other words were spoken by the condemned men, for at this moment one of the Arrabbiati, a personal enemy of Savonarola, breaking through the hedge of guards around the scaffold, snatched the torch from the executioner’s hand and himself set fire to the four corners of the pile. Savonarola and his disciples, from the moment when they saw the smoke arise, began to sing a psalm, and the flames enwrapped them on all sides with a glowing veil, while their religious song was yet heard mounting upward to the gates of heaven.

Pope Alexander VI was thus set free from perhaps the most formidable enemy who had ever risen against him, and the pontifical vengeance pursued the victims even after their death: the Signoria, yielding to his wishes, gave orders that the ashes of the prophet and his disciples should be thrown into the Arno. But certain half-burned fragments were picked up by the very soldiers whose business it was to keep the people back from approaching the fire, and the holy relics are even now shown, blackened by the flames, to the faithful, who if they no longer regard Savonarola as a prophet, revere him none the less as a martyr.

CHAPTER X

The French army was now preparing to cross the Alps a second time, under the command of Trivulce. Louis XII had come as far as Lyons in the company of Caesar Borgia and Giuliano della Rovere, on whom he had forced a reconciliation, and towards the beginning of the month of May had sent his vanguard before him, soon to be followed by the main body of the army. The forces he was employing in this second campaign of conquest were 1600, lances, 5000 Swiss, 9000 Gascons, and 3500 infantry, raised from all parts of France. On the 13th of August this whole body, amounting to nearly 15,000 men, who were to combine their forces with the Venetians, arrived beneath the walls of Arezzo, and immediately laid siege to the town.

Ludovico Sforza's position was a terrible one: he was now suffering from his imprudence in calling the French into Italy; all the allies he had thought he might count upon were abandoning him at the same moment, either because they were busy about their own affairs, or because they were afraid of the powerful enemy that the Duke of Milan had made for himself. Maximilian, who had promised him a contribution of 400 lances, to make up for not renewing the hostilities with Louis XII that had been interrupted, had just made a league with the circle of Swabia to war against the Swiss, whom he had declared rebels against the Empire. The Florentines, who had engaged to furnish him with 300 men-at-arms and 2000 infantry, if he would help them to retake Pisa, had just retracted their promise because of Louis XII's threats, and had undertaken to remain neutral. Frederic, who was holding back his troops for the defence of his own States, because he supposed, not without reason, that, Milan once conquered, he would again have to defend Naples, sent him no help, no men, no money, in spite of his promises. Ludovico Sforza was therefore reduced to his own proper forces.

But as he was a man powerful in arms and clever in artifice, he did not allow himself to succumb at the first blow, and in all haste fortified Annona, Novarro, and Alessandria, sent off Cajazzo with troops to that part of the Milanese territory which borders on the states of Venice, and collected on the Po as many troops as he could. But these precautions availed him nothing against the impetuous onslaught of the French, who in a few days had taken Annona, Arezzo, Novarro, Voghiera, Castelnuovo, Ponte Corona, Tartone, and Alessandria, while Trivulce was on the march to Milan.

Seeing the rapidity of this conquest and their numerous victories, Ludovico Sforza, despairing of holding out in his capital, resolved to retire to Germany, with his children, his brother, Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, and his treasure, which had been reduced in the course of eight years from 1,500,000 to 200,000 ducats. But before he went he left Bernardino da Carte in charge of the castle of Milan. In vain did his friends warn him to distrust this man, in vain did his brother Ascanio offer to hold the fortress himself, and offer to hold it to the very last; Ludovico refused to make any change in his arrangements, and started on the 2nd of September, leaving in the citadel three thousand foot and enough provisions, ammunition, and money to sustain a siege of several months.

Two days after Ludovico's departure, the French entered Milan. Ten days later Bernardino da Come gave up the castle before a single gun had been fired. Twenty-one days had sufficed for the French to get possession of the various towns, the capital, and all the territories of their enemy.

Louis XII received the news of this success while he was at Lyons, and he at once started for Milan, where he was received with demonstrations of joy that were really sincere. Citizens of every rank had come out three miles' distance from the gates to receive him, and forty boys, dressed in cloth of gold and silk, marched before him singing hymns of victory composed by poets of the period, in which the king was styled their liberator and the envoy of freedom. The great joy of the Milanese people was due to the fact that friends of Louis had been spreading reports beforehand that the King of France was rich enough to abolish all taxes. And so soon as the second day from his arrival at Milan the conqueror made some slight reduction, granted important favours to certain Milanese gentlemen, and bestowed the town of Vigavano on Trivulce as a reward for his swift and glorious campaign. But Caesar Borgia, who had followed Louis XII with a view to playing his part in the great hunting-ground of Italy, scarcely waited for him to attain his end when he claimed the fulfilment of his promise, which the king with his accustomed loyalty hastened to perform. He instantly put at the disposal of Caesar three hundred lances under the command of Yves d'Alegre, and four thousand Swiss under the command of the bailiff of Dijon, as a help in his work of reducing the Vicars of the Church.

We must now explain to our readers who these new personages were whom we introduce upon the scene by the above name.

During the eternal wars of Guelphs and Ghibelines and the long exile of the

popes at Avignon, most of the towns and fortresses of the Romagna had been usurped by petty tyrants, who for the most part had received from the Empire the investiture of their new possessions; but ever since German influence had retired beyond the Alps, and the popes had again made Rome the centre of the Christian world, all the small princes, robbed of their original protector, had rallied round the papal see, and received at the hands of the pope a new investiture, and now they paid annual dues, for which they received the particular title of duke, count, or lord, and the general name of Vicar of the Church.

It had been no difficult matter for Alexander, scrupulously examining the actions and behaviour of these gentlemen during the seven years that had elapsed since he was exalted to St. Peter's throne, to find in the conduct of each one of them something that could be called an infraction of the treaty made between vassals and suzerain; accordingly he brought forward his complaints at a tribunal established for the purpose, and obtained sentence from the judges to the effect that the vicars of the Church, having failed to fulfil the conditions of their investiture, were despoiled of their domains, which would again become the property of the Holy See. As the pope was now dealing with men against whom it was easier to pass a sentence than to get it carried out, he had nominated as captain-general the new Duke of Valentinois, who was commissioned to recover the territories for his own benefit. The lords in question were the Malatesti of Rimini, the Sforza of Pesaro, the Manfredi of Faenza, the Riarii of Imola and Farli, the Variani of Camerina, the Montefeltri of Urbino, and the Caetani of Sermoneta.

But the Duke of Valentinois, eager to keep as warm as possible his great friendship with his ally and relative Louis XII, was, as we know, staying with him at Milan so long as he remained there, where, after a month's occupation, the king retraced his steps to his own capital, the Duke of Valentinois ordered his men-at-arms and his Swiss to await him between Parma and Modena, and departed posthaste for Rome, to explain his plans to his father viva voce and to receive his final instructions. When he arrived, he found that the fortune of his sister Lucrezia had been greatly augmented in his absence, not from the side of her husband Alfonso, whose future was very uncertain now in consequence of Louis's successes, which had caused some coolness between Alfonso and the pope, but from her father's side, upon whom at this time she exercised an influence more astonishing than ever. The pope had declared Lucrezia Borgia of Aragon life-governor of Spoleto and its duchy, with all emoluments, rights, and

revenues accruing thereunto. This had so greatly increased her power and improved her position, that in these days she never showed herself in public without a company of two hundred horses ridden by the most illustrious ladies and noblest knights of Rome. Moreover, as the twofold affection of her father was a secret to nobody, the first prelates in the Church, the frequenters of the Vatican, the friends of His Holiness, were all her most humble servants; cardinals gave her their hands when she stepped from her litter or her horse, archbishops disputed the honour of celebrating mass in her private apartments.

But Lucrezia had been obliged to quit Rome in order to take possession of her new estates; and as her father could not spend much time away from his beloved daughter, he resolved to take into his hands the town of Nepi, which on a former occasion, as the reader will doubtless remember, he had bestowed on Ascanio Sforza in exchange for his suffrage. Ascanio had naturally lost this town when he attached himself to the fortunes of the Duke of Milan, his brother; and when the pope was about to take it again, he invited his daughter Lucrezia to join him there and be present at the rejoicings held in honour of his resuming its possession.

Lucrezia's readiness in giving way to her father's wishes brought her a new gift from him: this was the town and territory of Sermoneta, which belonged to the Caetani. Of course the gift was as yet a secret, because the two owners of the seignury, had first to be disposed of, one being Monsignore Giacomo Caetano, apostolic protonotary, the other Prospero Caetano, a young cavalier of great promise; but as both lived at Rome, and entertained no suspicion, but indeed supposed themselves to be in high favour with His Holiness, the one by virtue of his position, the other of his courage, the matter seemed to present no great difficulty. So directly after the return of Alexander to Rome, Giacomo Caetano was arrested, on what pretext we know not, was taken to the castle of Sant' Angelo, and there died shortly after, of poison: Prospero Caetano was strangled in his own house. After these two deaths, which both occurred so suddenly as to give no time for either to make a will, the pope declared that Sermoneta and all of her property appertaining to the Caetani devolved upon the apostolic chamber; and they were sold to Lucrezia for the sum of 80,000 crowns, which her father refunded to her the day after. Though Caesar hurried to Rome, he found when he arrived that his father had been beforehand with him, and had made a beginning of his conquests.

Another fortune also had been making prodigious strides during Caesar's stay in

France, viz. the fortune of Gian Borgia, the pope's nephew, who had been one of the most devoted friends of the Duke of Gandia up to the time of his death. It was said in Rome, and not in a whisper, that the young cardinal owed the favours heaped upon him by His Holiness less to the memory of the brother than to the protection of the sister. Both these reasons made Gian Borgia a special object of suspicion to Caesar, and it was with an inward vow that he should not enjoy his new dignities very long that the Duke of Valentino heard that his cousin Gian had just been nominated cardinal 'a latere' of all the Christian world, and had quitted Rome to make a circuit through all the pontifical states with a suite of archbishops, bishops, prelates, and gentlemen, such as would have done honour to the pope himself.

Caesar had only come to Rome to get news; so he only stayed three days, and then, with all the troops His Holiness could supply, rejoined his forces on the borders of the Euza, and marched at once to Imola. This town, abandoned by its chiefs, who had retired to Forli, was forced to capitulate. Imola taken, Caesar marched straight upon Forli. There he met with a serious check; a check, moreover, which came from a woman. Caterina Sforza, widow of Girolamo and mother of Ottaviano Riario, had retired to this town, and stirred up the courage of the garrison by putting herself, her goods and her person, under their protection. Caesar saw that it was no longer a question of a sudden capture, but of a regular siege; so he began to make all his arrangements with a view to it, and placing a battery of cannon in front of the place where the walls seemed to him weakest, he ordered an uninterrupted fire, to be continued until the breach was practicable.

When he returned to the camp after giving this order, he found there Gian Borgia, who had gone to Rome from Ferrara and was unwilling to be so near Caesar without paying him a visit: he was received with effusion and apparently the greatest joy, and stayed three days; on the fourth day all the officers and members of the court were invited to a grand farewell supper, and Caesar bade farewell to his cousin, charging him with despatches for the pope, and lavishing upon him all the tokens of affection he had shown on his arrival.

Cardinal Gian Borgia posted off as soon as he left the supper-table, but on arriving at Urbino he was seized with such a sudden and strange indisposition that he was forced to stop; but after a few minutes, feeling rather better, he went on; scarcely, however, had he entered Rocca Cantrada when he again felt so extremely ill that he resolved to go no farther, and stayed a couple of days in the

town. Then, as he thought he was a little better again, and as he had heard the news of the taking of Forli and also that Caterina Sforza had been taken prisoner while she was making an attempt to retire into the castle, he resolved to go back to Caesar and congratulate him on his victory; but at Fassambrane he was forced to stop a third time, although he had given up his carriage for a litter. This was his last halt: the same day he sought his bed, never to rise from it again; three days later he was dead.

His body was taken to Rome and buried without any ceremony in the church of Santa Maria del Populo, where lay awaiting him the corpse of his friend the Duke of Gandia; and there was now no more talk of the young cardinal, high as his rank had been, than if he had never existed. Thus in gloom and silence passed away all those who were swept to destruction by the ambition of that terrible trio, Alexander, Lucrezia, and Caesar.

Almost at the same time Rome was terrified by another murder. Don Giovanni Cerviglione, a gentleman by birth and a brave soldier, captain of the pope's men-at-arms, was attacked one evening by the sbirri, as he was on his way home from supping with Dan Elisio Pignatelli. One of the men asked his name, and as he pronounced it, seeing that there was no mistake, plunged a dagger into his breast, while a second man with a back stroke of his sword cut off his head, which lay actually at his feet before his body had time to fall.

The governor of Rome lodged a complaint against this assassination with the pope; but quickly perceiving, by the way his intimation was received, that he would have done better to say nothing, he stopped the inquiries he had started, so that neither of the murderers was ever arrested. But the rumour was circulated that Caesar, in the short stay he had made at Rome, had had a rendezvous with Cerviglione's wife, who was a Borgia by birth, and that her husband when he heard of this infringement of conjugal duty had been angry enough to threaten her and her lover, too: the threat had reached Caesar's ears, who, making a long arm of Michelotto, had, himself at Forli, struck down Cerviglione in the streets of Rome.

Another unexpected death followed so quickly on that of Don Giovanni Cerviglione that it could not but be attributed to the same originator, if not to the same cause. Monsignore Agnelli of Mantua, archbishop of Cosenza, clerk of the chamber and vice-legate of Viterbo, having fallen into disgrace with His Holiness, how it is not known, was poisoned at his own table, at which he had

passed a good part of the night in cheerful conversation with three or four guests, the poison gliding meanwhile through his veins; then going to bed in perfect health, he was found dead in the morning. His possessions were at once divided into three portions: the land and houses were given to the Duke of Valentinois; the bishopric went to Francesco Borgia, son of Calixtus III; and the office of clerk of the chamber was sold for 5000 ducats to Ventura Bonnassai, a merchant of Siena, who produced this sum for Alexander, and settled down the very same day in the Vatican.

This last death served the purpose of determining a point of law hitherto uncertain: as Monsignore Agnelli's natural heirs had made some difficulty about being disinherited, Alexander issued a brief; whereby he took from every cardinal and every priest the right of making a will, and declared that all their property should henceforth devolve upon him.

But Caesar was stopped short in the midst of his victories. Thanks to the 200,000 ducats that yet remained in his treasury, Ludovico Sforza had levied 500 men-at-arms from Burgundy and 8000 Swiss infantry, with whom he had entered Lombardy. So Trivulce, to face this enemy, had been compelled to call back Yves d'Alegre and the troops that Louis XII had lent to Caesar; consequently Caesar, leaving behind a body of pontifical soldiery as garrison at Forli and Imola, betook himself with the rest of his force to Rome.

It was Alexander's wish that his entry should be a triumph; so when he learned that the quartermasters of the army were only a few leagues from the town, he sent out runners to invite the royal ambassadors, the cardinals, the prelates, the Roman barons, and municipal dignitaries to make procession with all their suite to meet the Duke of Valentinois; and as it always happens that the pride of those who command is surpassed by the baseness of those who obey, the orders were not only fulfilled to the letter, but beyond it.

The entry of Caesar took place on the 26th of February, 1500. Although this was the great Jubilee year, the festivals of the carnival began none the less for that, and were conducted in a manner even more extravagant and licentious than usual; and the conqueror after the first day prepared a new display of ostentation, which he concealed under the veil of a masquerade. As he was pleased to identify himself with the glory, genius, and fortune of the great man whose name he bore, he resolved on a representation of the triumph of Julius Caesar, to be given on the Piazz di Navona, the ordinary place for holding the carnival fetes.

The next day, therefore, he and his retinue started from that square, and traversed all the streets of Rome, wearing classical costumes and riding in antique cars, on one of which Caesar stood, clad in the robe of an emperor of old, his brow crowned with a golden laurel wreath, surrounded by lictors, soldiers, and ensign-bearers, who carried banners whereon was inscribed the motto, 'Aut Caesar aut nihil'.

Finally, on the fourth Sunday, in Lent, the pope conferred upon Caesar the dignity he had so long coveted, and appointed him general and gonfaloniere of the Holy Church.

In the meanwhile Sforza had crossed the Alps and passed the Lake of Como, amid acclamations of joy from his former subjects, who had quickly lost the enthusiasm that the French army and Louis's promises had inspired. These demonstrations were so noisy at Milan, that Trivulce, judging that there was no safety for a French garrison in remaining there, made his way to Navarra. Experience proved that he was not deceived; for scarcely had the Milanese observed his preparations for departure when a suppressed excitement began to spread through the town, and soon the streets were filled with armed men. This murmuring crowd had to be passed through, sword in hand and lance in rest; and scarcely had the French got outside the gates when the mob rushed out after the army into the country, pursuing them with shouts and hooting as far as the banks of the Tesino. Trivulce left 400 lances at Navarra as well as the 3000 Swiss that Yves d'Alegre had brought from the Romagna, and directed his course with the rest of the army towards Mortara, where he stopped at last to await the help he had demanded from the King of France. Behind him Cardinal Ascanio and Ludovico entered Milan amid the acclamations of the whole town.

Neither of them lost any time, and wishing to profit by this enthusiasm, Ascanio undertook to besiege the castle of Milan while Ludovico should cross the Tesino and attack Navarra.

These besiegers and besieged were sons of the same nation; for Yves d'Alegre had scarcely as many as 300 French with him, and Ludovico 500 Italians. In fact, for the last sixteen years the Swiss had been practically the only infantry in Europe, and all the Powers came, purse in hand, to draw from the mighty reservoir of their mountains. The consequence was that these rude children of William Tell, put up to auction by the nations, and carried away from the humble, hardy life of a mountain people into cities of wealth and pleasure, had

lost, not their ancient courage, but that rigidity of principle for which they had been distinguished before their intercourse with other nations. From being models of honour and good faith they had become a kind of marketable ware, always ready for sale to the highest bidder. The French were the first to experience this venality, which later-on proved so fatal to Ludovico Sforza.

Now the Swiss in the garrison at Novarra had been in communication with their compatriots in the vanguard of the ducal army, and when they found that they, who as a fact were unaware that Ludavico's treasure was nearly exhausted, were better fed as well as better paid than themselves, they offered to give up the town and go over to the Milanese, if they could be certain of the same pay. Ludovico, as we may well suppose, closed with this bargain. The whole of Novarra was given up to him except the citadel, which was defended by Frenchmen: thus the enemy's army was recruited by 3000 men. Then Ludovico made the mistake of stopping to besiege the castle instead of marching on to Mortara with the new reinforcement. The result of this was that Louis XII, to whom runners had been sent by Trivulce, understanding his perilous position, hastened the departure of the French gendarmerie who were already collected to cross into Italy, sent off the bailiff of Dijon to levy new Swiss forces, and ordered Cardinal Amboise, his prime minister, to cross the Alps and take up a position at Asti, to hurry on the work of collecting the troops. There the cardinal found a nest-egg of 3000 men. La Trimouille added 1500 lances and 6000 French infantry; finally, the bailiff of Dijon arrived with 10,000 Swiss; so that, counting the troops which Trivulce had at Mortara, Louis XII found himself master on the other side of the Alps of the first army any French king had ever led out to battle. Soon, by good marching, and before Ludovico knew the strength or even the existence of this army, it took up a position between Novarra and Milan, cutting off all communication between the duke and his capital. He was therefore compelled, in spite of his inferior numbers, to prepare for a pitched battle.

But it so happened that just when the preparations for a decisive engagement were being made on both sides, the Swiss Diet, learning that the sons of Helvetia were on the point of cutting one another's throats, sent orders to all the Swiss serving in either army to break their engagements and return to the fatherland. But during the two months that had passed between the surrender of Novarra and the arrival of the French army before the town, there had been a very great change in the face of things, because Ludovico Sforza's treasure was now exhausted. New confabulations had gone on between the outposts, and this time, thanks to the money sent by Louis XII, it was the Swiss in the service of France

who were found to be the better fed and better paid. The worthy Helvetians, since they no longer fought for their own liberty, knew the value of their blood too well to allow a single drop of it to be spilled for less than its weight in gold: the result was that, as they had, betrayed Yves d'Alegre, they resolved to betray Ludovico Sforza too; and while the recruits brought in by the bailiff of Dijon were standing firmly by the French flag, careless of the order of the Diet, Ludovico's auxiliaries declared that in fighting against their Swiss brethren they would be acting in disobedience to the Diet, and would risk capital punishment in the end—a danger that nothing would induce them to incur unless they immediately received the arrears of their pay. The duke, who had spent the last ducat he had with him, and was entirely cut off from his capital, knew that he could not get money till he had fought his way through to it, and therefore invited the Swiss to make one last effort, promising them not only the pay that was in arrears but a double hire. But unluckily the fulfilment of this promise was dependent on the doubtful issue of a battle, and the Swiss replied that they had far too much respect for their country to disobey its decree, and that they loved their brothers far too well to consent to shed their blood without reward; and therefore Sforza would do well not to count upon them, since indeed the very next day they proposed to return to their homes. The duke then saw that all was lost, but he made a last appeal to their honour, adjuring them at least to ensure his personal safety by making it a condition of capitulation. But they replied that even if a condition of such a kind, would not make capitulation impossible, it would certainly deprive them of advantages which they had a right to expect, and on which they counted as indemnification for the arrears of their pay. They pretended, however, at last that they were touched by the prayers of the man whose orders they had obeyed so long, and offered to conceal him dressed in their clothes among their ranks. This proposition was barely plausible; for Sforza was short and, by this time an old man, and he could not possibly escape recognition in the midst of an army where the oldest was not past thirty and the shortest not less than five foot six. Still, this was his last chance, and he did not reject it at once, but tried to modify it so that it might help him in his straits. His plan was to disguise himself as a Franciscan monk, so that mounted on a shabby horse he might pass for their chaplain; the others, Galeazzo di San Severino, who commanded under him, and his two brothers, were all tall men, so, adopting the dress of common soldiers, they hoped they might escape detection in the Swiss ranks.

Scarcely were these plans settled when the duke heard that the capitulation was signed between Trivulce and the Swiss, who had made no stipulation in favour

of him and his generals. They were to go over the next day with arms and baggage right into the French army; so the last hope of the wretched Ludovico and his generals must needs be in their disguise. And so it was. San Severino and his brothers took their place in the ranks of the infantry, and Sforza took his among the baggage, clad in a monk's frock, with the hood pulled over his eyes.

The army marched off; but the Swiss, who had first trafficked in their blood, now trafficked in their honour. The French were warned of the disguise of Sforza and his generals, and thus they were all four recognised, and Sforza was arrested by Trimouille himself. It is said that the price paid for this treason was the town of Bellinzona; for it then belonged to the French, and when the Swiss returned to their mountains and took possession of it, Louis XII took no steps to get it back again.

When Ascanio Sforza, who, as we know, had stayed at Milan, learned the news of this cowardly desertion, he supposed that his cause was lost and that it would be the best plan for him to fly, before he found himself a prisoner in the hands of his brother's old subjects: such a change of face on the people's part would be very natural, and they might propose perhaps to purchase their own pardon at the price of his liberty; so he fled by night with the chief nobles of the Ghibelline party, taking the road to Piacenza, on his way to the kingdom of Naples. But when he arrived at Rivolta, he remembered that there was living in that town an old friend of his childhood, by name Conrad Lando, whom he had helped to much wealth in his days of power; and as Ascanio and his companions were extremely tired, he resolved to beg his hospitality for a single night. Conrad received them with every sign of joy, putting all his house and servants at their disposal. But scarcely had they retired to bed when he sent a runner to Piacenza, to inform Carlo Orsini, at that time commanding the Venetian garrison, that he was prepared to deliver up Cardinal Ascanio and the chief men of the Milanese army. Carlo Orsini did not care to resign to another so important an expedition, and mounting hurriedly with twenty-five men, he first surrounded Conrad's house, and then entered sword in hand the chamber wherein Ascanio and his companions lay, and being surprised in the middle of their sleep, they yielded without resistance. The prisoners were taken to Venice, but Louis XII claimed them, and they were given up. Thus the King of France found himself master of Ludovico Sforza and of Ascanio, of a legitimate nephew of the great Francesco Sforza named Hermes, of two bastards named Alessandro and Cortino, and of Francesco, son of the unhappy Gian Galeazzo who had been poisoned by his uncle.

Louis XII, wishing to make an end of the whole family at a blow, forced Francesco to enter a cloister, shut up Cardinal Ascanio in the tower of Bourges, threw into prison Alessandro, Cartino, and Hermes, and finally, after transferring the wretched Ludovico from the fortress of Pierre-Eucise to Lys-Saint-George he relegated him for good and all to the castle of Loches, where he lived for ten years in solitude and utter destitution, and there died, cursing the day when the idea first came into his head of enticing the French into Italy.

The news of the catastrophe of Ludovica and his family caused the greatest joy at Rome, for, while the French were consolidating their power in Milanese territory, the Holy See was gaining ground in the Romagna, where no further opposition was offered to Caesar's conquest. So the runners who brought the news were rewarded with valuable presents, and it was published throughout the whole town of Rome to the sound of the trumpet and drum. The war-cry of Louis, France, France, and that of the Orsini, Orso, Orso, rang through all the streets, which in the evening were illuminated, as though Constantinople or Jerusalem had been taken. And the pope gave the people fetes and fireworks, without troubling his head the least in the world either about its being Holy Week, or because the Jubilee had attracted more than 200,000 people to Rome; the temporal interests of his family seeming to him far more important than the spiritual interests of his subjects.

CHAPTER XI

One thing alone was wanting to assure the success of the vast projects that the pope and his son were founding upon the friendship of Louis and an alliance with him—that is,—money. But Alexander was not the man to be troubled about a paltry worry of that kind; true, the sale of benefices was by now exhausted, the ordinary and extraordinary taxes had already been collected for the whole year, and the prospect of inheritance from cardinals and priests was a poor thing now that the richest of them had been poisoned; but Alexander had other means at his disposal, which were none the less efficacious because they were less often used.

The first he employed was to spread a report that the Turks were threatening an invasion of Christendom, and that he knew for a positive fact that before the end of the summer Bajazet would land two considerable armies, one in Romagna, the other in Calabria; he therefore published two bulls, one to levy tithes of all ecclesiastical revenues in Europe of whatever nature they might be, the other to force the Jews into paying an equivalent sum: both bulls contained the severest sentences of excommunication against those who refused to submit, or attempted opposition.

The second plan was the selling of indulgences, a thing which had never been done before: these indulgences affected the people who had been prevented by reasons of health or business from coming to Rome for the Jubilee; the journey by this expedient was rendered unnecessary, and sins were pardoned for a third of what it would have cost, and just as completely as if the faithful had fulfilled every condition of the pilgrimage. For gathering in this tax a veritable army of collectors was instituted, a certain Ludovico della Torre at their head. The sum that Alexander brought into the pontifical treasury is incalculable, and some idea of it may be gathered from the fact that 799,000 livres in gold was paid in from the territory of Venice alone.

But as the Turks did as a fact make some sort of demonstration from the Hungarian side, and the Venetians began to fear that they might be coming in their direction, they asked for help from the pope, who gave orders that at twelve o'clock in the day in all his States an Ave Maria should be said, to pray God to avert the danger which was threatening the most serene republic. This was the only help the Venetians got from His Holiness in exchange for the 799,000 livres

in gold that he had got from them.

But it seemed as though God wished to show His strange vicar on earth that He was angered by the mockery of sacred things, and on the Eve of St. Peter's Day, just as the pope was passing the Capanile on his way to the tribune of benedictions, a enormous piece of iron broke off and fell at his feet; and then, as though one warning had not been enough, on the next day, St. Peter's, when the pope happened to be in one of the rooms of his ordinary dwelling with Cardinal Capuano and Monsignore Poto, his private chamberlain, he saw through the open windows that a very black cloud was coming up. Foreseeing a thunderstorm, he ordered the cardinal and the chamberlain to shut the windows. He had not been mistaken; for even as they were obeying his command, there came up such a furious gust of wind that the highest chimney of the Vatican was overturned, just as a tree is rooted up, and was dashed upon the roof, breaking it in; smashing the upper flooring, it fell into the very room where they were. Terrified by the noise of this catastrophe, which made the whole palace tremble, the cardinal and Monsignore Poto turned round, and seeing the room full of dust and debris, sprang out upon the parapet and shouted to the guards at the gate, "The pope is dead, the pope is dead!" At this cry, the guards ran up and discovered three persons lying in the rubbish on the floor, one dead and the other two dying. The dead man was a gentleman of Siena ailed Lorenzo Chigi, and the dying were two resident officials of the Vatican. They had been walking across the floor above, and had been flung down with the debris. But Alexander was not to be found; and as he gave no answer, though they kept on calling to him, the belief that he had perished was confirmed, and very soon spread about the town. But he had only fainted, and at the end of a certain time he began to come to himself, and moaned, whereupon he was discovered, dazed with the blow, and injured, though not seriously, in several parts of his body. He had been saved by little short of a miracle: a beam had broken in half and had left each of its two ends in the side walls; and one of these had formed a sort of roof aver the pontifical throne; the pope, who was sitting there at the time, was protected by this overarching beam, and had received only a few contusions.

The two contradictory reports of the sudden death and the miraculous preservation of the pope spread rapidly through Rome; and the Duke of Valentinois, terrified at the thought of what a change might be wrought in his own fortunes by any slight accident to the Holy Father, hurried to the Vatican, unable to assure himself by anything less than the evidence of his own eyes. Alexander desired to render public thanks to Heaven for the protection that had

been granted him; and on the very same day was carried to the church of Santa Maria del Popalo, escorted by a numerous procession of prelates and men-at arms, his pontifical seat borne by two valets, two equerries, and two grooms. In this church were buried the Duke of Gandia and Gian Borgia, and perhaps Alexander was drawn thither by some relics of devotion, or may be by the recollection of his love for his former mistress, Rosa Vanazza, whose image, in the guise of the Madonna, was exposed for the veneration of the faithful in a chapel on the left of the high altar. Stopping before this altar, the pope offered to the church the gift of a magnificent chalice in which were three hundred gold crowns, which the Cardinal of Siena poured out into a silver paten before the eyes of all, much to the gratification of the pontifical vanity.

But before he left Rome to complete the conquest of the Romagna, the Duke of Valentinois had been reflecting that the marriage, once so ardently desired, between Lucrezia and Alfonso had been quite useless to himself and his father. There was more than this to be considered: Louis XII's rest in Lombardy was only a halt, and Milan was evidently but the stage before Naples. It was very possible that Louis was annoyed about the marriage which converted his enemy's nephew into the son-in-law of his ally. Whereas, if Alfonso were dead, Lucrezia would be the position to marry some powerful lord of Ferrara or Brescia, who would be able to help his brother-in-law in the conquest of Romagna. Alfonso was now not only useless but dangerous, which to anyone with the character of the Borgias perhaps seemed worse, the death of Alfonso was resolved upon. But Lucrezia's husband, who had understood for a long time past what danger he incurred by living near his terrible father-in-law, had retired to Naples. Since, however, neither Alexander nor Caesar had changed in their perpetual dissimulation towards him, he was beginning to lose his fear, when he received an invitation from the pope and his son to take part in a bull-fight which was to be held in the Spanish fashion in honour of the duke before his departure: In the present precarious position of Naples it would not have been good policy for Alfonso to afford Alexander any sort of pretext for a rupture, so he could not refuse without a motive, and betook himself to Rome. It was thought of no use to consult Lucrezia in this affair, for she had two or three times displayed an absurd attachment for her husband, and they left her undisturbed in her government of Spoleto.

Alfonso was received by the pope and the duke with every demonstration of sincere friendship, and rooms in the Vatican were assigned to him that he had inhabited before with Lucrezia, in that part of the building which is known as the

Torre Nuova.

Great lists were prepared on the Piazza of St. Peter's; the streets about it were barricaded, and the windows of the surrounding houses served as boxes for the spectators. The pope and his court took their places on the balconies of the Vatican.

The fete was started by professional toreadors: after they had exhibited their strength and skill, Alfonso and Caesar in their turn descended to the arena, and to offer a proof of their mutual kindness, settled that the bull which pursued Caesar should be killed by Alfonso, and the bull that pursued Alfonso by Caesar.

Then Caesar remained alone on horseback within the lists, Alfonso going out by an improvised door which was kept ajar, in order that he might go back on the instant if he judged that his presence was necessary. At the same time, from the opposite side of the lists the bull was introduced, and was at the same moment pierced all over with darts and arrows, some of them containing explosives, which took fire, and irritated the bull to such a point that he rolled about with pain, and then got up in a fury, and perceiving a man on horseback, rushed instantly upon him. It was now, in this narrow arena, pursued by his swift enemy, that Caesar displayed all that skill which made him one of the finest horsemen of the period. Still, clever as he was, he could not have remained safe long in that restricted area from an adversary against whom he had no other resource than flight, had not Alfonso appeared suddenly, just when the bull was beginning to gain upon him, waving a red cloak in his left hand, and holding in his right a long delicate Aragon sword. It was high time: the bull was only a few paces distant from Caesar, and the risk he was running appeared so imminent that a woman's scream was heard from one of the windows. But at the sight of a man on foot the bull stopped short, and judging that he would do better business with the new enemy than the old one, he turned upon him instead. For a moment he stood motionless, roaring, kicking up the dust with his hind feet, and lashing his sides with his tail. Then he rushed upon Alfonso, his eyes all bloodshot, his horns tearing up the ground. Alfonso awaited him with a tranquil air; then, when he was only three paces away, he made a bound to one side and presented instead of his body his sword, which disappeared at once to the hilt; the bull, checked in the middle of his onslaught, stopped one instant motionless and trembling, then fell upon his knees, uttered one dull roar, and lying down on the very spot where his course had been checked, breathed his last without moving a single step forward.

Applause resounded on all sides, so rapid and clever had been the blow. Caesar had remained on horseback, seeking to discover the fair spectator who had given so lively a proof of her interest in him, without troubling himself about what was going on: his search had not been unrewarded, for he had recognized one of the maids of honour to Elizabeth, Duchess of Urbino, who was betrothed to Gian Battista Carraciuolo, captain-general of the republic of Venice.

It was now Alfonso's turn to run from the bull, Caesar's to fight him: the young men changed parts, and when four mules had reluctantly dragged the dead bull from the arena, and the valets and other servants of His Holiness had scattered sand over the places that were stained with blood, Alfonso mounted a magnificent Andalusian steed of Arab origin, light as the wind of Sahara that had wedded with his mother, while Caesar, dismounting, retired in his turn, to reappear at the moment when Alfonso should be meeting the same danger from which he had just now rescued him.

Then a second bull was introduced upon the scene, excited in the same manner with steeled darts and flaming arrows. Like his predecessor, when he perceived a man on horseback he rushed upon him, and then began a marvellous race, in which it was impossible to see, so quickly did they fly over the ground, whether the horse was pursuing the bull or the bull the horse. But after five or six rounds, the bull began to gain upon the son of Araby, for all his speed, and it was plain to see who fled and who pursued; in another moment there was only the length of two lances between them, and then suddenly Caesar appeared, armed with one of those long two handed swords which the French are accustomed to use, and just when the bull, almost close upon Don Alfonso, came in front of Caesar he brandished the sword, which flashed like lightning, and cut off his head, while his body, impelled by the speed of the run, fell to the ground ten paces farther on. This blow was so unexpected, and had been performed with such dexterity, that it was received not with mere clapping but with wild enthusiasm and frantic outcry. Caesar, apparently remembering nothing else in his hour of triumph but the scream that had been caused by his former danger, picked up the bull's head, and, giving it to one of his equerries, ordered him to lay it as an act of homage at the feet of the fair Venetian who had bestowed upon him so lively a sign of interest. This fete, besides affording a triumph to each of the young men, had another end as well; it was meant to prove to the populace that perfect goodwill existed between the two, since each had saved the life of the other. The result was that, if any accident should happen to Caesar, nobody would dream of accusing Alfonso; and also if any accident should happen to Alfonso, nobody

would dream, of accusing Caesar.

There was a supper at the Vatican. Alfonso made an elegant toilet, and about ten o'clock at night prepared to go from the quarters he inhabited into those where the pope lived; but the door which separated the two courts of the building was shut, and knock as he would, no one came to open it. Alfonso then thought that it was a simple matter for him to go round by the Piazza of St. Peter's; so he went out unaccompanied through one of the garden gates of the Vatican and made his way across the gloomy streets which led to the stairway which gave on the piazza. But scarcely had he set his foot on the first step when he was attacked by a band of armed men. Alfonso would have drawn his sword; but before it was out of the scabbard he had received two blows from a halberd, one on his head, the other on his shoulder; he was stabbed in the side, and wounded both in the leg and in the temple. Struck down by these five blows, he lost his footing and fell to the ground unconscious; his assassins, supposing he was dead, at once remounted the stairway, and found on the piazza forty horsemen waiting for them: by them they were calmly escorted from the city by the Porta Portesa. Alfonso was found at the point of death, but not actually dead, by some passers-by, some of whom recognised him, and instantly conveyed the news of his assassination to the Vatican, while the others, lifting the wounded man in their arms, carried him to his quarters in the Torre Nuova. The pope and Caesar, who learned this news just as they were sitting down to table, showed great distress, and leaving their companions, at once went to see Alfonso, to be quite certain whether his wounds were fatal or not; and on the next morning, to divert any suspicion that might be turned towards themselves, they arrested Alfonso's maternal uncle, Francesco Gazella, who had come to Rome in his nephew's company. Gazella was found guilty on the evidence of false witnesses, and was consequently beheaded.

But they had only accomplished half of what they wanted. By some means, fair or foul, suspicion had been sufficiently diverted from the true assassins; but Alfonso was not dead, and, thanks to the strength of his constitution and the skill of his doctors, who had taken the lamentations of the pope and Caesar quite seriously, and thought to please them by curing Alexander's son-in-law, the wounded man was making progress towards convalescence: news arrived at the same time that Lucrezia had heard of her husband's accident, and was starting to come and nurse him herself. There was no time to lose, and Caesar summoned Michelotto.

“The same night,” says Burcardus, “Don Alfonso, who would not die of his wounds, was found strangled in his bed.”

The funeral took place the next day with a ceremony not unbecoming in itself, though, unsuited to his high rank. Don Francesca Borgia, Archbishop of Cosenza, acted as chief mourner at St. Peter’s, where the body was buried in the chapel of Santa Maria delle Febbre.

Lucrezia arrived the same evening: she knew her father and brother too well to be put on the wrong scent; and although, immediately after Alfonso’s death, the Duke of Valentinois had arrested the doctors, the surgeons, and a poor deformed wretch who had been acting as valet, she knew perfectly well from what quarter the blow had proceeded. In fear, therefore, that the manifestation of a grief she felt this time too well might alienate the confidence of her father and brother, she retired to Nepi with her whole household, her whole court, and more than six hundred cavaliers, there to spend the period of her mourning.

This important family business was now settled, and Lucrezia was again a widow, and in consequence ready to be utilized in the pope’s new political machinations. Caesar only stayed at Rome to receive the ambassadors from France and Venice; but as their arrival was somewhat delayed, and considerable inroads had been made upon the pope’s treasury by the recent festivities, the creation of twelve new cardinals was arranged: this scheme was to have two effects, viz., to bring 600,000 ducats into the pontifical chest, each hat having been priced at 50,000 ducats, and to assure the pope of a constant majority in the sacred council.

The ambassadors at last arrived: the first was M. de Villeneuve, the same who had come before to see the Duke of Valentinois in the name of France. Just as he entered Rome, he met on the road a masked man, who, without removing his domino, expressed the joy he felt at his arrival. This man was Caesar himself, who did not wish to be recognised, and who took his departure after a short conference without uncovering his face. M. de Villeneuve then entered the city after him, and at the Porta del Popolo found the ambassadors of the various Powers, and among them those of Spain and Naples, whose sovereigns were not yet, it is true, in declared hostility to France, though there was already some coolness. The last-named, fearing to compromise themselves, merely said to their colleague of France, by way of complimentary address, “Sir, you are welcome”; whereupon the master of the ceremonies, surprised at the brevity of

the greeting, asked if they had nothing else to say. When they replied that they had not, M. de Villeneuve turned his back upon them, remarking that those who had nothing to say required no answer; he then took his place between the Archbishop of Reggio, governor of Rome, and the Archbishop of Ragusa, and made his way to the palace of the Holy Apostles, which had been, got ready for his reception.

Some days later, Maria Giorgi, ambassador extraordinary of Venice, made his arrival. He was commissioned not only to arrange the business on hand with the pope, but also to convey to Alexander and Caesar the title of Venetian nobles, and to inform them that their names were inscribed in the Golden Book—a favour that both of them had long coveted, less for the empty honour's sake than for the new influence that this title might confer. Then the pope went on to bestow the twelve cardinals' hats that had been sold. The new princes of the Church were Don Diego de Mendoza, archbishop of Seville; Jacques, archbishop of Oristagny, the Pope's vicar-general; Thomas, archbishop of Strigania; Piero, archbishop of Reggio, governor of Rome; Francesco Borgia, archbishop of Cosenza, treasurer-general; Gian, archbishop of Salerno, vice-chamberlain; Luigi Borgia, archbishop of Valencia, secretary to His Holiness, and brother of the Gian Borgia whom Caesar had poisoned; Antonio, bishop of Coma; Gian Battista Ferraro, bishop of Modem; Amedee d'Albret, son of the King of Navarre, brother-in-law of the Duke of Valentinois; and Marco Cornaro, a Venetian noble, in whose person His Holiness rendered back to the most serene republic the favour he had just received.

Then, as there was nothing further to detain the Duke of Valentinois at Rome, he only waited to effect a loan from a rich banker named Agostino Chigi, brother of the Lorenzo Chigi who had perished on the day when the pope had been nearly killed by the fall of a chimney, and departed for the Romagna, accompanied by Vitellozzo Vitelli, Gian Paolo Baglione, and Jacopo di Santa Croce, at that time his friends, but later on his victims.

His first enterprise was against Pesaro: this was the polite attention of a brother-in-law, and Gian Sforza very well knew what would be its consequences; for instead of attempting to defend his possessions by taking up arms, or to venture an negotiations, unwilling moreover to expose the fair lands he had ruled so long to the vengeance of an irritated foe, he begged his subjects, to preserve their former affection towards himself, in the hope of better days to come; and he fled into Dalmatia. Malatesta, lord of Rimini, followed his example; thus the Duke of

Valentinois entered both these towns without striking a single blow. Caesar left a sufficient garrison behind him, and marched on to Faenza.

But there the face of things was changed: Faenza at that time was under the rule of Astor Manfredi, a brave and handsome young man of eighteen, who, relying on the love of his subjects towards his family, had resolved on defending himself to the uttermost, although he had been forsaken by the Bentivagli, his near relatives, and by his allies, the Venetian and Florentines, who had not dared to send him any aid because of the affection felt towards Caesar by the King of France. Accordingly, when he perceived that the Duke of Valentinois was marching against him, he assembled in hot haste all those of his vassals who were capable of bearing arms, together with the few foreign soldiers who were willing to come into his pay, and collecting victual and ammunition, he took up his position with them inside the town.

By these defensive preparations Caesar was not greatly, disconcerted; he commanded a magnificent army, composed of the finest troops of France and Italy; led by such men as Paolo and Giulio Orsini, Vitellozzo Vitelli and Paolo Baglione, not to speak of himself—that is to say, by the first captains of the period. So, after he had reconnoitred, he at once began the siege, pitching his camp between the two rivers, Amana and Marziano, placing his artillery on the side which faces on Forli, at which point the besieged party had erected a powerful bastion.

At the end of a few days busy with entrenchments, the breach became practicable, and the Duke of Valentinois ordered an assault, and gave the example to his soldiers by being the first to march against the enemy. But in spite of his courage and that of his captains beside him, Astor Manfredi made so good a defence that the besiegers were repulsed with great loss of men, while one of their bravest leaders, Honario Savella; was left behind in the trenches.

But Faenza, in spite of the courage and devotion of her defenders, could not have held out long against so formidable an army, had not winter come to her aid. Surprised by the rigour of the season, with no houses for protection and no trees for fuel, as the peasants had destroyed both beforehand, the Duke of Valentinois was forced to raise the siege and take up his winter quarters in the neighbouring towns, in order to be quite ready for a return next spring; for Caesar could not forgive the insult of being held in check by a little town which had enjoyed a long time of peace, was governed by a mere boy, and deprived of all outside aid,

and had sworn to take his revenge. He therefore broke up his army into three sections, sent one-third to Imola, the second to Forli, and himself took the third to Cesena, a third-rate town, which was thus suddenly transformed into a city of pleasure and luxury.

Indeed, for Caesar's active spirit there must needs be no cessation of warfare or festivities. So, when war was interrupted, fetes began, as magnificent and as exciting as he knew how to make them: the days were passed in games and displays of horsemanship, the nights in dancing and gallantry; for the loveliest women of the Romagna—and that is to say of the whole world had come hither to make a seraglio for the victor which might have been envied by the Sultan of Egypt or the Emperor of Constantinople.

While the Duke of Valentinois was making one of his excursions in the neighbourhood of the town with his retinue of flattering nobles and titled courtesans, who were always about him, he noticed a cortege on the Rimini road so numerous that it must surely indicate the approach of someone of importance. Caesar, soon perceiving that the principal person was a woman, approached, and recognised the very same lady-in-waiting to the Duchess of Urbino who, on the day of the bull-fight, had screamed when Caesar was all but touched by the infuriated beast. At this time she was betrothed, as we mentioned, to Gian Carracciola, general of the Venetians. Elizabeth of Gonzaga, her protectress and godmother, was now sending her with a suitable retinue to Venice, where the marriage was to take place.

Caesar had already been struck by the beauty of this young girl, when at Rome; but when he saw her again she appeared more lovely than on the first occasion, so he resolved on the instant that he would keep this fair flower of love for himself: having often before reproached himself for his indifference in passing her by. Therefore he saluted her as an old acquaintance, inquired whether she were staying any time at Cesena, and ascertained that she was only passing through, travelling by long stages, as she was awaited with much impatience, and that she would spend the coming night at Forli. This was all that Caesar cared to know; he summoned Michelotto, and in a low voice said a few words to him, which were heard by no one else.

The cortege only made a halt at the neighbouring town, as the fair bride had said, and started at once for Forli, although the day was already far advanced; but scarcely had a league been covered when a troop of horsemen from Cesena

overtook and surrounded them. Although the soldiers in the escort were far from being in sufficient force, they were eager to defend their general's bride; but soon some fell dead, and others, terrified, took to flight; and when the lady came down from her litter to try to escape, the chief seized her in his arms and set her in front of him on his horse; then, ordering his men to return to Cesena without him, he put his horse to the gallop in a cross direction, and as the shades of evening were now beginning to fall, he soon disappeared into the darkness.

Carracciuolo learned the news through one of the fugitives, who declared that he had recognised among the ravishers the Duke of Valentino's soldiers. At first he thought his ears had deceived him, so hard was it to believe this terrible intelligence; but it was repeated, and he stood for one instant motionless, and, as it were, thunderstruck; then suddenly, with a cry of vengeance, he threw off his stupor and dashed away to the ducal palace, where sat the Doge Barberigo and the Council of Ten; unannounced, he rushed into their midst, the very moment after they had heard of Caesar's outrage.

"Most serene lords," he cried, "I am come to bid you farewell, for I am resolved to sacrifice my life to my private vengeance, though indeed I had hoped to devote it to the service of the republic. I have been wounded in the soul's noblest part—in my honour. The dearest thing I possessed, my wife, has been stolen from me, and the thief is the most treacherous, the most impious, the most infamous of men, it is Valentino! My lords, I beg you will not be offended if I speak thus of a man whose boast it is to be a member of your noble ranks and to enjoy your protection: it is not so; he lies, and his loose and criminal life has made him unworthy of such honours, even as he is unworthy of the life whereof my sword shall deprive him. In truth, his very birth was a sacrilege; he is a fratricide, an usurper of the goods of other men, an oppressor of the innocent, and a highway assassin; he is a man who will violate every law, even, the law of hospitality respected by the veriest barbarian, a man who will do violence to a virgin who is passing through his own country, where she had every right to expect from him not only the consideration due to her sex and condition, but also that which is due to the most serene republic, whose condottiere I am, and which is insulted in my person and in the dishonouring of my bride; this man, I say, merits indeed to die by another hand than mine. Yet, since he who ought to punish him is not for him a prince and judge, but only a father quite as guilty as the son, I myself will seek him out, and I will sacrifice my own life, not only in avenging my own injury and the blood of so many innocent beings, but also in promoting the welfare of the most serene republic, on which it is his ambition to

trample when he has accomplished the ruin of the other princes of Italy.”

The doge and the senators, who, as we said, were already apprised of the event that had brought Carracciuolo before them, listened with great interest and profound indignation; for they, as he told them, were themselves insulted in the person of their general: they all swore, on their honour, that if he would put the matter in their hands, and not yield to his rage, which could only work his own undoing, either his bride should be rendered up to him without a smirch upon her bridal veil, or else a punishment should be dealt out proportioned to the affront. And without delay, as a proof of the energy wherewith the noble tribunal would take action in the affair, Luigi Manenti, secretary to the Ten, was sent to Imola, where the duke was reported to be, that he might explain to him the great displeasure with which the most serene republic viewed the outrage perpetrated upon their candottiere. At the same time the Council of Ten and the doge sought out the French ambassador, entreating him to join with them and repair in person with Manenti to the Duke of Valentino, and summon him, in the name of King Louis XII, immediately to send back to Venice the lady he had carried off.

The two messengers arrived at Imola, where they found Caesar, who listened to their complaint with every mark of utter astonishment, denying that he had been in any way connected with the crime, nay, authorising Manenti and the French ambassador to pursue the culprits and promising that he would himself have the most active search carried on. The duke appeared to act in such complete good faith that the envoys were for the moment hoodwinked, and themselves undertook a search of the most careful nature. They accordingly repaired to the exact spot and began to procure information. On the highroad there had been found dead and wounded. A man had been seen going by at a gallop, carrying a woman in distress on his saddle; he had soon left the beaten track and plunged across country. A peasant coming home from working in the fields had seen him appear and vanish again like a shadow, taking the direction of a lonely house. An old woman declared that she had seen him go into this house. But the next night the house was gone, as though by enchantment, and the ploughshare had passed over where it stood; so that none could say, what had become of her whom they sought, far those who had dwelt in the house, and even the house itself, were there no longer.

Manenti and the French ambassador returned to Venice, and related what the duke had said, what they had done, and how all search had been in vain. No one doubted that Caesar was the culprit, but no one could prove it. So the most

serene republic, which could not, considering their war with the Turks, be embroiled with the pope, forbade Caracciuala to take any sort of private vengeance, and so the talk grew gradually less, and at last the occurrence was no more mentioned.

But the pleasures of the winter had not diverted Caesar's mind from his plans about Faenza. Scarcely did the spring season allow him to go into the country than he marched anew upon the town, camped opposite the castle, and making a new breach, ordered a general assault, himself going up first of all; but in spite of the courage he personally displayed, and the able seconding of his soldiers, they were repulsed by Astor, who, at the head of his men, defended the breach, while even the women, at the top of the rampart, rolled down stones and trunks of trees upon the besiegers. After an hour's struggle man to man, Caesar was forced to retire, leaving two thousand men in the trenches about the town, and among the two thousand one of his bravest condottieri, Valentino Farnese.

Then, seeing that neither excommunications nor assaults could help him, Caesar converted the siege into a blockade: all the roads leading to Faenza were cut off, all communications stopped; and further, as various signs of revolt had been remarked at Cesena, a governor was installed there whose powerful will was well known to Caesar, Ramiro d'Orco, with powers of life and death over the inhabitants; he then waited quietly before Faenza, till hunger should drive out the citizens from those walls they defended with such vehement enthusiasm. At the end of a month, during which the people of Faenza had suffered all the horrors of famine, delegates came out to parley with Caesar with a view to capitulation. Caesar, who still had plenty to do in the Romagna, was less hard to satisfy than might have been expected, and the town yielded an condition that he should not touch either the persons or the belongings of the inhabitants, that Astor Manfredi, the youthful ruler, should have the privilege of retiring whenever he pleased, and should enjoy the revenue of his patrimony wherever he might be.

The conditions were faithfully kept so far as the inhabitants were concerned; but Caesar, when he had seen Astor, whom he did not know before, was seized by a strange passion for this beautiful youth, who was like a woman: he kept him by his side in his own army, showing him honours befitting a young prince, and evincing before the eyes of all the strongest affection for him: one day Astor disappeared, just as Caracciuolo's bride had disappeared, and no one knew what had become of him; Caesar himself appeared very uneasy, saying that he had no

doubt made his escape somewhere, and in order to give credence to this story, he sent out couriers to seek him in all directions.

A year after this double disappearance, there was picked up in the Tiber, a little below the Castle Sant' Angelo, the body of a beautiful young woman, her hands bound together behind her back, and also the corpse of a handsome youth with the bowstring he had been strangled with tied round his neck. The girl was Caracciuolo's bride, the young man was Astor.

During the last year both had been the slaves of Caesar's pleasures; now, tired of them, he had had them thrown into the Tiber.

The capture of Faenza had brought Caesar the title of Duke of Romagna, which was first bestowed on him by the pope in full consistory, and afterwards ratified by the King of Hungary, the republic of Venice, and the Kings of Castile and Portugal. The news of the ratification arrived at Rome on the eve of the day on which the people are accustomed to keep the anniversary of the foundation of the Eternal City; this fete, which went back to the days of Pomponius Laetus, acquired a new splendour in their eyes from the joyful events that had just happened to their sovereign: as a sign of joy cannon were fired all day long; in the evening there were illuminations and bonfires, and during part of the night the Prince of Squillace, with the chief lords of the Roman nobility, marched about the streets, bearing torches, and exclaiming, "Long live Alexander! Long live Caesar! Long live the Borgias! Long live the Orsini! Long live the Duke of Romagna!"

CHAPTER XII

Caesar's ambition was only fed by victories: scarcely was he master of Faenza before, excited by the Mariscotti, old enemies of the Bentivoglio family, he cast his eyes upon Bologna; but Gian di Bentivoglio, whose ancestors had possessed this town from time immemorial, had not only made all preparations necessary for a long resistance, but he had also put himself under the protection of France; so, scarcely had he learned that Caesar was crossing the frontier of the Bolognese territory with his army, than he sent a courier to Louis XII to claim the fulfilment of his promise. Louis kept it with his accustomed good faith; and when Caesar arrived before Bologna, he received an intimation from the King of France that he was not to enter on any undertaking against his ally Bentivoglio; Caesar, not being the man to have his plans upset for nothing, made conditions for his retreat, to which Bentivoglio consented, only too happy to be quit of him at this price: the conditions were the cession of Castello Bolognese, a fortress between Imola and Faenza, the payment of a tribute of 9000 ducats, and the keeping for his service of a hundred men-at-arms and two thousand infantry. In exchange for these favours, Caesar confided to Bentivoglio that his visit had been due to the counsels of the Mariscotti; then, reinforced by his new ally's contingent, he took the road for Tuscany. But he was scarcely out of sight when Bentivoglio shut the gates of Bologna, and commanded his son Hermes to assassinate with his own hand Agamemnon Mariscotti, the head of the family, and ordered the massacre of four-and-thirty of his near relatives, brothers, sons, daughters, and nephews, and two hundred other of his kindred and friends. The butchery was carried out by the noblest youths of Bologna; whom Bentivoglio forced to bathe their hands in this blood, so that he might attach them to himself through their fear of reprisals.

Caesar's plans with regard to Florence were now no longer a mystery: since the month of January he had sent to Pisa ten or twelve hundred men under the Command of Regniero della Sassetta and Piero di Gamba Corti, and as soon as the conquest of the Romagna was complete, he had further despatched Oliverotto di Fermo with new detachments. His own army he had reinforced, as we have seen, by a hundred men-at-arms and two thousand infantry; he had just been joined by Vitellozzo Vitelli, lord of Citta, di Castello, and by the Orsini, who had brought him another two or three thousand men; so, without counting the troops sent to Pisa, he had under his control seven hundred men-at-arms and

five thousand infantry.

Still, in spite of this formidable company, he entered Tuscany declaring that his intentions were only pacific, protesting that he only desired to pass through the territories of the republic on his way to Rome, and offering to pay in ready money for any victual his army might require. But when he had passed the defiles of the mountains and arrived at Barberino, feeling that the town was in his power and nothing could now hinder his approach, he began to put a price on the friendship he had at first offered freely, and to impose his own conditions instead of accepting those of others. These were that Piero dei Medici, kinsman and ally of the Orsini, should be reinstated in his ancient power; that six Florentine citizens, to be chosen by Vitellozzo, should be put into his hands that they might by their death expiate that of Paolo Vitelli, unjustly executed by the Florentines; that the Signoria should engage to give no aid to the lord of Piombino, whom Caesar intended to dispossess of his estates without delay; and further, that he himself should be taken into the service of the republic, for a pay proportionate to his deserts. But just as Caesar had reached this point in his negotiations with Florence, he received orders from Louis XII to get ready, so soon as he conveniently could, to follow him with his army and help in the conquest of Naples, which he was at last in a position to undertake. Caesar dared not break his word to so powerful an ally; he therefore replied that he was at the king's orders, and as the Florentines were not aware that he was quitting them on compulsion, he sold his retreat for the sum of 36,000 ducats per annum, in exchange for which sum he was to hold three hundred men-at-arms always in readiness to go to the aid of the republic at her earliest call and in any circumstances of need.

But, hurried as he was, Caesar still hoped that he might find time to conquer the territory of Piombino as he went by, and take the capital by a single vigorous stroke; so he made his entry into the lands of Jacopo IV of Appiano. The latter, he found, however, had been beforehand with him, and, to rob him of all resource, had laid waste his own country, burned his fodder, felled his trees, torn down his vines, and destroyed a few fountains that produced salubrious waters. This did not hinder Caesar from seizing in the space of a few days Severeto, Scarlino, the isle of Elba, and La Pianosa; but he was obliged to stop short at the castle, which opposed a serious resistance. As Louis XII's army was continuing its way towards Rome, and he received a fresh order to join it, he took his departure the next day, leaving behind him, Vitellozzo and Gian Paolo Bagliani to prosecute the siege in his absence.

Louis XII was this time advancing upon Naples, not with the incautious ardour of Charles VIII, but, on the contrary, with that prudence and circumspection which characterised him. Besides his alliance with Florence and Rome, he had also signed a secret treaty with Ferdinand the Catholic, who had similar pretensions, through the house of Duras, to the throne of Naples to those Louis himself had through the house of Anjou. By this treaty the two kings were sharing their conquests beforehand: Louis would be master of Naples, of the town of Lavore and the Abruzzi, and would bear the title of King of Naples and Jerusalem; Ferdinand reserved for his own share Apulia and Calabria, with the title of Duke of these provinces; both were to receive the investiture from the pope and to hold them of him. This partition was all the more likely to be made, in fact, because Frederic, supposing all the time that Ferdinand was his good and faithful friend, would open the gates of his towns, only to receive into his fortresses conquerors and masters instead of allies. All this perhaps was not very loyal conduct on the part of a king who had so long desired and had just now received the surname of Catholic, but it mattered little to Louis, who profited by treasonable acts he did not have to share.

The French army, which the Duke of Valentinois had just joined, consisted of 1000 lances, 4000 Swiss, and 6000 Gascons and adventurers; further, Philip of Rabenstein was bringing by sea six Breton and Provençal vessels, and three Genoese caracks, carrying 6500 invaders.

Against this mighty host the King of Naples had only 700 men-at-arms, 600 light horse, and 6000 infantry under the command of the Colonna, whom he had taken into his pay after they were exiled by the pope from the States of the Church; but he was counting on Gonsalvo of Cordova, who was to join him at Gaeta, and to whom he had confidingly opened all his fortresses in Calabria.

But the feeling of safety inspired by Frederic's faithless ally was not destined to endure long: on their arrival at Rome, the French and Spanish ambassadors presented to the pope the treaty signed at Grenada on the 11th of November, 1500, between Louis XII and Ferdinand the Catholic, a treaty which up to that time had been secret. Alexander, foreseeing the probable future, had, by the death of Alfonso, loosened all the bonds that attached him to the house of Aragon, and then began by making some difficulty about it. It was demonstrated that the arrangement had only been undertaken to provide the Christian princes with another weapon for attacking the Ottoman Empire, and before this consideration, one may readily suppose, all the pope's scruples vanished; on the

25th of June, therefore, it was decided to call a consistory which was to declare Frederic deposed from the throne of Naples. When Frederic heard all at once that the French army had arrived at Rome, that his ally Ferdinand had deceived him, and that Alexander had pronounced the sentence of his downfall, he understood that all was lost; but he did not wish it to be said that he had abandoned his kingdom without even attempting to save it. So he charged his two new condottieri, Fabrizio Colonna and Ranuzia di Marciano, to check the French before Capua with 300 men-at-arms, some light horse, and 3000 infantry; in person he occupied Aversa with another division of his army, while Prospero Colonna was sent to defend Naples with the rest, and make a stand against the Spaniards on the side of Calabria.

These dispositions were scarcely made when d'Aubigny, having passed the Volturno, approached to lay siege to Capua, and invested the town on both sides of the river. Scarcely were the French encamped before the ramparts than they began to set up their batteries, which were soon in play, much to the terror of the besieged, who, poor creatures, were almost all strangers to the town, and had fled thither from every side, expecting to find protection beneath the walls. So, although bravely repulsed by Fabrizio Colonna, the French, from the moment of their first assault, inspired so great and blind a terror that everyone began to talk of opening the gates, and it was only with great difficulty that Colonna made this multitude understand that at least they ought to reap some benefit from the check the besiegers had received and obtain good terms of capitulation. When he had brought them round to his view, he sent out to demand a parley with d'Aubigny, and a conference was fixed for the next day but one, in which they were to treat of the surrender of the town.

But this was not Caesar Borgia's idea at all: he had stayed behind to confer with the pope, and had joined the French army with some of his troops on the very day on which the conference had been arranged for two days later: and a capitulation of any nature would rob him of his share of the booty and the promise of such pleasure as would come from the capture of a city so rich and populous as Capua. So he opened up negotiations on his own account with a captain who was on guard at one of the gates such negotiations, made with cunning supported by bribery, proved as usual more prompt and efficacious than any others. At the very moment when Fabrizio Colonna in a fortified outpost was discussing the conditions of capitulation with the French captains, suddenly great cries of distress were heard. These were caused by Borgia, who without a word to anyone had entered the town with his faithful army from Romagna, and

was beginning to cut the throats of the garrison, which had naturally somewhat relaxed their vigilance in the belief that the capitulation was all but signed. The French, when they saw that the town was half taken, rushed on the gates with such impetuosity that the besieged did not even attempt to defend themselves any longer, and forced their way into Capua by three separate sides: nothing more could be done then to stop the issue. Butchery and pillage had begun, and the work of destruction must needs be completed: in vain did Fabrizio Colonna, Ranuzio di Marciano, and Don Ugo di Cardona attempt to make head against the French and Spaniards with such men as they could get together. Fabrizio Colonna and Don Ugo were made prisoners; Ranuzia, wounded by an arrow, fell into the hands of the Duke of Valentino; seven thousand inhabitants were massacred in the streets among them the traitor who had given up the gate; the churches were pillaged, the convents of nuns forced open; and then might be seen the spectacle of some of these holy virgins casting themselves into pits or into the river to escape the soldiers. Three hundred of the noblest ladies of the town took refuge in a tower. The Duke of Valentino broke in the doors, chased out for himself forty of the most beautiful, and handed over the rest to his army.

The pillage continued for three days.

Capua once taken, Frederic saw that it was useless any longer to attempt defence. So he shut himself up in Castel Nuovo and gave permission to Gaeta and to Naples to treat with the conqueror. Gaeta bought immunity from pillage with 60,000 ducats; and Naples with the surrender of the castle. This surrender was made to d'Aubigny by Frederic himself, an condition that he should be allowed to take to the island of Ischia his money, jewels, and furniture, and there remain with his family for six months secure from all hostile attack. The terms of this capitulation were faithfully adhered to on both sides: d'Aubigny entered Naples, and Frederic retired to Ischia.

Thus, by a last terrible blow, never to rise again, fell this branch of the house of Aragon, which had now reigned for sixty-five years. Frederic, its head, demanded and obtained a safe-conduct to pass into France, where Louis XII gave him the duchy of Anjou and 30,000 ducats a year, an condition that he should never quit the kingdom; and there, in fact, he died, on the 9th of September 1504. His eldest son, Dan Ferdinand, Duke of Calabria, retired to Spain, where he was permitted to marry twice, but each time with a woman who was known to be barren; and there he died in 1550. Alfonso, the second son, who had followed his father to France, died, it is said, of poison, at Grenoble, at

the age of twenty-two; lastly Caesar, the third son, died at Ferrara, before he had attained his eighteenth birthday.

Frederic's daughter Charlotte married in France Nicholas, Count of Laval, governor and admiral of Brittany; a daughter was born of this marriage, Anne de Laval, who married Francois de la Trimouille. Through her those rights were transmitted to the house of La Trimouille which were used later on as a claim upon the kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

The capture of Naples gave the Duke of Valentino his liberty again; so he left the French army, after he had received fresh assurances on his own account of the king's friendliness, and returned to the siege of Piombino, which he had been forced to interrupt. During this interval Alexander had been visiting the scenes of his son's conquests, and traversing all the Romagna with Lucrezia, who was now consoled for her husband's death, and had never before enjoyed quite so much favour with His Holiness; so, when she returned to Rome. She no longer had separate rooms from him. The result of this recrudescence of affection was the appearance of two pontifical bulls, converting the towns of Nepi and Sermoneta into duchies: one was bestowed on Gian Borgia, an illegitimate child of the pope, who was not the son of either of his mistresses, Rosa Vanozza or Giulia Farnese, the other an Don Roderigo of Aragon, son of Lucrezia and Alfonso: the lands of the Colonna were in appanage to the two duchies.

But Alexander was dreaming of yet another addition to his fortune; this was to come from a marriage between Lucrezia and Don Alfonso d'Este, son of Duke Hercules of Ferrara, in favour of which alliance Louis XII had negotiated.

His Holiness was now having a run of good fortune, and he learned on the same day that Piombino was taken and that Duke Hercules had given the King of France his assent to the marriage. Both of these pieces of news were good for Alexander, but the one could not compare in importance with the other; and the intimation that Lucrezia was to marry the heir presumptive to the duchy of Ferrara was received with a joy so great that it smacked of the humble beginnings of the Borgian house. The Duke of Valentino was invited to return to Rome, to take his share in the family rejoicing, and on the day when the news was made public the governor of St. Angelo received orders that cannon should be fired every quarter of an hour from noon to midnight. At two o'clock, Lucrezia, attired as a fiancée, and accompanied by her two brothers, the Dukes of Valentino and Squillace, issued from the Vatican, followed by all the

nobility of Rome, and proceeded to the church of the Madonna del Papalo, where the Duke of Gandia and Cardinal Gian Borgia were buried, to render thanks for this new favour accorded to her house by God; and in the evening, accompanied by the same cavalcade, which shone the more brightly under the torchlight and brilliant illuminations, she made procession through the whole town, greeted by cries of “Long live Pope Alexander VI! Long live the Duchess of Ferrara!” which were shouted aloud by heralds clad in cloth of gold.

The next day an announcement was made in the town that a racecourse for women was opened between the castle of Sant’ Angelo and the Piazza of St. Peter’s; that on every third day there would be a bull-fight in the Spanish fashion; and that from the end of the present month, which was October, until the first day of Lent, masquerades would be permitted in the streets of Rome.

Such was the nature of the fetes outside; the programme of those going on within the Vatican was not presented to the people; for by the account of Bucciardo, an eye-witness, this is what happened—

“On the last Sunday of the month of October, fifty courtesans supped in the apostolic palace in the Duke of Valentino’s rooms, and after supper danced with the equerries and servants, first wearing their usual garments, afterwards in dazzling draperies; when supper was over, the table was removed, candlesticks were set on the floor in a symmetrical pattern, and a great quantity of chestnuts was scattered on the ground: these the fifty women skilfully picked up, running about gracefully, in and out between the burning lights; the pope, the Duke of Valentino, and his sister Lucrezia, who were looking on at this spectacle from a gallery, encouraged the most agile and industrious with their applause, and they received prizes of embroidered garters, velvet boots, golden caps, and laces; then new diversions took the place of these.”

We humbly ask forgiveness of our readers, and especially of our lady readers; but though we have found words to describe the first part of the spectacle, we have sought them in vain for the second; suffice it to say that just as there had been prizes for feats of adroitness, others were given now to the dancers who were most daring and brazen.

Some days after this strange night, which calls to mind the Roman evenings in the days of Tiberius, Nero, and Heliogabalus, Lucrezia, clad in a robe of golden brocade, her train carried by young girls dressed in white and crowned with

roses, issued from her palace to the sound of trumpets and clarions, and made her way over carpets that were laid down in the streets through which she had to pass. Accompanied by the noblest cavaliers and the loveliest women in Rome, she betook herself to the Vatican, where in the Pauline hall the pope awaited her, with the Duke of Valentinois, Don Ferdinand, acting as proxy for Duke Alfonso, and his cousin, Cardinal d'Este. The pope sat on one side of the table, while the envoys from Ferrara stood on the other: into their midst came Lucrezia, and Don Ferdinand placed on her finger the nuptial ring; this ceremony over, Cardinal d'Este approached and presented to the bride four magnificent rings set with precious stones; then a casket was placed on the table, richly inlaid with ivory, whence the cardinal drew forth a great many trinkets, chains, necklaces of pearls and diamonds, of workmanship as costly as their material; these he also begged Lucrezia to accept, before she received those the bridegroom was hoping to offer himself, which would be more worthy of her. Lucrezia showed the utmost delight in accepting these gifts; then she retired into the next room, leaning on the pope's arm, and followed by the ladies of her suite, leaving the Duke of Valentinois to do the honours of the Vatican to the men. That evening the guests met again, and spent half the night in dancing, while a magnificent display of fireworks lighted up the Piazza of San Paolo.

The ceremony of betrothal over, the pope and the Duke busied themselves with making preparations for the departure. The pope, who wished the journey to be made with a great degree of splendour, sent in his daughter's company, in addition to the two brothers-in-law and the gentlemen in their suite, the Senate of Rome and all the lords who, by virtue of their wealth, could display most magnificence in their costumes and liveries. Among this brilliant throng might be seen Olivero and Ramiro Mattei, sons of Piero Mattel, chancellor of the town, and a daughter of the pope whose mother was not Rosa Vanozza; besides these, the pope nominated in consistory Francesco Borgia, Cardinal of Sosenza, legate a latere, to accompany his daughter to the frontiers of the Ecclesiastical States.

Also the Duke of Valentinois sent out messengers into all the cities of Romagna to order that Lucrezia should be received as sovereign lady and mistress: grand preparations were at once set on foot for the fulfilment of his orders. But the messengers reported that they greatly feared that there would be some grumbling at Cesena, where it will be remembered that Caesar had left Ramiro d'Orco as governor with plenary powers, to calm the agitation of the town. Now Ramiro d'Orco had accomplished his task so well that there was nothing more to fear in the way of rebellion; for one-sixth of the inhabitants had perished on the

scaffold, and the result of this situation was that it was improbable that the same demonstrations of joy could be expected from a town plunged in mourning that were looked for from Imola, Faenza, and Pesaro. The Duke of Valentinois averted this inconvenience in the prompt and efficacious fashion characteristic of him alone. One morning the inhabitants of Cesena awoke to find a scaffold set up in the square, and upon it the four quarters of a man, his head, severed from the trunk, stuck up on the end of a pike.

This man was Ramiro d'Orco.

No one ever knew by whose hands the scaffold had been raised by night, nor by what executioners the terrible deed had been carried out; but when the Florentine Republic sent to ask Macchiavelli, their ambassador at Cesena, what he thought of it, he replied:

“MAGNIFICENT LORDS,-I can tell you nothing concerning the execution of Ramiro d'Orco, except that Caesar Borgia is the prince who best knows how to make and unmake men according to their deserts. NICCOLO MACCHIAVELLI”

The Duke of Valentinois was not disappointed, and the future Duchess of Ferrara was admirably received in every town along her route, and particularly at Cesena.

While Lucrezia was on her way to Ferrara to meet her fourth husband, Alexander and the Duke of Valentinois resolved to make a progress in the region of their last conquest, the duchy of Piombino. The apparent object of this journey was that the new subjects might take their oath to Caesar, and the real object was to form an arsenal in Jacopo d'Appiano's capital within reach of Tuscany, a plan which neither the pope nor his son had ever seriously abandoned. The two accordingly started from the port of Corneto with six ships, accompanied by a great number of cardinals and prelates, and arrived the same evening at Piombino. The pontifical court made a stay there of several days, partly with a view of making the duke known to the inhabitants, and also in order to be present at certain ecclesiastical functions, of which the most important was a service held on the third Sunday in Lent, in which the Cardinal of Cosenza sang a mass and the pope officiated in state with the duke and the cardinals. After these solemn functions the customary pleasures followed, and the pope summoned the prettiest girls of the country and ordered them to dance

their national dances before him.

Following on these dances came feasts of unheard of magnificence, during which the pope in the sight of all men completely ignored Lent and did not fast. The object of all these fetes was to scatter abroad a great deal of money, and so to make the Duke of Valentinois popular, while poor Jacopo d'Appiano was forgotten.

When they left Piombino, the pope and his son visited the island of Elba, where they only stayed long enough to visit the old fortifications and issue orders for the building of new ones.

Then the illustrious travellers embarked on their return journey to Rome; but scarcely had they put out to sea when the weather became adverse, and the pope not wishing to put in at Porto Ferrajo, they remained five days on board, though they had only two days' provisions. During the last three days the pope lived on fried fish that were caught under great difficulties because of the heavy weather. At last they arrived in sight of Corneto, and there the duke, who was not on the same vessel as the pope, seeing that his ship could not get in, had a boat put out, and so was taken ashore. The pope was obliged to continue on his way towards Pontercole, where at last he arrived, after encountering so violent a tempest that all who were with him were utterly subdued either by sickness or by the terror of death. The pope alone did not show one instant's fear, but remained on the bridge during the storm, sitting on his armchair, invoking the name of Jesus and making the sign of the cross. At last his ship entered the roads of Pontercole, where he landed, and after sending to Corneto to fetch horses, he rejoined the duke, who was there awaiting him. They then returned by slow stages, by way of Civita Vecchia and Palo, and reached Rome after an absence of a month. Almost at the same time d'Albret arrived in quest of his cardinal's hat. He was accompanied by two princes of the house of Navarre, who were received with not only those honours which beseemed their rank, but also as brothers-in-law to whom the duke was eager to show in what spirit he was contracting this alliance.

CHAPTER XIII

The time had now come for the Duke of Valentinois to continue the pursuit of his conquests. So, since on the 1st of May in the preceding year the pope had pronounced sentence of forfeiture in full consistory against Julius Caesar of Varano, as punishment for the murder of his brother Rudolph and for the harbouring of the pope's enemies, and he had accordingly been mulcted of his fief of Camerino, which was to be handed over to the apostolic chamber, Caesar left Rome to put the sentence in execution. Consequently, when he arrived on the frontiers of Perugia, which belonged to his lieutenant, Gian Paolo Baglioni, he sent Oliverotta da Fermo and Orsini of Gravina to lay waste the March of Camerino, at the same time petitioning Guido d'Ubaldo di Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, to lend his soldiers and artillery to help him in this enterprise. This the unlucky Duke of Urbino, who enjoyed the best possible relations with the pope, and who had no reason for distrusting Caesar, did not dare refuse. But on the very same day that the Duke of Urbino's troops started for Camerino, Caesar's troops entered the duchy of Urbino, and took possession of Cagli, one of the four towns of the little State. The Duke of Urbino knew what awaited him if he tried to resist, and fled incontinently, disguised as a peasant; thus in less than eight days Caesar was master of his whole duchy, except the fortresses of Maiolo and San Leone.

The Duke of Valentinois forthwith returned to Camerino, where the inhabitants still held out, encouraged by the presence of Julius Caesar di Varano, their lord, and his two sons, Venantio and Hannibal; the eldest son, Gian Maria, had been sent by his father to Venice.

The presence of Caesar was the occasion of parleying between the besiegers and besieged. A capitulation was arranged whereby Varano engaged to give up the town, on condition that he and his sons were allowed to retire safe and sound, taking with them their furniture, treasure, and carriages. But this was by no means Caesar's intention; so, profiting by the relaxation in vigilance that had naturally come about in the garrison when the news of the capitulation had been announced, he surprised the town in the night preceding the surrender, and seized Caesar di Varano and his two sons, who were strangled a short time after, the father at La Pergola and the sons at Pesaro, by Don Michele Correglio, who, though he had left the position of sbirro for that of a captain, every now and then

returned to his first business.

Meanwhile Vitellozzo Vitelli, who had assumed the title of General of the Church, and had under him 800 men-at-arms and 3,000 infantry, was following the secret instructions that he had received from Caesar by word of mouth, and was carrying forward that system of invasion which was to encircle Florence in a network of iron, and in the end make her defence an impossibility. A worthy pupil of his master, in whose school he had learned to use in turn the cunning of a fox and the strength of a lion, he had established an understanding between himself and certain young gentlemen of Arezzo to get that town delivered into his hands. But the plot had been discovered by Guglielma dei Pazzi, commissary of the Florentine Republic, and he had arrested two of the conspirators, whereupon the others, who were much more numerous than was supposed; had instantly dispersed about the town summoning the citizens to arms. All the republican faction, who saw in any sort of revolution the means of subjugating Florence, joined their party, set the captives at liberty, and seized Guglielmo; then proclaiming the establishment of the ancient constitution, they besieged the citadel, whither Cosimo dei Pazzi, Bishop of Arezzo, the son of Guglielmo, had fled for refuge; he, finding himself invested on every side, sent a messenger in hot haste to Florence to ask for help.

Unfortunately for the cardinal, Vitellozzo's troops were nearer to the besiegers than were the soldiers of the most serene republic to the besieged, and instead of help—the whole army of the enemy came down upon him. This army was under the command of Vitellozzo, of Gian Paolo Baglioni, and of Fabio Orsino, and with them were the two Medici, ever ready to go wherever there was a league against Florence, and ever ready at the command of Borgia, on any conditions whatever, to reenter the town whence they had been banished. The next day more help in the form of money and artillery arrived, sent by Pandolfo Petrucci, and on the 18th of June the citadel of Arezzo, which had received no news from Florence, was obliged to surrender.

Vitellozzo left the men of Arezzo to look after their town themselves, leaving also Fabio Orsina to garrison the citadel with a thousand men. Then, profiting by the terror that had been spread throughout all this part of Italy by the successive captures of the duchy of Urbino, of Camerino, and of Arezzo, he marched upon Monte San Severino, Castiglione, Aretino, Cortone, and the other towns of the valley of Chiana, which submitted one after the other almost without a struggle. When he was only ten or twelve leagues from Florence, and dared not an his

own account attempt anything against her, he made known the state of affairs to the Duke of Valentinois. He, fancying the hour had come at last for striking the blow so long delayed, started off at once to deliver his answer in person to his faithful lieutenants.

But the Florentines, though they had sent no help to Guglielmo dei Pazzi, had demanded aid from Chaumont dumbest, governor of the Milanese, on behalf of Louis XII, not only explaining the danger they themselves were in but also Caesar's ambitious projects, namely that after first overcoming the small principalities and then the states of the second order, he had now, it seemed, reached such a height of pride that he would attack the King of France himself. The news from Naples was disquieting; serious differences had already occurred between the Count of Armagnac and Gonzalva di Cordova, and Louis might any day need Florence, whom he had always found loyal and faithful. He therefore resolved to check Caesar's progress, and not only sent him orders to advance no further step forwards, but also sent off, to give effect to his injunction, the captain Imbaut with 400 lances. The Duke of Valentinois on the frontier of Tuscany received a copy of the treaty signed between the republic and the King of France, a treaty in which the king engaged to help his ally against any enemy whatsoever, and at the same moment the formal prohibition from Louis to advance any further. Caesar also learned that beside the 400 lances with the captain Imbaut, which were on the road to Florence, Louis XII had as soon as he reached Asti sent off to Parma Louis de la Trimouille and 200 men-at-arms, 3000 Swiss, and a considerable train of artillery. In these two movements combined he saw hostile intentions towards himself, and turning right about face with his usual agility, he profited by the fact that he had given nothing but verbal instructions to all his lieutenants, and wrote a furious letter to Vitellozzo, reproaching him for compromising his master with a view to his own private interest, and ordering the instant surrender to the Florentines of the towns and fortresses he had taken, threatening to march down with his own troops and take them if he hesitated for a moment.

As soon as this letter was written, Caesar departed for Milan, where Louis XII had just arrived, bringing with him proof positive that he had been calumniated in the evacuation of the conquered towns. He also was entrusted with the pope's mission to renew for another eighteen months the title of legate 'a latere' in France to Cardinal dumbest, the friend rather than the minister of Louis XII. Thus, thanks to the public proof of his innocence and the private use of his influence, Caesar soon made his peace with the King of France.

But this was not all. It was in the nature of Caesar's genius to divert an impending calamity that threatened his destruction so as to come out of it better than before, and he suddenly saw the advantage he might take from the pretended disobedience of his lieutenants. Already he had been disturbed now and again by their growing power, and coveted their towns, now he thought the hour had perhaps come for suppressing them also, and in the usurpation of their private possessions striking a blow at Florence, who always escaped him at the very moment when he thought to take her. It was indeed an annoying thing to have these fortresses and towns displaying another banner than his own in the midst of the beautiful Romagna which he desired for his own kingdom. For Vitellozzo possessed Citta di Castello, Bentivoglio Bologna, Gian Paolo Baglioni was in command of Perugia, Oliverotto had just taken Fermo, and Pandolfo Petrucci was lord of Siena; it was high time that all these returned: into his own hands. The lieutenants of the Duke of Valentinois, like Alexander's, were becoming too powerful, and Borgia must inherit from them, unless he were willing to let them become his own heirs. He obtained from Louis XII three hundred lances wherewith to march against them. As soon as Vitellozzo Vitelli received Caesar's letter he perceived that he was being sacrificed to the fear that the King of France inspired; but he was not one of those victims who suffer their throats to be cut in the expiation of a mistake: he was a buffalo of Romagna who opposed his horns to the knife of the butcher; besides, he had the example of Varano and the Manfredi before him, and, death for death, he preferred to perish in arms.

So Vitellozzo convoked at Maggione all whose lives or lands were threatened by this new reversal of Caesar's policy. These were Paolo Orsino, Gian Paolo Baglioni, Hermes Bentivoglio, representing his father Gian, Antonio di Venafro, the envoy of Pandolfo Petrucci, Olivertoxo da Fermo, and the Duke of Urbino: the first six had everything to lose, and the last had already lost everything.

A treaty of alliance was signed between the confederates: they engaged to resist whether he attacked them severally or all together.

Caesar learned the existence of this league by its first effects: the Duke of Urbino, who was adored by his subjects, had come with a handful of soldiers to the fortress of San Leone, and it had yielded at once. In less than a week towns and fortresses followed this example, and all the duchy was once more in the hands of the Duke of Urbino.

At the same time, each member of the confederacy openly proclaimed his revolt against the common enemy, and took up a hostile attitude.

Caesar was at Imola, awaiting the French troops, but with scarcely any men; so that Bentivoglio, who held part of the country, and the Duke of Urbino, who had just reconquered the rest of it, could probably have either taken him or forced him to fly and quit the Romagna, had they marched against him; all the more since the two men on whom he counted, viz., Don Ugo di Cardona, who had entered his service after Capua was taken, and Michelotto had mistaken his intention, and were all at once separated from him. He had really ordered them to fall back upon Rimini, and bring 200 light horse and 500 infantry of which they had the command; but, unaware of the urgency of his situation, at the very moment when they were attempting to surprise La Pergola and Fossombrone, they were surrounded by Orsino of Gravina and Vitellozzo. Ugo di Cardona and Michelotto defended themselves like lions; but in spite of their utmost efforts their little band was cut to pieces, and Ugo di Cardona taken prisoner, while Michelotto only escaped the same fate by lying down among the dead; when night came on, he escaped to Fano.

But even alone as he was, almost without troops at Imola, the confederates dared attempt nothing against Caesar, whether because of the personal fear he inspired, or because in him they respected the ally of the King of France; they contented themselves with taking the towns and fortresses in the neighbourhood.

Vitellozzo had retaken the fortresses of Fossombrone, Urbino, Cagli, and Aggobbio; Orsino of Gravina had reconquered Fano and the whole province; while Gian Maria de Varano, the same who by his absence had escaped being massacred with the rest of his family, had reentered Camerino, borne in triumph by his people. Not even all this could destroy Caesar's confidence in his own good fortune, and while he was on the one hand urging on the arrival of the French troops and calling into his pay all those gentlemen known as "broken lances," because they went about the country in parties of five or six only, and attached themselves to anyone who wanted them, he had opened up negotiations with his enemies, certain that from that very day when he should persuade them to a conference they were undone. Indeed, Caesar had the power of persuasion as a gift from heaven; and though they perfectly well knew his duplicity, they had no power of resisting, not so much his actual eloquence as that air of frank good-nature which Macchiavelli so greatly admired, and which indeed more than once deceived even him, wily politician as he was. In order to get Paolo Orsino to treat with him at Imola, Caesar sent Cardinal Borgia to the

confederates as a hostage; and on this Paolo Orsino hesitated no longer, and on the 25th of October, 1502, arrived at Imola.

Caesar received him as an old friend from whom one might have been estranged a few days because of some slight passing differences; he frankly avowed that all the fault was no doubt on his side, since he had contrived to alienate men who were such loyal lords and also such brave captains; but with men of their nature, he added, an honest, honourable explanation such as he would give must put everything once more in statu quo. To prove that it was goodwill, not fear, that brought him back to them, he showed Orsino the letters from Cardinal Amboise which announced the speedy arrival of French troops; he showed him those he had collected about him, in the wish, he declared, that they might be thoroughly convinced that what he chiefly regretted in the whole matter was not so much the loss of the distinguished captains who were the very soul of his vast enterprise, as that he had led the world to believe, in a way so fatal to his own interest, that he could for a single instant fail to recognise their merit; adding that he consequently relied upon him, Paolo Orsino, whom he had always cared for most, to bring back the confederates by a peace which would be as much for the profit of all as a war was hurtful to all, and that he was ready to sign a treaty in consonance with their wishes so long as it should not prejudice his own honour.

Orsino was the man Caesar wanted: full of pride and confidence in himself, he was convinced of the truth of the old proverb that says, “A pope cannot reign eight days, if he has hath the Colonnas and the Orsini against him.” He believed, therefore, if not in Caesar’s good faith, at any rate in the necessity he must feel for making peace; accordingly he signed with him the following conventions—which only needed ratification—on the 18th of October, 1502, which we reproduce here as Macchiavelli sent them to the magnificent republic of Florence.

“Agreement between the Duke of Valentinois and the Confederates.

“Let it be known to the parties mentioned below, and to all who shall see these presents, that His Excellency the Duke of Romagna of the one part and the Orsini of the other part, together with their confederates, desiring to put an end to differences, enmities, misunderstandings, and suspicions which have arisen between them, have resolved as follows:

“There shall be between them peace and alliance true and perpetual, with a

complete obliteration of wrongs and injuries which may have taken place up to this day, both parties engaging to preserve no resentment of the same; and in conformity with the aforesaid peace and union, His Excellency the Duke of Romagna shall receive into perpetual confederation, league, and alliance all the lords aforesaid; and each of them shall promise to defend the estates of all in general and of each in particular against any power that may annoy or attack them for any cause whatsoever, excepting always nevertheless the Pope Alexander VI and his Very Christian Majesty Louis XII, King of France: the lords above named promising on the other part to unite in the defence of the person and estates of His Excellency, as also those of the most illustrious lords, Don Gaffredo Borgia, Prince of Squillace, Don Roderigo Borgia, Duke of Sermaneta and Biselli, and Don Gian Borgia, Duke of Camerino and Negi, all brothers or nephews of the Duke of Romagna.

“Moreover, since the rebellion and usurpation of Urbino have occurred during the above-mentioned misunderstandings, all the confederates aforesaid and each of them shall bind themselves to unite all their forces for the recovery of the estates aforesaid and of such other places as have revolted and been usurped.

“His Excellency the Duke of Romagna shall undertake to continue to the Orsini and Vitelli their ancient engagements in the way of military service and on the same conditions.

“His Excellency promises further not to insist on the service in person of more than one of them, as they may choose: the service that the others may render shall be voluntary.

“He also promises that the second treaty shall be ratified by the sovereign pontiff, who shall not compel Cardinal Orsino to reside in Rome longer than shall seem convenient to this prelate.

“Furthermore, since there are certain differences between the Pope and the lord Gian Bentivoglio, the confederates aforesaid agree that they shall be put to the arbitration of Cardinal Orsino, of His Excellency the Duke of Romagna, and of the lord Pandolfo Petrucci, without appeal.

“Thus the confederates engage, each and all, so soon as they may be required by the Duke of Romagna, to put into his hands as a hostage one of the legitimate sons of each of them, in that place and at that time which he may be pleased to

indicate.

“The same confederates promising moreover, all and each, that if any project directed against any one of them come to their knowledge, to give warning thereof, and all to prevent such project reciprocally.

“It is agreed, over and above, between the Duke of Romagna and the confederates aforesaid, to regard as a common enemy any who shall fail to keep the present stipulations, and to unite in the destruction of any States not conforming thereto.

“(Signed) CAESAR, PAOLO ORSINO. “AGAPIT, Secretary.”

At the same time, while Orsino was carrying to the confederates the treaty drawn up between him and the duke, Bentivoglio, not willing to submit to the arbitration indicated, made an offer to Caesar of settling their differences by a private treaty, and sent his son to arrange the conditions: after some parleying, they were settled as follows:—

Bentivoglio should separate his fortunes from the Vitelli and Orsini;

He should furnish the Duke of Valentinois with a hundred men-at-arms and a hundred mounted archers for eight years;

He should pay 12,000 ducats per annum to Caesar, for the support of a hundred lances;

In return for this, his son Hannibal was to marry the sister of the Archbishop of Enna, who was Caesar’s niece, and the pope was to recognise his sovereignty in Bologna;

The King of France, the Duke of Ferrara, and the republic of Florence were to be the guarantors of this treaty.

But the convention brought to the confederates by Orsino was the cause of great difficulties on their part. Vitellozza Vitelli in particular, who knew Caesar the best, never ceased to tell the other condottieri that so prompt and easy a peace must needs be the cover to some trap; but since Caesar had meanwhile collected a considerable army at Imala, and the four hundred lances lent him by Louis XII had arrived at last, Vitellozzo and Oliverotto decided to sign the treaty that

Orsino brought, and to let the Duke of Urbino and the lord of Camerino know of it; they, seeing plainly that it was henceforth impassible to make a defence unaided, had retired, the one to Citta di Castello and the other into the kingdom of Naples.

But Caesar, saying nothing of his intentions, started on the 10th of December, and made his way to Cesena with a powerful army once more under his command. Fear began to spread on all sides, not only in Romagna but in the whole of Northern Italy; Florence, seeing him move away from her, only thought it a blind to conceal his intentions; while Venice, seeing him approach her frontiers, despatched all her troops to the banks of the Po. Caesar perceived their fear, and lest harm should be done to himself by the mistrust it might inspire, he sent away all French troops in his service as soon as he reached Cesena, except a hundred men with M. de Candale, his brother-in-law; it was then seen that he only had 2000 cavalry and 2000 infantry with him. Several days were spent in parleying, for at Cesena Caesar found the envoys of the Vitelli and Orsini, who themselves were with their army in the duchy of Urbino; but after the preliminary discussions as to the right course to follow in carrying on the plan of conquest, there arose such difficulties between the general-in-chief and these agents, that they could not but see the impossibility of getting anything settled by intermediaries, and the urgent necessity of a conference between Caesar and one of the chiefs. So Oliverotto ran the risk of joining the duke in order to make proposals to him, either to march an Tuscany or to take Sinigaglia, which was the only place in the duchy of Urbino that had not again fallen into Caesar's power. Caesar's reply was that he did not desire to war upon Tuscany, because the Tuscans were his friends; but that he approved of the lieutenants' plan with regard to Sinigaglia, and therefore was marching towards Fano.

But the daughter of Frederic, the former Duke of Urbino, who held the town of Sinigaglia, and who was called the lady-prefect, because she had married Gian delta Rovere, whom his uncle, Sixtus IV, had made prefect of Rome, judging that it would be impossible to defend herself against the forces the Duke of Valentinois was bringing, left the citadel in the hands of a captain, recommending him to get the best terms he could for the town, and took boat for Venice.

Caesar learned this news at Rimini, through a messenger from Vitelli and the Orsini, who said that the governor of the citadel, though refusing to yield to them, was quite ready to make terms with him, and consequently they would

engage to go to the town and finish the business there. Caesar's reply was that in consequence of this information he was sending some of his troops to Cesena and Imola, for they would be useless to him, as he should now have theirs, which together with the escort he retained would be sufficient, since his only object was the complete pacification of the duchy of Urbino. He added that this pacification would not be possible if his old friends continued to distrust him, and to discuss through intermediaries alone plans in which their own fortunes were interested as well as his. The messenger returned with this answer, and the confederates, though feeling, it is true, the justice of Caesar's remarks, none the less hesitated to comply with his demand. Vitellozzo Vitelli in particular showed a want of confidence in him which nothing seemed able to subdue; but, pressed by Oliverotto, Gravina, and Orsino, he consented at last to await the duke's coming; making concession rather because he could not bear to appear more timid than his companions, than because of any confidence he felt in the return of friendship that Borgia was displaying.

The duke learned the news of this decision, so much desired, when he arrived at Fano on the 20th of December 1502. At once he summoned eight of his most faithful friends, among whom were d'Enna, his nephew, Michelotto, and Ugo di Cardona, and ordered them, as soon as they arrived at Sinigaglia, and had seen Vitellozzo, Gravina, Oliverotto, and Orsino come out to meet them, on a pretext of doing them honour, to place themselves on the right and left hand of the four generals, two beside each, so that at a given signal they might either stab or arrest them; next he assigned to each of them his particular man, bidding them not quit his side until he had reentered Sinigaglia and arrived at the quarters prepared for him; then he sent orders to such of the soldiers as were in cantonments in the neighbourhood to assemble to the number of 8000 on the banks of the Metaurus, a little river of Umbria which runs into the Adriatic and has been made famous by the defeat of Hannibal.

The duke arrived at the rendezvous given to his army on the 31st of December, and instantly sent out in front two hundred horse, and immediately behind them his infantry; following close in the midst of his men-at-arms, following the coast of the Adriatic, with the mountains on his right and the sea on his left, which in part of the way left only space for the army to march ten abreast.

After four hours' march, the duke at a turn of the path perceived Sinigaglia, nearly a mile distant from the sea, and a bowshot from the mountains; between the army and the town ran a little river, whose banks he had to follow for some

distance. At last he found a bridge opposite a suburb of the town, and here Caesar ordered his cavalry to stop: it was drawn up in two lines, one between the road and the river, the other on the side of the country, leaving the whole width of the road to the infantry: which latter defiled, crossed the bridge, and entering the town, drew themselves up in battle array in the great square.

On their side, Vitellazzo, Gravina, Orsino, and Oliverotto, to make room for the duke's army, had quartered their soldiers in little towns or villages in the neighbourhood of Sinigaglia; Oliverotto alone had kept nearly 1000 infantry and 150 horse, who were in barracks in the suburb through which the duke entered.

Caesar had made only a few steps towards the town when he perceived Vitellozzo at the gate, with the Duke of Gravina and Orsina, who all came out to meet him; the last two quite gay and confident, but the first so gloomy and dejected that you would have thought he foresaw the fate that was in store for him; and doubtless he had not been without some presentiments; for when he left his army to come to Sinigaglia, he had bidden them farewell as though never to meet again, had commended the care of his family to the captains, and embraced his children with tears—a weakness which appeared strange to all who knew him as a brave condottiere.

The duke marched up to them holding out his hand, as a sign that all was over and forgotten, and did it with an air at once so loyal and so smiling that Gravina and Orsina could no longer doubt the genuine return of his friendship, and it was only Vitellozza still appeared sad. At the same moment, exactly as they had been commanded, the duke's accomplices took their posts on the right and left of those they were to watch, who were all there except Oliverotto, whom the duke could not see, and began to seek with uneasy looks; but as he crossed the suburb he perceived him exercising his troops on the square. Caesar at once despatched Michelotto and d'Enna, with a message that it was a rash thing to have his troops out, when they might easily start some quarrel with the duke's men and bring about an affray: it would be much better to settle them in barracks and then come to join his companions, who were with Caesar. Oliverotto, drawn by the same fate as his friends, made no abjection, ordered his soldiers indoors, and put his horse to the gallop to join the duke, escorted on either side by d'Enna and Michelotto. Caesar, on seeing him, called him, took him by the hand, and continued his march to the palace that had been prepared for him, his four victims following after.

Arrived on the threshold, Caesar dismounted, and signing to the leader of the men-at-arms to, await his orders, he went in first, followed by Oliverotto, Gravina, Vitellozzo Vitelli, and Orsino, each accompanied by his two satellites; but scarcely had they gone upstairs and into the first room when the door was shut behind them, and Caesar turned round, saying, “The hour has come!” This was the signal agreed upon. Instantly the former confederates were seized, thrown down, and forced to surrender with a dagger at their throat. Then, while they were being carried to a dungeon, Caesar opened the window, went out on the balcony and cried out to the leader of his men-at-arms, “Go forward!” The man was in the secret, he rushed on with his band towards the barracks where Oliverotto’s soldiers had just been consigned, and they, suddenly surprised and off their guard, were at once made prisoners; then the duke’s troops began to pillage the town, and he summoned Macchiavelli.

Caesar and the Florentine envoy were nearly two hours shut up together, and since Macchiavelli himself recounts the history of this interview, we will give his own words.

“He summoned me,” says the Florentine ambassador, “and in the calmest manner showed me his joy at the success of this enterprise, which he assured me he had spoken of to me the evening before; I remember that he did, but I did not at that time understand what he meant; next he explained, in terms of much feeling and lively affection for our city, the different motives which had made him desire your alliance, a desire to which he hopes you will respond. He ended with charging me to lay three proposals before your lordships: first, that you rejoice with him in the destruction at a single blow of the mortal enemies of the king, himself, and you, and the consequent disappearance of all seeds of trouble and dissension likely to waste Italy: this service of his, together with his refusal to allow the prisoners to march against you, ought, he thinks, to excite your gratitude towards him; secondly, he begs that you will at this juncture give him a striking proof of your friendliness, by urging your cavalry’s advance towards Borgo, and there assembling some infantry also, in order that they may march with him, should need arise, on Castello or on Perugia. Lastly, he desires—and this is his third condition—that you arrest the Duke of Urbino, if he should flee from Castello into your territories, when he learns that Vitellozzo is a prisoner.

“When I objected that to give him up would not beseem the dignity of the republic, and that you would never consent, he approved of my words, and said that it would be enough for you to keep the duke, and not give him his liberty

without His Excellency's permission. I have promised to give you all this information, to which he awaits your reply."

The same night eight masked men descended to the dungeon where the prisoners lay: they believed at that moment that the fatal hour had arrived for all. But this time the executioners had to do with Vitellozzo and Oliverotto alone. When these two captains heard that they were condemned, Oliverotto burst forth into reproaches against Vitellozzo, saying that it was all his fault that they had taken up arms against the duke: not a word Vitellozzo answered except a prayer that the pope might grant him plenary indulgence for all his sins. Then the masked men took them away, leaving Orsino and Gravina to await a similar fate, and led away the two chosen out to die to a secluded spot outside the ramparts of the town, where they were strangled and buried at once in two trenches that had been dug beforehand.

The two others were kept alive until it should be known if the pope had arrested Cardinal Orsino, archbishop of Florence and lord of Santa Croce; and when the answer was received in the affirmative from His Holiness, Gravina and Orsino, who had been transferred to a castle, were likewise strangled.

The duke, leaving instructions with Michelotto, set off for Sinigaglia as soon as the first execution was over, assuring Macchiavelli that he had never had any other thought than that of giving tranquillity to the Romagna and to Tuscany, and also that he thought he had succeeded by taking and putting to death the men who had been the cause of all the trouble; also that any other revolt that might take place in the future would be nothing but sparks that a drop of water could extinguish.

The pope had barely learned that Caesar had his enemies in his power, when, eager to play the same winning game himself, he announced to Cardinal Orsino, though it was then midnight, that his son had taken Sinigaglia, and gave him an invitation to come the next morning and talk over the good news. The cardinal, delighted at this increase of favour, did not miss his appointment. So, in the morning, he started on horseback for the Vatican; but at a turn of the first street he met the governor of Rome with a detachment of cavalry, who congratulated himself on the happy chance that they were taking the same road, and accompanied him to the threshold of the Vatican. There the cardinal dismounted,

and began to ascend the stairs; scarcely, however, had he reached the first landing before his mules and carriages were seized and shut in the palace stables. When he entered the hall of the Perropont, he found that he and all his suite were surrounded by armed men, who led him into another apartment, called the Vicar's Hall, where he found the Abbate Alviano, the protonotary Orsino, Jacopo Santa Croce, and Rinaldo Orsino, who were all prisoners like himself; at the same time the governor received orders to seize the castle of Monte Giardino, which belonged to the Orsini, and take away all the jewels, all the hangings, all the furniture, and all the silver that he might find.

The governor carried out his orders conscientiously, and brought to the Vatican everything he seized, down to the cardinal's account-book. On consulting this book, the pope found out two things: first, that a sum of 2000 ducats was due to the cardinal, no debtor's name being mentioned; secondly, that the cardinal had bought three months before, for 1500 Roman crowns, a magnificent pearl which could not be found among the objects belonging to him: on which Alexander ordered that from that very moment until the negligence in the cardinal's accounts was repaired, the men who were in the habit of bringing him food twice a day on behalf of his mother should not be admitted into the Castle Sant' Angelo. The same day, the cardinal's mother sent the pope the 2000 ducats, and the next day his mistress, in man's attire, came in person to bring the missing pearl. His Holiness, however, was so struck with her beauty in this costume, that, we are told, he let her keep the pearl for the same price she had paid for it.

Then the pope allowed the cardinal to have his food brought as before, and he died of poison on the 22nd of February—that is, two days after his accounts had been set right.

That same night the Prince of Squillace set off to take possession, in the pope's name, of the lands of the deceased.

CHAPTER XIV

The Duke of Valentinois had continued, his road towards Citta di Castello and Perugia, and had seized these two towns without striking a blow; for the Vitelli had fled from the former, and the latter had been abandoned by Gian Paolo Baglione with no attempt whatever at resistance. There still remained Siena, where Pandolfo Petrucci was shut up, the only man remaining of all who had joined the league against Caesar.

But Siena was under the protection of the French. Besides, Siena was not one of the States of the Church, and Caesar had no rights there. Therefore he was content with insisting upon Pandolfo Petrucci's leaving the town and retiring to Lucca, which he accordingly did.

Then all on this side being peaceful and the whole of Romagna in subjection, Caesar resolved to return to Rome and help the pope to destroy all that was left of the Orsini.

This was all the easier because Louis XII, having suffered reverses in the kingdom of Naples, had since then been much concerned with his own affairs to disturb himself about his allies. So Caesar, doing for the neighbourhood of the Holy See the same thing that he had done far the Romagna, seized in succession Vicovaro, Cera, Palombera, Lanzano, and Cervetti ; when these conquests were achieved, having nothing else to do now that he had brought the pontifical States into subjection from the frontiers of Naples to those of Venice, he returned to Rome to concert with his father as to the means of converting his duchy into a kingdom.

Caesar arrived at the right moment to share with Alexander the property of Cardinal Gian Michele, who had just died, having received a poisoned cup from the hands of the pope.

The future King of Italy found his father preoccupied with a grand project: he had resolved, for the Feast of St. Peter's, to create nine cardinals. What he had to gain from these nominations is as follows:

First, the cardinals elected would leave all their offices vacant; these offices would fall into the hands of the pope, and he would sell them;

Secondly, each of them would buy his election, more or less dear according to his fortune; the price, left to be settled at the pope's fancy, would vary from 10,000 to 40,000 ducats;

Lastly, since as cardinals they would by law lose the right of making a will, the pope, in order to inherit from them, had only to poison them: this put him in the position of a butcher who, if he needs money, has only to cut the throat of the fattest sheep in the flock.

The nomination came to pass: the new cardinals were Giovanni Castellarò Valentine, archbishop of Trani; Francesco Remolini, ambassador from the King of Aragon; Francesco Soderini, bishop of Volterra; Melchior Copis, bishop of Brissina; Nicolas Fiesque, bishop of Frejus; Francesco di Sprate, bishop of Leome; Adriano Castellense, clerk of the chamber, treasurer-general, and secretary of the briefs; Francesco Boris, bishop of Elva, patriarch of Constantinople, and secretary to the pope; and Giacomo Casanova, protonotary and private chamberlain to His Holiness.

The price of their simony paid and their vacated offices sold, the pope made his choice of those he was to poison: the number was fixed at three, one old and two new; the old one was Cardinal Casanova, and the new ones Melchior Copis and Adriano Castellense, who had taken the name of Adrian of Carneta from that town where he had been born, and where, in the capacity of clerk of the chamber, treasurer-general, and secretary of briefs, he had amassed an immense fortune.

So, when all was settled between Caesar and the pope, they invited their chosen guests to supper in a vineyard situated near the Vatican, belonging to the Cardinal of Corneto. In the morning of this day, the 2nd of August, they sent their servants and the steward to make all preparations, and Caesar himself gave the pope's butler two bottles of wine prepared with the white powder resembling sugar whose mortal properties he had so often proved, and gave orders that he was to serve this wine only when he was told, and only to persons specially indicated; the butler accordingly put the wine on a sideboard apart, bidding the waiters on no account to touch it, as it was reserved for the pope's drinking.

[The poison of the Borgias, say contemporary writers, was of two kinds, powder

and liquid. The poison in the form of powder was a sort of white flour, almost impalpable, with the taste of sugar, and called Contarella. Its composition is unknown.

The liquid poison was prepared, we are told in so strange a fashion that we cannot pass it by in silence. We repeat here what we read, and vouch for nothing ourselves, lest science should give us the lie.

A strong dose of arsenic was administered to a boar; as soon as the poison began to take effect, he was hung up by his heels; convulsions supervened, and a froth deadly and abundant ran out from his jaws; it was this froth, collected into a silver vessel and transferred into a bottle hermetically sealed, that made the liquid poison.]

Towards evening Alexander VI walked from the Vatican leaning on Caesar's arm, and turned his steps towards the vineyard, accompanied by Cardinal Caraffa; but as the heat was great and the climb rather steep, the pope, when he reached the top, stopped to take breath; then putting his hand on his breast, he found that he had left in his bedroom a chain that he always wore round his neck, which suspended a gold medallion that enclosed the sacred host. He owed this habit to a prophecy that an astrologer had made, that so long as he carried about a consecrated wafer, neither steel nor poison could take hold upon him. Now, finding himself without his talisman, he ordered Monsignors Caraffa to hurry back at once to the Vatican, and told him in which part of his room he had left it, so that he might get it and bring it him without delay. Then, as the walk had made him thirsty, he turned to a valet, giving signs with his hand as he did so that his messenger should make haste, and asked for something to drink. Caesar, who was also thirsty, ordered the man to bring two glasses. By a curious coincidence, the butler had just gone back to the Vatican to fetch some magnificent peaches that had been sent that very day to the pope, but which had been forgotten when he came here; so the valet went to the under butler, saying that His Holiness and Monsignors the Duke of Romagna were thirsty and asking for a drink. The under butler, seeing two bottles of wine set apart, and having heard that this wine was reserved for the pope, took one, and telling the valet to bring two glasses on a tray, poured out this wine, which both drank, little thinking that it was what they had themselves prepared to poison their guests.

Meanwhile Caraffa hurried to the Vatican, and, as he knew the palace well, went up to the pope's bedroom, a light in his hand and attended by no servant. As he turned round a corridor a puff of wind blew out his lamp; still, as he knew the way, he went on, thinking there was no need of seeing to find the object he was in search of; but as he entered the room he recoiled a step, with a cry of terror: he beheld a ghastly apparition; it seemed that there before his eyes, in the middle of the room, between the door and the cabinet which held the medallion, Alexander VI, motionless and livid, was lying on a bier at whose four corners there burned four torches. The cardinal stood still for a moment, his eyes fixed, and his hair standing on end, without strength to move either backward or forward; then thinking it was all a trick of fancy or an apparition of the devil's making, he made the sign of the cross, invoking God's holy name; all instantly vanished, torches, bier, and corpse, and the seeming mortuary, chamber was once more in darkness.

Then Cardinal Caraffa, who has himself recorded this strange event, and who was afterwards Pope Paul IV, entered baldly, and though an icy sweat ran down his brow, he went straight to the cabinet, and in the drawer indicated found the gold chain and the medallion, took them, and hastily went out to give them to the pope. He found supper served, the guests arrived, and His Holiness ready to take his 317 place at table; as soon as the cardinal was in sight, His Holiness, who was very pale, made one step towards him; Caraffa doubled his pace, and handed the medallion to him; but as the pope stretched forth his arm to take it, he fell back with a cry, instantly followed by violent convulsions: an instant later, as he advanced to render his father assistance, Caesar was similarly seized; the effect of the poison had been more rapid than usual, for Caesar had doubled the dose, and there is little doubt that their heated condition increased its activity.

The two stricken men were carried side by side to the Vatican, where each was taken to his own rooms: from that moment they never met again.

As soon as he reached his bed, the pope was seized with a violent fever, which did not give way to emetics or to bleeding; almost immediately it became necessary to administer the last sacraments of the Church; but his admirable bodily constitution, which seemed to have defied old age, was strong enough to fight eight days with death; at last, after a week of mortal agony, he died, without once uttering the name of Caesar or Lucrezia, who were the two poles around which had turned all his affections and all his crimes. His age was seventy-two, and he had reigned eleven years.

Caesar, perhaps because he had taken less of the fatal beverage, perhaps because the strength of his youth overcame the strength of the poison, or maybe, as some say, because when he reached his own rooms he had swallowed an antidote known only to himself, was not so prostrated as to lose sight for a moment of the terrible position he was in: he summoned his faithful Michelotto, with those he could best count on among his men, and disposed this band in the various rooms that led to his own, ordering the chief never to leave the foot of his bed, but to sleep lying on a rug, his hand upon the handle of his sword.

The treatment had been the same for Caesar as for the pope, but in addition to bleeding and emetics strange baths were added, which Caesar had himself asked for, having heard that in a similar case they had once cured Ladislaus, King of Naples. Four posts, strongly welded to the floor and ceiling, were set up in his room, like the machines at which farriers shoe horses; every day a bull was brought in, turned over on his back and tied by his four legs to the four posts; then, when he was thus fixed, a cut was made in his belly a foot and a half long, through which the intestines were drawn out; then Caesar slipped into this living bath of blood: when the bull was dead, Caesar was taken out and rolled up in burning hot blankets, where, after copious perspirations, he almost always felt some sort of relief.

Every two hours Caesar sent to ask news of his father: he hardly waited to hear that he was dead before, though still at death's door himself, he summoned up all the force of character and presence of mind that naturally belonged to him. He ordered Michelotto to shut the doors of the Vatican before the report of Alexander's decease could spread about the town, and forbade anyone whatsoever to enter the pope's apartments until the money and papers had been removed. Michelotto obeyed at once, went to find Cardinal Casanova, held a dagger at his throat, and made him deliver up the keys of the pope's rooms and cabinets; then, under his guidance, took away two chests full of gold, which perhaps contained 100,000 Roman crowns in specie, several boxes full of jewels, much silver and many precious vases; all these were carried to Caesar's chamber; the guards of the room were doubled; then the doors of the Vatican were once more thrown open, and the death of the pope was proclaimed.

Although the news was expected, it produced none the less a terrible effect in Rome; for although Caesar was still alive, his condition left everyone in suspense: had the mighty Duke of Romagna, the powerful condottiere who had taken thirty towns and fifteen fortresses in five years, been seated, sword in

hand, upon his charger, nothing would have been uncertain of fluctuating even for a moment; far, as Caesar afterwards told Macchiavelli, his ambitious soul had provided for all things that could occur on the day of the pope's death, except the one that he should be dying himself; but being nailed down to his bed, sweating off the effects the poison had wrought; so, though he had kept his power of thinking he could no longer act, but must needs wait and suffer the course of events, instead of marching on in front and controlling them.

Thus he was forced to regulate his actions no longer by his own plans but according to circumstances. His most bitter enemies, who could press him hardest, were the Orsini and the Colonnas: from the one family he had taken their blood, from the other their goods.

So he addressed himself to those to whom he could return what he had taken, and opened negotiations with the Colonnas.

Meanwhile the obsequies of the pope were going forward: the vice-chancellor had sent out orders to the highest among the clergy, the superiors of convents, and the secular orders, not to fail to appear, according to regular custom, on pain of being despoiled of their office and dignities, each bringing his own company to the Vatican, to be present at the pope's funeral; each therefore appeared on the day and at the hour appointed at the pontifical palace, whence the body was to be conveyed to the church of St. Peter's, and there buried. The corpse was found to be abandoned and alone in the mortuary chamber; for everyone of the name of Borgia, except Caesar, lay hidden, not knowing what might come to pass. This was indeed well justified; for Fabio Orsino, meeting one member of the family, stabbed him, and as a sign of the hatred they had sworn to one another, bathed his mouth and hands in the blood.

The agitation in Rome was so great, that when the corpse of Alexander VI was about to enter the church there occurred a kind of panic, such as will suddenly arise in times of popular agitation, instantly causing so great a disturbance in the funeral cortege that the guards drew up in battle array, the clergy fled into the sacristy, and the bearers dropped the bier.

The people, tearing off the pall which covered it, disclosed the corpse, and everyone could see with impunity and close at hand the man who, fifteen days before, had made princes, kings and emperors tremble, from one end of the world to the other.

But in accordance with that religious feeling towards death which all men instinctively feel, and which alone survives every other, even in the heart of the atheist, the bier was taken up again and carried to the foot of the great altar in St. Peter's, where, set on trestles, it was exposed to public view; but the body had become so black, so deformed and swollen, that it was horrible to behold; from its nose a bloody matter escaped, the mouth gaped hideously, and the tongue was so monstrously enlarged that it filled the whole cavity; to this frightful appearance was added a decomposition so great that, although at the pope's funeral it is customary to kiss the hand which bore the Fisherman's ring, not one approached to offer this mark of respect and religious reverence to the representative of God on earth.

Towards seven o'clock in the evening, when the declining day adds so deep a melancholy to the silence of a church, four porters and two working carpenters carried the corpse into the chapel where it was to be interred, and, lifting it off the catafalque, where it lay in state, put it in the coffin which was to be its last abode; but it was found that the coffin was too short, and the body could not be got in till the legs were bent and thrust in with violent blows; then the carpenters put on the lid, and while one of them sat on the top to force the knees to bend, the others hammered in the nails: amid those Shakespearian pleasantries that sound as the last orison in the ear of the mighty; then, says Tommaso Tommasi, he was placed on the right of the great altar of St. Peter's, beneath a very ugly tomb.

The next morning this epitaph was found inscribed upon the tomb:

“VENDIT ALEXANDER CLAVES, ALTARIA, CHRISTUM: EMERAT ILLE PRIUS, VENDERE JUKE POTEST”;

that is,

“Pope Alexander sold the Christ, the altars, and the keys: But anyone who buys a thing may sell it if he please.”

CHAPTER XV

From the effect produced at Rome by Alexander's death, one may imagine what happened not only in the whole of Italy but also in the rest of the world: for a moment Europe swayed, for the column which supported the vault of the political edifice had given way, and the star with eyes of flame and rays of blood, round which all things had revolved for the last eleven years, was now extinguished, and for a moment the world, on a sudden struck motionless, remained in silence and darkness.

After the first moment of stupefaction, all who had an injury to avenge arose and hurried to the chase. Sforza retook Pesaro, Baglione Perugia, Guido and Ubaldo Urbino, and La Rovere Sinigaglia; the Vitelli entered Citta di Castello, the Appiani Piombino, the Orsini Monte Giordano and their other territories; Romagna alone remained impassive and loyal, for the people, who have no concern with the quarrels of the great, provided they do not affect themselves, had never been so happy as under the government of Caesar.

The Colonnas were pledged to maintain a neutrality, and had been consequently restored to the possession of their castles and the cities of Chiuzano, Capo d'Anno, Frascati, Rocca di Papa, and Nettuno, which they found in a better condition than when they had left them, as the pope had had them embellished and fortified.

Caesar was still in the Vatican with his troops, who, loyal to him in his misfortune, kept watch about the palace, where he was writhing on his bed of pain and roaring like a wounded lion. The cardinals, who had in their first terror fled, each his own way, instead of attending the pope's obsequies, began to assemble once more, some at the Minerva, others around Cardinal Caraffa. Frightened by the troops that Caesar still had, especially since the command was entrusted to Michelotto, they collected all the money they could to levy an army of 2000 soldiers with. Charles Taneo at their head, with the title of Captain of the Sacred College. It was then hoped that peace was reestablished, when it was heard that Prospero Colonna was coming with 3000 men from the side of Naples, and Fabio Orsino from the side of Viterbo with 200 horse and more than 1000 infantry. Indeed, they entered Rome at only one day's interval one from another, by so similar an ardour were they inspired.

Thus there were five armies in Rome: Caesar's army, holding the Vatican and the Borgo; the army of the Bishop of Nicastro, who had received from Alexander the guardianship of the Castle Sant' Angelo and had shut himself up there, refusing to yield; the army of the Sacred College, which was stationed round about the Minerva; the army of Prospero Colonna, which was encamped at the Capitol; and the army of Fabio Orsino, in barracks at the Ripetta.

On their side, the Spaniards had advanced to Terracino, and the French to Nepi. The cardinals saw that Rome now stood upon a mine which the least spark might cause to explode: they summoned the ambassadors of the Emperor of Germany, the Kings of France and Spain, and the republic of Venice to raise their voice in the name of their masters. The ambassadors, impressed with the urgency of the situation, began by declaring the Sacred College inviolable: they then ordered the Orsini, the Colonnas, and the Duke of Valentinois to leave Rome and go each his own way.

The Orsini were the first to submit: the next morning their example was followed by the Colonnas. No one was left but Caesar, who said he was willing to go, but desired to make his conditions beforehand: the Vatican was undermined, he declared, and if his demands were refused he and those who came to take him should be blown up together.

It was known that his were never empty threats they came to terms with him.

[Caesar promised to remain ten miles away from Rome the whole time the Conclave lasted, and not to take any action against the town or any other of the Ecclesiastical States: Fabio Orsino and Prospero Colonna had made the same promises.]

[It was agreed that Caesar should quit Rome with his army, artillery, and baggage; and to ensure his not being attacked or molested in the streets, the Sacred College should add to his numbers 400 infantry, who, in case of attack or insult, would fight for him. The Venetian ambassador answered for the Orsini, the Spanish ambassador for the Colonnas, the ambassador of France for Caesar.]

At the day and hour appointed Caesar sent out his artillery, which consisted of eighteen pieces of cannon, and 400 infantry of the Sacred College, on each of whom he bestowed a ducat: behind the artillery came a hundred chariots

escorted by his advance guard.

The duke was carried out of the gate of the Vatican: he lay on a bed covered with a scarlet canopy, supported by twelve halberdiers, leaning forward on his cushions so that no one might see his face with its purple lips and bloodshot eyes: beside him was his naked sword, to show that, feeble as he was, he could use it at need: his finest charger, caparisoned in black velvet embroidered with his arms, walked beside the bed, led by a page, so that Caesar could mount in case of surprise or attack: before him and behind, both right and left, marched his army, their arms in rest, but without beating of drums or blowing of trumpets: this gave a sombre, funereal air to the whole procession, which at the gate of the city met Prospero Colonna awaiting it with a considerable band of men.

Caesar thought at first that, breaking his word as he had so often done himself, Prospero Colonna was going to attack him. He ordered a halt, and prepared to mount his horse; but Prospero Colonna, seeing the state he was in, advanced to his bedside alone: he came, against expectation, to offer him an escort, fearing an ambush on the part of Fabio Orsino, who had loudly sworn that he would lose his honour or avenge the death of Paolo Orsino, his father. Caesar thanked Colonna, and replied that from the moment that Orsino stood alone he ceased to fear him. Then Colonna saluted the duke, and rejoined his men, directing them towards Albano, while Caesar took the road to Citta Castellana, which had remained loyal.

When there, Caesar found himself not only master of his own fate but of others as well: of the twenty-two votes he owned in the Sacred College twelve had remained faithful, and as the Conclave was composed in all of thirty-seven cardinals, he with his twelve votes could make the majority incline to whichever side he chose. Accordingly he was courted both by the Spanish and the French party, each desiring the election of a pope of their own nation. Caesar listened, promising nothing and refusing nothing: he gave his twelve votes to Francesco Piccolomini, Cardinal of Siena, one of his father's creatures who had remained his friend, and the latter was elected on the 8th of October and took the name of Pius III.

Caesar's hopes did not deceive him: Pius III was hardly elected before he sent him a safe-conduct to Rome: the duke came back with 250 men-at-arms, 250 light horse, and 800 infantry, and lodged in his palace, the soldiers camping round about.

Meanwhile the Orsini, pursuing their projects of vengeance against Caesar, had been levying many troops at Perugia and the neighbourhood to bring against him to Rome, and as they fancied that France, in whose service they were engaged, was humouring the duke for the sake of the twelve votes which were wanted to secure the election of Cardinal Amboise at the next Conclave, they went over to the service of Spain.

Meanwhile Caesar was signing a new treaty with Louis XII, by which he engaged to support him with all his forces, and even with his person, so soon as he could ride, in maintaining his conquest of Naples: Louis, on his side, guaranteed that he should retain possession of the States he still held, and promised his help in recovering those he had lost.

The day when this treaty was made known, Gonzalvo di Cordovo proclaimed to the sound of a trumpet in all the streets of Rome that every Spanish subject serving in a foreign army was at once to break his engagement on pain of being found guilty of high treason.

This measure robbed Caesar of ten or twelve of his best officers and of nearly 300 men.

Then the Orsini, seeing his army thus reduced, entered Rome, supported by the Spanish ambassador, and summoned Caesar to appear before the pope and the Sacred College and give an account of his crimes.

Faithful to his engagements, Pius III replied that in his quality of sovereign prince the duke in his temporal administration was quite independent and was answerable for his actions to God alone.

But as the pope felt he could not much longer support Caesar against his enemies for all his goodwill, he advised him to try to join the French army, which was still advancing on Naples, in the midst of which he would alone find safety. Caesar resolved to retire to Bracciano, where Gian Giordano Orsino, who had once gone with him to France, and who was the only member of the family who had not declared against him, offered him an asylum in the name of Cardinal dumbest: so one morning he ordered his troops to march for this town, and, taking his place in their midst, he left Rome.

But though Caesar had kept his intentions quiet, the Orsini had been forewarned, and, taking out all the troops they had by the gate of San Pancraccio, they had

made along detour and blocked Caesar's way; so, when the latter arrived at Storta, he found the Orsini's army drawn up awaiting him in numbers exceeding his own by at least one-half.

Caesar saw that to come to blows in his then feeble state was to rush on certain destruction; so he ordered his troops to retire, and, being a first-rate strategist, echeloned his retreat so skilfully that his enemies, though they followed, dared not attack him, and he reentered the pontifical town without the loss of a single man.

This time Caesar went straight to the Vatican, to put himself more directly under the pope's protection; he distributed his soldiers about the palace, so as to guard all its exits. Now the Orsini, resolved to make an end of Caesar, had determined to attack him wheresoever he might be, with no regard to the sanctity of the place: this they attempted, but without success, as Caesar's men kept a good guard on every side, and offered a strong defence.

Then the Orsini, not being able to force the guard of the Castle Sant' Angelo, hoped to succeed better with the duke by leaving Rome and then returning by the Torione gate; but Caesar anticipated this move, and they found the gate guarded and barricaded. None the less, they pursued their design, seeking by open violence the vengeance that they had hoped to obtain by craft; and, having surprised the approaches to the gate, set fire to it: a passage gained, they made their way into the gardens of the castle, where they found Caesar awaiting them at the head of his cavalry.

Face to face with danger, the duke had found his old strength: and he was the first to rush upon his enemies, loudly challenging Orsino in the hope of killing him should they meet; but either Orsino did not hear him or dared not fight; and after an exciting contest, Caesar, who was numerically two-thirds weaker than his enemy, saw his cavalry cut to pieces; and after performing miracles of personal strength and courage, was obliged to return to the Vatican. There he found the pope in mortal agony: the Orsini, tired of contending against the old man's word of honour pledged to the duke, had by the interposition of Pandolfo Petrucci, gained the ear of the pope's surgeon, who placed a poisoned plaster upon a wound in his leg.

The pope then was actually dying when Caesar, covered with dust and blood, entered his room, pursued by his enemies, who knew no check till they reached

the palace walls, behind which the remnant of his army still held their ground.

Pius III, who knew he was about to die, sat up in his bed, gave Caesar the key of the corridor which led to the Castle of Sant' Angelo, and an order addressed to the governor to admit him and his family, to defend him to the last extremity, and to let him go wherever he thought fit; and then fell fainting on his bed.

Caesar took his two daughters by the hand, and, followed by the little dukes of Sermaneta and Nepi, took refuge in the last asylum open to him.

The same night the pope died: he had reigned only twenty-six days.

After his death, Caesar, who had cast himself fully dressed upon his bed, heard his door open at two o'clock in the morning: not knowing what anyone might want of him at such an hour, he raised himself on one elbow and felt for the handle of his sword with his other hand; but at the first glance he recognised in his nocturnal visitor Giuliano della Rovere.

Utterly exhausted by the poison, abandoned by his troops, fallen as he was from the height of his power, Caesar, who could now do nothing for himself, could yet make a pope: Giuliano della Rovere had come to buy the votes of his twelve cardinals.

Caesar imposed his conditions, which were accepted.

If elected, Giuliano della Rovere was to help Caesar to recover his territories in Romagna; Caesar was to remain general of the Church; and Francesco Maria della Rovere, prefect of Rome, was to marry one of Caesar's daughters.

On these conditions Caesar sold his twelve cardinals to Giuliano.

The next day, at Giuliano's request, the Sacred College ordered the Orsini to leave Rome for the whole time occupied by the Conclave.

On the 31st of October 1503, at the first scrutiny, Giuliano della Rovere was elected pope, and took the name of Julius II.

He was scarcely installed in the Vatican when he made it his first care to summon Caesar and give him his former rooms there; then, since the duke was fully restored to health, he began to busy himself with the reestablishment of his

affairs, which had suffered sadly of late.

The defeat of his army and his own escape to Sant' Angelo, where he was supposed to be a prisoner, had brought about great changes in Romagna. Sesena was once more in the power of the Church, as formerly it had been; Gian Sforza had again entered Pesaro; Ordelafi had seized Forli; Malatesta was laying claim to Rimini; the inhabitants of Imola had assassinated their governor, and the town was divided between two opinions, one that it should be put into the hands of the Riani, the other, into the hands of the Church; Faenza had remained loyal longer than any other place; but at last, losing hope of seeing Caesar recover his power, it had summoned Francesco, a natural son of Galeotto Manfredi, the last surviving heir of this unhappy family, all whose legitimate descendants had been massacred by Borgia.

It is true that the fortresses of these different places had taken no part in these revolutions, and had remained immutably faithful to the Duke of Valentinois.

So it was not precisely the defection of these towns, which, thanks to their fortresses, might be reconquered, that was the cause of uneasiness to Caesar and Julius II, it was the difficult situation that Venice had thrust upon them. Venice, in the spring of the same year, had signed a treaty of peace with the Turks: thus set free from her eternal enemy, she had just led her forces to the Romagna, which she had always coveted: these troops had been led towards Ravenna, the farthest limit of the Papal estates, and put under the command of Giacompo Venieri, who had failed to capture Cesena, and had only failed through the courage of its inhabitants; but this check had been amply compensated by the surrender of the fortresses of Val di Lamane and Faenza, by the capture of Farlimpopoli, and the surrender of Rimini, which Pandolfo Malatesta, its lord, exchanged for the seigniory of Cittadella, in the State of Padua, and for the rank of gentleman of Venice.

Then Caesar made a proposition to Julius II: this was to make a momentary cession to the Church of his own estates in Romagna, so that the respect felt by the Venetians for the Church might save these towns from their aggressors; but, says Guicciardini, Julius II, whose ambition, so natural in sovereign rulers, had not yet extinguished the remains of rectitude, refused to accept the places, afraid of exposing himself to the temptation of keeping them later on, against his promises.

But as the case was urgent, he proposed to Caesar that he should leave Rome, embark at Ostia, and cross over to Spezia, where Michelotto was to meet him at the head of 100 men-at-arms and 100 light horse, the only remnant of his magnificent army, thence by land to Ferrara, and from Ferrara to Imala, where, once arrived, he could utter his war-cry so loud that it would be heard through the length and breadth of Romagna.

This advice being after Caesar's own heart, he accepted it at once.

The resolution submitted to the Sacred College was approved, and Caesar left for Ostia, accompanied by Bartolommeo della Rovere, nephew of His Holiness.

Caesar at last felt he was free, and fancied himself already on his good charger, a second time carrying war into all the places where he had formerly fought. When he reached Ostia, he was met by the cardinals of Sorrento and Volterra, who came in the name of Julius II to ask him to give up the very same citadels which he had refused three days before: the fact was that the pope had learned in the interim that the Venetians had made fresh aggressions, and recognised that the method proposed by Caesar was the only one that would check them. But this time it was Caesar's turn, to refuse, for he was weary of these tergiversations, and feared a trap; so he said that the surrender asked for would be useless, since by God's help he should be in Romagna before eight days were past. So the cardinals of Sorrento and Volterra returned to Rome with a refusal.

The next morning, just as Caesar was setting foot on his vessel, he was arrested in the name of Julius II.

He thought at first that this was the end; he was used to this mode of action, and knew how short was the space between a prison and a tomb; the matter was all the easier in his case, because the pope, if he chose, would have plenty of pretext for making a case against him. But the heart of Julius was of another kind from his; swift to anger, but open to clemency; so, when the duke came back to Rome guarded, the momentary irritation his refusal had caused was already calmed, and the pope received him in his usual fashion at his palace, and with his ordinary courtesy, although from the beginning it was easy for the duke to see that he was being watched. In return for this kind reception, Caesar consented to yield the fortress of Cesena to the pope, as being a town which had once belonged to the Church, and now should return; giving the deed, signed by Caesar, to one of his captains, called Pietro d'Oviedo, he ordered him to take

possession of the fortress in the name of the Holy See. Pietro obeyed, and starting at once for Cesena, presented himself armed with his warrant before Don Diego Chinon; a noble condottiere of Spain, who was holding the fortress in Caesar's name. But when he had read over the paper that Pietro d'Oviedo brought, Don Diego replied that as he knew his lord and master was a prisoner, it would be disgraceful in him to obey an order that had probably been wrested from him by violence, and that the bearer deserved to die for undertaking such a cowardly office. He therefore bade his soldiers seize d'Oviedo and fling him down from the top of the walls: this sentence was promptly executed.

This mark of fidelity might have proved fatal to Caesar: when the pope heard how his messenger had been treated, he flew into such a rage that the prisoner thought a second time that his hour was come; and in order to receive his liberty, he made the first of those new propositions to Julius II, which were drawn up in the form of a treaty and sanctioned by a bull. By these arrangements, the Duke of Valentinois was bound to hand over to His Holiness, within the space of forty days, the fortresses of Cesena and Bertinoro, and authorise the surrender of Forli. This arrangement was guaranteed by two bankers in Rome who were to be responsible for 15,000 ducats, the sum total of the expenses which the governor pretended he had incurred in the place on the duke's account. The pope on his part engaged to send Caesar to Ostia under the sole guard of the Cardinal of Santa Croce and two officers, who were to give him his full liberty on the very day when his engagements were fulfilled: should this not happen, Caesar was to be taken to Rome and imprisoned in the Castle of Sant' Angelo. In fulfilment of this treaty, Caesar went down the Tiber as far as Ostia, accompanied by the pope's treasurer and many of his servants. The Cardinal of Santa Croce followed, and the next day joined him there.

But as Caesar feared that Julius II might keep him a prisoner, in spite of his pledged word, after he had yielded up the fortresses, he asked, through the mediation of Cardinals Borgia and Remolina, who, not feeling safe at Rome, had retired to Naples, for a safe-conduct to Gonzalva of Cordova, and for two ships to take him there; with the return of the courier the safe-conduct arrived, announcing that the ships would shortly follow.

In the midst of all this, the Cardinal of Santa Croce, learning that by the duke's orders the governors of Cesena and Bertinoro had surrendered their fortresses to the captains of His Holiness, relaxed his rigour, and knowing that his prisoner would some day or other be free, began to let him go out without a guard. Then

Caesar, feeling some fear lest when he started with Gonzalvo's ships the same thing might happen as on the occasion of his embarking on the pope's vessel—that is, that he might be arrested a second time—concealed himself in a house outside the town; and when night came on, mounting a wretched horse that belonged to a peasant, rode as far as Nettuno, and there hired a little boat, in which he embarked for Monte Dragone, and thence gained Naples. Gonzalvo received him with such joy that Caesar was deceived as to his intention, and this time believed that he was really saved. His confidence was redoubled when, opening his designs to Gonzalvo, and telling him that he counted upon gaining Pisa and thence going on into Romagna, Gonzalvo allowed him to recruit as many soldiers at Naples as he pleased, promising him two ships to embark with. Caesar, deceived by these appearances, stopped nearly six weeks at Naples, every day seeing the Spanish governor and discussing his plans. But Gonzalvo was only waiting to gain time to tell the King of Spain that his enemy was in his hands; and Caesar actually went to the castle to bid Gonzalvo goodbye, thinking he was just about to start after he had embarked his men on the two ships. The Spanish governor received him with his accustomed courtesy, wished him every kind of prosperity, and embraced him as he left; but at the door of the castle Caesar found one of Gonzalvo's captains, Nuno Campeja by name, who arrested him as a prisoner of Ferdinand the Catholic. Caesar at these words heaved a deep sigh, cursing the ill luck that had made him trust the word of an enemy when he had so often broken his own.

He was at once taken to the castle, where the prison gate closed behind him, and he felt no hope that anyone would come to his aid; for the only being who was devoted to him in this world was Michelotto, and he had heard that Michelotto had been arrested near Pisa by order of Julius II. While Caesar was being taken to prison an officer came to him to deprive him of the safe-conduct given him by Gonzalvo.

The day after his arrest, which occurred on the 27th of May, 1504, Caesar was taken on board a ship, which at once weighed anchor and set sail for Spain: during the whole voyage he had but one page to serve him, and as soon as he disembarked he was taken to the castle of Medina del Campo.

Ten years later, Gonzalvo, who at that time was himself proscribed, owned to Loxa on his dying bed that now, when he was to appear in the presence of God, two things weighed cruelly on his conscience: one was his treason to Ferdinand, the other his breach of faith towards Caesar.

CHAPTER XVI

Caesar was in prison for two years, always hoping that Louis XII would reclaim him as peer of the kingdom of France; but Louis, much disturbed by the loss of the battle of Garigliano, which robbed him of the kingdom of Naples, had enough to do with his own affairs without busying himself with his cousin's. So the prisoner was beginning to despair, when one day as he broke his bread at breakfast he found a file and a little bottle containing a narcotic, with a letter from Michelotto, saying that he was out of prison and had left Italy for Spain, and now lay in hiding with the Count of Benevento in the neighbouring village: he added that from the next day forward he and the count would wait every night on the road between the fortress and the village with three excellent horses; it was now Caesar's part to do the best he could with his bottle and file. When the whole world had abandoned the Duke of Romagna he had been remembered by a sbirro.

The prison where he had been shut up for two years was so hateful to Caesar that he lost not a single moment: the same day he attacked one of the bars of a window that looked out upon an inner court, and soon contrived so to manipulate it that it would need only a final push to come out. But not only was the window nearly seventy feet from the ground, but one could only get out of the court by using an exit reserved for the governor, of which he alone had the key; also this key never left him; by day it hung at his waist, by night it was under his pillow: this then was the chief difficulty.

But prisoner though he was, Caesar had always been treated with the respect due to his name and rank: every day at the dinner-hour he was conducted from the room that served as his prison to the governor, who did the honours of the table in a grand and courteous fashion. The fact was that Dan Manuel had served with honour under King Ferdinand, and therefore, while he guarded Caesar rigorously, according to orders, he had a great respect for so brave a general, and took pleasure in listening to the accounts of his battles. So he had often insisted that Caesar should not only dine but also breakfast with him; happily the prisoner, yielding perhaps to some presentiment, had till now refused this favour. This was of great advantage to him, since, thanks to his solitude, he had been able to receive the instruments of escape sent by Michelotto. The same day he received them, Caesar, on going back to his room, made a false step and sprained

his foot; at the dinner-hour he tried to go down, but he pretended to be suffering so cruelly that he gave it up. The governor came to see him in his room, and found him stretched upon the bed.

The day after, he was no better; the governor had his dinner sent in, and came to see him, as on the night before; he found his prisoner so dejected and gloomy in his solitude that he offered to come and sup with him: Caesar gratefully accepted.

This time it was the prisoner who did the honours: Caesar was charmingly courteous; the governor thought he would profit by this lack of restraint to put to him certain questions as to the manner of his arrest, and asked him as an Old Castilian, for whom honour is still of some account, what the truth really was as to Gonzalvo's and Ferdinand's breach of faith, with him. Caesar appeared extremely inclined to give him his entire confidence, but showed by a sign that the attendants were in the way. This precaution appeared quite natural, and the governor took no offense, but hastened to send them all away, so as to be sooner alone with his companion. When the door was shut, Caesar filled his glass and the governor's, proposing the king's health: the governor honoured the toast: Caesar at once began his tale; but he had scarcely uttered a third part of it when, interesting as it was, the eyes of his host shut as though by magic, and he slid under the table in a profound sleep.

After half a hour had passed, the servants, hearing no noise, entered and found the two, one on the table, the other under it: this event was not so extraordinary that they paid any great attention to it: all they did was to carry Don Manuel to his room and lift Caesar on the bed; then they put away the remnant of the meal for the next day's supper, shut the door very carefully, and left their prisoner alone.

Caesar stayed for a minute motionless and apparently plunged in the deepest sleep; but when he had heard the steps retreating, he quietly raised his head, opened his eyes, slipped off the bed, walked to the door, slowly indeed, but not to all appearance feeling the accident of the night before, and applied his ear for some minutes to the keyhole; then lifting his head with an expression of indescribable pride, he wiped his brow with his hand, and for the first time since his guards went out, breathed freely with full-drawn breaths.

There was no time to lose: his first care was to shut the door as securely on the

inside as it was already shut on the outside, to blow out the lamp, to open the window, and to finish sawing through the bar. When this was done, he undid the bandages on his leg, took down the window and bed curtains, tore them into strips, joined the sheets, table napkins and cloth, and with all these things tied together end to end, formed a rope fifty or sixty feet long, with knots every here and there. This rope he fixed securely to the bar next to the one he had just cut through; then he climbed up to the window and began what was really the hardest part of his perilous enterprise, clinging with hands and feet to this fragile support. Luckily he was both strong and skilful, and he went down the whole length of the rope without accident; but when he reached the end and was hanging on the last knot, he sought in vain to touch the ground with his feet; his rope was too short.

The situation was a terrible one: the darkness of the night prevented the fugitive from seeing how far off he was from the ground, and his fatigue prevented him from even attempting to climb up again. Caesar put up a brief prayer, whether to Gad or Satan he alone could say; then letting go the rope, he dropped from a height of twelve or fifteen feet.

The danger was too great for the fugitive to trouble about a few trifling contusions: he at once rose, and guiding himself by the direction of his window, he went straight to the little door of exit; he then put his hand into the pocket of his doublet, and a cold sweat damped his brow; either he had forgotten and left it in his room or had lost it in his fall; anyhow, he had not the key.

But summoning his recollections, he quite gave up the first idea for the second, which was the only likely one: again he crossed the court, looking for the place where the key might have fallen, by the aid of the wall round a tank on which he had laid his hand when he got up; but the object of search was so small and the night so dark that there was little chance of getting any result; still Caesar sought for it, for in this key was his last hope: suddenly a door was opened, and a night watch appeared, preceded by two torches. Caesar for the moment thought he was lost, but remembering the tank behind him, he dropped into it, and with nothing but his head above water anxiously watched the movements of the soldiers, as they advanced beside him, passed only a few feet away, crossed the court, and then disappeared by an opposite door. But short as their luminous apparition had been, it had lighted up the ground, and Caesar by the glare of the torches had caught the glitter of the long-sought key, and as soon as the door was shut behind the men, was again master of his liberty.

Half-way between the castle and the village two cavaliers and a led horse were waiting for him: the two men were Michelotto and the Count of Benevento. Caesar sprang upon the riderless horse, pressed with fervour the hand of the count and the sbirro; then all three galloped to the frontier of Navarre, where they arrived three days later, and were honourably received by the king, Jean d'Albret, the brother of Caesar's wife.

From Navarre he thought to pass into France, and from France to make an attempt upon Italy, with the aid of Louis XII; but during Caesar's detention in the castle of Medina del Campo, Louis had made peace with the King of Spain; and when he heard of Caesar's flight; instead of helping him, as there was some reason to expect he would, since he was a relative by marriage, he took away the duchy of Valentinois and also his pension. Still, Caesar had nearly 200,000 ducats in the charge of bankers at Genoa; he wrote asking for this sum, with which he hoped to levy troops in Spain and in Navarre, and make an attempt upon Pisa: 500 men, 200,000 ducats, his name and his word were more than enough to save him from despair.

The bankers denied the deposit.

Caesar was at the mercy of his brother-in-law.

One of the vassals of the King of Navarre, named Prince Alarino, had just then revolted: Caesar then took command of the army which Jean d'Albret was sending out against him, followed by Michelotto, who was as faithful in adversity as ever before. Thanks to Caesar's courage and skilful tactics, Prince Alarino was beaten in a first encounter; but the day after his defeat he rallied his army, and offered battle about three o'clock in the afternoon. Caesar accepted it.

For nearly four hours they fought obstinately on both sides; but at length, as the day was going down, Caesar proposed to decide the issue by making a charge himself, at the head of a hundred men-at-arms, upon a body of cavalry which made his adversary's chief force. To his great astonishment, this cavalry at the first shock gave way and took flight in the direction of a little wood, where they seemed to be seeking refuge. Caesar followed close on their heels up to the edge of the forest; then suddenly the pursued turned right about face, three or four hundred archers came out of the wood to help them, and Caesar's men, seeing that they had fallen into an ambush, took to their heels like cowards, and abandoned their leader.

Left alone, Caesar would not budge one step; possibly he had had enough of life, and his heroism was rather the result of satiety than courage: however that may be, he defended himself like a lion; but, riddled with arrows and bolts, his horse at last fell, with Caesar's leg under him. His adversaries rushed upon him, and one of them thrusting a sharp and slender iron pike through a weak place in his armour, pierced his breast; Caesar cursed God and died.

But the rest of the enemy's army was defeated, thanks to the courage of Michelotto, who fought like a valiant condottiere, but learned, on returning to the camp in the evening, from those who had fled; that they had abandoned Caesar and that he had never reappeared. Then only too certain, from his master's well-known courage, that disaster had occurred, he desired to give one last proof of his devotion by not leaving his body to the wolves and birds of prey. Torches were lighted, for it was dark, and with ten or twelve of those who had gone with Caesar as far as the little wood, he went to seek his master. On reaching the spot they pointed out, he beheld five men stretched side by side; four of them were dressed, but the fifth had been stripped of his clothing and lay completely naked. Michelotto dismounted, lifted the head upon his knees, and by the light of the torches recognised Caesar.

Thus fell, on the 10th of March, 1507, on an unknown field, near an obscure village called Viane, in a wretched skirmish with the vassal of a petty king, the man whom Macchiavelli presents to all princes as the model of ability, diplomacy, and courage.

As to Lucrezia, the fair Duchess of Ferrara, she died full of years, and honours, adored as a queen by her subjects, and sung as a goddess by Ariosto and by Bembo.

EPILOGUE

There was once in Paris, says Boccaccio, a brave and good merchant named Jean de Civigny, who did a great trade in drapery, and was connected in business with a neighbour and fellow-merchant, a very rich man called Abraham, who, though a Jew, enjoyed a good reputation. Jean de Civigny, appreciating the qualities of the worthy Israelite; feared lest, good man as he was, his false religion would bring his soul straight to eternal perdition; so he began to urge him gently as a friend to renounce his errors and open his eyes to the Christian faith, which he could see for himself was prospering and spreading day by day, being the only true and good religion; whereas his own creed, it was very plain, was so quickly diminishing that it would soon disappear from the face of the earth. The Jew replied that except in his own religion there was no salvation, that he was born in it, proposed to live and die in it, and that he knew nothing in the world that could change his opinion. Still, in his proselytising fervour Jean would not think himself beaten, and never a day passed but he demonstrated with those fair words the merchant uses to seduce a customer, the superiority of the Christian religion above the Jewish; and although Abraham was a great master of Mosaic law, he began to enjoy his friend's preaching, either because of the friendship he felt for him or because the Holy Ghost descended upon the tongue of the new apostle; still obstinate in his own belief, he would not change. The more he persisted in his error, the more excited was Jean about converting him, so that at last, by God's help, being somewhat shaken by his friend's urgency, Abraham one day said—

“Listen, Jean: since you have it so much at heart that I should be converted, behold me disposed to satisfy you; but before I go to Rome to see him whom you call God's vicar on earth, I must study his manner of life and his morals, as also those of his brethren the cardinals; and if, as I doubt not, they are in harmony with what you preach, I will admit that, as you have taken such pains to show me, your faith is better than mine, and I will do as you desire; but if it should prove otherwise, I shall remain a Jew, as I was before; for it is not worth while, at my age, to change my belief for a worse one.”

Jean was very sad when he heard these words; and he said mournfully to himself, “Now I have lost my time and pains, which I thought I had spent so well when I was hoping to convert this unhappy Abraham; for if he unfortunately

goes, as he says he will, to the court of Rome, and there sees the shameful life led by the servants of the Church, instead of becoming a Christian the Jew will be more of a Jew than ever." Then turning to Abraham, he said, "Ah, friend, why do you wish to incur such fatigue and expense by going to Rome, besides the fact that travelling by sea or by land must be very dangerous for so rich a man as you are? Do you suppose there is no one here to baptize you? If you have any doubts concerning the faith I have expounded, where better than here will you find theologians capable of contending with them and allaying them? So, you see, this voyage seems to me quite unnecessary: just imagine that the priests there are such as you see here, and all the better in that they are nearer to the supreme pastor. If you are guided by my advice, you will postpone this toil till you have committed some grave sin and need absolution; then you and I will go together."

But the Jew replied—

"I believe, dear Jean, that everything is as you tell me; but you know how obstinate I am. I will go to Rome, or I will never be a Christian."

Then Jean, seeing his great wish, resolved that it was no use trying to thwart him, and wished him good luck; but in his heart he gave up all hope; for it was certain that his friend would come back from his pilgrimage more of a Jew than ever, if the court of Rome was still as he had seen it.

But Abraham mounted his horse, and at his best speed took the road to Rome, where on his arrival he was wonderfully well received by his coreligionists; and after staying there a good long time, he began to study the behaviour of the pope, the cardinals and other prelates, and of the whole court. But much to his surprise he found out, partly by what passed under his eyes and partly by what he was told, that all from the pope downward to the lowest sacristan of St. Peter's were committing the sins of luxurious living in a most disgraceful and unbridled manner, with no remorse and no shame, so that pretty women and handsome youths could obtain any favours they pleased. In addition to this sensuality which they exhibited in public, he saw that they were gluttons and drunkards, so much so that they were more the slaves of the belly than are the greediest of animals. When he looked a little further, he found them so avaricious and fond of money that they sold for hard cash both human bodies and divine offices, and with less conscience than a man in Paris would sell cloth or any other merchandise. Seeing this and much more that it would not be proper to set down

here, it seemed to Abraham, himself a chaste, sober, and upright man, that he had seen enough. So he resolved to return to Paris, and carried out the resolution with his usual promptitude. Jean de Civigny held a great fete in honour of his return, although he had lost hope of his coming back converted. But he left time for him to settle down before he spoke of anything, thinking there would be plenty of time to hear the bad news he expected. But, after a few days of rest, Abraham himself came to see his friend, and Jean ventured to ask what he thought of the Holy Father, the cardinals, and the other persons at the pontifical court. At these words the Jew exclaimed, "God damn them all! I never once succeeded in finding among them any holiness, any devotion, any good works; but, on the contrary, luxurious living, avarice, greed, fraud, envy, pride, and even worse, if there is worse; all the machine seemed to be set in motion by an impulse less divine than diabolical. After what I saw, it is my firm conviction that your pope, and of course the others as well, are using all their talents, art, endeavours, to banish the Christian religion from the face of the earth, though they ought to be its foundation and support; and since, in spite of all the care and trouble they expend to arrive at this end, I see that your religion is spreading every day and becoming more brilliant and more pure, it is borne in upon me that the Holy Spirit Himself protects it as the only true and the most holy religion; this is why, deaf as you found me to your counsel and rebellious to your wish, I am now, ever since I returned from this Sodom, firmly resolved on becoming a Christian. So let us go at once to the church, for I am quite ready to be baptized."

There is no need to say if Jean de Civigny, who expected a refusal, was pleased at this consent. Without delay he went with his godson to Notre Dame de Paris, where he prayed the first priest he met to administer baptism to his friend, and this was speedily done; and the new convert changed his Jewish name of Abraham into the Christian name of Jean; and as the neophyte, thanks to his journey to Rome, had gained a profound belief, his natural good qualities increased so greatly in the practice of our holy religion, that after leading an exemplary life he died in the full odour of sanctity.

This tale of Boccaccio's gives so admirable an answer to the charge of irreligion which some might make against us if they mistook our intentions, that as we shall not offer any other reply, we have not hesitated to present it entire as it stands to the eyes of our readers.

And let us never forget that if the papacy has had an Innocent VIII and an

Alexander VI who are its shame, it has also had a Pius VII and a Gregory XVI who are its honour and glory.

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CELEBRATED CRIMES VOLUME 1(of 8), Part 2

By Alexander Dumas, Pere

THE CENCI

1598

Should you ever go to Rome and visit the villa Pamphili, no doubt, after having sought under its tall pines and along its canals the shade and freshness so rare in the capital of the Christian world, you will descend towards the Janiculum Hill by a charming road, in the middle of which you will find the Pauline fountain. Having passed this monument, and having lingered a moment on the terrace of the church of St. Peter Montorio, which commands the whole of Rome, you will visit the cloister of Bramante, in the middle of which, sunk a few feet below the level, is built, on the identical place where St. Peter was crucified, a little temple, half Greek, half Christian; you will thence ascend by a side door into the church itself. There, the attentive cicerone will show you, in the first chapel to the right, the Christ Scourged, by Sebastian del Piombo, and in the third chapel to the left, an Entombment by Fiammingo; having examined these two masterpieces at leisure, he will take you to each end of the transverse cross, and will show you—on one side a picture by Salviati, on slate, and on the other a work by Vasari; then, pointing out in melancholy tones a copy of Guido's Martyrdom of St. Peter on the high altar, he will relate to you how for three centuries the divine

Raffaelle's Transfiguration was worshipped in that spot; how it was carried away by the French in 1809, and restored to the pope by the Allies in 1814. As you have already in all probability admired this masterpiece in the Vatican, allow him to expatiate, and search at the foot of the altar for a mortuary slab, which you will identify by a cross and the single word; Orate; under this gravestone is buried Beatrice Cenci, whose tragical story cannot but impress you profoundly.

She was the daughter of Francesco Cenci. Whether or not it be true that men are born in harmony with their epoch, and that some embody its good qualities and others its bad ones, it may nevertheless interest our readers to cast a rapid glance over the period which had just passed when the events which we are about to relate took place. Francesco Cenci will then appear to them as the diabolical incarnation of his time.

On the 11th of August, 1492, after the lingering death-agony of Innocent VIII, during which two hundred and twenty murders were committed in the streets of Rome, Alexander VI ascended the pontifical throne. Son of a sister of Pope Calixtus III, Roderigo Lenzuoli Borgia, before being created cardinal, had five children by Rosa Vanozza, whom he afterwards caused to be married to a rich Roman. These children were:

Francis, Duke of Gandia;

Caesar, bishop and cardinal, afterwards Duke of Valentinois;

Lucrezia, who was married four times: her first husband was Giovanni Sforza, lord of Pesaro, whom she left owing to his impotence; the second, Alfonso, Duke of Bisiglia, whom her brother Caesar caused to be assassinated; the third, Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, from whom a second divorce separated her; finally, the fourth, Alfonso of Aragon, who was stabbed to death on the steps of the basilica of St. Peter, and afterwards, three weeks later, strangled, because he did not die soon enough from his wounds, which nevertheless were mortal;

Giofre, Count of Squillace, of whom little is known;

And, finally, a youngest son, of whom nothing at all is known.

The most famous of these three brothers was Caesar Borgia. He had made every arrangement a plotter could make to be King of Italy at the death of his father the pope, and his measures were so carefully taken as to leave no doubt in his own

mind as to the success of this vast project. Every chance was provided against, except one; but Satan himself could hardly have foreseen this particular one. The reader will judge for himself.

The pope had invited Cardinal Adrien to supper in his vineyard on the Belvidere; Cardinal Adrien was very rich, and the pope wished to inherit his wealth, as he already had acquired that of the Cardinals of Sant' Angelo, Capua, and Modena. To effect this, Caesar Borgia sent two bottles of poisoned wine to his father's cup-bearer, without taking him into his confidence; he only instructed him not to serve this wine till he himself gave orders to do so; unfortunately, during supper the cup-bearer left his post for a moment, and in this interval a careless butler served the poisoned wine to the pope, to Caesar Borgia, and to Cardinal Corneto.

Alexander VI died some hours afterwards; Caesar Borgia was confined to bed, and sloughed off his skin; while Cardinal Corneto lost his sight and his senses, and was brought to death's door.

Pius III succeeded Alexander VI, and reigned twenty-five days; on the twenty-sixth he was poisoned also.

Caesar Borgia had under his control eighteen Spanish cardinals who owed to him their places in the Sacred College; these cardinals were entirely his creatures, and he could command them absolutely. As he was in a moribund condition and could make no use of them for himself, he sold them to Giuliano della Rovere, and Giuliano della Rovere was elected pope, under the name of Julius II. To the Rome of Nero succeeded the Athens of Pericles.

Leo X succeeded Julius II, and under his pontificate Christianity assumed a pagan character, which, passing from art into manners, gives to this epoch a strange complexion. Crimes for the moment disappeared, to give place to vices; but to charming vices, vices in good taste, such as those indulged in by Alcibiades and sung by Catullus. Leo X died after having assembled under his reign, which lasted eight years, eight months, and nineteen days, Michael Angelo, Raffaele, Leonardo da Vinci, Correggio, Titian, Andrea del Sarto, Fra Bartolommeo, Giulio Romano, Ariosto, Guicciardini, and Macchiavelli.

Giulio di Medici and Pompeo Colonna had equal claims to succeed him. As both were skilful politicians, experienced courtiers, and moreover of real and almost equal merit, neither of them could obtain a majority, and the Conclave was

prolonged almost indefinitely, to the great fatigue of the cardinals. So it happened one day that a cardinal, more tired than the rest, proposed to elect, instead of either Medici or Colonna, the son, some say of a weaver, others of a brewer of Utrecht, of whom no one had ever thought till then, and who was for the moment acting head of affairs in Spain, in the absence of Charles the Fifth. The jest prospered in the ears of those who heard it; all the cardinals approved their colleague's proposal, and Adrien became pope by a mere accident.

He was a perfect specimen of the Flemish type a regular Dutchman, and could not speak a word of Italian. When he arrived in Rome, and saw the Greek masterpieces of sculpture collected at vast cost by Leo X, he wished to break them to pieces, exclaiming, "Suet idola anticorum." His first act was to despatch a papal nuncio, Francesco Cherigato, to the Diet of Nuremberg, convened to discuss the reforms of Luther, with instructions which give a vivid notion of the manners of the time.

"Candidly confess," said he, "that God has permitted this schism and this persecution on account of the sins of man, and especially those of priests and prelates of the Church; for we know that many abominable things have taken place in the Holy See."

Adrien wished to bring the Romans back to the simple and austere manners of the early Church, and with this object pushed reform to the minutest details. For instance, of the hundred grooms maintained by Leo X, he retained only a dozen, in order, he said, to have two more than the cardinals.

A pope like this could not reign long: he died after a year's pontificate. The morning after his death his physician's door was found decorated with garlands of flowers, bearing this inscription: "To the liberator of his country."

Giulio di Medici and Pompeo Colonna were again rival candidates. Intrigues recommenced, and the Conclave was once more so divided that at one time the cardinals thought they could only escape the difficulty in which they were placed by doing what they had done before, and electing a third competitor; they were even talking about Cardinal Orsini, when Giulio di Medici, one of the rival candidates, hit upon a very ingenious expedient. He wanted only five votes; five of his partisans each offered to bet five of Colonna's a hundred thousand ducats to ten thousand against the election of Giulio di Medici. At the very first ballot after the wager, Giulio di Medici got the five votes he wanted; no objection

could be made, the cardinals had not been bribed; they had made a bet, that was all.

Thus it happened, on the 18th of November, 1523, Giulio di Medici was proclaimed pope under the name of Clement VII. The same day, he generously paid the five hundred thousand ducats which his five partisans had lost.

It was under this pontificate, and during the seven months in which Rome, conquered by the Lutheran soldiers of the Constable of Bourbon, saw holy things subjected to the most frightful profanations, that Francesco Cenci was born.

He was the son of Monsignor Nicolo Cenci, afterwards apostolic treasurer during the pontificate of Pius V. Under this venerable prelate, who occupied himself much more with the spiritual than the temporal administration of his kingdom, Nicolo Cenci took advantage of his spiritual head's abstraction of worldly matters to amass a net revenue of a hundred and sixty thousand piastres, about £32,000 of our money. Francesco Cenci, who was his only son, inherited this fortune.

His youth was spent under popes so occupied with the schism of Luther that they had no time to think of anything else. The result was, that Francesco Cenci, inheriting vicious instincts and master of an immense fortune which enabled him to purchase immunity, abandoned himself to all the evil passions of his fiery and passionate temperament. Five times during his profligate career imprisoned for abominable crimes, he only succeeded in procuring his liberation by the payment of two hundred thousand piastres, or about one million francs. It should be explained that popes at this time were in great need of money.

The lawless profligacy of Francesco Cenci first began seriously to attract public attention under the pontificate of Gregory XIII. This reign offered marvellous facilities for the development of a reputation such as that which this reckless Italian Don Juan seemed bent on acquiring. Under the Bolognese Buoncampagno, a free hand was given to those able to pay both assassins and judges. Rape and murder were so common that public justice scarcely troubled itself with these trifling things, if nobody appeared to prosecute the guilty parties. The good Gregory had his reward for his easygoing indulgence; he was spared to rejoice over the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.

Francesco Cenci was at the time of which we are speaking a man of forty-four or forty-five years of age, about five feet four inches in height, symmetrically proportioned, and very strong, although rather thin; his hair was streaked with grey, his eyes were large and expressive, although the upper eyelids drooped somewhat; his nose was long, his lips were thin, and wore habitually a pleasant smile, except when his eye perceived an enemy; at this moment his features assumed a terrible expression; on such occasions, and whenever moved or even slightly irritated, he was seized with a fit of nervous trembling, which lasted long after the cause which provoked it had passed. An adept in all manly exercises and especially in horsemanship, he sometimes used to ride without stopping from Rome to Naples, a distance of forty-one leagues, passing through the forest of San Germano and the Pontine marshes heedless of brigands, although he might be alone and unarmed save for his sword and dagger. When his horse fell from fatigue, he bought another; were the owner unwilling to sell he took it by force; if resistance were made, he struck, and always with the point, never the hilt. In most cases, being well known throughout the Papal States as a free-handed person, nobody tried to thwart him; some yielding through fear, others from motives of interest. Impious, sacrilegious, and atheistical, he never entered a church except to profane its sanctity. It was said of him that he had a morbid appetite for novelties in crime, and that there was no outrage he would not commit if he hoped by so doing to enjoy a new sensation.

At the age of about forty-five he had married a very rich woman, whose name is not mentioned by any chronicler. She died, leaving him seven children—five boys and two girls. He then married Lucrezia Petroni, a perfect beauty of the Roman type, except for the ivory pallor of her complexion. By this second marriage he had no children.

As if Francesco Cenci were void of all natural affection, he hated his children, and was at no pains to conceal his feelings towards them: on one occasion, when he was building, in the courtyard of his magnificent palace, near the Tiber, a chapel dedicated to St. Thomas, he remarked to the architect, when instructing him to design a family vault, “That is where I hope to bury them all.” The architect often subsequently admitted that he was so terrified by the fiendish laugh which accompanied these words, that had not Francesco Cenci’s work been extremely profitable, he would have refused to go on with it.

As soon as his three eldest boys, Giacomo, Cristoforo, and Rocco, were out of their tutors’ hands, in order to get rid of them he sent them to the University of

Salamanca, where, out of sight, they were out of mind, for he thought no more about them, and did not even send them the means of subsistence. In these straits, after struggling for some months against their wretched plight, the lads were obliged to leave Salamanca, and beg their way home, tramping barefoot through France and Italy, till they made their way back to Rome, where they found their father harsher and more unkind than ever.

This happened in the early part of the reign of Clement VIII, famed for his justice. The three youths resolved to apply to him, to grant them an allowance out of their father's immense income. They consequently repaired to Frascati, where the pope was building the beautiful Aldobrandini Villa, and stated their case. The pope admitted the justice of their claims, and ordered Francesco, to allow each of them two thousand crowns a year. He endeavoured by every possible means to evade this decree, but the pope's orders were too stringent to be disobeyed.

About this period he was for the third time imprisoned for infamous crimes. His three sons then again petitioned the pope, alleging that their father dishonoured the family name, and praying that the extreme rigour of the law, a capital sentence, should be enforced in his case. The pope pronounced this conduct unnatural and odious, and drove them with ignominy from his presence. As for Francesco, he escaped, as on the two previous occasions, by the payment of a large sum of money.

It will be readily understood that his sons' conduct on this occasion did not improve their father's disposition towards them, but as their independent pensions enabled them to keep out of his way, his rage fell with all the greater intensity on his two unhappy daughters. Their situation soon became so intolerable, that the elder, contriving to elude the close supervision under which she was kept, forwarded to the pope a petition, relating the cruel treatment to which she was subjected, and praying His Holiness either to give her in marriage or place her in a convent. Clement VIII took pity on her; compelled Francesco Cenci to give her a dowry of sixty thousand crowns, and married her to Carlo Gabrielli, of a noble family of Gubbio. Francesco driven nearly frantic with rage when he saw this victim released from his clutches.

About the same time death relieved him from two other encumbrances: his sons Rocco and Cristoforo were killed within a year of each other; the latter by a bungling medical practitioner whose name is unknown; the former by Paolo

Corso di Massa, in the streets of Rome. This came as a relief to Francesco, whose avarice pursued his sons even after their death, for he intimated to the priest that he would not spend a farthing on funeral services. They were accordingly borne to the paupers' graves which he had caused to be prepared for them, and when he saw them both interred, he cried out that he was well rid of such good-for-nothing children, but that he should be perfectly happy only when the remaining five were buried with the first two, and that when he had got rid of the last he himself would burn down his palace as a bonfire to celebrate the event.

But Francesco took every precaution against his second daughter, Beatrice Cenci, following the example of her elder sister. She was then a child of twelve or thirteen years of age, beautiful and innocent as an angel. Her long fair hair, a beauty seen so rarely in Italy, that Raffaello, believing it divine, has appropriated it to all his Madonnas, curtained a lovely forehead, and fell in flowing locks over her shoulders. Her azure eyes bore a heavenly expression; she was of middle height, exquisitely proportioned; and during the rare moments when a gleam of happiness allowed her natural character to display itself, she was lively, joyous, and sympathetic, but at the same time evinced a firm and decided disposition.

To make sure of her custody, Francesco kept her shut up in a remote apartment of his palace, the key of which he kept in his own possession. There, her unnatural and inflexible gaoler daily brought her some food. Up to the age of thirteen, which she had now reached, he had behaved to her with the most extreme harshness and severity; but now, to poor Beatrice's great astonishment, he all at once became gentle and even tender. Beatrice was a child no longer; her beauty expanded like a flower; and Francesco, a stranger to no crime, however heinous, had marked her for his own.

Brought up as she had been, uneducated, deprived of all society, even that of her stepmother, Beatrice knew not good from evil: her ruin was comparatively easy to compass; yet Francesco, to accomplish his diabolical purpose, employed all the means at his command. Every night she was awakened by a concert of music which seemed to come from Paradise. When she mentioned this to her father, he left her in this belief, adding that if she proved gentle and obedient she would be rewarded by heavenly sights, as well as heavenly sounds.

One night it came to pass that as the young girl was reposing, her head supported on her elbow, and listening to a delightful harmony, the chamber door suddenly

opened, and from the darkness of her own room she beheld a suite of apartments brilliantly illuminated, and sensuous with perfumes; beautiful youths and girls, half clad, such as she had seen in the pictures of Guido and Raffaele, moved to and fro in these apartments, seeming full of joy and happiness: these were the ministers to the pleasures of Francesco, who, rich as a king, every night revelled in the orgies of Alexander, the wedding revels of Lucrezia, and the excesses of Tiberius at Capri. After an hour, the door closed, and the seductive vision vanished, leaving Beatrice full of trouble and amazement.

The night following, the same apparition again presented itself, only, on this occasion, Francesco Cenci, undressed, entered his daughter's room and invited her to join the fete. Hardly knowing what she did, Beatrice yet perceived the impropriety of yielding to her father's wishes: she replied that, not seeing her stepmother, Lucrezia Petroni, among all these women, she dared not leave her bed to mix with persons who were unknown to her. Francesco threatened and prayed, but threats and prayers were of no avail. Beatrice wrapped herself up in the bedclothes, and obstinately refused to obey.

The next night she threw herself on her bed without undressing. At the accustomed hour the door opened, and the nocturnal spectacle reappeared. This time, Lucrezia Petroni was among the women who passed before Beatrice's door; violence had compelled her to undergo this humiliation. Beatrice was too far off to see her blushes and her tears. Francesco pointed out her stepmother, whom she had lacked for in vain the previous evening; and as she could no longer make any opposition, he led her, covered with blushes and confusion, into the middle of this orgy.

Beatrice there saw incredible and infamous things....

Nevertheless, she resisted a long time: an inward voice told her that this was horrible; but Francesco had the slow persistence of a demon. To these sights, calculated to stimulate her passions, he added heresies designed to warp her mind; he told her that the greatest saints venerated by the Church were the issue of fathers and daughters, and in the end Beatrice committed a crime without even knowing it to be a sin.

His brutality then knew no bounds. He forced Lucrezia and Beatrice to share the same bed, threatening his wife to kill her if she disclosed to his daughter by a single word that there was anything odious in such an intercourse. So matters

went on for about three years.

At this time Francesco was obliged to make a journey, and leave the women alone and free. The first thing Lucrezia did was to enlighten Beatrice on the infamy of the life they were leading; they then together prepared a memorial to the pope, in which they laid before him a statement of all the blows and outrages they had suffered. But, before leaving, Francesco Cenci had taken precautions; every person about the pope was in his pay, or hoped to be. The petition never reached His Holiness, and the two poor women, remembering that Clement VIII had on a former occasion driven Giacomo, Cristaforo, and Rocco from his presence, thought they were included in the same proscription, and looked upon themselves as abandoned to their fate.

When matters were in this state, Giacomo, taking advantage of his father's absence, came to pay them a visit with a friend of his, an abbe named Guerra: he was a young man of twenty-five or twenty-six, belonging to one of the most noble families in Rome, of a bold, resolute, and courageous character, and idolised by all the Roman ladies for his beauty. To classical features he added blue eyes swimming in poetic sentiment; his hair was long and fair, with chestnut beard and eyebrows; add to these attractions a highly educated mind, natural eloquence expressed by a musical and penetrating voice, and the reader may form some idea of Monsignor the Abbe Guerra.

No sooner had he seen Beatrice than he fell in love with her. On her side, she was not slow to return the sympathy of the young priest. The Council of Trent had not been held at that time, consequently ecclesiastics were not precluded from marriage. It was therefore decided that on the return of Francesco the Abbe Guerra should demand the hand of Beatrice from her father, and the women, happy in the absence of their master, continued to live on, hoping for better things to come.

After three or four months, during which no one knew where he was, Francesco returned. The very first night, he wished to resume his intercourse with Beatrice; but she was no longer the same person, the timid and submissive child had become a girl of decided will; strong in her love for the abbe, she resisted alike prayers, threats, and blows.

The wrath of Francesco fell upon his wife, whom he accused of betraying him; he gave her a violent thrashing. Lucrezia Petroni was a veritable Roman she-

wolf, passionate alike in love and vengeance; she endured all, but pardoned nothing.

Some days after this, the Abbe Guerra arrived at the Cenci palace to carry out what had been arranged. Rich, young, noble, and handsome, everything would seem to promise him success; yet he was rudely dismissed by Francesco. The first refusal did not daunt him; he returned to the charge a second time and yet a third, insisting upon the suitability of such a union. At length Francesco, losing patience, told this obstinate lover that a reason existed why Beatrice could be neither his wife nor any other man's. Guerra demanded what this reason was. Francesco replied:

“Because she is my mistress.”

Monsignor Guerra turned pale at this answer, although at first he did not believe a word of it; but when he saw the smile with which Francesco Cenci accompanied his words, he was compelled to believe that, terrible though it was, the truth had been spoken.

For three days he sought an interview with Beatrice in vain; at length he succeeded in finding her. His last hope was her denial of this horrible story: Beatrice confessed all. Henceforth there was no human hope for the two lovers; an impassable gulf separated them. They parted bathed in tears, promising to love one another always.

Up to that time the two women had not formed any criminal resolution, and possibly the tragical incident might never have happened, had not Francesco one night returned into his daughter's room and violently forced her into the commission of fresh crime.

Henceforth the doom of Francesco was irrevocably pronounced.

As we have said, the mind of Beatrice was susceptible to the best and the worst influences: it could attain excellence, and descend to guilt. She went and told her mother of the fresh outrage she had undergone; this roused in the heart of the other woman the sting of her own wrongs; and, stimulating each other's desire for revenge, they, decided upon the murder of Francesco.

Guerra was called in to this council of death. His heart was a prey to hatred and revenge. He undertook to communicate with Giacomo Cenci, without whose

concurrence the women would not act, as he was the head of the family, when his father was left out of account.

Giacomo entered readily into the conspiracy. It will be remembered what he had formerly suffered from his father; since that time he had married, and the close-fisted old man had left him, with his wife and children, to languish in poverty. Guerra's house was selected to meet in and concert matters.

Giacomo hired a sbirro named Marzio, and Guerra a second named Olympio.

Both these men had private reasons for committing the crime—one being actuated by love, the other by hatred. Marzio, who was in the service of Giacomo, had often seen Beatrice, and loved her, but with that silent and hopeless love which devours the soul. When he conceived that the proposed crime would draw him nearer to Beatrice, he accepted his part in it without any demur.

As for Olympio, he hated Francesco, because the latter had caused him to lose the post of castellan of Rocco Petrella, a fortified stronghold in the kingdom of Naples, belonging to Prince Colonna. Almost every year Francesco Cenci spent some months at Rocco Petrella with his family; for Prince Colonna, a noble and magnificent but needy prince, had much esteem for Francesco, whose purse he found extremely useful. It had so happened that Francesco, being dissatisfied with Olympio, complained about him to Prince Colonna, and he was dismissed.

After several consultations between the Cenci family, the abbe and the sbirri, the following plan of action was decided upon.

The period when Francesco Cenci was accustomed to go to Rocco Petrella was approaching: it was arranged that Olympio, conversant with the district and its inhabitants, should collect a party of a dozen Neapolitan bandits, and conceal them in a forest through which the travellers would have to pass. Upon a given signal, the whole family were to be seized and carried off. A heavy ransom was to be demanded, and the sons were to be sent back to Rome to raise the sum; but, under pretext of inability to do so, they were to allow the time fixed by the bandits to lapse, when Francesco was to be put to death. Thus all suspicions of a plot would be avoided, and the real assassins would escape justice.

This well-devised scheme was nevertheless unsuccessful. When Francesco left Rome, the scout sent in advance by the conspirators could not find the bandits;

the latter, not being warned beforehand, failed to come down before the passage of the travellers, who arrived safe and sound at Rocco Petreila. The bandits, after having patrolled the road in vain, came to the conclusion that their prey had escaped, and, unwilling to stay any longer in a place where they had already spent a week, went off in quest of better luck elsewhere.

Francesco had in the meantime settled down in the fortress, and, to be more free to tyrannise over Lucrezia and Beatrice, sent back to Rome Giacomo and his two other sons. He then recommenced his infamous attempts upon Beatrice, and with such persistence, that she resolved herself to accomplish the deed which at first she desired to entrust to other hands.

Olympio and Marzio, who had nothing to fear from justice, remained lurking about the castle; one day Beatrice saw them from a window, and made signs that she had something to communicate to them. The same night Olympio, who having been castellan knew all the approaches to the fortress, made his way there with his companion. Beatrice awaited them at a window which looked on to a secluded courtyard; she gave them letters which she had written to her brother and to Monsignor Guerra. The former was to approve, as he had done before, the murder of their father; for she would do nothing without his sanction. As for Monsignor Guerra, he was to pay Olympio a thousand piastres, half the stipulated sum; Marzio acting out of pure love for Beatrice, whom he worshipped as a Madonna; which observing, the girl gave him a handsome scarlet mantle, trimmed with gold lace, telling him to wear it for love of her. As for the remaining moiety, it was to be paid when the death of the old man had placed his wife and daughter in possession of his fortune.

The two sbirri departed, and the imprisoned conspirators anxiously awaited their return. On the day fixed, they were seen again. Monsignor Guerra had paid the thousand piastres, and Giacomo had given his consent. Nothing now stood in the way of the execution of this terrible deed, which was fixed for the 8th of September, the day of the Nativity of the Virgin; but Signora Lucrezia, a very devout person, having noticed this circumstance, would not be a party to the committal of a double sin; the matter was therefore deferred till the next day, the 9th.

That evening, the 9th of September, 1598, the two women, supping with the old man, mixed some narcotic with his wine so adroitly that, suspicious though he was, he never detected it, and having swallowed the potion, soon fell into a deep

sleep.

The evening previous, Marzio and Olympio had been admitted into the castle, where they had lain concealed all night and all day; for, as will be remembered, the assassination would have been effected the day before had it not been for the religious scruples of Signora Lucrezia Petroni. Towards midnight, Beatrice fetched them out of their hiding-place, and took them to her father's chamber, the door of which she herself opened. The assassins entered, and the two women awaited the issue in the room adjoining.

After a moment, seeing the sbirri reappear pale and nerveless, shaking their heads without speaking, they at once inferred that nothing had been done.

“What is the matter?” cried Beatrice; “and what hinders you?”

“It is a cowardly act,” replied the assassins, “to kill a poor old man in his sleep. At the thought of his age, we were struck with pity.”

Then Beatrice disdainfully raised her head, and in a deep firm voice thus reproached them.

“Is it possible that you, who pretend to be brave and strong, have not courage enough to kill a sleeping old man? How would it be if he were awake? And thus you steal our money! Very well: since your cowardice compels me to do so, I will kill my father myself; but you will not long survive him.”

Hearing these words, the sbirri felt ashamed of their irresolution, and, indicating by signs that they would fulfil their compact, they entered the room, accompanied by the two women. As they had said, a ray of moonlight shone through the open window, and brought into prominence the tranquil face of the old man, the sight of whose white hair had so affected them.

This time they showed no mercy. One of them carried two great nails, such as those portrayed in pictures of the Crucifixion; the other bore a mallet: the first placed a nail upright over one of the old man's eyes; the other struck it with the hammer, and drove it into his head. The throat was pierced in the same way with the second nail; and thus the guilty soul, stained throughout its career with crimes of violence, was in its turn violently torn from the body, which lay writhing on the floor where it had rolled. The young girl then, faithful to her word, handed the sbirri a large purse containing the rest of the sum agreed upon,

and they left. When they found themselves alone, the women drew the nails out of the wounds, wrapped the corpse in a sheet, and dragged it through the rooms towards a small rampart, intending to throw it down into a garden which had been allowed to run to waste. They hoped that the old man's death would be attributed to his having accidentally fallen off the terrace on his way in the dark to a closet at the end of the gallery. But their strength failed them when they reached the door of the last room, and, while resting there, Lucrezia perceived the two sbirri, sharing the money before making their escape. At her call they came to her, carried the corpse to the rampart, and, from a spot pointed out by the women, where the terrace was unfenced by any parapet, they threw it into an elder tree below, whose branches retained' it suspended.

When the body was found the following morning hanging in the branches of the elder tree, everybody supposed, as Beatrice and her stepmother had foreseen, that Francesco, stepping over the edge of the 386 terrace in the dark, had thus met his end. The body was so scratched and disfigured that no one noticed the wounds made by the two nails. The ladies, as soon as the news was imparted to them, came out from their rooms, weeping and lamenting in so natural a manner as to disarm any suspicions. The only person who formed any was the laundress to whom Beatrice entrusted the sheet in which her father's body had been wrapped, accounting for its bloody condition by a lame explanation, which the laundress accepted without question, or pretended to do so; and immediately after the funeral, the mourners returned to Rome, hoping at length to enjoy quietude and peace. For some time, indeed, they did enjoy tranquillity, perhaps poisoned by remorse, but ere long retribution pursued them. The court of Naples, hearing of the sudden and unexpected death of Francesco Cenci, and conceiving some suspicions of violence, despatched a royal commissioner to Petrella to exhume the body and make minute inquiries, if there appeared to be adequate grounds for doing so. On his arrival all the domestics in the castle were placed under arrest and sent in chains to Naples. No incriminating proofs, however, were found, except in the evidence of the laundress, who deposed that Beatrice had given her a bloodstained sheet to wash. This, clue led to terrible consequences; for, further questioned she declared that she could not believe the explanation given to account for its condition. The evidence was sent to the Roman court; but at that period it did not appear strong enough to warrant the arrest of the Cenci family, who remained undisturbed for many months, during which time the youngest boy died. Of the five brothers there only remained Giacomo, the eldest, and Bernardo, the youngest but one. Nothing prevented them from escaping to Venice or Florence; but they remained quietly in Rome.

Meantime Monsignor Guerra received private information that, shortly before the death of Francesco, Marzio and Olympio had been seen prowling round the castle, and that the Neapolitan police had received orders to arrest them.

The monsignor was a most wary man, and very difficult to catch napping when warned in time. He immediately hired two other sbirri to assassinate Marzio and Olympio. The one commissioned to put Olympio out of the way came across him at Terni, and conscientiously did his work with a poniard, but Marzio's man unfortunately arrived at Naples too late, and found his bird already in the hands of the police.

He was put to the torture, and confessed everything. His deposition was sent to Rome, whither he shortly afterwards followed it, to be confronted with the accused. Warrants were immediately issued for the arrest of Giacomo, Bernardo, Lucrezia, and Beatrice; they were at first confined in the Cenci palace under a strong guard, but the proofs against them becoming stronger and stronger, they were removed to the castle of Corte Savella, where they were confronted with Marzio; but they obstinately denied both any complicity in the crime and any knowledge of the assassin. Beatrice, above all, displayed the greatest assurance, demanding to be the first to be confronted with Marzio; whose mendacity she affirmed with such calm dignity, that he, more than ever smitten by her beauty, determined, since he could not live for her, to save her by his death. Consequently, he declared all his statements to be false, and asked forgiveness from God and from Beatrice; neither threats nor tortures could make him recant, and he died firm in his denial, under frightful tortures. The Cenci then thought themselves safe.

God's justice, however, still pursued them. The sbirro who had killed Olympio happened to be arrested for another crime, and, making a clean breast, confessed that he had been employed by Monsignor Guerra—to put out of the way a fellow-assassin named Olympio, who knew too many of the monsignor's secrets.

Luckily for himself, Monsignor Guerra heard of this opportunely. A man of infinite resource, he lost not a moment in timid or irresolute plans, but as it happened that at the very moment when he was warned, the charcoal dealer who supplied his house with fuel was at hand, he sent for him, purchased his silence with a handsome bribe, and then, buying for almost their weight in gold the dirty old clothes which he wore, he assumed these, cut off all his beautiful cherished fair hair, stained his beard, smudged his face, bought two asses, laden with

charcoal, and limped up and down the streets of Rome, crying, “Charcoal! charcoal!” Then, whilst all the detectives were hunting high and low for him, he got out of the city, met a company of merchants under escort, joined them, and reached Naples, where he embarked. What ultimately became of him was never known; it has been asserted, but without confirmation, that he succeeded—in reaching France, and enlisted in a Swiss regiment in the pay of Henry IV.

The confession of the sbirro and the disappearance of Monsignor Guerra left no moral doubt of the guilt of the Cenci. They were consequently sent from the castle to the prison; the two brothers, when put to the torture, broke down and confessed their guilt. Lucrezia Petroni’s full habit of body rendered her unable to bear the torture of the rope, and, on being suspended in the air, begged to be lowered, when she confessed all she knew.

As for Beatrice, she continued unmoved; neither promises, threats, nor torture had any effect upon her; she bore everything unflinchingly, and the judge Ulysses Moscati himself, famous though he was in such matters, failed to draw from her a single incriminating word. Unwilling to take any further responsibility, he referred the case to Clement VIII; and the pope, conjecturing that the judge had been too lenient in applying the torture to, a young and beautiful Roman lady, took it out of his hands and entrusted it to another judge, whose severity and insensibility to emotion were undisputed.

This latter reopened the whole interrogatory, and as Beatrice up to that time had only been subjected to the ordinary torture, he gave instructions to apply both the ordinary and extraordinary. This was the rope and pulley, one of the most terrible inventions ever devised by the most ingenious of tormentors.

To make the nature of this horrid torture plain to our readers, we give a detailed description of it, adding an extract of the presiding judge’s report of the case, taken from the Vatican manuscripts.

Of the various forms of torture then used in Rome the most common were the whistle, the fire, the sleepless, and the rope.

The mildest, the torture of the whistle, was used only in the case of children and old persons; it consisted in thrusting between the nails and the flesh reeds cut in the shape of whistles.

The fire, frequently employed before the invention of the sleepless torture, was

simply roasting the soles of the feet before a hot fire.

The sleepless torture, invented by Marsilius, was worked by forcing the accused into an angular frame of wood about five feet high, the sufferer being stripped and his arms tied behind his back to the frame; two men, relieved every five hours, sat beside him, and roused him the moment he closed his eyes. Marsilius says he has never found a man proof against this torture; but here he claims more than he is justly entitled to. Farinacci states that, out of one hundred accused persons subjected to it, five only refused to confess—a very satisfactory result for the inventor.

Lastly comes the torture of the rope and pulley, the most in vogue of all, and known in other Latin countries as the strappado.

It was divided into three degrees of intensity—the slight, the severe, and the very severe.

The first, or slight torture, which consisted mainly in the apprehensions it caused, comprised the threat of severe torture, introduction into the torture chamber, stripping, and the tying of the rope in readiness for its appliance. To increase the terror these preliminaries excited, a pang of physical pain was added by tightening a cord round the wrists. This often sufficed to extract a confession from women or men of highly strung nerves.

The second degree, or severe torture, consisted in fastening the sufferer, stripped naked, and his hands tied behind his back, by the wrists to one end of a rope passed round a pulley bolted into the vaulted ceiling, the other end being attached to a windlass, by turning which he could be hoisted, into the air, and dropped again, either slowly or with a jerk, as ordered by the judge. The suspension generally lasted during the recital of a Pater Noster, an Ave Maria, or a Miserere; if the accused persisted in his denial, it was doubled. This second degree, the last of the ordinary torture, was put in practice when the crime appeared reasonably probable but was not absolutely proved.

The third, or very severe, the first of the extraordinary forms of torture, was so called when the sufferer, having hung suspended by the wrists, for sometimes a whole hour, was swung about by the executioner, either like the pendulum of a clock, or by elevating him with the windlass and dropping him to within a foot or two of the ground. If he stood this torture, a thing almost unheard of, seeing

that it cut the flesh of the wrist to the bone and dislocated the limbs, weights were attached to the feet, thus doubling the torture. This last form of torture was only applied when an atrocious crime had been proved to have been committed upon a sacred person, such as a priest, a cardinal, a prince, or an eminent and learned man.

Having seen that Beatrice was sentenced to the torture ordinary and extraordinary, and having explained the nature of these tortures, we proceed to quote the official report:—

“And as in reply to every question she would confess nothing, we caused her to be taken by two officers and led from the prison to the torture chamber, where the torturer was in attendance; there, after cutting off her hair, he made her sit on a small stool, undressed her, pulled off her shoes, tied her hands behind her back, fastened them to a rope passed over a pulley bolted into the ceiling of the aforesaid chamber, and wound up at the other end by a four lever windlass, worked by two men.”

“Before hoisting her from the ground we again interrogated her touching the aforesaid parricide; but notwithstanding the confessions of her brother and her stepmother, which were again produced, bearing their signatures, she persisted in denying everything, saying, ‘Haul me about and do what you like with me; I have spoken the truth, and will tell you nothing else, even if I were torn to pieces.’

“Upon this we had her hoisted in the air by the wrists to the height of about two feet from the ground, while we recited a Pater Noster; and then again questioned her as to the facts and circumstances of the aforesaid parricide; but she would make no further answer, only saying, ‘You are killing me! You are killing me!’

“We then raised her to the elevation of four feet, and began an Ave Maria. But before our prayer was half finished she fainted away; or pretended to do so.

“We caused a bucketful of water to be thrown over her head; feeling its coolness, she recovered consciousness, and cried, ‘My God! I am dead! You are killing me! My God!’ But this was all she would say.

“We then raised her higher still, and recited a Miserere, during which, instead of joining in the prayer, she shook convulsively and cried several times, ‘My God! My God!’

“Again questioned as to the aforesaid parricide, she would confess nothing, saying only that she was innocent, and then again fainted away.

“We caused more water to be thrown over her; then she recovered her senses, opened her eyes, and cried, ‘O cursed executioners! You are killing me! You are killing me!’ But nothing more would she say.

“Seeing which, and that she persisted in her denial, we ordered the torturer to proceed to the torture by jerks.

“He accordingly hoisted her ten feet from the ground, and when there we enjoined her to tell the truth; but whether she would not or could not speak, she answered only by a motion of the head indicating that she could say nothing.

“Seeing which, we made a sign to the executioner, to let go the rope, and she fell with all her weight from the height of ten feet to that of two feet; her arms, from the shock, were dislocated from their sockets; she uttered a loud cry, and swooned away.

“We again caused water to be dashed in her face; she returned to herself, and again cried out, ‘Infamous assassins! You are killing me; but were you to tear out my arms, I would tell you nothing else.’

“Upon this, we ordered a weight of fifty pounds to be fastened to her feet. But at this moment the door opened, and many voices cried, ‘Enough! Enough! Do not torture her any more!’”

These voices were those of Giacomo, Bernardo, and Lucrezia Petroni. The judges, perceiving the obstinacy of Beatrice, had ordered that the accused, who had been separated for five months, should be confronted.

They advanced into the torture chamber, and seeing Beatrice hanging by the wrists, her arms disjointed, and covered with blood, Giacomo cried out:—

“The sin is committed; nothing further remains but to save our souls by repentance, undergo death courageously, and not suffer you to be thus tortured.”

Then said Beatrice, shaking her head as if to cast off grief—

“Do you then wish to die? Since you wish it, be it so.”

Then turning to the officers:—

“Untie me,” said she, “read the examination to me; and what I have to confess, I will confess; what I have to deny, I will deny.”

Beatrice was then lowered and untied; a barber reduced the dislocation of her arms in the usual manner; the examination was read over to her, and, as she had promised, she made a full confession.

After this confession, at the request of the two brothers, they were all confined in the same prison; but the next day Giacomo and Bernardo were taken to the cells of Tordinona; as for the women, they remained where they were.

The pope was so horrified on reading the particulars of the crime contained in the confessions, that he ordered the culprits to be dragged by wild horses through the streets of Rome. But so barbarous a sentence shocked the public mind, so much so that many persons of princely rank petitioned the Holy Father on their knees, imploring him to reconsider his decree, or at least allow the accused to be heard in their defence.

“Tell me,” replied Clement VIII, “did they give their unhappy father time to be heard in his own defence, when they slew him in so merciless and degrading a fashion?”

At length, overcome by so many entreaties, he respited them for three days.

The most eloquent and skilful advocates in Rome immediately busied themselves in preparing pleadings for so emotional a case, and on the day fixed for hearing appeared before His Holiness.

The first pleader was Nicolo degli Angeli, who spoke with such force and eloquence that the pope, alarmed at the effect he was producing among the audience, passionately interrupted him.

“Are there then to be found,” he indignantly cried, “among the Roman nobility children capable of killing their parents, and among Roman lawyers men capable of speaking in their defence? This is a thing we should never have believed, nor even for a moment supposed it possible!”

All were silent upon this terrible rebuke, except Farinacci, who, nerving himself

with a strong sense of duty, replied respectfully but firmly—

“Most Holy Father, we are not here to defend criminals, but to save the innocent; for if we succeeded in proving that any of the accused acted in self-defence, I hope that they will be exonerated in the eyes of your Holiness; for just as the law provides for cases in which the father may legally kill the child, so this holds good in the converse. We will therefore continue our pleadings on receiving leave from your Holiness to do so.”

Clement VIII then showed himself as patient as he had previously been hasty, and heard the argument of Farinacci, who pleaded that Francesco Cenci had lost all the rights of a father from, the day that he violated his daughter. In support of his contention he wished to put in the memorial sent by Beatrice to His Holiness, petitioning him, as her sister had done, to remove her from the paternal roof and place her in a convent. Unfortunately, this petition had disappeared, and notwithstanding the minutest search among the papal documents, no trace of it could be found.

The pope had all the pleadings collected, and dismissed the advocates, who then retired, excepting d’Altieri, who knelt before him, saying—

“Most Holy Father, I humbly ask pardon for appearing before you in this case, but I had no choice in the matter, being the advocate of the poor.”

The pope kindly raised him, saying:

“Go; we are not surprised at your conduct, but at that of others, who protect and defend criminals.”

As the pope took a great interest in this case, he sat up all night over it, studying it with Cardinal di San Marcello, a man of much acumen and great experience in criminal cases. Then, having summed it up, he sent a draft of his opinion to the advocates, who read it with great satisfaction, and entertained hopes that the lives of the convicted persons would be spared; for the evidence all went to prove that even if the children had taken their father’s life, all the provocation came from him, and that Beatrice in particular had been dragged into the part she had taken in this crime by the tyranny, wickedness, and brutality of her father. Under the influence of these considerations the pope mitigated the severity of their prison life, and even allowed the prisoners to hope that their lives would not be forfeited.

Amidst the general feeling of relief afforded to the public by these favours, another tragical event changed the papal mind and frustrated all his humane intentions. This was the atrocious murder of the Marchese di Santa Croce, a man seventy years of age, by his son Paolo, who stabbed him with a dagger in fifteen or twenty places, because the father would not promise to make Paolo his sole heir. The murderer fled and escaped.

Clement VIII was horror-stricken at the increasing frequency of this crime of parricide: for the moment, however, he was unable to take action, having to go to Monte Cavallo to consecrate a cardinal titular bishop in the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli; but the day following, on Friday the 10th of September 1599, at eight o'clock in the morning, he summoned Monsignor Taverna, governor of Rome, and said to him—

“Monsignor, we place in your hands the Cenci case, that you may carry out the sentence as speedily as possible.”

On his return to his palace, after leaving His Holiness, the governor convened a meeting of all the criminal judges in the city, the result of the council being that all the Cenci were condemned to death.

The final sentence was immediately known; and as this unhappy family inspired a constantly increasing interest, many cardinals spent the whole of the night either on horseback or in their carriages, making interest that, at least so far as the women were concerned, they should be put to death privately and in the prison, and that a free pardon should be granted to Bernardo, a poor lad only fifteen years of age, who, guiltless of any participation in the crime, yet found himself involved in its consequences. The one who interested himself most in the case was Cardinal Sforza, who nevertheless failed to elicit a single gleam of hope, so obdurate was His Holiness. At length Farinacci, working on the papal conscience, succeeded, after long and urgent entreaties, and only at the last moment, that the life of Bernardo should be spared.

From Friday evening the members of the brotherhood of the Conforteria had gathered at the two prisons of Corte Savella and Tordinona. The preparations for the closing scene of the tragedy had occupied workmen on the bridge of Sant' Angelo all night; and it was not till five o'clock in the morning that the registrar entered the cell of Lucrezia and Beatrice to read their sentences to them.

Both were sleeping, calm in the belief of a reprieve. The registrar woke them, and told them that, judged by man, they must now prepare to appear before God.

Beatrice was at first thunderstruck: she seemed paralysed and speechless; then she rose from bed, and staggering as if intoxicated, recovered her speech, uttering despairing cries. Lucrezia heard the tidings with more firmness, and proceeded to dress herself to go to the chapel, exhorting Beatrice to resignation; but she, raving, wrung her hands and struck her head against the wall, shrieking, "To die! to die! Am I to die unprepared, on a scaffold! on a gibbet! My God! my God!" This fit led to a terrible paroxysm, after which the exhaustion of her body enabled her mind to recover its balance, and from that moment she became an angel of humility and an example of resignation.

Her first request was for a notary to make her will. This was immediately complied with, and on his arrival she dictated its provisions with much calmness and precision. Its last clause desired her interment in the church of San Pietro in Montorio, for which she always had a strong attachment, as it commanded a view of her father's palace. She bequeathed five hundred crowns to the nuns of the order of the Stigmata, and ordered that her dowry; amounting to fifteen thousand crowns, should be distributed in marriage portions to fifty poor girls. She selected the foot of the high altar as the place where she wished to be buried, over which hung the beautiful picture of the Transfiguration, so often admired by her during her life.

Following her example, Lucrezia in her turn, disposed of her property: she desired to be buried in the church of San Giorgio di Velobre, and left thirty-two thousand crowns to charities, with other pious legacies. Having settled their earthly affairs, they joined in prayer, reciting psalms, litanies, and prayers for the dying.

At eight o'clock they confessed, heard mass, and received the sacraments; after which Beatrice, observing to her stepmother that the rich dresses they wore were out of place on a scaffold, ordered two to be made in nun's fashion—that is to say, gathered at the neck, with long wide sleeves. That for Lucrezia was made of black cotton stuff, Beatrice's of taffetas. In addition she had a small black turban made to place on her head. These dresses, with cords for girdles, were brought them; they were placed on a chair, while the women continued to pray.

The time appointed being near at hand, they were informed that their last

moment was approaching. Then Beatrice, who was still on her knees, rose with a tranquil and almost joyful countenance. "Mother," said she, "the moment of our suffering is impending; I think we had better dress in these clothes, and help one another at our toilet for the last time." They then put on the dresses provided, girt themselves with the cords; Beatrice placed her turban on her head, and they awaited the last summons.

In the meantime, Giacomo and Bernardo, whose sentences had been read to them, awaited also the moment of their death. About ten o'clock the members of the Confraternity of Mercy, a Florentine order, arrived at the prison of Tordinona, and halted on the threshold with the crucifix, awaiting the appearance of the unhappy youths. Here a serious accident had nearly happened. As many persons were at the prison windows to see the prisoners come out, someone accidentally threw down a large flower-pot full of earth, which fell into the street and narrowly missed one of the Confraternity who was amongst the torch-bearers just before the crucifix. It passed so close to the torch as to extinguish the flame in its descent.

At this moment the gates opened, and Giacomo appeared first on the threshold. He fell on his knees, adoring the holy crucifix with great devotion. He was completely covered with a large mourning cloak, under which his bare breast was prepared to be torn by the red-hot pincers of the executioner, which were lying ready in a chafing-dish fixed to the cart. Having ascended the vehicle, in which the executioner placed him so as more readily to perform this office, Bernardo came out, and was thus addressed on his appearance by the fiscal of Rome—

"Signor Bernardo Cenci, in the name of our blessed Redeemer, our Holy Father the Pope spares your life; with the sole condition that you accompany your relatives to the scaffold and to their death, and never forget to pray for those with whom you were condemned to die."

At this unexpected intelligence, a loud murmur of joy spread among the crowd, and the members of the Confraternity immediately untied the small mask which covered the youth's eyes; for, owing to his tender age, it had been thought proper to conceal the scaffold from his sight.

Then the executioner; having disposed of Giacomo, came down from the cart to take Bernardo; whose pardon being formally communicated to him, he took off

his handcuffs, and placed him alongside his brother, covering him up with a magnificent cloak embroidered with gold, for the neck and shoulders of the poor lad had been already bared, as a preliminary to his decapitation. People were surprised to see such a rich cloak in the possession of the executioner, but were told that it was the one given by Beatrice to Marzio to pledge him to the murder of her father, which fell to the executioner as a perquisite after the execution of the assassin. The sight of the great assemblage of people produced such an effect upon the boy that he fainted.

The procession then proceeded to the prison of Corte Savella, marching to the sound of funeral chants. At its gates the sacred crucifix halted for the women to join: they soon appeared, fell on their knees, and worshipped the holy symbol as the others had done. The march to the scaffold was then resumed.

The two female prisoners followed the last row of penitents in single file, veiled to the waist, with the distinction that Lucrezia, as a widow, wore a black veil and high-heeled slippers of the same hue, with bows of ribbon, as was the fashion; whilst Beatrice, as a young unmarried girl, wore a silk flat cap to match her corsage, with a plush hood, which fell over her shoulders and covered her violet frock; white slippers with high heels, ornamented with gold rosettes and cherry-coloured fringe. The arms of both were untrammelled, except for a thin slack cord which left their hands free to carry a crucifix and a handkerchief.

During the night a lofty scaffold had been erected on the bridge of Sant' Angelo, and the plank and block were placed thereon. Above the block was hung, from a large cross beam, a ponderous axe, which, guided by two grooves, fell with its whole weight at the touch of a spring.

In this formation the procession wended its way towards the bridge of Sant' Angela. Lucrezia, the more broken down of the two, wept bitterly; but Beatrice was firm and unmoved. On arriving at the open space before the bridge, the women were led into a chapel, where they were shortly joined by Giacomo and Bernardo; they remained together for a few moments, when the brothers were led away to the scaffold, although one was to be executed last, and the other was pardoned. But when they had mounted the platform, Bernardo fainted a second time; and as the executioner was approaching to his assistance, some of the crowd, supposing that his object was to decapitate him, cried loudly, "He is pardoned!" The executioner reassured them by seating Bernardo near the block, Giacomo kneeling on the other side.

Then the executioner descended, entered the chapel, and reappeared leading Lucrezia, who was the first to suffer. At the foot of the scaffold he tied her hands behind her back, tore open the top of her corsage so as to uncover her shoulders, gave her the crucifix to kiss, and led her to the step ladder, which she ascended with great difficulty, on account of her extreme stoutness; then, on her reaching the platform, he removed the veil which covered her head. On this exposure of her features to the immense crowd, Lucrezia shuddered from head to foot; then, her eyes full of tears, she cried with a loud voice—

“O my God, have mercy upon me; and do you, brethren, pray for my soul!”

Having uttered these words, not knowing what was required of her, she turned to Alessandro, the chief executioner, and asked what she was to do; he told her to bstride the plank and lie prone upon it; which she did with great trouble and timidity; but as she was unable, on account of the fullness of her bust, to lay her neck upon the block, this had to be raised by placing a billet of wood underneath it; all this time the poor woman, suffering even more from shame than from fear, was kept in suspense; at length, when she was properly adjusted, the executioner touched the spring, the knife fell, and the decapitated head, falling on the platform of the scaffold, bounded two or three times in the air, to the general horror; the executioner then seized it, showed it to the multitude, and wrapping it in black taffetas, placed it with the body on a bier at the foot of the scaffold.

Whilst arrangements were being made for the decapitation of Beatrice, several stands, full of spectators, broke down; some people were killed by this accident, and still more lamed and injured.

The machine being now rearranged and washed, the executioner returned to the chapel to take charge of Beatrice, who, on seeing the sacred crucifix, said some prayers for her soul, and on her hands being tied, cried out, “God grant that you be binding this body unto corruption, and loosing this soul unto life eternal!” She then arose, proceeded to the platform, where she devoutly kissed the stigmata; then leaving her slippers at the foot of the scaffold, she nimbly ascended the ladder, and instructed beforehand, promptly lay down on the plank, without exposing her naked shoulders. But her precautions to shorten the bitterness of death were of no avail, for the pope, knowing her impetuous disposition, and fearing lest she might be led into the commission of some sin between absolution and death, had given orders that the moment Beatrice was extended on the scaffold a signal gun should be fired from the castle of Sant’ Angelo;

which was done, to the great astonishment of everybody, including Beatrice herself, who, not expecting this explosion, raised herself almost upright; the pope meanwhile, who was praying at Monte Cavallo, gave her absolution 'in articulo mortis'. About five minutes thus passed, during which the sufferer waited with her head replaced on the block; at length, when the executioner judged that the absolution had been given, he released the spring, and the axe fell.

A gruesome sight was then afforded: whilst the head bounced away on one side of the block, on the other the body rose erect, as if about to step backwards; the executioner exhibited the head, and disposed of it and the body as before. He wished to place Beatrice's body with that of her stepmother, but the brotherhood of Mercy took it out of his hands, and as one of them was attempting to lay it on the bier, it slipped from him and fell from the scaffold to the ground below; the dress being partially torn from the body, which was so besmeared with dust and blood that much time was occupied in washing it. Poor Bernardo was so overcome by this horrible scene that he swooned away for the third time, and it was necessary to revive him with stimulants to witness the fate of his elder brother.

The turn of Giacomo at length arrived: he had witnessed the death of his stepmother and his sister, and his clothes were covered with their blood; the executioner approached him and tore off his cloak, exposing his bare breast covered with the wounds caused by the grip of red-hot pincers; in this state, and half-naked, he rose to his feet, and turning to his brother, said—

“Bernardo, if in my examination I have compromised and accused you, I have done so falsely, and although I have already disavowed this declaration, I repeat, at the moment of appearing before God, that you are innocent, and that it is a cruel abuse of justice to compel you to witness this frightful spectacle.”

The executioner then made him kneel down, bound his legs to one of the beams erected on the scaffold, and having bandaged his eyes, shattered his head with a blow of his mallet; then, in the sight of all, he hacked his body into four quarters. The official party then left, taking with them Bernardo, who, being in a state of high fever, was bled and put to bed.

The corpses of the two ladies were laid out each on its bier under the statue of St. Paul, at the foot of the bridge, with four torches of white wax, which burned till

four o'clock in the afternoon; then, along with the remains of Giacomo, they were taken to the church of San Giovanni Decollato; finally, about nine in the evening, the body of Beatrice, covered with flowers, and attired in the dress worn at her execution, was carried to the church of San Pietro in Montorio, with fifty lighted torches, and followed by the brethren of the order of the Stigmata and all the Franciscan monks in Rome; there, agreeably to her wish, it was buried at the foot of the high altar.

The same evening Signora Lucrezia was interred, as she had desired to be, in the church of San Giorgio di Velobre.

All Rome may be said to have been present at this tragedy, carriages, horses, foot people, and cars crowding as it were upon one another. The day was unfortunately so hot, and the sun so scorching, that many persons fainted, others returned home stricken with fever, and some even died during the night, owing to sunstroke from exposure during the three hours occupied by the execution.

The Tuesday following, the 14th of September; being the Feast of the Holy Cross, the brotherhood of San Marcello, by special licence of the pope, set at liberty the unhappy Bernardo Cenci, with the condition of paying within the year two thousand five hundred Roman crowns to the brotherhood of the most Holy Trinity of Pope Sixtus, as may be found to-day recorded in their archives.

Having now seen the tomb, if you desire to form a more vivid impression of the principal actors in this tragedy than can be derived from a narrative, pay a visit to the Barberini Gallery, where you will see, with five other masterpieces by Guido, the portrait of Beatrice, taken, some say the night before her execution, others during her progress to the scaffold; it is the head of a lovely girl, wearing a headdress composed of a turban with a lappet. The hair is of a rich fair chestnut hue; the dark eyes are moistened with recent tears; a perfectly formed nose surmounts an infantile mouth; unfortunately, the loss of tone in the picture since it was painted has destroyed the original fair complexion. The age of the subject may be twenty, or perhaps twenty-two years.

Near this portrait is that of Lucrezia Petrani the small head indicates a person below the middle height; the attributes are those of a Roman matron in her pride; her high complexion, graceful contour, straight nose, black eyebrows, and expression at the same time imperious and voluptuous indicate this character to the life; a smile still seems to linger on the charming dimpled cheeks and perfect

mouth mentioned by the chronicler, and her face is exquisitely framed by luxuriant curls falling from her forehead in graceful profusion.

As for Giacomo and Bernardo, as no portraits of them are in existence, we are obliged to gather an idea of their appearance from the manuscript which has enabled us to compile this sanguinary history; they are thus described by the eye-witness of the closing scene—

Giacomo was short, well-made and strong, with black hair and beard; he appeared to be about twenty-six years of age.

Poor Bernardo was the image of his sister, so nearly resembling her, that when he mounted the scaffold his long hair and girlish face led people to suppose him to be Beatrice herself: he might be fourteen or fifteen years of age.

The peace of God be with them!

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CRIMES, v1 by Alexander Dumas, Pere

MASSACRES OF THE SOUTH

1551-1815

by Alexandre Dumas, Pere

CHAPTER I

It is possible that our reader, whose recollections may perhaps go back as far as the Restoration, will be surprised at the size of the frame required for the picture we are about to bring before him, embracing as it does two centuries and a half; but as everything, has its precedent, every river its source, every volcano its central fire, so it is that the spot of earth on which we are going to fix our eyes has been the scene of action and reaction, revenge and retaliation, till the religious annals of the South resemble an account-book kept by double entry, in which fanaticism enters the profits of death, one side being written with the blood of Catholics, the other with that of Protestants.

In the great political and religious convulsions of the South, the earthquake-like throes of which were felt even in the capital, Nimes has always taken the central place; Nimes will therefore be the pivot round which our story will revolve, and though we may sometimes leave it for a moment, we shall always return thither without fail.

Nimes was reunited to France by Louis VIII, the government being taken from its vicomte, Bernard Athon VI, and given to consuls in the year 1207. During the episcopate of Michel Briconnet the relics of St. Bauzile were discovered, and hardly were the rejoicings over this event at an end when the new doctrines began to spread over France. It was in the South that the persecutions began, and in 1551 several persons were publicly burnt as heretics by order of the Seneschal's Court at Nimes, amongst whom was Maurice Secenat, a missionary from the Cevennes, who was taken in the very act of preaching. Thenceforth Nimes rejoiced in two martyrs and two patron saints, one revered by the Catholics, and one by the Protestants; St. Bauzile, after reigning as sole protector for twenty-four years, being forced to share the honours of his guardianship with his new rival.

Maurice Secenat was followed as preacher by Pierre de Lavau; these two names being still remembered among the crowd of obscure and forgotten martyrs. He also was put to death on the Place de la Salamandre, all the difference being that the former was burnt and the latter hanged.

Pierre de Lavau was attended in his last moments by Dominique Deyron, Doctor

of Theology; but instead of, as is usual, the dying man being converted by the priest, it was the priest who was converted by de Lavau, and the teaching which it was desired should be suppressed burst forth again. Decrees were issued against Dominique Deyron; he was pursued and tracked down, and only escaped the gibbet by fleeing to the mountains.

The mountains are the refuge of all rising or decaying sects; God has given to the powerful on earth city, plain, and sea, but the mountains are the heritage of the oppressed.

Persecution and proselytism kept pace with each other, but the blood that was shed produced the usual effect: it rendered the soil on which it fell fruitful, and after two or three years of struggle, during which two or three hundred Huguenots had been burnt or hanged, Nimes awoke one morning with a Protestant majority. In 1556 the consuls received a sharp reprimand on account of the leaning of the city towards the doctrines of the Reformation; but in 1557, one short year after this admonition, Henri II was forced to confer the office of president of the Presidial Court on William de Calviere, a Protestant. At last a decision of the senior judge having declared that it was the duty of the consuls to sanction the execution of heretics by their presence, the magistrates of the city protested against this decision, and the power of the Crown was insufficient to carry it out.

Henri II dying, Catherine de Medicis and the Guises took possession of the throne in the name of Francois II. There is a moment when nations can always draw a long breath, it is while their kings are awaiting burial; and Nimes took advantage of this moment on the death of Henri II, and on September 29th, 1559, Guillaume Moget founded the first Protestant community.

Guillaume Moget came from Geneva. He was the spiritual son of Calvin, and came to Nimes with the firm purpose of converting all the remaining Catholics or of being hanged. As he was eloquent, spirited, and wily, too wise to be violent, ever ready to give and take in the matter of concessions, luck was on his side, and Guillaume Moget escaped hanging.

The moment a rising sect ceases to be downtrodden it becomes a queen, and heresy, already mistress of three-fourths of the city, began to hold up its head with boldness in the streets. A householder called Guillaume Raymond opened his house to the Calvinist missionary, and allowed him to preach in it regularly to

all who came, and the wavering were thus confirmed in the new faith. Soon the house became too narrow to contain the crowds which flocked thither to imbibe the poison of the revolutionary doctrine, and impatient glances fell on the churches.

Meanwhile the Vicomte de Joyeuse, who had just been appointed governor of Languedoc in the place of M. de Villars, grew uneasy at the rapid progress made by the Protestants, who so far from trying to conceal it boasted of it; so he summoned the consuls before him, admonished them sharply in the king's name, and threatened to quarter a garrison in the town which would soon put an end to these disorders. The consuls promised to stop the evil without the aid of outside help, and to carry out their promise doubled the patrol and appointed a captain of the town whose sole duty was to keep order in the streets. Now this captain whose office had been created solely for the repression of heresy, happened to be Captain Bouillargues, the most inveterate Huguenot who ever existed.

The result of this discriminating choice was that Guillaume Moget began to preach, and once when a great crowd had gathered in a garden to hear him hold forth, heavy rain came on, and it became necessary for the people either to disperse or to seek shelter under a roof. As the preacher had just reached the most interesting part of his sermon, the congregation did not hesitate an instant to take the latter alternative. The Church of St. Etienne du Capitole was quite near: someone present suggested that this building, if not the most suitable, as at least the most spacious for such a gathering.

The idea was received with acclamation: the rain grew heavier, the crowd invaded the church, drove out the priests, trampled the Holy Sacrament under foot, and broke the sacred images. This being accomplished, Guillaume Moget entered the pulpit, and resumed his sermon with such eloquence that his hearers' excitement redoubled, and not satisfied with what had already been done, rushed off to seize on the Franciscan monastery, where they forthwith installed Moget and the two women, who, according to Menard the historian of Languedoc, never left him day or night; all which proceedings were regarded by Captain Bouillargues with magnificent calm.

The consuls being once more summoned before M. de Villars, who had again become governor, would gladly have denied the existence of disorder; but finding this impossible, they threw themselves on his mercy. He being unable to repose confidence in them any longer, sent a garrison to the citadel of Nimes,

which the municipality was obliged to support, appointed a governor of the city with four district captains under him, and formed a body of military police which quite superseded the municipal constabulary. Moget was expelled from Nimes, and Captain Bouillargues deprived of office.

Francis II dying in his turn, the usual effect was produced,—that is, the persecution became less fierce,—and Moget therefore returned to Nimes. This was a victory, and every victory being a step forward, the triumphant preacher organised a Consistory, and the deputies of Nimes demanded from the States-General of Orleans possession of the churches. No notice was taken of this demand; but the Protestants were at no loss how to proceed. On the 21st December 1561 the churches of *Ste. Eugenie*, *St. Augustin*, and the *Cordeliers* were taken by assault, and cleared of their images in a hand's turn; and this time Captain Bouillargues was not satisfied with looking on, but directed the operations.

The cathedral was still safe, and in it were entrenched the remnant of the Catholic clergy; but it was apparent that at the earliest opportunity it too would be turned into a meetinghouse; and this opportunity was not long in coming.

One Sunday, when Bishop Bernard d'Elbene had celebrated mass, just as the regular preacher was about to begin his sermon, some children who were playing in the close began to hoot the 'beguinier' [a name of contempt for friars]. Some of the faithful being disturbed in their meditations, came out of the church and chastised the little Huguenots, whose parents considered themselves in consequence to have been insulted in the persons of their children. A great commotion ensued, crowds began to form, and cries of "To the church! to the church!" were heard. Captain Bouillargues happened to be in the neighbourhood, and being very methodical set about organising the insurrection; then putting himself at its head, he charged the cathedral, carrying everything before him, in spite of the barricades which had been hastily erected by the Papists. The assault was over in a few moments; the priests and their flock fled by one door, while the Reformers entered by another. The building was in the twinkling of an eye adapted to the new form of worship: the great crucifix from above the altar was dragged about the streets at the end of a rope and scourged at every crossroads. In the evening a large fire was lighted in the place before the cathedral, and the archives of the ecclesiastical and religious houses, the sacred images, the relics of the saints, the decorations of the altar, the sacerdotal vestments, even the Host itself, were thrown on it without any remonstrance from the consuls; the very

wind which blew upon Nimes breathed heresy.

For the moment Nimes was in full revolt, and the spirit of organisation spread: Moget assumed the titles of pastor and minister of the Christian Church. Captain Bouillargues melted down the sacred vessels of the Catholic churches, and paid in this manner the volunteers of Nimes and the German mercenaries; the stones of the demolished religious houses were used in the construction of fortifications, and before anyone thought of attacking it the city was ready for a siege. It was at this moment that Guillaume Calviere, who was at the head of the Presidial Court, Moget being president of the Consistory, and Captain Bouillargues commander-in-chief of the armed forces, suddenly resolved to create a new authority, which, while sharing the powers hitherto vested solely in the consuls, should be, even more than they, devoted to Calvin: thus the office of les Messieurs came into being. This was neither more nor less than a committee of public safety, and having been formed in the stress of revolution it acted in a revolutionary spirit, absorbing the powers of the consuls, and restricting the authority of the Consistory to things spiritual. In the meantime the Edict of Amboise, was promulgated, and it was announced that the king, Charles IX, accompanied by Catherine de Medicis, was going to visit his loyal provinces in the South.

Determined as was Captain Bouillargues, for once he had to give way, so strong was the party against him; therefore, despite the murmurs of the fanatics, the city of Nimes resolved, not only to open its gates to its sovereign, but to give him such a reception as would efface the bad impression which Charles might have received from the history of recent events. The royal procession was met at the Pont du Gare, where young girls attired as nymphs emerged from a grotto bearing a collation, which they presented to their Majesties, who graciously and heartily partook of it. The repast at an end, the illustrious travellers resumed their progress; but the imagination of the Nimes authorities was not to be restrained within such narrow bounds: at the entrance to the city the king found the Porte de la Couronne transformed into a mountain-side, covered with vines and olive trees, under which a shepherd was tending his flock. As the king approached the mountain parted as if yielding to the magic of his power, the most beautiful maidens and the most noble came out to meet their sovereign, presenting him the keys of the city wreathed with flowers, and singing to the accompaniment of the shepherd's pipe. Passing through the mountain, Charles saw chained to a palm tree in the depths of a grotto a monster crocodile from whose jaws issued flames: this was a representation of the old coat of arms granted to the city by Octavius

Caesar Augustus after the battle of Actium, and which Francis I had restored to it in exchange for a model in silver of the amphitheatre presented to him by the city. Lastly, the king found in the Place de la Salamandre numerous bonfires, so that without waiting to ask if these fires were made from the remains of the faggots used at the martyrdom of Maurice Secenat, he went to bed very much pleased with the reception accorded him by his good city of Nimes, and sure that all the unfavourable reports he had heard were calumnies.

Nevertheless, in order that such rumours, however slight their foundation, should not again be heard, the king appointed Damville governor of Languedoc, installing him himself in the chief city of his government; he then removed every consul from his post without exception, and appointed in their place Guy-Rochette, doctor and lawyer; Jean Beaudan, burgess; Francois Aubert, mason; and Cristol Ligier, farm labourer—all Catholics. He then left for Paris, where a short time after he concluded a treaty with the Calvinists, which the people with its gift of prophecy called “The halting peace of unsure seat,” and which in the end led to the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

Gracious as had been the measures taken by the king to secure the peace of his good city of Nimes, they had nevertheless been reactionary; consequently the Catholics, feeling the authorities were now on their side, returned in crowds: the householders reclaimed their houses, the priests their churches; while, rendered ravenous by the bitter bread of exile, both the clergy and the laity pillaged the treasury. Their return was not, however; stained by bloodshed, although the Calvinists were reviled in the open street. A few stabs from a dagger or shots from an arquebus might, however, have been better; such wounds heal while mocking words rankle in the memory.

On the morrow of Michaelmas Day—that is, on the 31st September 1567—a number of conspirators might have been seen issuing from a house and spreading themselves through the streets, crying “To arms! Down with the Papists!” Captain Bouillargues was taking his revenge.

As the Catholics were attacked unawares, they did not make even a show of resistance: a number of Protestants—those who possessed the best arms—rushed to the house of Guy-Rochette, the first consul, and seized the keys of the city. Guy Rochette, startled by the cries of the crowds, had looked out of the window, and seeing a furious mob approaching his house, and feeling that their rage was directed against himself, had taken refuge with his brother Gregoire. There,

recovering his courage and presence of mind, he recalled the important responsibilities attached to his office, and resolving to fulfil them whatever might happen, hastened to consult with the other magistrates, but as they all gave him very excellent reasons for not meddling, he soon felt there was no dependence to be placed on such cowards and traitors. He next repaired to the episcopal palace, where he found the bishop surrounded by the principal Catholics of the town, all on their knees offering up earnest prayers to Heaven, and awaiting martyrdom. Guy-Rochette joined them, and the prayers were continued.

A few instants later fresh noises were heard in the street, and the gates of the palace court groaned under blows of axe and crowbar. Hearing these alarming sounds, the bishop, forgetting that it was his duty to set a brave example, fled through a breach in the wall of the next house; but Guy-Rochette and his companions valiantly resolved not to run away, but to await their fate with patience. The gates soon yielded, and the courtyard and palace were filled with Protestants: at their head appeared Captain Bouillargues, sword in hand. Guy-Rochette and those with him were seized and secured in a room under the charge of four guards, and the palace was looted. Meantime another band of insurgents had attacked the house of the vicar-general, John Pebereau, whose body pierced by seven stabs of a dagger was thrown out of a window, the same fate as was meted out to Admiral Coligny eight years later at the hands of the Catholics. In the house a sum of 800 crowns was found and taken. The two bands then uniting, rushed to the cathedral, which they sacked for the second time.

Thus the entire day passed in murder and pillage: when night came the large number of prisoners so imprudently taken began to be felt as an encumbrance by the insurgent chiefs, who therefore resolved to take advantage of the darkness to get rid of them without causing too much excitement in the city. They were therefore gathered together from the various houses in which they had been confined, and were brought to a large hall in the Hotel de Ville, capable of containing from four to five hundred persons, and which was soon full. An irregular tribunal arrogating to itself powers of life and death was formed, and a clerk was appointed to register its decrees. A list of all the prisoners was given him, a cross placed before a name indicating that its bearer was condemned to death, and, list in hand, he went from group to group calling out the names distinguished by the fatal sign. Those thus sorted out were then conducted to a spot which had been chosen beforehand as the place of execution.

This was the palace courtyard in the middle of which yawned a well twenty-four feet in circumference and fifty deep. The fanatics thus found a grave ready-dug as it were to their hand, and to save time, made use of it.

The unfortunate Catholics, led thither in groups, were either stabbed with daggers or mutilated with axes, and the bodies thrown down the well. Guy-Rochette was one of the first to be dragged up. For himself he asked neither mercy nor favour, but he begged that the life of his young brother might be spared, whose only crime was the bond of blood which united them; but the assassins, paying no heed to his prayers, struck down both man and boy and flung them into the well. The corpse of the vicar-general, who had been killed the day before, was in its turn dragged thither by a rope and added to the others. All night the massacre went on, the crimsoned water rising in the well as corpse after corpse was thrown in, till, at break of day, it overflowed, one hundred and twenty bodies being then hidden in its depths.

Next day, October 1st, the scenes of tumult were renewed: from early dawn Captain Bouillargues ran from street to street crying, "Courage, comrades! Montpellier, Pezenas, Aramon, Beaucaire, Saint-Andeol, and Villeneuve are taken, and are on our side. Cardinal de Lorraine is dead, and the king is in our power." This aroused the failing energies of the assassins. They joined the captain, and demanded that the houses round the palace should be searched, as it was almost certain that the bishop, who had, as may be remembered, escaped the day before, had taken refuge in one of them. This being agreed to, a house-to-house visitation was begun: when the house of M. de Sauvignargues was reached, he confessed that the bishop was in his cellar, and proposed to treat with Captain Bouillargues for a ransom. This proposition being considered reasonable, was accepted, and after a short discussion the sum of 120 crowns was agreed on. The bishop laid down every penny he had about him, his servants were despoiled, and the sum made up by the Sieur de Sauvignargues, who having the bishop in his house kept him caged. The prelate, however, made no objection, although under other circumstances he would have regarded this restraint as the height of impertinence; but as it was he felt safer in M. de Sauvignargues' cellar than in the palace.

But the secret of the worthy prelate's hiding place was but badly kept by those with whom he had treated; for in a few moments a second crowd appeared, hoping to obtain a second ransom. Unfortunately, the Sieur de Sauvignargues, the bishop, and the bishop's servants had stripped themselves of all their ready

money to make up the first, so the master of the house, fearing for his own safety, having barricaded the doors, got out into a lane and escaped, leaving the bishop to his fate. The Huguenots climbed in at the windows, crying, "No quarter! Down with the Papists! "The bishop's servants were cut down, the bishop himself dragged out of the cellar and thrown into the street. There his rings and crozier were snatched from him; he was stripped of his clothes and arrayed in a grotesque and ragged garment which chanced to be at hand; his mitre was replaced by a peasant's cap; and in this condition he was dragged back to the palace and placed on the brink of the well to be thrown in. One of the assassins drew attention to the fact that it was already full. "Pooh!" replied another, "they won't mind a little crowding for a bishop." Meantime the prelate, seeing he need expect no mercy from man, threw himself on his knees and commended his soul to God. Suddenly, however, one of those who had shown himself most ferocious during the massacre, Jean Coussinal by name, was touched as if by miracle with a feeling of compassion at the sight of so much resignation, and threw himself between the bishop and those about to strike, and declaring that whoever touched the prelate must first overcome himself, took him under his protection, his comrades retreating in astonishment. Jean Coussinal raising the bishop, carried him in his arms into a neighbouring house, and drawing his sword, took his stand on the threshold.

The assassins, however, soon recovered from their surprise, and reflecting that when all was said and done they were fifty to one, considered it would be shameful to let themselves be intimidated by a single opponent, so they advanced again on Coussinal, who with a back-handed stroke cut off the head of the first-comer. The cries upon this redoubled, and two or three shots were fired at the obstinate defender of the poor bishop, but they all missed aim. At that moment Captain Bouillargues passed by, and seeing one man attacked by fifty, inquired into the cause. He was told of Coussinal's odd determination to save the bishop. "He is quite right," said the captain; "the bishop has paid ransom, and no one has any right to touch him." Saying this, he walked up to Coussinal, gave him his hand, and the two entered the house, returning in a few moments with the bishop between them. In this order they crossed the town, followed by the murmuring crowd, who were, however, afraid to do more than murmur; at the gate the bishop was provided with an escort and let go, his defenders remaining there till he was out of sight.

The massacres went on during the whole of the second day, though towards evening the search for victims relaxed somewhat; but still many isolated acts of

murder took place during the night. On the morrow, being tired of killing, the people began to destroy, and this phase lasted a long time, it being less fatiguing to throw stones about than corpses. All the convents, all the monasteries, all the houses of the priests and canons were attacked in turn; nothing was spared except the cathedral, before which axes and crowbars seemed to lose their power, and the church of *Ste. Eugenie*, which was turned into a powder-magazine. The day of the great butchery was called “*La Michelade*,” because it took place the day after Michaelmas, and as all this happened in the year 1567 the Massacre of St. Bartholomew must be regarded as a plagiarism.

At last, however, with the help of M. Damville; the Catholics again got the upper hand, and it was the turn of the Protestants to fly. They took refuge in the Cevennes. From the beginning of the troubles the Cevennes had been the asylum of those who suffered for the Protestant faith; and still the plains are Papist, and the mountains Protestant. When the Catholic party is in the ascendant at Nimes, the plain seeks the mountain; when the Protestants come into power, the mountain comes down into the plain.

However, vanquished and fugitive though they were, the Calvinists did not lose courage: in exile one day, they felt sure their luck would turn the next; and while the Catholics were burning or hanging them in effigy for contumacy, they were before a notary, dividing the property of their executioners.

But it was not enough for them to buy or sell this property amongst each other, they wanted to enter into possession; they thought of nothing else, and in 1569—that is, in the eighteenth month of their exile—they attained their wish in the following manner:

One day the exiles perceived a carpenter belonging to a little village called Cauvisson approaching their place of refuge. He desired to speak to M. Nicolas de Calviere, seigneur de St. Cosme, and brother of the president, who was known to be a very enterprising man. To him the carpenter, whose name was Maduron, made the following proposition:

In the moat of Nimes, close to the Gate of the Carmelites, there was a grating through which the waters from the fountain found vent. Maduron offered to file through the bars of this grating in such a manner that some fine night it could be lifted out so as to allow a band of armed Protestants to gain access to the city. Nicolas de Calviere approving of this plan, desired that it should be carried out

at once; but the carpenter pointed out that it would be necessary to wait for stormy weather, when the waters swollen by the rain would by their noise drown the sound of the file. This precaution was doubly necessary as the box of the sentry was almost exactly above the grating. M. de Calviere tried to make Maduron give way; but the latter, who was risking more than anyone else, was firm. So whether they liked it or not, de Calviere and the rest had to await his good pleasure.

Some days later rainy weather set in, and as usual the fountain became fuller; Maduron seeing that the favourable moment had arrived, glided at night into the moat and applied his file, a friend of his who was hidden on the ramparts above pulling a cord attached to Maduron's arm every time the sentinel, in pacing his narrow round, approached the spot. Before break of day the work was well begun. Maduron then obliterated all traces of his file by daubing the bars with mud and wax, and withdrew. For three consecutive nights he returned to his task, taking the same precautions, and before the fourth was at an end he found that by means of a slight effort the grating could be removed. That was all that was needed, so he gave notice to Messire Nicolas de Calviere that the moment had arrived.

Everything was favourable to the undertaking: as there was no moon, the next night was chosen to carry out the plan, and as soon as it was dark Messire Nicolas de Calviere set out with his men, who, slipping down into the moat without noise, crossed, the water being up to their belts, climbed up the other side, and crept along at the foot of the wall till they reached the grating without being perceived. There Maduron was waiting, and as soon as he caught sight of them he gave a slight blow to the loose bars; which fell, and the whole party entered the drain, led by de Calviere, and soon found themselves at the farther end—that is to say, in the Place de la Fontaine. They immediately formed into companies twenty strong, four of which hastened to the principal gates, while the others patrolled the streets shouting, “The city taken! Down with the Papists! A new world! “Hearing this, the Protestants in the city recognised their coreligionists, and the Catholics their opponents: but whereas the former had been warned and were on the alert, the latter were taken by surprise; consequently they offered no resistance, which, however, did not prevent bloodshed. M. de St. Andre, the governor of the town, who during his short period of office had drawn the bitter hatred of the Protestants on him, was shot dead in his bed, and his body being flung out of the window, was torn in pieces by the populace. The work of murder went on all night, and on the morrow the

victors in their turn began an organised persecution, which fell more heavily on the Catholics than that to which they had subjected the Protestants; for, as we have explained above, the former could only find shelter in the plain, while the latter used the Cevennes as a stronghold.

It was about this time that the peace, which was called, as we have said, “the insecurely seated,” was concluded. Two years later this name was justified by the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.

When this event took place, the South, strange as it may seem, looked on: in Nimes both Catholics and Protestants, stained with the other’s blood, faced each other, hand on hilt, but without drawing weapon. It was as if they were curious to see how the Parisians would get through. The massacre had one result, however, the union of the principal cities of the South and West: Montpellier, Uzès, Montauban, and La Rochelle, with Nimes at their head, formed a civil and military league to last, as is declared in the Act of Federation, until God should raise up a sovereign to be the defender of the Protestant faith. In the year 1775 the Protestants of the South began to turn their eyes towards Henri IV as the coming defender.

At that date Nimes, setting an example to the other cities of the League, deepened her moats, blew up her suburbs, and added to the height of her ramparts. Night and day the work of perfecting the means of defence went on; the guard at every gate was doubled, and knowing how often a city had been taken by surprise, not a hole through which a Papist could creep was left in the fortifications. In dread of what the future might bring, Nimes even committed sacrilege against the past, and partly demolished the Temple of Diana and mutilated the amphitheatre—of which one gigantic stone was sufficient to form a section of the wall. During one truce the crops were sown, during another they were garnered in, and so things went on while the reign of the Mignons lasted. At length the prince raised up by God, whom the Huguenots had waited for so long, appeared; Henri IV ascended the throne.

But once seated, Henri found himself in the same difficulty as had confronted Octavius fifteen centuries earlier, and which confronted Louis Philippe three centuries later—that is to say, having been raised to sovereign power by a party which was not in the majority, he soon found himself obliged to separate from this party and to abjure his religious beliefs, as others have abjured or will yet abjure their political beliefs; consequently, just as Octavius had his Antony, and

Louis Philippe was to have his Lafayette, Henri IV was to have his Biron. When monarchs are in this position they can no longer have a will of their own or personal likes and dislikes; they submit to the force of circumstances, and feel compelled to rely on the masses; no sooner are they freed from the ban under which they laboured than they are obliged to bring others under it.

However, before having recourse to extreme measures, Henri IV with soldierly frankness gathered round him all those who had been his comrades of old in war and in religion; he spread out before them a map of France, and showed them that hardly a tenth of the immense number of its inhabitants were Protestants, and that even that tenth was shut up in the mountains; some in Dauphine, which had been won for them by their three principal leaders, Baron des Adrets, Captain Montbrun, and Lesdiguières; others in the Cevennes, which had become Protestant through their great preachers, Maurice Secenat and Guillaume Moget; and the rest in the mountains of Navarre, whence he himself had come. He recalled to them further that whenever they ventured out of their mountains they had been beaten in every battle, at Jarnac, at Moncontour, and at Dreux. He concluded by explaining how impossible it was for him, such being the case, to entrust the guidance of the State to their party; but he offered them instead three things, viz., his purse to supply their present needs, the Edict of Nantes to assure their future safety, and fortresses to defend themselves should this edict one day be revoked, for with profound insight the grandfather divined the grandson: Henri IV feared Louis XIV.

The Protestants took what they were offered, but of course like all who accept benefits they went away filled with discontent because they had not been given more.

Although the Protestants ever afterwards looked on Henri IV as a renegade, his reign nevertheless was their golden age, and while it lasted Nines was quiet; for, strange to say, the Protestants took no revenge for St. Bartholomew, contenting themselves with debarring the Catholics from the open exercise of their religion, but leaving them free to use all its rites and ceremonies in private. They even permitted the procession of the Host through the streets in case of illness, provided it took place at night. Of course death would not always wait for darkness, and the Host was sometimes carried to the dying during the day, not without danger to the priest, who, however, never let himself be deterred thereby from the performance of his duty; indeed, it is of the essence of religious devotion to be inflexible; and few soldiers, however brave, have equalled the

martyrs in courage.

During this time, taking advantage of the truce to hostilities and the impartial protection meted out to all without distinction by the Constable Damville, the Carmelites and Capuchins, the Jesuits and monks of all orders and colours, began by degrees to return to Nines; without any display, it is true, rather in a surreptitious manner, preferring darkness to daylight; but however this may be, in the course of three or four years they had all regained foothold in the town; only now they were in the position in which the Protestants had been formerly, they were without churches, as their enemies were in possession of all the places of worship. It also happened that a Jesuit high in authority, named Pere Coston, preached with such success that the Protestants, not wishing to be beaten, but desirous of giving word for word, summoned to their aid the Rev. Jeremie Ferrier, of Alais, who at the moment was regarded as the most eloquent preacher they had. Needless to say, Alais was situated in the mountains, that inexhaustible source of Huguenot eloquence. At once the controversial spirit was aroused; it did not as yet amount to war, but still less could it be called peace: people were no longer assassinated, but they were anathematised; the body was safe, but the soul was consigned to damnation: the days as they passed were used by both sides to keep their hand in, in readiness for the moment when the massacres should again begin.

CHAPTER II

The death of Henri IV led to new conflicts, in which although at first success was on the side of the Protestants it by degrees went over to the Catholics; for with the accession of Louis XIII Richelieu had taken possession of the throne: beside the king sat the cardinal; under the purple mantle gleamed the red robe. It was at this crisis that Henri de Rohan rose to eminence in the South. He was one of the most illustrious representatives of that great race which, allied as it was to the royal houses of Scotland, France, Savoy, and Lorraine; had taken as their device, "Be king I cannot, prince I will not, Rohan I am."

Henri de Rohan was at this time about forty years of age, in the prime of life. In his youth, in order to perfect his education, he had visited England, Scotland, and Italy. In England Elizabeth had called him her knight; in Scotland James VI had asked him to stand godfather to his son, afterwards Charles I; in Italy he had been so deep in the confidence of the leaders of men, and so thoroughly initiated into the politics of the principal cities, that it was commonly said that, after Machiavel, he was the greatest authority in these matters. He had returned to France in the lifetime of Henry IV, and had married the daughter of Sully, and after Henri's death had commanded the Swiss and the Grison regiments—at the siege of Juliers. This was the man whom the king was so imprudent as to offend by refusing him the reversion of the office of governor of Poitou, which was then held by Sully, his father-in-law. In order to revenge himself for the neglect he met with at court, as he states in his *Memoires* with military ingenuousness, he espoused the cause of Conde with all his heart, being also drawn in this direction by his liking for Conde's brother and his consequent desire to help those of Conde's religion.

>From this day on street disturbances and angry disputes assumed another aspect: they took in a larger area and were not so readily appeased. It was no longer an isolated band of insurgents which roused a city, but rather a conflagration which spread over the whole South, and a general uprising which was almost a civil war.

This state of things lasted for seven or eight years, and during this time Rohan, abandoned by Chatillon and La Force, who received as the reward of their defection the field marshal's baton, pressed by Conde, his old friend, and by

Montmorency, his consistent rival, performed prodigies of courage and miracles of strategy. At last, without soldiers, without ammunition, without money, he still appeared to Richelieu to be so redoubtable that all the conditions of surrender he demanded were granted. The maintenance of the Edict of Nantes was guaranteed, all the places of worship were to be restored to the Reformers, and a general amnesty granted to himself and his partisans. Furthermore, he obtained what was an unheard-of thing until then, an indemnity of 300,000 livres for his expenses during the rebellion; of which sum he allotted 240,000 livres to his coreligionists—that is to say, more than three-quarters of the entire amount—and kept, for the purpose of restoring his various chateaux and setting his domestic establishment, which had been destroyed during the war, again on foot, only 60,000 livres. This treaty was signed on July 27th, 1629.

The Duc de Richelieu, to whom no sacrifice was too great in order to attain his ends, had at last reached the goal, but the peace cost him nearly 40,000,000 livres; on the other hand, Saintonge, Poitou, and Languedoc had submitted, and the chiefs of the houses of La Tremouille, Conde, Bouillon, Rohan, and Soubise had come to terms with him; organised armed opposition had disappeared, and the lofty manner of viewing matters natural to the cardinal duke prevented him from noticing private enmity. He therefore left Nimes free to manage her local affairs as she pleased, and very soon the old order, or rather disorder, reigned once more within her walls. At last Richelieu died, and Louis XIII soon followed him, and the long minority of his successor, with its embarrassments, left to Catholics and Protestants in the South more complete liberty than ever to carry on the great duel which down to our own days has never ceased.

But from this period, each flux and reflux bears more and more the peculiar character of the party which for the moment is triumphant; when the Protestants get the upper hand, their vengeance is marked by brutality and rage; when the Catholics are victorious, the retaliation is full of hypocrisy and greed. The Protestants pull down churches and monasteries, expel the monks, burn the crucifixes, take the body of some criminal from the gallows, nail it on a cross, pierce its side, put a crown of thorns round its temples and set it up in the marketplace—an effigy of Jesus on Calvary. The Catholics levy contributions, take back what they had been deprived of, exact indemnities, and although ruined by each reverse, are richer than ever after each victory. The Protestants act in the light of day, melting down the church bells to make cannon to the sound of the drum, violate agreements, warm themselves with wood taken from the houses of the cathedral clergy, affix their theses to the cathedral doors, beat

the priests who carry the Holy Sacrament to the dying, and, to crown all other insults, turn churches into slaughter-houses and sewers.

The Catholics, on the contrary, march at night, and, slipping in at the gates which have been left ajar for them, make their bishop president of the Council, put Jesuits at the head of the college, buy converts with money from the treasury, and as they always have influence at court, begin by excluding the Calvinists from favour, hoping soon to deprive them of justice.

At last, on the 31st of December, 1657, a final struggle took place, in which the Protestants were overcome, and were only saved from destruction because from the other side of the Channel, Cromwell exerted himself in their favour, writing with his own hand at the end of a despatch relative to the affairs of Austria, "I Learn that there have been popular disturbances in a town of Languedoc called Nimes, and I beg that order may be restored with as much mildness as possible, and without shedding of blood." As, fortunately for the Protestants, Mazarin had need of Cromwell at that moment, torture was forbidden, and nothing allowed but annoyances of all kinds. These henceforward were not only innumerable, but went on without a pause: the Catholics, faithful to their system of constant encroachment, kept up an incessant persecution, in which they were soon encouraged by the numerous ordinances issued by Louis XIV. The grandson of Henri IV could not so far forget all ordinary respect as to destroy at once the Edict of Nantes, but he tore off clause after clause.

In 1630—that is, a year after the peace with Rohan had been signed in the preceding reign—Chalons-sur-Saone had resolved that no Protestant should be allowed to take any part in the manufactures of the town.

In 1643, six months after the accession of Louis XIV, the laundresses of Paris made a rule that the wives and daughters of Protestants were unworthy to be admitted to the freedom of their respectable guild.

In 1654, just one year after he had attained his majority, Louis XIV consented to the imposition of a tax on the town of Nimes of 4000 francs towards the support of the Catholic and the Protestant hospitals; and instead of allowing each party to contribute to the support of its own hospital, the money was raised in one sum, so that, of the money paid by the Protestants, who were twice as numerous as the Catholics, two-sixths went to their enemies. On August 9th of the same year a decree of the Council ordered that all the artisan consuls should be Catholics; on

the 16th September another decree forbade Protestants to send deputations to the king; lastly, on the 20th of December, a further decree declared that all hospitals should be administered by Catholic consuls alone.

In 1662 Protestants were commanded to bury their dead either at dawn or after dusk, and a special clause of the decree fixed the number of persons who might attend a funeral at ten only.

In 1663 the Council of State issued decrees prohibiting the practice of their religion by the Reformers in one hundred and forty-two communes in the dioceses of Nimes, Uzes, and Mendes; and ordering the demolition of their meetinghouses.

In 1664 this regulation was extended to the meetinghouses of Alencon and Montauban, as well as their small place of worship in Nimes. On the 17th July of the same year the Parliament of Rouen forbade the master-merciers to engage any more Protestant workmen or apprentices when the number already employed had reached the proportion of one Protestant, to fifteen Catholics; on the 24th of the same month the Council of State declared all certificates of mastership held by a Protestant invalid from whatever source derived; and in October reduced to two the number of Protestants who might be employed at the mint.

In 1665 the regulation imposed on the merciers was extended to the goldsmiths.

In 1666 a royal declaration, revising the decrees of Parliament, was published, and Article 31 provided that the offices of clerk to the consulates, or secretary to a guild of watchmakers, or porter in a municipal building, could only be held by Catholics; while in Article 33 it was ordained that when a procession carrying the Host passed a place of worship belonging to the so-called Reformers, the worshippers should stop their psalm-singing till the procession had gone by; and lastly, in Article 34 it was enacted that the houses and other buildings belonging to those who were of the Reformed religion might, at the pleasure of the town authorities, be draped with cloth or otherwise decorated on any religious Catholic festival.

In 1669 the Chambers appointed by the Edict of Nantes in the Parliaments of Rouen and Paris were suppressed, as well as the articulated clerkships connected therewith, and the clerkships in the Record Office; and in August of the same year, when the emigration of Protestants was just beginning, an edict was issued,

of which the following is a clause:

“Whereas many of our subjects have gone to foreign countries, where they continue to follow their various trades and occupations, even working as shipwrights, or taking service as sailors, till at length they feel at home and determine never to return to France, marrying abroad and acquiring property of every description: We hereby forbid any member of the so-called Reformed Church to leave this kingdom without our permission, and we command those who have already left France to return forthwith within her boundaries.”

In 1670 the king excluded physicians of the Reformed faith from the office of dean of the college of Rouen, and allowed only two Protestant doctors within its precincts. In 1671 a decree was published commanding the arms of France to be removed from all the places of worship belonging to the pretended Reformers. In 1680 a proclamation from the king closed the profession of midwife to women of the Reformed faith. In 1681 those who renounced the Protestant religion were exempted for two years from all contributions towards the support of soldiers sent to their town, and were for the same period relieved from the duty of giving them board and lodging. In the same year the college of Sedan was closed—the only college remaining in the entire kingdom at which Calvinist children could receive instruction. In 1682 the king commanded Protestant notaries; procurators, ushers, and serjeants to lay down their offices, declaring them unfit for such professions; and in September of the same year three months only were allowed them for the sale of the reversion of the said offices. In 1684 the Council of State extended the preceding regulations to those Protestants holding the title of honorary secretary to the king, and in August of the same year Protestants were declared incapable of serving on a jury of experts.

In 1685 the provost of merchants in Paris ordered all Protestant privileged merchants in that city to sell their privileges within a month. And in October of the same year the long series of persecutions, of which we have omitted many, reached its culminating point—the: Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Henri IV, who foresaw this result, had hoped that it would have occurred in another manner, so that his coreligionists would have been able to retain their fortresses; but what was actually done was that the strong places were first taken away, and then came the Revocation; after which the Calvinists found themselves completely at the mercy of their mortal enemies.

>From 1669, when Louis first threatened to aim a fatal blow at the civil rights of

the Huguenots, by abolishing the equal partition of the Chambers between the two parties, several deputations had been sent to him praying him to stop the course of his persecutions; and in order not to give him any fresh excuse for attacking their party, these deputations addressed him in the most submissive manner, as the following fragment from an address will prove:

“In the name of God, sire,” said the Protestants to the king, “listen to the last breath of our dying liberty, have pity on our sufferings, have pity on the great number of your poor subjects who daily water their bread with their tears: they are all filled with burning zeal and inviolable loyalty to you; their love for your august person is only equalled by their respect; history bears witness that they contributed in no small degree to place your great and magnanimous ancestor on his rightful throne, and since your miraculous birth they have never done anything worthy of blame; they might indeed use much stronger terms, but your Majesty has spared their modesty by addressing to them on many occasions words of praise which they would never have ventured to apply to themselves; these your subjects place their sole trust in your sceptre for refuge and protection on earth, and their interest as well as their duty and conscience impels them to remain attached to the service of your Majesty with unalterable devotion.”

But, as we have seen, nothing could restrain the triumvirate which held the power just then, and thanks to the suggestions of Pere Lachaise and Madame de Maintenon, Louis XIV determined to gain heaven by means of wheel and stake.

As we see, for the Protestants, thanks to these numerous decrees, persecution began at the cradle and followed them to the grave.

As a boy, a Huguenot could—enter no public school; as a youth, no career was open to him; he could become neither mercer nor concierge, neither apothecary nor physician, neither lawyer nor consul. As a man, he had no sacred house, of prayer; no registrar would inscribe his marriage or the birth of his children; hourly his liberty and his conscience were ignored. If he ventured to worship God by the singing of psalms, he had to be silent as the Host was carried past outside. When a Catholic festival occurred, he was forced not only to swallow his rage but to let his house be hung with decorations in sign of joy; if he had inherited a fortune from his fathers, having neither social standing nor civil rights, it slipped gradually out of his hands, and went to support the schools and hospitals of his foes. Having reached the end of his life, his deathbed was made miserable; for dying in the faith of his fathers, he could not be laid to rest beside

them, and like a pariah he would be carried to his grave at night, no more than ten of those near and dear to him being allowed to follow his coffin.

Lastly, if at any age whatever he should attempt to quit the cruel soil on which he had no right to be born, to live, or to die, he would be declared a rebel, his goods would be confiscated, and the lightest penalty that he had to expect, if he ever fell into the hands of his enemies, was to row for the rest of his life in the galleys of the king, chained between a murderer and a forger.

Such a state of things was intolerable: the cries of one man are lost in space, but the groans of a whole population are like a storm; and this time, as always, the tempest gathered in the mountains, and the rumblings of the thunder began to be heard.

First there were texts written by invisible hands on city walls, on the signposts and crossroads, on the crosses in the cemeteries: these warnings, like the 'Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin' of Belshazzar, even pursued the persecutors into the midst of their feasts and orgies.

Now it was the threat, "Jesus came not to send peace, but a sword." Then this consolation, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Or perhaps it was this appeal for united action which was soon to become a summons to revolt, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us."

And before these promises, taken from the New Testament, the persecuted paused, and then went home inspired by faith in the prophets, who spake, as St. Paul says in his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, "not the word of men but the word of God."

Very soon these words became incarnate, and what the prophet Joel foretold came to pass: "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions,... and I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire,... and it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered."

In 1696 reports began to circulate that men had had visions; being able to see what was going on in the most distant parts, and that the heavens themselves opened to their eyes. While in this ecstatic state they were insensible to pain when pricked with either pin or blade; and when, on recovering consciousness,

they were questioned they could remember nothing.

The first of these was a woman from Vivarais, whose origin was unknown. She went about from town to town, shedding tears of blood. M. de Baille, intendant of Languedoc, had her arrested and brought to Montpellier. There she was condemned to death and burnt at the stake, her tears of blood being dried by fire.

After her came a second fanatic, for so these popular prophets were called. He was born at Mazillon, his name was Laquoite, and he was twenty years of age. The gift of prophecy had come to him in a strange manner. This is the story told about him:—"One day, returning from Languedoc, where he had been engaged in the cultivation of silkworms, on reaching the bottom of the hill of St. Jean he found a man lying on the ground trembling in every limb. Moved by pity, he stopped and asked what ailed him. The man replied, 'Throw yourself on your knees, my son, and trouble not yourself about me, but learn how to attain salvation and save your brethren. This can only be done by the communion of the Holy Ghost, who is in me, and whom by the grace of God I can bestow on you. Approach and receive this gift in a kiss.' At these words the unknown kissed the young man on the mouth, pressed his hand and disappeared, leaving the other trembling in his turn; for the spirit of God was in him, and being inspired he spread the word abroad."

A third fanatic, a prophetess, raved about the parishes of St. Andeol de Clerguemont and St. Frazal de Vantalon, but she addressed herself principally to recent converts, to whom she preached concerning the Eucharist that in swallowing the consecrated wafer they had swallowed a poison as venomous as the head of the basilisk, that they had bent the knee to Baal, and that no penitence on their part could be great enough to save them. These doctrines inspired such profound terror that the Rev. Father Louvreloeil himself tells us that Satan by his efforts succeeded in nearly emptying the churches, and that at the following Easter celebrations there were only half as many communicants as the preceding year.

Such a state of licence, which threatened to spread farther and farther, awoke the religious solicitude of Messire Francois Langlade de Duchayla, Prior of Laval, Inspector of Missions of Gevaudan, and Archpriest of the Cevennes. He therefore resolved to leave his residence at Mende and to visit the parishes in which heresy had taken the strongest hold, in order to oppose it by every means which God and the king had put in his power.

The Abbe Duchayla was a younger son of the noble house of Langlade, and by the circumstances of his birth, in spite of his soldierly instincts, had been obliged to leave epaulet and sword to his elder brother, and himself assume cassock and stole. On leaving the seminary, he espoused the cause of the Church militant with all the ardour of his temperament. Perils to encounter; foes to fight, a religion to force on others, were necessities to this fiery character, and as everything at the moment was quiet in France, he had embarked for India with the fervent resolution of a martyr.

On reaching his destination, the young missionary had found himself surrounded by circumstances which were wonderfully in harmony with his celestial longings: some of his predecessors had been carried so far by religious zeal that the King of Siam had put several to death by torture and had forbidden any more missionaries to enter his dominions; but this, as we can easily imagine, only excited still more the abbe's missionary fervour; evading the watchfulness of the military, and regardless of the terrible penalties imposed by the king, he crossed the frontier, and began to preach the Catholic religion to the heathen, many of whom were converted.

One day he was surprised by a party of soldiers in a little village in which he had been living for three months, and in which nearly all the inhabitants had abjured their false faith, and was brought before the governor of Bankan, where instead of denying his faith, he nobly defended Christianity and magnified the name of God. He was handed over to the executioners to be subjected to torture, and suffered at their hands with resignation everything that a human body can endure while yet retaining life, till at length his patience exhausted their rage; and seeing him become unconscious, they thought he was dead, and with mutilated hands, his breast furrowed with wounds, his limbs half worn through by heavy fetters, he was suspended by the wrists to a branch of a tree and abandoned. A pariah passing by cut him down and succoured him, and reports of his martyrdom having spread, the French ambassador demanded justice with no uncertain voice, so that the King of Siam, rejoicing that the executioners had stopped short in time, hastened to send back to M. de Chaumont, the representative of Louis XIV, a mutilated though still living man, instead of the corpse which had been demanded.

At the time when Louis XIV was meditating the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes he felt that the services of such a man would be invaluable to him, so about 1632, Abbe Duchayla was recalled from India, and a year later was sent to

Mende, with the titles of Archpriest of the Cevennes and Inspector of Missions.

Soon the abbe, who had been so much persecuted, became a persecutor, showing himself as insensible to the sufferings of others as he had been inflexible under his own. His apprenticeship to torture stood him in such good stead that he became an inventor, and not only did he enrich the torture chamber by importing from India several scientifically constructed machines, hitherto unknown in Europe, but he also designed many others. People told with terror of reeds cut in the form of whistles which the abbe pitilessly forced under the nails of malignants; of iron pincers for tearing out their beards, eyelashes, and eyebrows; of wicks steeped in oil and wound round the fingers of a victim's hands, and then set on fire so as to form a pair of five-flamed candelabra; of a case turning on a pivot in which a man who refused to be converted was sometimes shut up, the case being then made to revolve rapidly till the victim lost consciousness; and lastly of fetters used when taking prisoners from one town to another, and brought to such perfection, that when they were on the prisoner could neither stand nor sit.

Even the most fervent panegyrists of Abbe Duchayla spoke of him with bated breath, and, when he himself looked into his own heart and recalled how often he had applied to the body the power to bind and loose which God had only given him over the soul, he was seized with strange tremors, and falling on his knees with folded hands and bowed head he remained for hours wrapt in thought, so motionless that were it not for the drops of sweat which stood on his brow he might have been taken for a marble statue of prayer over a tomb.

Moreover, this priest by virtue of the powers with which he was invested, and feeling that he had the authority of M. de Baille, intendant of Languedoc, and M. de Broglie, commander of the troops, behind him, had done other terrible things.

He had separated children from father and mother, and had shut them up in religious houses, where they had been subjected to such severe chastisement, by way of making them do penance for the heresy of their parents, that many of them died under it.

He had forced his way into the chamber of the dying, not to bring consolation but menaces; and bending over the bed, as if to keep back the Angel of Death, he had repeated the words of the terrible decree which provided that in case of the

death of a Huguenot without conversion, his memory should be persecuted, and his body, denied Christian burial, should be drawn on hurdles out of the city, and cast on a dungheap.

Lastly, when with pious love children tried to shield their parents in the death-agony from his threats, or dead from his justice, by carrying them, dead or dying, to some refuge in which they might hope to draw their last breath in peace or to obtain Christian burial, he declared that anyone who should open his door hospitably to such disobedience was a traitor to religion, although among the heathen such pity would have been deemed worthy of an altar.

Such was the man raised up to punish, who went on his way, preceded by terror, accompanied by torture, and followed by death, through a country already exhausted by long and bloody oppression, and where at every step he trod on half repressed religious hate, which like a volcano was ever ready to burst out afresh, but always prepared for martyrdom. Nothing held him back, and years ago he had had his grave hollowed out in the church of St. Germain, choosing that church for his last long sleep because it had been built by Pope Urban IV when he was bishop of Mende.

Abbe Duchayla extended his visitation over six months, during which every day was marked by tortures and executions: several prophets were burnt at the stake; Françoise de Brez, she who had preached that the Host contained a more venomous poison than a basilisk's head, was hanged; and Laquoite, who had been confined in the citadel of Montpellier, was on the point of being broken on the wheel, when on the eve of his execution his cell was found empty. No one could ever discover how he escaped, and consequently his reputation rose higher than ever, it being currently believed that, led by the Holy Spirit as St. Peter by the angel, he had passed through the guards invisible to all, leaving his fetters behind.

This incomprehensible escape redoubled the severity of the Archpriest, till at last the prophets, feeling that their only chance of safety lay in getting rid of him, began to preach against him as Antichrist, and advocate his death. The abbe was warned of this, but nothing could abate his zeal. In France as in India, martyrdom was his longed-for goal, and with head erect and unfaltering step he "pressed toward the mark."

At last, on the evening of the 24th of July, two hundred conspirators met in a

wood on the top of a hill which overlooked the bridge of Montvert, near which was the Archpriest's residence. Their leader was a man named Laporte, a native of Alais, who had become a master-blacksmith in the pass of Deze. He was accompanied by an inspired man, a former wool-carder, born at Magistavols, Esprit Segulier by name. This man was, after Laquoite, the most highly regarded of the twenty or thirty prophets who were at that moment going up and down the Cevennes in every direction. The whole party was armed with scythes, halberts, and swords; a few had even pistols and guns.

On the stroke of ten, the hour fixed for their departure, they all knelt down and with uncovered heads began praying as fervently as if they were about to perform some act most pleasing to God, and their prayers ended, they marched down the hill to the town, singing psalms, and shouting between the verses to the townspeople to keep within their homes, and not to look out of door or window on pain of death.

The abbe was in his oratory when he heard the mingled singing and shouting, and at the same moment a servant entered in great alarm, despite the strict regulation of the Archpriest that he was never to be interrupted at his prayers. This man announced that a body of fanatics was coming down the hill, but the abbe felt convinced that it was only an unorganised crowd which was going to try and carry off six prisoners, at that moment in the 'ceps.' [A terrible kind of stocks—a beam split in two, no notches being made for the legs: the victim's legs were placed between the two pieces of wood, which were then, by means of a vice at each end, brought gradually together. Translators Note.]

These prisoners were three young men and three girls in men's clothes, who had been seized just as they were about to emigrate. As the abbe was always protected by a guard of soldiers, he sent for the officer in command and ordered him to march against, the fanatics and disperse them. But the officer was spared the trouble of obeying, for the fanatics were already at hand. On reaching the gate of the courtyard he heard them outside, and perceived that they were making ready to burst it in. Judging of their numbers by the sound of their voices, he considered that far from attacking them, he would have enough to do in preparing for defence, consequently he bolted and barred the gate on the inside, and hastily erected a barricade under an arch leading to the apartments of the abbe. Just as these preparations were complete, Esprit Segulier caught sight of a heavy beam of wood lying in a ditch; this was raised by a dozen men and used as a battering-ram to force in the gate, which soon showed a breach. Thus

encouraged, the workers, cheered by the chants of their comrades, soon got the gate off the hinges, and thus the outside court was taken. The crowd then loudly demanded the release of the prisoners, using dire threats.

The commanding officer sent to ask the abbe what he was to do; the abbe replied that he was to fire on the conspirators. This imprudent order was carried out; one of the fanatics was killed on the spot, and two wounded men mingled their groans with the songs and threats of their comrades.

The barricade was next attacked, some using axes, others darting their swords and halberts through the crevices and killing those behind; as for those who had firearms, they climbed on the shoulders of the others, and having fired at those below, saved themselves by tumbling down again. At the head of the besiegers were Laporte and Esprit Seguiet, one of whom had a father to avenge and the other a son, both of whom had been done to death by the abbe. They were not the only ones of the party who were fired by the desire of vengeance; twelve or fifteen others were in the same position.

The abbe in his room listened to the noise of the struggle, and finding matters growing serious, he gathered his household round him, and making them kneel down, he told them to make their confession, that he might, by giving them absolution, prepare them for appearing before God. The sacred words had just been pronounced when the rioters drew near, having carried the barricade, and driven the soldiers to take refuge in a hall on the ground floor just under the Archpriest's room.

But suddenly, the assault was stayed, some of the men going to surround the house, others setting out on a search for the prisoners. These were easily found, for judging by what they could hear that their brethren had come to their rescue, they shouted as loudly as they could.

The unfortunate creatures had already passed a whole week with their legs caught and pressed by the cleft beams which formed these inexpressibly painful stocks. When the unfortunate victims were released, the fanatics screamed with rage at the sight of their swollen bodies and half-broken bones. None of the unhappy people were able to stand. The attack on the soldiers was renewed, and these being driven out of the lower hall, filled the staircase leading to the abbe's apartments, and offered such determined resistance that their assailants were twice forced to fall back. Laporte, seeing two of his men killed and five or six

wounded, called out loudly, "Children of God, lay down your arms: this way of going to work is too slow; let us burn the abbey and all in it. To work! to work!" "The advice was good, and they all hastened to follow it: benches, chairs, and furniture of all sorts were heaped up in the hall, a palliasse thrown on the top, and the pile fired. In a moment the whole building was ablaze, and the Archpriest, yielding to the entreaties of his servants, fastened his sheets to the window-bars, and by their help dropped into the garden. The drop was so great that he broke one of his thigh bones, but dragging himself along on his hands and one knee, he, with one of his servants, reached a recess in the wall, while another servant was endeavouring to escape through the flames, thus falling into the hands of the fanatics, who carried him before their captain. Then cries of "The prophet! the prophet!" were heard on all sides. Esprit Segulier, feeling that something fresh had taken place, came forward, still holding in his hand the blazing torch with which he had set fire to the pile.

"Brother," asked Laporte, pointing to the prisoner, "is this man to die?"

Esprit Segulier fell on his knees and covered his face with his mantle, like Samuel, and sought the Lord in prayer, asking to know His will.

In a short time he rose and said, "This man is not to die; for inasmuch as he has showed mercy to our brethren we must show mercy to him."

Whether this fact had been miraculously revealed to Segulier, or whether he had gained his information from other sources, the newly released prisoners confirmed its truth, calling out that the man had indeed treated them with humanity. Just then a roar as of a wild beast was heard: one of the fanatics, whose brother had been put to death by the abbe, had just caught sight of him, the whole neighbourhood being lit up by the fire; he was kneeling in an angle of the wall, to which he had dragged himself.

"Down with the son of Belial!" shouted the crowd, rushing towards the priest, who remained kneeling and motionless like a marble statue. His valet took advantage of the confusion to escape, and got off easily; for the sight of him on whom the general hate was concentrated made the Huguenots forget everything else:

Esprit Segulier was the first to reach the priest, and spreading his hands over him, he commanded the others to hold back. "God desireth not the death of a sinner,"

said he, “but rather that he turn from his wickedness and live.”

“No, no!” shouted a score of voices, refusing obedience for the first time, perhaps, to an order from the prophet; “let him die without mercy, as he struck without pity. Death to the son of Belial, death!”

“Silence!” exclaimed the prophet in a terrible voice, “and listen to the word of God from my mouth. If this man will join us and take upon him the duties of a pastor, let us grant him his life, that he may henceforward devote it to the spread of the true faith.”

“Rather a thousand deaths than apostasy!” answered the priest.

“Die, then!” cried Laporte, stabbing him; “take that for having burnt my father in Nimes.”

And he passed on the dagger to Esprit Segurier.

Duchayla made neither sound nor gesture: it would have seemed as if the dagger had been turned by the priest’s gown as by a coat of mail were it not that a thin stream of blood appeared. Raising his eyes to heaven, he repeated the words of the penitential psalm: “Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord! Lord, hear my voice!”

Then Esprit Segurier raised his arm and struck in his turn, saying, “Take that for my son, whom you broke on the wheel at Montpellier.”

And he passed on the dagger.

But this blow also was not mortal, only another stream of blood appeared, and the abbe said in a failing voice, “Deliver me, O my Saviour, out of my well-merited sufferings, and I will acknowledge their justice; far I have been a man of blood.”

The next who seized the dagger came near and gave his blow, saying, “Take that for my brother, whom you let die in the ‘ceps.’”

This time the dagger pierced the heart, and the abbe had only time to ejaculate, “Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy!” before he fell back dead.

But his death did not satisfy the vengeance of those who had not been able to strike him living; one by one they drew near and stabbed, each invoking the shade of some dear murdered one and pronouncing the same words of malediction.

In all, the body of the abbe received fifty-two dagger thrusts, of which twenty-four would have been mortal.

Thus perished, at the age of fifty-five, Messire Francois de Langlade Duchayla, prior of Laval, inspector of missions in Gevaudan, and Archpriest of the Cevennes and Mende.

Their vengeance thus accomplished, the murderers felt that there was no more safety for them in either city or plain, and fled to the mountains; but in passing near the residence of M. de Laveze, a Catholic nobleman of the parish of Molezon, one of the fugitives recollected that he had heard that a great number of firearms was kept in the house. This seemed a lucky chance, for firearms were what the Huguenots needed most of all. They therefore sent two envoys to M. de Laveze to ask him to give them at least a share of his weapons; but he, as a good Catholic, replied that it was quite true that he had indeed a store of arms, but that they were destined to the triumph and not to the desecration of religion, and that he would only give them up with his life. With these words, he dismissed the envoys, barring his doors behind them.

But while this parley was going on the conspirators had approached the chateau, and thus received the valiant answer to their demands sooner than M. de Laveze had counted on. Resolving not to leave him time to take defensive measures, they dashed at the house, and by standing on each other's shoulders reached the room in which M. de Laveze and his entire family had taken refuge. In an instant the door was forced, and the fanatics, still reeking with the life-blood of Abbe Duchayla, began again their work of death. No one was spared; neither the master of the house, nor his brother, nor his uncle, nor his sister, who knelt to the assassins in vain; even his old mother, who was eighty years of age, having from her bed first witnessed the murder of all her family, was at last stabbed to the heart, though the butchers might have reflected that it was hardly worth while thus to anticipate the arrival of Death, who according to the laws of nature must have been already at hand.

The massacre finished, the fanatics spread over the castle, supplying themselves

with arms and under-linen, being badly in need of the latter; for when they left their homes they had expected soon to return, and had taken nothing with them. They also carried off the copper kitchen utensils, intending to turn them into bullets. Finally, they seized on a sum of 5000 francs, the marriage-portion of M. de Laveze's sister, who was just about to be married, and thus laid the foundation of a war fund

The news of these two bloody events soon reached not only Nimes but all the countryside, and roused the authorities to action. M. le Comte de Broglie crossed the Upper Cevennes, and marched down to the bridge of Montvert, followed by several companies of fusiliers. From another direction M. le Comte de Peyre brought thirty-two cavalry and three hundred and fifty infantry, having enlisted them at Marvejols, La Canourgue, Chiac, and Serverette. M. de St. Paul, Abbe Duchayla's brother, and the Marquis Duchayla, his nephew, brought eighty horsemen from the family estates. The Count of Morangiez rode in from St. Auban and Malzieu with two companies of cavalry, and the town of Mende by order of its bishop despatched its nobles at the head of three companies of fifty men each.

But the mountains had swallowed up the fanatics, and nothing was ever known of their fate, except that from time to time a peasant would relate that in crossing the Cevennes he had heard at dawn or dusk, on mountain peak or from valley depths, the sound going up to heaven of songs of praise. It was the fanatic assassins worshipping God.

Or occasionally at night, on the tops of the lofty mountains, fires shone forth which appeared to signal one to another, but on looking the next night in the same direction all was dark.

So M. de Broglie, concluding that nothing could be done against enemies who were invisible, disbanded the troops which had come to his aid, and went back to Montpellier, leaving a company of fusiliers at Collet, another at Ayres, one at the bridge of Montvert, one at Barre, and one at Pompidon, and appointing Captain Poul as their chief,

This choice of such a man as chief showed that M. de Broglie was a good judge of human nature, and was also perfectly acquainted with the situation, for Captain Poul was the very man to take a leading part in the coming struggle. "He was," says Pere Louvreloeil, priest of the Christian doctrine and cure of Saint-

Germain de Calberte, “an officer of merit and reputation, born in Ville-Dubert, near Carcassonne, who had when young served in Hungary and Germany, and distinguished himself in Piedmont in several excursions against the Barbets, [A name applied first to the Alpine smugglers who lived in the valleys, later to the insurgent peasants in the Cevennes.— Translator’s Note.] notably in one of the later ones, when, entering the tent of their chief, Barbanaga, he cut off his head. His tall and agile figure, his warlike air, his love of hard work, his hoarse voice, his fiery and austere character, his carelessness in regard to dress, his mature age, his tried courage, his taciturn habit, the length and weight of his sword, all combined to render him formidable. Therefore no one could have been chosen more suitable for putting down the rebels, for forcing their entrenchments, and for putting them to flight.”

Hardly had he taken up a position in the market town of Labarre, which was to be his headquarters, than he was informed that a gathering of fanatics had been seen on the little plain of Fondmorte, which formed a pass between two valleys. He ordered out his Spanish steed, which he was accustomed to ride in the Turkish manner—that is, with very short stirrups, so that he could throw himself forward to the horse’s ears, or backward to the tail, according as he wished to give or avoid a mortal blow. Taking with him eighteen men of his own company and twenty-five from the town, he at once set off for the place indicated, not considering any larger number necessary to put to rout a band of peasants, however numerous.

The information turned out to be correct: a hundred Reformers led by Esprit Segquier had encamped in the plain of Fondmorte, and about eleven o’clock in the morning one of their sentinels in the defile gave the alarm by firing off his gun and running back to the camp, shouting, “To arms!” But Captain Poul, with his usual impetuosity, did not give the insurgents time to form, but threw himself upon them to the beat of the drum, not in the least deterred by their first volley. As he had expected, the band consisted of undisciplined peasants, who once scattered were unable to rally. They were therefore completely routed. Poul killed several with his own hand, among whom were two whose heads he cut off as cleverly as the most experienced executioner could have done, thanks to the marvellous temper of his Damascus blade. At this sight all who had till then stood their ground took to flight, Poul at their heels, slashing with his sword unceasingly, till they disappeared among the mountains. He then returned to the field of battle, picked up the two heads, and fastening them to his saddlebow, rejoined his soldiers with his bloody trophies,—that is to say, he joined the

largest group of soldiers he could find; for the fight had turned into a number of single combats, every soldier fighting for himself. Here he found three prisoners who were about to be shot; but Poul ordered that they should not be touched: not that he thought for an instant of sparing their lives, but that he wished to reserve them for a public execution. These three men were Nouvel, a parishioner of Vialon, Moise Bonnet of Pierre-Male, and Esprit Segulier the prophet.

Captain Poul returned to Barre carrying with him his two heads and his three prisoners, and immediately reported to M. Just de Baviille, intendant of Languedoc, the important capture he had made. The prisoners were quickly tried. Pierre Nouvel was condemned to be burnt alive at the bridge of Montvert, Molise Bonnet to be broken on the wheel at Deveze, and Esprit Segulier to be hanged at Andre-de-Lancise. Thus those who were amateurs in executions had a sufficient choice.

However, Moise Bonnet saved himself by becoming Catholic, but Pierre Nouvel and Esprit Segulier died as martyrs, making profession of the new faith and praising God.

Two days after the sentence on Esprit Segulier had been carried out, the body disappeared from the gallows. A nephew of Laporte named Roland had audaciously carried it off, leaving behind a writing nailed to the gibbet. This was a challenge from Laporte to Poul, and was dated from the "Camp of the Eternal God, in the desert of Cevennes," Laporte signing himself "Colonel of the children of God who seek liberty of conscience." Poul was about to accept the challenge when he learned that the insurrection was spreading on every side. A young man of Vieljeu, twenty-six years of age, named Solomon Couderc, had succeeded Esprit Segulier in the office of prophet, and two young lieutenants had joined Laporte. One of these was his nephew Roland, a man of about thirty, pock-marked, fair, thin, cold, and reserved; he was not tall, but very strong, and of inflexible courage. The other, Henri Castanet of Massevaques, was a keeper from the mountain of Laygoal, whose skill as a marksman was so well known that it was said he never missed a shot. Each of these lieutenants had fifty men under him.

Prophets and prophetesses too increased apace, so that hardly a day passed without reports being heard of fresh ones who were rousing whole villages by their ravings.

In the meantime a great meeting of the Protestants of Languedoc had been held in the fields of Vauvert, at which it had been resolved to join forces with the rebels of the Cevennes, and to send a messenger thither to make this resolution known.

Laporte had just returned from La Vaunage, where he had been making recruits, when this good news arrived; he at once sent his nephew Roland to the new allies with power to pledge his word in return for theirs, and to describe to them, in order to attract them, the country which he had chosen as the theatre of the coming war, and which, thanks to its hamlets, its woods, its defiles, its valleys, its precipices, and its caves, was capable of affording cover to as many bands of insurgents as might be employed, would be a good rallying-ground after repulse, and contained suitable positions for ambuscades. Roland was so successful in his mission that these new "soldiers of the Lord," as they called themselves, on learning that he had once been a dragoon, offered him the post of leader, which he accepted, and returned to his uncle at the head of an army.

Being thus reinforced, the Reformers divided themselves into three bands, in order to spread abroad their beliefs through the entire district. One went towards Soustele and the neighbourhood of Alais, another towards St. Privat and the bridge of Montvert, while the third followed the mountain slope down to St. Roman le Pompidou, and Barre.

The first was commanded by Castanet, the second by Roland, and the third by Laporte.

Each party ravaged the country as it passed, returning deathblow for deathblow and conflagration for conflagration, so that hearing one after another of these outrages Captain Poul demanded reinforcements from M. de Broglie and M. de Baille, which were promptly despatched.

As soon as Captain Poul found himself at the head of a sufficient number of troops, he determined to attack the rebels. He had received intelligence that the band led by Laporte was just about to pass through the valley of Croix, below Barre, near Temelague. In consequence of this information, he lay in ambush at a favourable spot on the route. As soon as the Reformers who were without suspicion, were well within the narrow pass in which Poul awaited them, he issued forth at the head of his soldiers, and charged the rebels with such courage and impetuosity that they, taken by surprise, made no attempt at resistance, but,

thoroughly demoralised, spread over the mountain-side, putting a greater and greater distance at, every instant between themselves and the enemy, despite the efforts of Laporte to make them stand their ground. At last, seeing himself deserted, Laporte began to think of his own safety. But it was already too late, for he was surrounded by dragoons, and the only way of retreat open to him lay over a large rock. This he successfully scaled, but before trying to get down the other side he raised his hands in supplication to Heaven; at that instant a volley was fired, two bullets struck him, and he fell head foremost down the precipice.

When the dragoons reached the foot of the rock, they found him dead. As they knew he was the chief of the rebels, his body was searched: sixty Louis was found in his pockets, and a sacred chalice which he was in the habit of using as an ordinary drinking-cup. Poul cut off his head and the heads of twelve other Reformers found dead on the field of battle, and enclosing them in a wicker basket, sent them to M. Just de Baviile.

The Reformers soon recovered from this defeat and death, joined all their forces into one body, and placed Roland at their head in the place of Laporte. Roland chose a young man called Couderc de Mazel-Rozade, who had assumed the name of Lafleur, as his lieutenant, and the rebel forces were not only quickly reorganised, but made complete by the addition of a hundred men raised by the new lieutenant, and soon gave a sign that they were again on the war-path by burning down the churches of Bousquet, Cassagnas, and Prunet.

Then first it was that the consuls of Mende began to realise that it was no longer an insurrection they had on hand but a war, and Mende being the capital of Gevaudan and liable to be attacked at any moment, they set themselves to bring into repair their counterscarps, ravelins, bastions, gates, portcullises, moats, walls, turrets, ramparts, parapets, watchtowers, and the gear of their cannon, and having laid in a stock of firearms, powder and ball, they formed eight companies each fifty strong, composed of townsmen, and a further band of one hundred and fifty peasants drawn from the neighbouring country. Lastly, the States of the province sent an envoy to the king, praying him graciously to take measures to check the plague of heresy which was spreading from day to day. The king at once sent M. Julien in answer to the petition. Thus it was no longer simple governors of towns nor even chiefs of provinces who were engaged in the struggle; royalty itself had come to the rescue.

M. de Julien, born a Protestant, was a member of the nobility of Orange, and in

his youth had served against France and borne arms in England and Ireland when William of Orange succeeded James II as King of England, Julien was one of his pages, and received as a reward for his fidelity in the famous campaign of 1688 the command of a regiment which was sent to the aid of the Duke of Savoy, who had begged both England and Holland to help him. He bore himself so gallantly that it was in great part due to him that the French were forced to raise the siege of Cony.

Whether it was that he expected too much from this success, or that the Duke of Savoy did not recognise his services at their worth, he withdrew to Geneva, where Louis XIV hearing of his discontent, caused overtures to be made to him with a view to drawing him into the French service. He was offered the same rank in the French army as he had held in the English, with a pension of 3000 livres.

M. de Julien accepted, and feeling that his religious belief would be in the way of his advancement, when he changed his master he changed his Church. He was given the command of the valley of Barcelonnette, whence he made many excursions against the Barbets; then he was transferred to the command of the Avennes, of the principality of Orange, in order to guard the passes, so that the French Protestants could not pass over the frontier for the purpose of worshipping with their Dutch Protestant brethren; and after having tried this for a year, he went to Versailles to report himself to the king. While he was there, it chanced that the envoy from Gevaudan arrived, and the king being satisfied with de Julien's conduct since he had entered his service, made him major-general, chevalier of the military order of St. Louis; and commander-in-chief in the Vivarais and the Cevennes.

M. de Julien from the first felt that the situation was very grave, and saw that his predecessors had felt such great contempt for the heretics that they had not realised the danger of the revolt. He immediately proceeded to inspect in person the different points where M. de Broglie had placed detachments of the Tournon and Marsily regiments. It is true that he arrived by the light of thirty burning village churches.

M. de Broglie, M. de Baille, M. de Julien, and Captain Poul met together to consult as to the best means of putting an end to these disorders. It was agreed that the royal troops should be divided into two bodies, one under the command of M. de Julien to advance on Alais, where it was reported large meetings of the

rebels were taking place, and the other under M. de Brogue, to march about in the neighbourhood of Nimes.

Consequently, the two chiefs separated. M. le Comte de Broglie at the head of sixty-two dragoons and some companies of foot, and having under him Captain Poul and M. de Dourville, set out from Cavayrac on the 12th of January at 2 a. m., and having searched without finding anything the vineyards of Nimes and La Garrigue de Milhau, took the road to the bridge of Lunel. There he was informed that those he was in search of had been seen at the chateau of Caudiac the day before; he therefore at once set out for the forest which lies around it, not doubting to find the fanatics entrenched there; but, contrary to his expectations, it was vacant. He then pushed on to Vauvert, from Vauvert to Beauvoisin, from Beauvoisin to Generac, where he learned that a troop of rebels had passed the night there, and in the morning had left for Aubore. Resolved to give them no rest, M. de Broglie set out at once for this village.

When half-way there, a member of his staff thought he could distinguish a crowd of men near a house about half a league distant; M. de Broglie instantly ordered Sieur de Gibertin, Captain Paul's lieutenant, who was riding close by, at the head of his company, to take eight dragoons and make a reconnaissance, in order to ascertain who these men were, while the rest of the troops would make a halt.

This little band, led by its officer, crossed a clearing in the wood, and advanced towards the farmhouse, which was called the Mas de Gafarel, and which now seemed deserted. But when they were within half a gunshot of the wall the charge was sounded behind it, and a band of rebels rushed towards them, while from a neighbouring house a second troop emerged, and looking round, he perceived a third lying on their faces in a small wood. These latter suddenly stood up and approached him, singing psalms. As it was impossible for M. de Gibertin to hold his ground against so large a force, he ordered two shots to be fired as a warning to de Brogue to advance to meet him, and fell back on his comrades. Indeed, the rebels had only pursued him till they had reached a favourable position, on which they took their stand.

M. de Brogue having surveyed the whole position with the aid of a telescope, held a council of war, and it was decided that an attack should be made forthwith. They therefore advanced on the rebels in line: Captain Poul on the right, M. de Dourville on the left, and Count Broglie in the centre.

As they got near they could see that the rebels had chosen their ground with an amount of strategical sagacity they had never till then displayed. This skill in making their dispositions was evidently due to their having found a new leader whom no one knew, not even Captain Poul, although they could see him at the head of his men, carbine in hand.

However, these scientific preparations did not stop M. de Brogue: he gave the order to charge, and adding example to precept, urged his horse to a gallop. The rebels in the first rank knelt on one knee, so that the rank behind could take aim, and the distance between the two bodies of troops disappeared rapidly, thanks to the impetuosity of the dragoons; but suddenly, when within thirty paces of the enemy, the royals found themselves on the edge of a deep ravine which separated them from the enemy like a moat. Some were able to check their horses in time, but others, despite desperate efforts, pressed upon by those behind, were pushed into the ravine, and rolled helplessly to the bottom. At the same moment the order to fire was given in a sonorous voice, there was a rattle of musketry, and several dragoons near M. de Broglie fell.

“Forward!” cried Captain Poul, “forward!” and putting his horse at a part of the ravine where the sides were less steep, he was soon struggling up the opposite side, followed by a few dragoons.

“Death to the son of Belial!” cried the same voice which had given the order to fire. At that moment a single shot rang out, Captain Poul threw up his hands, letting his sabre go, and fell from his horse, which instead of running away, touched his master with its smoking nostrils, then lifting its head, neighed long and low. The dragoons retreated.

“So perish all the persecutors of Israel!” cried the leader, brandishing his carbine. He then dashed down into the ravine, picked up Captain Poul’s sabre and jumped upon his horse. The animal, faithful to its old master, showed some signs of resistance, but soon felt by the pressure of its rider’s knees that it had to do with one whom it could not readily unseat. Nevertheless, it reared and bounded, but the horseman kept his seat, and as if recognising that it had met its match, the noble animal tossed its head, neighed once more, and gave in. While this was going on, a party of Camisards [Name given to the insurgent Calvinists after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.—Translator’s Note.] and one of the dragoons had got down into the ravine, which had in consequence been turned into a battlefield; while those who remained above on either side took advantage of

their position to fire down at their enemies. M. de Dourville, in command of the dragoons, fought among the others like a simple soldier, and received a serious wound in the head; his men beginning to lose ground, M. de Brogue tried to rally them, but without avail, and while he was thus occupied his own troop ran away; so seeing there was no prospect of winning the battle, he and a few valiant men who had remained near him dashed forward to extricate M. Dourville, who, taking advantage of the opening thus made, retreated, his wound bleeding profusely. On the other hand, the Camisards perceiving at some distance bodies of infantry coming up to reinforce the royals, instead of pursuing their foes, contented themselves with keeping up a thick and well-directed musketry-fire from the position in which they had won such a quick and easy victory.

As soon as the royal forces were out of reach of their weapons, the rebel chief knelt down and chanted the song the Israelites sang when, having crossed the Red Sea in safety, they saw the army of Pharaoh swallowed up in the waters, so that although no longer within reach of bullets the defeated troops were still pursued by songs of victory. Their thanksgivings ended, the Calvinists withdrew into the forest, led by their new chief, who had at his first assay shown the great extent of his knowledge, coolness, and courage.

This new chief, whose superiors were soon to become his lieutenants, was the famous Jean Cavalier.

Jean Cavalier was then a young man of twenty-three, of less than medium height, but of great strength. His face was oval, with regular features, his eyes sparkling and beautiful; he had long chestnut hair falling on his shoulders, and an expression of remarkable sweetness. He was born in 1680 at Ribaute, a village in the diocese of Alais, where his father had rented a small farm, which he gave up when his son was about fifteen, coming to live at the farm of St. Andeol, near Mende.

Young Cavalier, who was only a peasant and the son of a peasant, began life as a shepherd at the Sieur de Lacombe's, a citizen of Vezénobre, but as the lonely life dissatisfied a young man who was eager for pleasure, Jean gave it up, and apprenticed himself to a baker of Anduze.

There he developed a great love for everything connected with the military; he spent all his free time watching the soldiers at their drill, and soon became intimate with some of them, amongst others with a fencing-master who gave him

lessons, and a dragoon who taught him to ride.

On a certain Sunday, as he was taking a walk with his sweetheart on his arm, the young girl was insulted by a dragoon of the Marquis de Florae's regiment. Jean boxed the dragoon's ears, who drew his sword. Cavalier seized a sword from one of the bystanders, but the combatants were prevented from fighting by Jean's friends. Hearing of the quarrel, an officer hurried up: it was the Marquis de Florae himself, captain of the regiment which bore his name; but when he arrived on the scene he found, not the arrogant peasant who had dared to attack a soldier of the king, but only the young girl, who had fainted, the townspeople having persuaded her lover to decamp.

The young girl was so beautiful that she was commonly called la belle Isabeau, and the Marquis de Florac, instead of pursuing Jean Cavalier, occupied himself in reviving Isabeau.

As it was, however, a serious affair, and as the entire regiment had sworn Cavalier's death, his friends advised him to leave the country for a time. La belle Isabeau, trembling for the safety of her lover, joined her entreaties to those of his friends, and Jean Cavalier yielded. The young girl promised him inviolable fidelity, and he, relying on this promise, went to Geneva.

There he made the acquaintance of a Protestant gentleman called Du Serre, who having glass-works at the Mas Arritas, quite near the farm of St. Andeol, had undertaken several times, at the request of Jean's father, Jerome, to convey money to Jean; for Du Serre went very often to Geneva, professedly on business affairs, but really in the interests of the Reformed faith. Between the outlaw and the apostle union was natural. Du Serre found in Cavalier a young man of robust nature, active imagination, and irreproachable courage; he confided to him his hopes of converting all Languedoc and Vivarais. Cavalier felt himself drawn back there by many ties, especially by patriotism and love. He crossed the frontier once more, disguised as a servant, in the suite of a Protestant gentleman; he arrived one night at Anduze, and immediately directed his steps to the house of Isabeau.

He was just about to knock, although it was one o'clock in the morning, when the door was opened from within, and a handsome young man came out, who took tender leave of a woman on the threshold. The handsome young man was the Marquis de Florac; the woman was Isabeau. The promised wife of the

peasant had become the mistress of the noble.

Our hero was not the man to suffer such an outrage quietly. He walked straight up to the marquis and stood right in his way. The marquis tried to push him aside with his elbow, but Jean Cavalier, letting fall the cloak in which he was wrapped, drew his sword. The marquis was brave, and did not stop to inquire if he who attacked him was his equal or not. Sword answered sword, the blades crossed, and at the end of a few instants the marquis fell, Jean's sword piercing his chest.

Cavalier felt sure that he was dead, for he lay at his feet motionless. He knew he had no time to lose, for he had no mercy to hope for. He replaced his bloody sword in the scabbard, and made for the open country; from the open country he hurried into the mountains, and at break of day he was in safety.

The fugitive remained the whole day in an isolated farmhouse whose inmates offered him hospitality. As he very soon felt that he was in the house of a coreligionist, he confided to his host the circumstances in which he found himself, and asked where he could meet with an organised band in which he could enrol himself in order to fight for the propagation of the Reformed religion. The farmer mentioned Generac as being a place in which he would probably find a hundred or so of the brethren gathered together. Cavalier set out the same evening for this village, and arrived in the middle of the Camisards at the very moment when they had just caught sight of M. de Broglie and his troops in the distance. The Calvinists happening to have no leader, Cavalier with governing faculty which some men possess by nature, placed himself at their head and took those measures for the reception of the royal forces of which we have seen the result, so that after the victory to which his head and arm had contributed so much he was confirmed in the title which he had arrogated to himself, by acclamation.

Such was the famous Jean Cavalier when the Royalists first learned of his existence, through the repulse of their bravest troops and the death of their most intrepid captain.

The news of this victory soon spread through the Cevennes, and fresh conflagrations lit up the mountains in sign of joy. The beacons were formed of the chateau de la Bastide, the residence of the Marquis de Chambonnas, the church of Samson, and the village of Grouppieres, where of eighty houses only seven were left standing.

Thereupon M. de Julien wrote to the king, explaining the serious turn things had taken, and telling him that it was no longer a few fanatics wandering through the mountains and flying at the sight of a dragoon whom they had to put down, but organised companies well led and officered, which if united would form an army twelve to fifteen hundred strong. The king replied by sending M. le Comte de Montrevel to Nimes. He was the son of the Marechal de Montrevel, chevalier of the Order of the Holy Spirit, major-general, lieutenant of the king in Bresse and Charolais, and captain of a hundred men-at-arms.

In their struggle against shepherds, keepers, and peasants, M. de Brogue, M. de Julien, and M. de Baille were thus joined together with the head of the house of Beaune, which had already at this epoch produced two cardinals, three archbishops, two bishops, a viceroy of Naples, several marshals of France, and many governors of Savoy, Dauphine, and Bresse.

He was followed by twenty pieces of ordnance, five thousand bullets, four thousand muskets, and fifty thousand pounds of powder, all of which was carried down the river Rhone, while six hundred of the skilful mountain marksmen called 'miquelets' from Roussillon came down into Languedoc.

M. de Montrevel was the bearer of terrible orders. Louis XIV was determined, no matter what it cost, to root out heresy, and set about this work as if his eternal salvation depended on it. As soon as M. de Baille had read these orders, he published the following proclamation:

“The king having been informed that certain people without religion bearing arms have been guilty of violence, burning down churches and killing priests, His Majesty hereby commands all his subjects to hunt these people down, and that those who are taken with arms in their hands or found amongst their bands, be punished with death without any trial whatever, that their houses be razed to the ground and their goods confiscated, and that all buildings in which assemblies of these people have been held, be demolished. The king further forbids fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and other relations of the fanatics, or of other rebels, to give them refuge, food, stores, ammunition, or other assistance of any kind, under any pretext whatever, either directly or indirectly, on pain of being reputed accessory to the rebellion, and he commands the Sieur de Baille and whatever officers he may choose to prosecute such and pronounce sentence of death on them. Furthermore, His Majesty commands that all the inhabitants of Languedoc who may be absent at the date of the issue of this proclamation,

return home within a week, unless their absence be caused by legitimate business, in which case they shall declare the same to the commandant, the Sieur de Montrevel, or to the intendant, the Sieur de Baviile, and also to the mayors and consuls of the places where they may be, receiving from the latter certificates that there is a sufficient reason for their delay, which certificates they shall forward to the above-mentioned commandant or intendant. And His Majesty furthermore commands the said commandant and intendant to admit no foreigner or inhabitant of any other province into Languedoc for commercial purposes or for any other reason whatsoever, unless provided with certificates from the commandants or intendants of the provinces whence they come, or from the judges of the royal courts in the places whence they come, or from the nearest place containing such courts. Foreigners must be provided with passports from the ambassadors or ministers of the king accredited to the countries to which they belong, or from the commandants or intendants of the provinces, or from the judges of the royal courts of the places in which they may be at the date of this proclamation. Furthermore, it is His Majesty's will that those who are found in the, aforesaid province of Languedoc without such certificates be regarded as fanatics and rebels, and that they be prosecuted as such, and punished with death, and that they be brought for this purpose before the aforesaid Sieur de Baviile or the officers whom he may choose.

“(Signed) “(Countersigned)

“LOUIS PHILIPPEAU

“Given at Versailles the 25th day, of the month of February 1703.”

M. de Montrevel obeyed this proclamation to the letter. For instance, one day—the 1st of April 1703—as he was seated at dinner it was reported to him that about one hundred and fifty Reformers were assembled in a mill at Carmes, outside Nimes, singing psalms. Although he was told at the same time that the gathering was composed entirely of old people and children, he was none the less furious, and rising from the table, gave orders that the call to horse should be sounded. Putting himself at the head of his dragoons, he advanced on the mill, and before the Huguenots knew that they were about to be attacked they were surrounded on every side. It was no combat which ensued, for the Huguenots were incapable of resistance, it was simply a massacre; a certain number of the

dragoons entered the mill sword in hand, stabbing all whom they could reach, whilst the rest of the force stationed outside before the windows received those who jumped out on the points of their swords. But soon this butchery tired the butchers, and to get over the business more quickly, the marshal, who was anxious to return to his dinner, gave orders that the mill should be set on fire. This being done, the dragoons, the marshal still at their head, no longer exerted themselves so violently, but were satisfied with pushing back into the flames the few unfortunates who, scorched and burnt, rushed out, begging only for a less cruel death.

Only one victim escaped. A beautiful young girl of sixteen was saved by the marshal's valet: both were taken and condemned to death; the young girl was hanged, and the valet was on the point of being executed when some Sisters of Mercy from the town threw themselves at the marshal's feet and begged for his life: after long supplication, he granted their prayer, but he banished the valet not only from his service, but from Nimes.

The very same evening at supper word was brought to the marshal that another gathering had been discovered in a garden near the still smoking mill. The indefatigable marshal again rose from table, and taking with him his faithful dragoons, surrounded the garden, and caught and shot on the spot all those who were assembled in it. The next day it turned out that he had made a mistake: those whom he had shot were Catholics who had gathered together to rejoice over the execution of the Calvinists. It is true that they had assured the marshal that they were Catholics, but he had refused to listen to them. Let us, however, hasten to assure the reader that this mistake caused no further annoyance to the marshal, except that he received a paternal remonstrance from the Bishop of Nimes, begging him in future not to confound the sheep with the wolves.

In requital of these bloody deeds, Cavalier took the chateau of Serras, occupied the town of Sauve, formed a company of horse, and advancing to Nimes, took forcible possession of sufficient ammunition for his purposes. Lastly, he did something which in the eyes of the courtiers seemed the most incredible thing of all, he actually wrote a long letter to Louis XIV himself. This letter was dated from the "Desert, Cevennes," and signed "Cavalier, commander of the troops sent by God"; its purpose was to prove by numerous passages from Holy Writ that Cavalier and his comrades had been led to revolt solely from a sense of duty, feeling that liberty of conscience was their right; and it dilated on the subject of the persecutions under which Protestants had suffered, and asserted that it was

the infamous measures put in force against them which had driven them to take up arms, which they were ready to lay down if His Majesty would grant them that liberty in matters of religion which they sought and if he would liberate all who were in prison for their faith. If this were accorded, he assured the king His Majesty would have no more faithful subjects than themselves, and would henceforth be ready to shed their last drop of blood in his service, and wound up by saying that if their just demands were refused they would obey God rather than the king, and would defend their religion to their last breath.

Roland, who, whether in mockery or pride, began now to call himself “Comte Roland,” did not lag behind his young brother either as warrior or correspondent. He had entered the town of Ganges, where a wonderful reception awaited him; but not feeling sure that he would be equally well received at St. Germain and St. Andre, he had written the following letters:—

“Gentlemen and officers of the king’s forces, and citizens of St. Germain, make ready to receive seven hundred troops who have vowed to set Babylon on fire; the seminary and the houses of MM. de Fabregue, de Sarrasin, de Moles, de La Rouviere, de Musse, and de Solier, will be burnt to the ground. God, by His Holy Spirit, has inspired my brother Cavalier and me with the purpose of entering your town in a few days; however strongly you fortify yourselves, the children of God will bear away the victory. If ye doubt this, come in your numbers, ye soldiers of St. Etienne, Barre, and Florac, to the field of Domergue; we shall be there to meet you. Come, ye hypocrites, if your hearts fail not.

“COMTE ROLAND.”

The second letter was no less violent. It was as follows:—

“We, Comte Roland, general of the Protestant troops of France assembled in the Cevennes in Languedoc, enjoin on the inhabitants of the town of St. Andre of Valborgne to give proper notice to all priests and missionaries within it, that we forbid them to say mass or to preach in the afore-mentioned town, and that if they will avoid being burnt alive with their adherents in their churches and houses, they are to withdraw to some other place within three days.

“COMTE ROLAND.”

Unfortunately for the cause of the king, though the rebels met with some resistance in the villages of the plain, such as St. Germain and St. Andre, it was otherwise with those situated in the mountains; in those, when beaten, the Protestants found cover, when victorious rest; so that M. de Montrevel becoming aware that while these villages existed heresy would never be extirpated, issued the following ordinance:—

“We, governor for His most Christian Majesty in the provinces of Languedoc and Vivarais, do hereby make known that it has pleased the king to command us to reduce all the places and parishes hereinafter named to such a condition that they can afford no assistance to the rebel troops; no inhabitants will therefore be allowed to remain in them. His Majesty, however, desiring to provide for the subsistence of the afore-mentioned inhabitants, orders them to conform to the following regulations. He enjoins on the afore-mentioned inhabitants of the hereinafter-mentioned parishes to repair instantly to the places hereinafter appointed, with their furniture, cattle, and in general all their movable effects, declaring that in case of disobedience their effects will be confiscated and taken away by the troops employed to demolish their houses. And it is hereby forbidden to any other commune to receive such rebels, under pain of having their houses also razed to the ground and their goods confiscated, and furthermore being regarded and treated as rebels to the commands of His Majesty.”

To this proclamation were appended the following instructions:—

“I. The officers who may be appointed to perform the above task shall first of all make themselves acquainted with the position of the parishes and villages which are to be destroyed and depopulated, in order to an effective disposition of the troops, who are to guard the militia engaged in the work of destruction.

“II. The attention of the officers is called to the following:— When two or more villages or hamlets are so near together that they may be protected at the same time by the same troops, then in order to save time the work is to be carried on simultaneously in such villages or hamlets.

“III. When inhabitants are found still remaining in any of the proscribed places, they are to be brought together, and a list made of them, as well as an inventory

taken of their stock and corn.

“IV. Those inhabitants who are of the most consequence among them shall be selected to guide the others to the places assigned.

“V. With regard to the live stock, the persons who may be found in charge of it shall drive it to the appointed place, save and except mules and asses, which shall be employed in the transport of corn to whatever places it may be needed in. Nevertheless, asses may be given to the very old, and to women with child who may be unable to walk.

“VI. A regular distribution of the militia is to be made, so that each house to be destroyed may have a sufficient number, for the task; the foundations of such houses may be undermined or any other method employed which may be most convenient; and if the house can be destroyed by no other means, it is to be set on fire.

“VII. No damage is to be done to the houses of former Catholics until further notice, and to ensure the carrying out of this order a guard is to be placed in them, and an inventory of their contents taken and sent to Marechal de Montrevel.

“VIII. The order forbidding the inhabitants to return to their houses is to be read to the inhabitants of each village; but if any do return they shall not be harmed, but simply driven away with threats; for the king does not desire that blood be shed; and the said order shall be affixed to a wall or tree in each village.

“IX. Where no inhabitants are found, the said order shall simply be affixed as above-mentioned in each place.

“(Signed) “MARECHAL DE MONTREVEL”

Under these instructions the list of the villages to be destroyed was given. It was as follows:

18 in the parish of Frugeres, 5 ” ” Fressinet-de-Lozere, 4 ” ” Grizac, 15 ” ”
Castagnols, 11 ” ” Vialas, 6 ” ” Saint-Julien, 8 ” ” Saint-Maurice de Vantalon, 14
” ” Frezal de Vantalon, 7 ” ” Saint-Hilaire de Laret, 6 ” ” Saint-Andeol de

Clergues, 28 ” ” Saint-Privat de Vallongues, 10 ” ” Saint-Andre de Lancise, 19 ” ” Saint-Germain de Calberte, 26 ” ” Saint-Etienne de Valfrancesque, 9 ” ” parishes of Prunet and Montvaillant, 16 ” ” parish of Florac.

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A second list was promised, and was shortly afterwards published: it included the parishes of Frugeres, Pompidon, Saint-Martin, Lansuscle, Saint-Laurent, Treves, Vebron, Ronnes, Barre, Montluzon, Bousquet, La Barthes, Balme, Saint-Julien d’Aspaon Cassagnas, Sainte-Croix de Valfrancesque, Cabriac, Moissac, Saint-Roman, Saint Martin de Robaux, La Melouse, le Collet de Deze, Saint-Michel de Deze, and the villages of Salieges, Rampon, Ruas, Chavrieres, Tourgueselle, Ginestous, Fressinet, Fourques, Malbos, Jousanel, Campis, Campredon, Lous-Aubrez, La Croix de Fer, Le Cap de Coste, Marquayres, Le Cazairal, and Le Poujal.

In all, 466 market towns, hamlets, and villages, with 19,500 inhabitants, were included.

All these preparations made Marechal de Montrevel set out for Aix, September 26th, 1703, in order that the work might be carried out under his personal supervision. He was accompanied by MM. de Vergetot and de Marsilly, colonels of infantry, two battalions of the Royal-Comtois, two of the Soissonais infantry, the Languedoc regiment of dragoons, and two hundred dragoons from the Fimarcon regiment. M. de Julien, on his side, set out for the Pont-de- Montvert at the same time with two battalions from Hainault, accompanied by the Marquis of Canillac, colonel of infantry, who brought two battalions of his own regiment, which was stationed in Rouergue, with him, and Comte de Payre, who brought fifty-five companies of militia from Gevaudan, and followed by a number of mules loaded with crowbars, axes, and other iron instruments necessary for pulling down houses.

The approach of all these troops following close on the terrible proclamations we have given above, produced exactly the contrary effect to that intended. The inhabitants of the proscribed districts were convinced that the order to gather together in certain places was given that they might be conveniently massacred together, so that all those capable of bearing arms went deeper into the

mountains, and joined the forces of Cavalier and Roland, thus reinforcing them to the number of fifteen hundred men. Also hardly had M. de Julien set his hand to the work than he received information from M. de Montrevel, who had heard the news through a letter from Flechier, that while the royal troops were busy in the mountains the Camisards had come down into the plain, swarmed over La Camargue, and had been seen in the neighbourhood of Saint-Gilles. At the same time word was sent him that two ships had been seen in the offing, from Cette, and that it was more than probable that they contained troops, that England and Holland were sending to help the Camisards.

M. de Montrevel; leaving the further conduct of the expedition to MM. de Julien and de Canillac, hastened to Cette with eight hundred men and ten guns. The ships were still in sight, and were really, as had been surmised, two vessels which had been detached from the combined fleets of England and Holland by Admiral Schowel, and were the bearers of money, arms, and ammunition to the Huguenots. They continued to cruise about and signal, but as the rebels were forced by the presence of M. de Montrevel to keep away from the coast, and could therefore make no answer, they put off at length into the open, and rejoined the fleet. As M. de Montrevel feared that their retreat might be a feint, he ordered all the fishermen's huts from Aigues-Morte to Saint-Gilles to be destroyed, lest they should afford shelter to the Camisards. At the same time he carried off the inhabitants of the district of Guillan and shut them up in the chateau of Sommerey, after having demolished their villages. Lastly, he ordered all those who lived in homesteads, farms, or hamlets, to quit them and go to some large town, taking with them all the provisions they were possessed of; and he forbade any workman who went outside the town to work to take more than one day's provisions with him.

These measures had the desired effect, but they were terrible in their results; they deprived the Camisards of shelter indeed, but they ruined the province. M. de Baille, despite his well-known severity tried remonstrances, but they were taken in bad part by M. de Montrevel, who told the intendant to mind his own business, which was confined to civil matters, and to leave military matters in his, M. de Montrevel's, hands; whereupon the commandant joined M. de Julien, who was carrying on the work of destruction with indefatigable vigour.

In spite of all the enthusiasm with which M. de Julien went to work to accomplish his mission, and being a new convert, it was, of course, very great. Material hindrances hampered him at every step. Almost all the doomed houses

were built on vaulted foundations, and were therefore difficult to lay low; the distance of one house from another, too, their almost inaccessible position, either on the peak of a high mountain or in the bottom of a rocky valley, or buried in the depths of the forest which hid them like a veil, made the difficulty still greater; whole days were often lost by the workmen and militia in searching for the dwellings they came to destroy.

The immense size of the parishes also caused delay: that of Saint-Germain de Calberte, for instance, was nine leagues in circumference, and contained a hundred and eleven hamlets, inhabited by two hundred and seventy-five families, of which only nine were Catholic; that of Saint-Etienne de Valfrancesque was of still greater extent, and its population was a third larger, so that obstacles to the work multiplied in a remarkable manner. For the first few days the soldiers and workmen found food in and around the villages, but this was soon at an end, and as they could hardly expect the peasants to keep up the supply, and the provisions they had brought with them being also exhausted, they were soon reduced to biscuit and water; and they were not even able to make it into a warm mess by heating the water, as they had no vessels; moreover, when their hard day's work was at an end, they had but a handful of straw on which to lie. These privations, added to their hard and laborious life, brought on an endemic fever, which incapacitated for work many soldiers and labourers, numbers of whom had to be dismissed. Very soon the unfortunate men, who were almost as much to be pitied as those whom they were persecuting, waited no longer to be sent away, but deserted in numbers.

M. de Julien soon saw that all his efforts would end in failure if he could not gain the king's consent to a slight change in the original plan. He therefore wrote to Versailles, and represented to the king how long the work would take if the means employed were only iron tools and the human hand, instead of fire, the only true instrument employed by Heaven in its vengeance. He quoted in support of his petition the case of Sodom and Gomorrah—those cities accursed of the Lord. Louis XIV, impressed by the truth of this comparison, sent him back a messenger posthaste authorising him to employ the suggested means.

“At once,” says Pere Louvreloeil, “the storm burst, and soon of all the happy homesteads nothing was left: the hamlets, with their barns and outhouses, the isolated farmhouses, the single huts and cottages, every species of building in short, disappeared before the swift advancing flames as wild flowers, weeds, and roots fall before the ploughshare.”

This destruction was accompanied by horrible cruelty. For instance, twenty-five inhabitants of a certain village took refuge in a chateau; the number consisted of children and very old people, and they were all that was left of the entire population. Palmerolle, in command of the miquelets, hearing of this, hastened thither, seized the first eight he could lay hold of, and shot them on the spot, “to teach them,” as he says in his report, “not to choose a shelter which was not on the list of those permitted to them.”

The Catholics also of St. Florent, Senechas, Rousson, and other parishes, becoming excited at seeing the flames which enveloped the houses of their old enemies, joined together, and arming themselves with everything that could be made to serve as an instrument of death, set out to hunt the conscripts down; they carried off the flocks of Perolat, Fontareche, and Pajolas, burned down a dozen houses at the Collet-de-Deze, and from there went to the village of Brenoux, drunk with the lust of destruction. There they massacred fifty-two persons, among them mothers with unborn children; and with these babes, which they tore from them, impaled on their pikes and halberts, they continued their march towards the villages of St. Denis and Castagnols.

Very soon these volunteers organised themselves into companies, and became known under the name of Cadets de la Croix, from a small white cross which they wore on their coats; so the poor Huguenots had a new species of enemy to contend with, much more bloodthirsty than the dragoons and the miquelets; for while these latter simply obeyed orders from Versailles, Nimes, or Montpellier, the former gratified a personal hate—a hate which had come down to them from their fathers, and which they would pass on to their children.

On the other hand, the young Huguenot leader, who every day gained more influence over his soldiers, tried to make the dragoons and Cadets de la Croix suffer in return everything they inflicted on the Huguenots, except the murders. In the night from the 2nd to the 3rd October, about ten o’clock, he came down into the plain and attacked Sommieres from two different points, setting fire to the houses. The inhabitants seizing their arms, made a sortie, but Cavalier charged them at the head of the Cavalry and forced them to retreat. Thereupon the governor, whose garrison was too small to leave the shelter of the walls, turned his guns on them and fired, less in the hope of inflicting injury on them than in that of being heard by the neighbouring garrisons.

The Camisards recognising this danger, retired, but not before they had burnt

down the hotels of the Cheval-Blanc, the Croix-d'Or, the Grand-Louis, and the Luxembourg, as well as a great number of other houses, and the church and the presbytery of Saint-Amand.

Thence the Camisards proceeded to Cayla and Vauvert, into which they entered, destroying the fortifications. There they provided themselves abundantly with provisions for man and beast. In Vauvert, which was almost entirely inhabited by his coreligionists, Cavalier assembled the inhabitants in the marketplace, and made them join with him in prayer to God, that He would prevent the king from following evil counsel; he also exhorted his brethren to be ready to sacrifice their goods and their lives for the reestablishment of their religion, affirming that the Holy Spirit had revealed to him that the arm of the Lord, which had always come to their aid, was still stretched out over them.

Cavalier undertook these movements in the hope of interrupting the work of destruction going on in Upper Cevennes; and partly obtained the desired result; for M. de Julien received orders to come down into the open country and disperse the Camisards.

The troops tried to fulfil this task, but, thanks to the knowledge that the rebels had of the country, it was impossible to come up with them, so that Fleshier, who was in the thick of the executions, conflagrations, and massacres, but who still found time to write Latin verse and gallant letters, said, in speaking of them, "They were never caught, and did all the damage they wished to do without let or hindrance. We laid their mountains waste, and they laid waste our plain. There are no more churches left in our dioceses, and not being able either to plough or sow our lands, we have no revenues. We dread serious revolt, and desire to avoid a religious civil war; so all our efforts are relaxing, we let our arms fall without knowing why, and we are told, 'You must have patience; it is not possible to fight against phantoms.'" Nevertheless, from time to time, these phantoms became visible. Towards the end of October, Cavalier came down to Uzes, carried off two sentinels who were guarding the gates, and hearing the call to arms within, shouted that he would await the governor of the city, M. de Vergetot, near Lussan.

And indeed Cavalier, accompanied by his two lieutenants, Ravanel and Catinat, took his way towards this little town, between Uzes and Bargeac, which stands upon an eminence surrounded upon all sides by cliffs, which serve it as ramparts and render it very difficult of access. Having arrived within three gunshots of

Lussan, Cavalier sent Ravanel to demand provisions from the inhabitants; but they, proud of their natural ramparts, and believing their town impregnable, not only refused to comply with the requisition, but fired several shots on the envoy, one of which wounded in the arm a Camisard of the name of La Grandeur, who had accompanied Ravanel. Ravanel withdrew, supporting his wounded comrade, followed by shots and the hootings of the inhabitants. When they rejoined Cavalier and made their report, the young commander issued orders to his soldiers to make ready to take the town the next morning; for, as night was already falling, he did not venture to start in the dark. In the meantime the besieged sent posthaste to M. de Vergetot to warn him of their situation; and resolving to defend themselves as long as they could, while waiting for a response to their message they set about barricading their gates, turned their scythes into weapons, fastened large hooks on long poles, and collected all the instruments they could find that could be used in attack or defence. As to the Camisards, they encamped for the night near an old chateau called Fan, about a gunshot from Lussan.

At break of day loud shouts from the town told the Camisards that the expected relief was in sight, and looking out they saw in the distance a troop of soldiers advancing towards them; it was M. de Vergetat at the head of his regiment, accompanied by forty Irish officers.

The Protestants prepared themselves, as usual, by reciting psalms and prayers, notice without taking of the shouts and threats of any of the townspeople, and having finished their invocations, they marched out to meet the approaching column. The cavalry, commanded by Catinat, made a detour, taking a sheltered way to an unguarded bridge over a small river not far off, so as to outflank the royal forces, which they were to attack in the rear as soon as Cavalier and Ravanel should have engaged them in front.

M. de Vergetot, on his side, continued to advance, so that the Calvinists and the Catholics were soon face to face. The battle began on both sides by a volley; but Cavalier having seen his cavalry emerging from a neighbouring wood, and counting upon their assistance, charged the enemy at the double quick. Catinat judging by the noise of the firing that his presence was necessary, charged also at a gallop, falling on the flank of the Catholics.

In this charge, one of M. de Vergetot's captains was killed by a bullet, and the other by a sabre-cut, and the grenadiers falling into disorder, first lost ground and

then fled, pursued by Catinat and his horsemen, who, seizing them by the hair, despatched them with their swords. Having tried in vain to rally his men, M, de Vergetot, surrounded by a few Irish, was forced in his turn to fly; he was hotly pursued, and on the point of being taken, when by good luck he reached the height of Gamene, with its walls of rock. Jumping off his horse, he entered the narrow pathway which led to the top, and entrenched himself with about a hundred men in this natural fort. Cavalier perceiving that further pursuit would be dangerous, resolved to rest satisfied with his victory; as he knew by his own experience that neither men nor horses had eaten for eighteen hours, he gave the signal for retreat, and retired on Seyne, where he hoped to find provisions.

This defeat mortified the royal forces very deeply, and they resolved to take their revenge. Having learnt by their spies that on a certain night in November Cavalier and his band intended to sleep on a mountain called Nages, they surrounded the mountain during the night, so that at dawn Cavalier found himself shut in on every side. As he wished to see with his own eyes if the investment was complete, he ordered his troops to fall into rank on the top of the mountain, giving the command to Ravanel and Catinat, and with a pair of pistols in his belt and his carbine on his shoulder, he glided from bush to bush and rock to rock, determined, if any weak spot existed, to discover it; but the information he had received was perfectly correct, every issue was guarded.

Cavalier now set off to rejoin his troops, passing through a ravine, but he had hardly taken thirty steps when he found himself confronted by a cornet and two dragoons who were lying in ambush. There was no time to run away, and indeed such a thought never entered the young commander's head; he walked straight up to them. On their side, the dragoons advanced towards him, and the cornet covering him with his pistol, called out, "Halt! you are Cavalier; I know you. It is not possible for you to escape; surrender at discretion." Cavalier's answer was to blow out the cornet's brains with a shot from his carbine, then throwing it behind him as of no further use, he drew his two pistols from his belt, walked up to the two dragoons, shot them both dead, and rejoined his comrades un wounded. These, who had believed him lost, welcomed him with cheers.

But Cavalier had something else to do than to celebrate his return; mounting his horse, he put himself at the head of his men, and fell upon the royal troops with such impetuosity that they gave way at the first onset. Then a strange incident occurred. About thirty women who had come to the camp with provisions, carried away by their enthusiasm at the sight of this success, threw themselves

upon the enemy, fighting like men. One young girl of about seventeen, Lucrese Guigon by name, distinguished herself amongst the others by her great valour. Not content with encouraging her brethren by the cry of "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" she tore sabres from the hands of the dead dragoons to despatch the dying. Catinat, followed by ten of his men, pursued the flying troops as far as the plain of Calvisson. There they were able to rally, thanks to the advance of the garrison to meet them.

Eighty dragoons lay dead on the field of battle, while Cavalier had only lost five men.

As we shall see, Cavalier was not only a brave soldier and a skilful captain, but also a just judge. A few days after the deed of arms which we have just related, he learned that a horrible murder had been committed by four Camisards, who had then retired into the forest of Bouquet. He sent a detachment of twenty men with orders to arrest the murderers and bring them before him. The following are the details of the crime:

The daughter of Baron Meyrargues, who was not long married to a gentleman named M. de Miraman, had set out on the 29th November for Ambroix to join her husband, who was waiting for her there. She was encouraged to do this by her coachman, who had often met with Camisards in the neighbourhood, and although a Catholic, had never received any harm from them. She occupied her own carriage, and was accompanied by a maid, a nurse, a footman, and the coachman who had persuaded her to undertake the journey. Two-thirds of the way already lay safely behind them, when between Lussan and Vaudras she was stopped by four men, who made her get out of her carriage and accompany them into the neighbouring forest. The account of what then happened is taken from the deposition of the maid. We copy it word for word:

"These wretches having forced us," says she, "to walk into the forest till we were at some distance from the high road, my poor mistress grew so tired that she begged the man who walked beside her to allow her to lean on his shoulder. He looking round and seeing that they had reached a lonely spot, replied, 'We need hardly go any farther,' and made us sit down on a plot of grass which was to be the scene of our martyrdom. My poor mistress began to plead with the barbarians in the most touching manner, and so sweetly that she would have softened the heart of a demon. She offered them her purse, her gold waistband, and a fine diamond which she drew from her finger; but nothing could move

these tigers, and one of them said, 'I am going to kill all the Catholics at once, and shall be gin with you.' 'What will you gain by my death?' asked my mistress. 'Spare my life.'— 'No; shut up!' replied he. 'You shall die by my hand. Say your prayers.' My good mistress threw herself at once on her knees and prayed aloud that God would show mercy to her and to her murderers, and while she was thus praying she received a pistol-shot in her left breast, and fell; a second assassin cut her across the face with his sword, and a third dropped a large stone on her head, while the fourth killed the nurse with a shot from his pistol. Whether it was that they had no more loaded firearms, or that they wished to save their ammunition, they were satisfied with only giving me several bayonet wounds. I pretended to be dead: they thought it was really the case, and went away. Some time after, seeing that everything had become quiet, and hearing no sound, I dragged myself, dying as I was, to where my dear mistress lay, and called her. As it happened, she was not quite dead, and she said in a faint voice, 'Stay with me, Suzon, till I die.' She added, after a short pause, for she was hardly able to speak, 'I die for my religion, and I hope that God will have pity on me. Tell my husband that I confide our little one to his care.' Having said this, she turned her thoughts from the world, praying to God in broken and tender words, and drew her last breath as the night fell."

In obedience to Cavalier's orders, the four criminals were taken and brought before him. He was then with his troops near Saint-Maurice de Casevielle; he called a council of war, and having had the prisoners tried for their atrocious deed, he summed up the evidence in as clear a manner as any lawyer could have done, and called upon the judges to pronounce sentence. All the judges agreed that the prisoners should be put to death, but just as the sentence was made known one of the assassins pushed aside the two men who guarded him, and jumping down a rock, disappeared in the forest before any attempt could be made to stop him. The three others were shot.

The Catholics also condemned many to be executed, but the trials conducted by then were far from being as remarkable for honour and justice as was that which we have just described. We may instance the trial of a poor boy of fourteen, the son of a miller of Saint-Christol who had been broken the wheel just a month before. For a moment the judges hesitated to condemn so young a boy to death, but a witness presented himself who testified that the little fellow was employed by the fanatics to strangle Catholic children. Although no one believed the evidence, yet it was seized-on as a pretext: the unfortunate boy was condemned to death, and hanged without mercy an hour later.

A great many people from the parishes devastated by M. de Julien had taken refuge in Aussilargues, in the parish of St. Andre. Driven by hunger and misery, they went beyond the prescribed limits in search of means of subsistence. Planque hearing of this, in his burning zeal for the Catholic faith resolved not to leave such a crime unpunished. He despatched a detachment of soldiers to arrest the culprits: the task was easy, for they were all once more inside the barrier and in their beds. They were seized, brought to St. Andre's Church and shut in; then, without trial of any kind,—they were taken, five at a time, and massacred: some were shot and some cut down with sword or axe; all were killed without exception—old and young women and children. One of the latter, who had received three shots was still able to raise his head and cry, "Where is father? Why doesn't he come and take me away."

Four men and a young girl who had taken refuge in the town of Lasalle, one of the places granted to the houseless villagers as an asylum, asked and received formal permission from the captain of the Soissonais regiment, by name Laplace, to go home on important private business, on condition that they returned the same night. They promised, and in the intention of keeping this promise they all met on their way back at a small farmhouse. Just as they reached it a terrible storm came on. The men were for continuing their way in spite of the weather, but the young girl besought them to wait till daylight, as she did not dare to venture out in the dark during such a storm, and would die of fright if left alone at the farm. The men, ashamed to desert their companion, who was related to one of them, yielded to her entreaties and remained, hoping that the storm would be a sufficient excuse for the delay. As soon as it was light, the five resumed their journey. But the news of their crime had reached the ears of Laplace before they got back. They were arrested, and all their excuses were of no avail. Laplace ordered the men to be taken outside the town and shot. The young girl was condemned to be hanged; and the sentence was to be carried out that very day, but some nuns who had been sent for to prepare her for death, having vainly begged Laplace to show mercy, entreated the girl to declare that she would soon become a mother. She indignantly refused to save her life at the cost of her good name, so the nuns took the lie on themselves and made the necessary declaration before the captain, begging him if he had no pity for the mother to spare the child at least, by granting a reprieve till it should be born. The captain was/not for a moment deceived, but he sent for a midwife and ordered her to examine the young girl. At the end of half an hour she declared that the assertion of the nuns was true.

“Very well,” said the captain: “let them both be kept in prison for three months; if by the end of that time the truth of this assertion is not self-evident, both shall be hanged.” When this decision was made known to the poor woman, she was overcome by fear, and asked to see the captain again, to whom she confessed that, led away by the entreaties of the nuns, she had told a lie.

Upon this, the woman was sentenced to be publicly whipped, and the young girl hanged on a gibbet round which were placed the corpses of the four men of whose death she was the cause.

As may easily be supposed, the “Cadets of the Cross” vied with both Catholics and Protestants in the work of destruction. One of their bands devoted itself to destroying everything belonging to the new converts from Beaucaire to Nimes. They killed a woman and two children at Campuget, an old man of eighty at a farm near Bouillargues, several persons at Cicure, a young girl at Caissargues, a gardener at Nimes, and many other persons, besides carrying off all the flocks, furniture, and other property they could lay hands on, and burning down the farmhouses of Clairan, Loubes, Marine, Carlot, Campoget Miraman, La Bergerie, and Larnac—all near St. Gilies and Manduel. “They stopped travellers on the highways,” says Louvreloeil, “and by way of finding out whether they were Catholic or not, made them say in Latin the Lord’s Prayer, the Ave Maria, the Symbol of the Faith, and the General Confession, and those who were unable to do this were put to the sword. In Dions nine corpses were found supposed to have been killed by their hands, and when the body of a shepherd who had been in the service of the Sieur de Roussiere, a former minister, was found hanging to a tree, no one doubted who were the murderers. At last they went so far that one of their bands meeting the Abbe de Saint Gilles on the road, ordered him to deliver up to them one of his servants, a new convert, in order to put him to death. It was in vain that the abbe remonstrated with them, telling them it was a shame to put such an affront on a man of his birth and rank; they persisted none the less in their determination, till at last the abbe threw his arms round his servant and presented his own body to the blows directed at the other.”

The author of *The Troubles in the Cevennes* relates something surpassing all this which took place at Montelus on the 22nd February “There were a few Protestants in the place,” he says, “but they were far outnumbered by the Catholics; these being roused by a Capuchin from Bergerac, formed themselves into a body of ‘Cadets of the Cross,’ and hastened to serve their apprenticeship to the work of assassination at the cost of their countrymen. They therefore entered

the house of one Jean Bernoin, cut off his ears and further mutilated him, and then bled him to death like a pig. On coming out of this house they met Jacques Clas, and shot him in the abdomen, so that his intestines protruded; pushing them back, he reached his house in a terrible condition, to the great alarm of his wife, who was near her confinement, and her children, who hastened to the help of husband and father. But the murderers appeared on the threshold, and, unmoved by the cries and tears of the unfortunate wife and the poor little children, they finished the wounded man, and as the wife made an effort to prevent them, they murdered her also, treating her dead body, when they discovered her condition, in a manner too revolting for description; while a neighbour, called Marie Silliot, who tried to rescue the children, was shot dead; but in her case they did not pursue their vengeance any further. They then went into the open country and meeting Pierre and Jean Bernard, uncle and nephew, one aged forty-five and the other ten, seized on them both, and putting a pistol into the hands of the child, forced him to shoot his uncle. In the meantime the boy's father had come up, and him they tried to constrain to shoot his son; but finding that no threats had any effect, they ended by killing both, one by the sword, the other by the bayonet.

“The reason why they put an end to father and son so quickly was that they had noticed three young girls of Bagnols going towards a grove of mulberry trees, where they were raising silkworms. The men followed them, and as it was broad daylight and the girls were therefore not afraid, they soon came up with them. Having first violated them, they hung them by the feet to a tree, and put them to death in a horrible manner.”

All this took place in the reign of Louis the Great, and for the greater glory of the Catholic religion.

History has preserved the names of the five wretches who perpetrated these crimes: they were Pierre Vigneau, Antoine Rey, Jean d'Hugon, Guillaume, and Gontanille.

CHAPTER III

Such crimes, of which we have only described a few, inspired horror in the breasts of those who were neither maddened by fanaticism nor devoured by the desire of vengeance. One of these, a Protestant, Baron d'Aygaliers, without stopping to consider what means he had at his command or what measures were the best to take to accomplish his object, resolved to devote his life to the pacification of the Cevennes. The first thing to be considered was, that if the Camisards were ever entirely destroyed by means of Catholic troops directed by de Baviile, de Julien, and de Montrevel, the Protestants, and especially the Protestant nobles who had never borne arms, would be regarded as cowards, who had been prevented by fear of death or persecution from openly taking the part of the Huguenots: He was therefore convinced that the only course to pursue was to get, his coreligionists to put an end to the struggle themselves, as the one way of pleasing His Majesty and of showing him how groundless were the suspicions aroused in the minds of men by the Catholic clergy.

This plan presented, especially to Baron d'Aygaliers, two apparently insurmountable difficulties, for it could only be carried out by inducing the king to relax his rigorous measures and by inducing the Camisards to submit. Now the baron had no connection with the court, and was not personally acquainted with a single Huguenot chief.

The first thing necessary to enable the baron to begin his efforts was a passport for Paris, and he felt sure that as he was a Protestant neither M. de Baviile nor M. de Montrevel would give him one. A lucky accident, however, relieved his embarrassment and strengthened his resolution, for he thought he saw in this accident the hand of Providence.

Baron d'Aygaliers found one day at the house of a friend a M. de Paratte, a colonel in the king's army, and who afterwards became major-general, but who at the time we are speaking of was commandant at Uzes. He was of a very impulsive disposition, and so zealous in matters relating to the Catholic religion and in the service of the king, that he never could find himself in the presence of a Protestant without expressing his indignation at those who had taken up arms against their prince, and also those who without taking up arms encouraged the rebels in their designs. M. d'Aygaliers understood that an allusion was meant to

himself, and he resolved to take advantage of it.

So the next day he paid a visit to M. de Paratte, and instead of demanding satisfaction, as the latter quite expected, for the rudeness of his remarks on the previous day, he professed himself very much obliged for what he had said, which had made such a deep impression on him that he had made up his mind to give proof of his zeal and loyalty by going to Paris and petitioning the king for a position at court. De Paratte, charmed with what he had heard, and enchanted with his convert, embraced d'Aygaliers, and gave him, says the chronicler, his blessing; and with the blessing a passport, and wished him all the success that a father could wish for his son. D'Aygaliers had now attained his object, and furnished with the lucky safe-conduct, he set out for Paris, without having communicated his intentions to anyone, not even to his mother.

On reaching Paris he put up at a friend's house, and drew up a statement of his plan: it was very short and very clear.

“The undersigned has the honour to point out humbly to His Majesty:

“That the severities and the persecutions which have been employed by some of the village priests have caused many people in the country districts to take up arms, and that the suspicions which new converts excited have driven a great many of them to join the insurgents. In taking this step they were also impelled by the desire to avoid imprisonment or removal from their homes, which were the remedies chosen to keep them in the old faith. This being the case, he thinks that the best means of putting an end to this state of things would be to take measures exactly the contrary of those which produced it, such as putting an end to the persecutions and permitting a certain number of those of the Reformed religion to bear arms, that they might go to the rebels and tell them that far from approving of their actions the Protestants as a whole wished to bring them back to the right way by setting them a good example, or to fight against them in order to show the king and France, at the risk of their lives, that they disapproved of the conduct of their coreligionists, and that the priests had been in the wrong in writing to the court that all those of the Reformed religion were in favour of revolt.”

D'Aygaliers hoped that the court would adopt this plan; for if they did, one of two things must happen: either the Camisards, by refusing to accept the terms offered to them, would make themselves odious to their brethren (for d'Aygaliers

intended to take with him on his mission of persuasion only men of high reputation among the Reformers, who would be repelled by the Camisards if they refused to submit), or else; by laying down their arms and submitting, they would restore peace to the South of France, obtain liberty of worship, set free their brethren from the prisons and galleys, and come to the help of the king in his war against the allied powers, by supplying him in a moment with a large body of disciplined troops ready to take the field against his enemies; for not only would the Camisards, if they were supplied with officers, be available for this purpose, but also those troops which were at the moment employed in hunting down the Camisards would be set free for this important duty.

This proposition was so clear and promised to produce such useful results, that although the prejudice against the Reformers was very strong, Baron d'Aygaliers found supporters who were at once intelligent and genuine in the Duke de Chevreuse and the Duke de Montfort, his son. These two gentlemen brought about a meeting between the baron and Chamillard, and the latter presented him to the Marechal de Villars, to whom he showed his petition, begging him to bring it to the notice of the king; but M. de Villars, who was well acquainted with the obstinacy of Louis, who, as Baron de Peken says, "only saw the Reformers through the spectacles of Madame de Maintenon," told d'Aygaliers that the last thing he should do would be to give the king any hint of his plans, unless he wished to see them come to nothing; on the contrary, he advised him to go at once to Lyons and wait there for him, M. de Villars; for he would probably be passing through that town in a few days, being almost certain to be appointed governor of Languedoc in place of M. de Montrevel, who had fallen under the king's displeasure and was about to be recalled. In the course of the three interviews which d'Aygaliers had had with M. de Villars, he had become convinced that de Villars was a man capable of understanding his object; he therefore followed his advice, as he believed his knowledge of the king to be correct, and left Paris for Lyons.

The recall of M. de Montrevel had been brought about in the following manner:—M. de Montrevel having just come to Uzes, learned that Cavalier and his troops were in the neighbourhood of Sainte-Chatte; he immediately sent M. de La Jonquiere, with six hundred picked marines and some companies of dragoons from the regiment of Saint-Sernin, but half an hour later, it having occurred to him that these forces were not sufficient, he ordered M. de Foix, lieutenant of the dragoons of Fimarçon, to join M. de La Jonquiere at Sainte-Chatte with a hundred soldiers of his regiment, and to remain with him if he were wanted; if

not, to return the same night.

M. de Foix gave the necessary orders, chose a hundred of his bravest men, put himself at their head, and joined M. de La Jonquiere, showing him his orders; but the latter, confiding in the courage of his soldiers and unwilling to share with anyone the glory of a victory of which he felt assured, not only sent away M. de Foix, but begged him to go back to Uzes, declaring to him that he had enough troops to fight and conquer all the Camisards whom he might encounter; consequently the hundred dragoons whom the lieutenant had brought with him were quite useless at Sainte-Chatte, while on the contrary they might be very necessary somewhere else. M. de Foix did not consider that it was his duty to insist on remaining under these circumstances, and returned to Uzes, while M. de La Jonquiere continued his route in order to pass the night at Moussac. Cavalier left the town by one gate just as M. de La Jonquiere entered at the other. The wishes of the young Catholic commander were thus in a fair way to be fulfilled, for in all probability he would come up with his enemy the next day.

As the village was inhabited for the most part by new converts, the night instead of being spent in repose was devoted to pillage.

The next day the Catholic troops reached Moussac, which they found deserted, so they went on to Lascours-de-Gravier, a little village belonging to the barony of Boucairan, which M. de La Jonquiere gave up to pillage, and where he had four Protestants shot—a man, a woman, and two young girls. He then resumed his route. As it had rained, he soon came on the trail of the Camisards, the terrible game which he was hunting down. For three hours he occupied himself in this pursuit, marching at the head of his troops, lest someone else less careful than he should make some mistake, when, suddenly raising his eyes, he perceived the Camisards on a small eminence called Les Devois de Maraignargues. This was the spot they had chosen to await attack in, being eager for the approaching combat.

As soon as Cavalier saw the royals advancing, he ordered his men, according to custom, to offer up prayers to God, and when these were finished he disposed his troops for battle. His plan was to take up position with the greater part of his men on the other side of a ravine, which would thus form a kind of moat between him and the king's soldiers; he also ordered about thirty horsemen to make a great round, thus reaching unseen a little wood about two hundred yards to his left, where they could conceal themselves; and lastly, he sent to a point on

the right sixty foot-soldiers chosen from his best marksmen, whom he ordered not to fire until the royal forces were engaged in the struggle with him.

M. de La Jonquiere having approached to within a certain distance, halted, and sent one of his lieutenants named de Sainte-Chatte to make a reconnaissance, which he did, advancing beyond the men in ambush, who gave no sign of their existence, while the officer quietly examined the ground. But Sainte-Chatte was an old soldier of fortune and not easily taken in, so on his return, while explaining the plan of the ground chosen by Cavalier for the disposition of his troops to M. de La Jonquiere, he added that he should be very much astonished if the young Camisard had not employed the little wood on his left and the lie of the ground on his right as cover for soldiers in ambush; but M. de La Jonquiere returned that the only thing of importance was to know the position of the principal body of troops in order to attack it at once. Sainte-Chatte told him that the principal body was that which was before his eyes, and that on this subject there could be no mistake; for he had approached near enough to recognise Cavalier himself in the front rank.

This was enough for M. de La Jonquiere: he put himself at the head of his men and rode straight to the ravine, beyond which Cavalier and his comrades awaited him in order of battle. Having got within a pistol-shot, M. de La Jonquiere gave the order to fire, but he was so near that Cavalier heard the words and saw the motion made by the men as they made ready; he therefore gave a rapid sign to his men, who threw themselves on their faces, as did their leader, and the bullets passed over them without doing any harm. M. de La Jonquiere, who believed them all dead, was astonished when Cavalier and his Camisards rose up and rushed upon the royal troops, advancing to the sound of a psalm. At a distance of ten paces they fired, and then charged the enemy at the point of the bayonet. At this moment the sixty men in ambush to the right opened fire, while the thirty horsemen to the left, uttering loud shouts, charged at a gallop. Hearing this noise, and seeing death approach them in three different directions, the royals believed themselves surrounded, and did not attempt to make a stand; the men, throwing away their weapons, took to their heels, the officers alone and a few dragoons whom they had succeeded in rallying making a desperate resistance.

Cavalier was riding over the field of battle, sabring all the fugitives whom he met, when he caught sight of a group, composed of ten naval officers; standing close together and back to back, spontoon in hand, facing the Camisards, who surrounded them. He spurred up to them, passing through the ranks of his

soldiers, and not pausing till he was within fifteen paces of them, although they raised their weapons to fire. Then making a sign with his hand that he wished to speak to them, he said, "Gentlemen, surrender. I shall give quarter, and in return for the ten lives I now spare you, will ask that my father, who is in prison at Nimes, be released."

For sole answer, one of the officers fired and wounded the young chief's horse in the head. Cavalier drew a pistol from his belt, took aim at the officer and killed him, then turning again to the others, he asked, "Gentlemen, are you as obstinate as your comrade, or do you accept my offer?" A second shot was the reply, and a bullet grazed his shoulder. Seeing that no other answer was to be hoped for, Cavalier turned to his soldiers. "Do your duty," said he, and withdrew, to avoid seeing the massacre. The nine officers were shot.

M. de La Jonquiere, who had received a slight wound in the cheek, abandoned his horse in order to climb over a wall. On the other side he made a dragoon dismount and give him his horse, on which he crossed the river Gardon, leaving behind him on the battlefield twenty-five officers and six hundred soldiers killed. This defeat was doubly disastrous to the royal cause, depriving it of the flower of its officers, almost all of those who fell belonging to the noblest families of France, and also because the Camisards gained what they so badly needed, muskets, swords, and bayonets in great quantities, as well as eighty horses, these latter enabling Cavalier to complete the organisation of a magnificent troop of cavalry.

The recall of the Marechal de Montrevel was the consequence of this defeat, and M. de Villars, as he had anticipated, was appointed in his place. But before giving up his governorship Montrevel resolved to efface the memory of the check which his lieutenant's foolhardiness had caused, but for which, according to the rules of war, the general had to pay the penalty. His plan was by spreading false rumours and making feigned marches to draw the Camisards into a trap in which they, in their turn, would be caught. This was the less difficult to accomplish as their latest great victory had made Cavalier over confident both in himself and his men.

In fact, since the incident connected with the naval officers the troops of Cavalier had increased enormously in numbers, everyone desiring to serve under so brave a chief, so that he had now under him over one thousand infantry and two hundred cavalry; they were furnished, besides, just like regular troops, with

a bugler for the cavalry, and eight drums and a fife for the infantry.

The marechal felt sure that his departure would be the signal for some expedition into the level country under Cavalier, so it was given out that he had left for Montpellier, and had sent forward some of his baggage-waggons to that place. On April 15th he was informed that Cavalier, deceived by the false news, had set out on the 16th April, intending to pass the night at Caveyrac, a small town about a league from Nimes, that he might be ready next day to make a descent on La Vannage. This news was brought to M. de Montrevel by a village priest called Verrien, who had in his pay vigilant and faithful spies in whom he had every confidence.

Montrevel accordingly ordered the commandant of Lunel, M. de Grandval, to set out the next day, very early in the morning, with the Charolais regiment and five companies of the Fimarcon and Saint-Sernin dragoons, and to repair to the heights of Boissieres, where instructions would await him. Sandricourt, governor of Nimes, was at the same time directed to withdraw as many men as possible from the garrison, both Swiss and dragoons, and send them by night towards Saint-Come and Clarensac; lastly, he himself set out, as he had said, but instead of going on to Montpellier, he stopped at Sommieres, whence he could observe the movements of Cavalier.

Cavalier, as M. de Montrevel already knew, was to sleep on the 15th at Caveyrac. On this day Cavalier reached the turning-point in his magnificent career. As he entered the town with his soldiers, drums beating and flags flying, he was at the zenith of his power. He rode the splendid horse M. de La Jonquiere had abandoned in his flight; behind him, serving as page, rode his young brother, aged ten, followed by four grooms; he was preceded by twelve guards dressed in red; and as his colleague Roland had taken the title of Comte, he allowed himself to be called Duke of the Cevennes.

At his approach half of the garrison, which was commanded by M. de Maillan, took possession of the church and half of the citadel; but as Cavalier was more bent on obtaining food and rest for his soldiers than of disturbing the town, he billeted his men on the townspeople, and placed sentinels at the church and fortress, who exchanged shots all the night through with the royal troops. The next morning, having destroyed the fortifications, he marched out of the town again, drums beating and flags flying as before. When almost in sight of Nimes he made his troops, which had never before been so numerous or so brilliant,

perform a great many evolutions, and then continued his way towards Nages.

M. de Montrevel received a report at nine o'clock in the morning of the direction Cavalier and his troops had taken, and immediately left Sommieres, followed by six companies of Fimarçon dragoons, one hundred Irish free-lances, three hundred rank and file of the Hainault regiment, and one company each of the Soissonnais, Charolais, and Menon regiments, forming in all a corps over nine hundred strong. They took the direction of Vaunages, above Clarensac; but suddenly hearing the rattle of musketry behind them, they wheeled and made for Langlade.

They found that Grandval had already encountered the Camisards. These being fatigued had withdrawn into a hollow between Boissieres and the windmill at Langlade, in order to rest. The infantry lay down, their arms beside them; the cavalry placed themselves at the feet of their horses, the bridle on arm. Cavalier himself, Cavalier the indefatigable, broken by the fatigues of the preceding days, had fallen asleep, with his young brother watching beside him. Suddenly he felt himself shaken by the arm, and rousing up, he heard on all sides cries of "Kill! Kill!" and "To arms! To arms!" Grandval and his men, who had been sent to find out where the Camisards were, had suddenly come upon them.

The infantry formed, the cavalry sprang to their saddles, Cavalier leaped on his horse, and drawing his sword, led his soldiers as usual against the dragoons, and these, as was also usual, ran away, leaving twelve of their number dead on the field. The Camisard cavalry soon gave up the pursuit, as they found themselves widely separated from the infantry and from their leader; for Cavalier had been unable to keep up with them, his horse having received a bullet through its neck.

Still they followed the flying dragoons for a good hour, from time to time a wounded dragoon falling from his horse, till at last the Camisard cavalry found itself confronted by the Charolais regiment, drawn up in battle array, and behind them the royal dragoons, who had taken refuge there, and were reforming.

Carried on by the rapidity of their course, the Camisards could not pull up till they were within a hundred yards of the enemy; they fired once, killing several, then turned round and retreated.

When a third of the way, back had been covered, they met their chief, who had found a fresh horse by the wayside standing beside its dead master. He arrived at

full gallop, as he was anxious to unite his cavalry and infantry at once, as he had seen the forces of the marechal advancing, who, as we have already said, had turned in the direction of the firing. Hardly had Cavalier effected the desired junction of his forces than he perceived that his retreat was cut off. He had the royal troops both before and behind him.

The young chief saw that a desperate dash to right or left was all that remained to him, and not knowing this country as well as the Cevennes, he asked a peasant the way from Soudorgues to Nages, that being the only one by which he could escape. There was no time to inquire whether the peasant was Catholic or Protestant; he could only trust to chance, and follow the road indicated. But a few yards from the spot where the road from Doudorgues to Nages joins the road to Nimes he found himself in face of Marechal Montrevel's troops under the command of Menon. However, as they hardly outnumbered the Camisards, these did not stop to look for another route, but bending forward in their saddles, they dashed through the lines at full gallop, taking the direction of Nages, hoping to reach the plain round Calvisson. But the village, the approaches, the issues were all occupied by royal troops, and at the same time Grandval and the marechal joined forces, while Menon collected his men together and pushed forward. Cavalier was completely surrounded: he gave the situation a comprehensive glance—his foes, were five to one.

Rising in his stirrups, so that he could see over every head, Cavalier shouted so loud that not only his own men heard but also those of the enemy: "My children, if our hearts fail us now, we shall be taken and broken on the wheel. There is only one means of safety: we must cut our way at full gallop through these people. Follow me, and keep close order!"

So speaking, he dashed on the nearest group, followed by all his men, who formed a compact mass; round which the three corps of royal troops closed. Then there was everywhere a hand-to-hand battle there was no time to load and fire; swords flashed and fell, bayonets stabbed, the royals and the Camisards took each other by the throat and hair. For an hour this demoniac fight lasted, during which Cavalier lost five hundred men and slew a thousand of the enemy. At last he won through, followed by about two hundred of his troops, and drew a long breath; but finding himself in the centre of a large circle of soldiers, he made for a bridge, where alone it seemed possible to break through, it being only guarded by a hundred dragoons.

He divided his men into two divisions, one to force the bridge, the other to cover the retreat. Then he faced his foes like a wild boar driven to bay.

Suddenly loud shouts behind him announced that the bridge was forced; but the Camisards, instead of keeping the passage open for their leader, scattered over the plain and sought safety in flight. But a child threw himself before them, pistol in hand. It was Cavalier's young brother, mounted on one of the small wild horses of Camargues of that Arab breed which was introduced into Languedoc by the Moors from Spain. Carrying a sword and carbine proportioned to his size, the boy addressed the flying men. "Where are you going?" he cried, "Instead of running away like cowards, line the river banks and oppose the enemy to facilitate my brother's escape." Ashamed of having deserved such reproaches, the Camisards stopped, rallied, lined the banks of the river, and by keeping up a steady fire, covered Cavalier's retreat, who crossed without having received a single wound, though his horse was riddled with bullets and he had been forced to change his sword three times.

Still the combat raged; but gradually Cavalier managed to retreat: a plain cut by trenches, the falling darkness, a wood which afforded cover, all combined to help him at last. Still his rearguard, harassed by the enemy, dotted the ground it passed over with its dead, until at last both victors and vanquished were swallowed up by night. The fight had lasted ten hours, Cavalier had lost more than five hundred men, and the royals about a thousand.

"Cavalier," says M. de Villars, in his Memoirs, "acted on this day in a way which astonished everyone. For who could help being astonished to see a nobody, inexperienced in the art of warfare, bear himself in such difficult and trying circumstances like some great general? At one period of the day he was followed everywhere by a dragoon; Cavalier shot at him and killed his horse. The dragoon returned the shot, but missed. Cavalier had two horses killed under him; the first time he caught a dragoon's horse, the second time he made one of his own men dismount and go on foot."

M. de Montrevel also showed himself to be a gallant soldier; wherever there was danger there was he, encouraging officers and soldiers by his example: one Irish captain was killed at his side, another fatally wounded, and a third slightly hurt. Grandval, on his part, had performed miracles: his horse was shot under him, and M. de Montrevel replaced it by one of great value, on which he joined in the pursuit of the Camisards. After this affair M, de Montrevel gave up his place to

M. de Villars, leaving word for Cavalier that it was thus he took leave of his friends.

Although Cavalier came out of this battle with honour, compelling even his enemies to regard him as a man worthy of their steel, it had nevertheless destroyed the best part of his hopes. He made a halt-near Pierredon to gather together the remnant of his troops, and truly it was but a remnant which remained. Of those who came back the greater number were without weapons, for they had thrown them away in their flight. Many were incapacitated for service by their wounds; and lastly, the cavalry could hardly be said to exist any longer, as the few men who survived had been obliged to abandon their horses, in order to get across the high ditches which were their only cover from the dragoons during the flight.

Meantime the royalists were very active, and Cavalier felt that it would be imprudent to remain long at Pierredon, so setting out during the night, and crossing the Gardon, he buried himself in the forest of Hieuzet, whither he hoped his enemies would not venture to follow him. And in fact the first two days were quiet, and his troops benefited greatly by the rest, especially as they were able to draw stores of all kinds—wheat, hay, arms, and ammunition—from an immense cave which the Camisards had used for a long time as a magazine and arsenal. Cavalier now also employed it as a hospital, and had the wounded carried there, that their wounds might receive attention.

Unfortunately, Cavalier was soon obliged to quit the forest, in spite of his hopes of being left in peace; for one day on his way back from a visit to the wounded in the cave, whose existence was a secret, he came across a hundred miquelets who had penetrated thus far, and who would have taken him prisoner if he had not, with his, accustomed presence of mind and courage, sprung from a rock twenty feet high. The miquelets fired at him, but no bullet reached him. Cavalier rejoined his troops, but fearing to attract the rest of the royalists to the place,—retreated to some distance from the cave, as it was of the utmost importance that it should not be discovered, since it contained all his resources.

Cavalier had now reached one of those moments when Fortune, tired of conferring favours, turns her back on the favourite. The royalists had often noticed an old woman from the village of Hieuzet going towards the forest, sometimes carrying a basket in her hand, sometimes with a hamper on her head, and it occurred to them that she was supplying the hidden Camisards with

provisions. She was arrested and brought before General Lalande, who began his examination by threatening that he would have her hanged if she did not at once declare the object of her frequent journeys to the forest without reserve. At first she made use of all kinds of pretexts, which only strengthened the suspicions of Lalande, who, ceasing his questions, ordered her to be taken to the gallows and hanged. The old woman walked to the place of execution with such a firm step that the general began to think he would get no information from her, but at the foot of the ladder her courage failed. She asked to be taken back before the general, and having been promised her life, she revealed everything.

M. de Lalande put himself at once at the head of a strong detachment of miquelets, and forced the woman to walk before them till they reached the cavern, which they never would have discovered without a guide, so cleverly was the entrance hidden by rocks and brushwood. On entering, the first thing that met their eye was the wounded, about thirty in number. The miquelets threw themselves upon them and slaughtered them. This deed accomplished, they went farther into the cave, which to their great surprise contained a thousand things they never expected to find there—heaps of grain, sacks of flour, barrels of wine, casks of brandy, quantities of chestnuts and potatoes; and besides all this, chests containing ointments, drugs and lint, and lastly a complete arsenal of muskets, swords, and bayonets, a quantity of powder ready-made, and sulphur, saltpetre, and charcoal—in short, everything necessary for the manufacture of more, down to small mills to be turned by hand. Lalande kept his word: the life of an old woman was not too much to give in return for such a treasure.

Meantime M. de Villars, as he had promised, took up Baron d'Aygaliers in passing through Lyons, so that during the rest of the journey the peacemaker had plenty of time to expatiate on his plans. As M. de Villars was a man of tact and a lover of justice, and desired above all things to bring a right spirit to bear on the performance of the duties of his new office, in which his two predecessors had failed, he promised the baron “to keep,” as he expressed himself, his “two ears open” and listen to both sides, and as a first proof of impartiality—he refused to give any opinion until he had heard M. de Julien, who was coming to meet him at Tournon.

When they arrived at Tournon, M. de Julien was there to receive them, and had a very different story to tell from that which M. de Villars had heard from d'Aygaliers. According to him, the only pacific ration possible was the complete extermination of the Camisards. He felt himself very hardly treated in that he

had been allowed to destroy only four hundred villages and hamlets in the Upper Cevennes, —assuring de Villars with the confidence of a man who had studied the matter profoundly, that they should all have been demolished without exception, and all the peasants killed to the last man.

So it came to pass that M. de Villars arrived at Beaucaire placed like Don Juan between the spirits of good and evil, the one advising clemency and the other murder. M. de Villars not being able to make up his mind, on reaching Nimes, d'Aygaliers assembled the principal Protestants of the town, told them of his plan, showing them its practicability, so that also joined in the good work, and drew up a document in which they asked the marechal to allow them to take up arms and march against the rebels, as they were determined either to bring them back into the good way by force of example or to fight them as a proof of their loyalty.

This petition, which was signed by several nobles and by almost all the lawyers and merchants of the city of Nimes, was presented to M. de Villars on Tuesday, 22nd April, 1704, by M. de Albenas, at the head of seven or eight hundred persons of the Reformed religion. M. de Villars received the request kindly, thanked its bearer and those who accompanied him, assuring them that he had no doubt of the sincerity of their professions, and that if he were in want of help he would have recourse to them with as much confidence as if they were old Catholics. He hoped, however, to win the rebels back by mildness, and he begged them to second his efforts in this direction by spreading abroad the fact that an amnesty was offered to all those who would lay down arms and return to their houses within a week. The very next day but one, M. de Villars set out from Nimes to visit all the principal towns, in order to make himself acquainted with men, things, and places.

Although the answer to the petition had been a delicate refusal, d'Aygaliers was not discouraged, but followed M. de Villars everywhere. When the latter arrived at Alais, the new governor sent for MM. de Lalande and de Baviile, in order to consult them as to the best means of inducing the Camisards to lay down their arms. Baron d'Aygaliers was summoned to this consultation, and described his plan to the two gentlemen. As he expected, both were opposed to it; however, he tried to bring them over to his side by presenting to them what seemed to him to be cogent reasons for its adoption. But de Lalande and de Baviile made light of all his reasons, and rejected his proposals with such vehemence, that the marechal, however much inclined to the side of d'Aygaliers, did not venture to

act quite alone, and said he would not decide on any course until he reached Uzes.

D'Aygaliers saw clearly that until he had obtained the approbation of either the general or the intendant, he would get nothing from the marechal. He therefore considered which of the two he should try to persuade, and although de Baviile was his personal enemy, having several times shown his hatred for him and his family, he decided to address himself to him.

In consequence, the next day, to the great astonishment of M. de Baviile, d'Aygaliers paid him a visit. The intendant received him coldly but politely, asked him to sit down, and when he was seated begged to know the motive which had brought him. "Sir," replied the baron, "you have given my family and me such cause of offence that I had come to the firm resolution never to ask a favour of you, and as perhaps you may have remarked during the journey we have taken with M. le marechal, I would rather have died of thirst than accept a glass of water from you. But I have come here to-day not upon any private matter, to obtain my own ends, but upon a matter which concerns the welfare of the State. I therefore beg you to put out of your mind the dislike which you have to me and mine, and I do this the more earnestly that your dislike can only have been caused by the fact that our religion is different from yours—a thing which could neither have been foreseen nor prevented. My entreaty is that you do not try to set M. le marechal against the course which I have proposed to him, which I am convinced would bring the disorders in our province to an end, stop the occurrence of the many unfortunate events which I am sure you look on with regret, and spare you much trouble and embarrassment."

The intendant was much touched by this calm speech, and above all by the confidence which M. d'Aygaliers had shown him, and replied that he had only offered opposition to the plan of pacification because he believed it to be impracticable. M. d'Aygaliers then warmly pressed him to try it before rejecting it for ever, and in the end M. de Baviile withdrew his opposition.

M. d'Aygaliers hastened to the marechal, who finding himself no longer alone in his favourable opinion, made no further delay, but told the baron to call together that very day all the people whom he thought suitable for the required service, and desired that they should be presented to him the next morning before he set out for Nimes.

The next day, instead of the fifty men whom the marachal had thought could be gathered together, d'Aygaliens came to him followed by eighty, who were almost all of good and many of noble family. The meeting took place, by the wish of the baron, in the courtyard of the episcopal palace. "This palace," says the baron in his Memoirs, "which was of great magnificence, surrounded by terraced gardens and superbly furnished, was occupied by Monseigneur Michel Poncet de La Riviere. He was a man passionately devoted to pleasures of all kinds, especially to music, women, and good cheer. There were always to be found in his house good musicians, pretty women, and excellent wines. These latter suited him so well that he never left the table without being in a pleasant humour, and at such a moment if it came into his head that anyone in his diocese was not as good a Christian as himself, he would sit down and write to M. de Baviile, urging that the delinquent ought to be sent into exile. He often did this honour to my late father." M. d'Aygaliens goes on to say that "on seeing such a great number of Huguenots in the court who were all declaring that they were better servants of the king than the Catholics, he almost fell from his balcony with vexation and surprise. This vexation increased when he saw M. de Villars and M. de Baviile, who had apartments in the palace, come down into the court and talk to these people. One hope still remained to him: it was that the marechal and the intendant had come down to send them away; but this last hope was cruelly disappointed when he heard M. de Villars say that he accepted their service and expected them to obey d'Aygaliens in all matters concerning the service of the king."

But this was not all that had to be accomplished arms were necessary for the Protestants, and though their number was not great, there was a difficulty in finding them weapons. The unfortunate Calvinists had been disarmed so often that even their table-knives had been carried off, so it was useless to search their houses for guns and sabres. D'Aygaliens proposed that they should take the arms of the townspeople, but M. de Villars considered that it would offend the Catholics to have their arms taken from them and given to the Protestants. In the end, however, this was the course that had to be adopted: M. de Paratte was ordered to give fifty muskets and the same number of bayonets to M. d'Aygaliens, who also received, as the reward of his long patience, from M. de Villars, before the latter left for Nimes, the following commission:

"We, Marechal de Villars, general in the armies of the king, etc., etc., have given permission to M. d'Aygaliens, nobleman and Protestant of the town of Uzes, and to fifty men chosen by him, to make war on the Camisards.

“(Signed) “VILLARS

“(Countersigned) “MORETON

“Given at Uzes, the 4th of May 1704”

Hardly had M. de Villars set out for Nimes than d’Aygaliens met with fresh difficulties. The bishop, who could not forget that his episcopal palace had been turned into barracks for Huguenots, went from house to house threatening those who had promised to countenance d’Aygaliens’ plans, and strictly forbidding the captains of the town troops to deliver any weapons to the Protestants. Fortunately, d’Aygaliens had not accomplished so much. without having learned not to draw back when the road grew rough, so he also on his side went about confirming the strong and encouraging the feeble, and called on M. de Paratte to beg him to carry out the orders of M. de Villars. De Paratte was happily an old soldier, whose one idea was that discipline should be maintained, so that he gave the guns and bayonets to d’Aygaliens on the spot, without a word of objection, and thus enabled the latter to start at five o’clock next morning with his little band.

Meantime de Baille and de Lalande had been reflecting what great influence d’Aygaliens would gain in the province should he succeed in his aims, and their jealousy had made them resolve to forestall him in his work, by themselves inducing Cavalier to abandon his present course. They did not conceal from themselves that this would be difficult, but as they could command means of corruption which were not within the power of d’Aygaliens, they did not despair of success.

They therefore sent for a countryman called Lacombe, in order to enlist him on their side; for Cavalier, when a boy, had been his shepherd for two years, and both had remained friends ever since: this man undertook to try and bring about a meeting between the two gentlemen and Cavalier—an enterprise which would have been dangerous for anyone else. He promised first of all to explain to Cavalier the offers of MM. de Baille and de Lalande.

Lacombe kept his word: he set off the same day, and two days later appeared before Cavalier. The first feeling of the young chief was astonishment, the second pleasure. Lacombe could not have chosen a better moment to speak of

peace to his former shepherd.

“Indeed,” says Cavalier in his Memoirs, “the loss which I had just sustained at Nages was doubly painful to me because it was irreparable. I had lost at one blow not only a great number of weapons, all my ammunition, and all my money, but also a body of men, inured to danger and fatigue, and capable of any undertaking; —besides all this, I had been robbed of my stores—a loss which made itself felt more than all the others put together, because as long as the secret of the cavern was kept, in all our misfortunes we were never without resources; but from the moment it got into the possession of our enemies we were quite destitute. The country was ravaged, my friends had grown cold, their purses were empty, a hundred towns had been sacked and burned, the prisons were full of Protestants, the fields were uncultivated. Added to all this, the long promised help from England had never arrived, and the new marechal had appeared in the province accompanied by fresh troops.”

Nevertheless, in spite of his desperate position, Cavalier listened to the propositions laid before him by Lacombe with cold and haughty front, and his reply was that he would never lay down arms till the Protestants had obtained the right to the free exercise of their religion.

Firm as was this answer, Lalande did not despair of inducing Cavalier to come to terms: he therefore wrote him a letter with his own hand, asking him for an interview, and pledging his word that if they came to no agreement Cavalier should be free to retire without any harm being done him; but he added that, if he refused this request, he should regard him as an enemy to peace, and responsible for all the blood which might be shed in future.

This overture, made with a soldier’s frankness, had a great effect on Cavalier, and in order that neither his friends nor his enemies should have the least excuse for blaming him, he resolved to show everyone that he was eager to seize the first chance of making peace on advantageous terms.

He therefore replied to Lalande, that he would come to the bridge of Avene on that very day, the 12th May, at noon, and sent his letter by Catinat, ordering him to deliver it into the hands of the Catholic general himself.

Catinat was worthy of his mission. He was a peasant from Cayla, whose real name was Abdias Maurel. He had served under Marshal Catinat in Italy, the

same who had maintained so gallant a struggle against Prince Eugene. When Maurel returned home he could talk of nothing but his marshal and his campaigns, so that he soon went among his neighbours by the name of "Catinat." He was, as we have seen, Cavalier's right hand, who had placed him in command of his cavalry, and who now entrusted him with a still more dangerous post, that of envoy to a man who had often said that he would give 2000 livres to him who would bring him the head of Cavalier, and 1000 livres each for the heads of his two lieutenants. Catinat was quite well aware of this offer of Lalande's, yet he appeared before the general perfectly cool and calm; only, either from a feeling of propriety or of pride, he was dressed in full uniform.

The bold and haughty expression of the man who presented Cavalier's letter astonished the general, who asked him his name.

"I am Catinat," he answered.

"Catinat!" exclaimed Lalande in surprise.

"Yes, Catinat, commander of the cavalry of Cavalier."

"What!" said Lalande, "are you the Catinat who massacred so many people in Beaucaire?"

"Yes, I am. I did it, but it was my duty."

"Well," exclaimed M. de Lalande, "you show great hardihood in daring to appear before me."

"I came," said Catinat proudly, "trusting to your honour and to the promise that Brother Cavalier gave me that nothing should happen to me."

"He was quite right," returned Lalande, taking the letter. Having read it, he said, "Go back to Cavalier and assure him that I shall be at the bridge of Avene at noon, accompanied only by a few officers and thirty dragoons. I expect to find him there with a similar number of men."

"But," answered Catinat, "it is possible that Brother Cavalier may not wish to come with so poor a following."

“If so,” returned Lalande, “then tell him that he may bring his whole army if he likes, but that I shall not take a single man with me more than I have said; as Cavalier has confidence in me, I have confidence in him.”

Catinat reported Lalande’s answer to his chief it was of a kind that he understood and liked, so leaving the rest of his troops at Massanes, he chose sixty men from his infantry, and eight horsemen as escort. On coming in sight of the bridge, he saw Lalande approaching from the other side. He at once ordered his sixty men to halt, went a few steps farther with his eight horsemen, and then ordered them in their turn to stop, and advanced alone towards the bridge. Lalande had acted in the same manner with regard to his dragoons and officers, and now dismounting, came towards Cavalier.

The two met in the middle of the bridge, and saluted with the courtesy of men who had learned to esteem each other on the field of battle. Then after a short silence, during which they examined each other, Lalande spoke.

“Sir,” said he, “the king in his clemency desires to put an end to the war which is going on between his subjects, and which can only result in the ruin of his kingdom. As he knows that this war has been instigated and supported by the enemies of France, he hopes to meet no opposition to his wishes among those of his subjects who were momentarily led astray, but to whom he now offers pardon.”

“Sir,” answered Cavalier, “the war not having been begun by the Protestants, they are always ready for peace—but a real peace, without restriction or reserve. They have no right, I know, to lay down conditions, but I hope they will be permitted to discuss those which may be laid down for them. Speak openly, sir, and let me know what the offers are that you have been authorised to make to us, that I may judge if we can accept them.”

“But how would it be,” said Lalande, “if you were mistaken, and if the king desired to know what conditions you would consider reasonable?”

“If that is so,” answered Cavalier, “I will tell you our conditions at once, in order not to prolong the negotiations; for every minute’s delay, as you know, costs someone his life or fortune.”

“Then tell me what your conditions are,” returned Lalande.

“Well,” said Cavalier, “our demands are three first, liberty of conscience; secondly, the release of all prisoners who have been condemned to imprisonment or the galleys because of their religion; and thirdly, that if we are not granted liberty of conscience we may be at least permitted to leave the kingdom.”

“As far as I can judge,” replied Lalande, “I do not believe that the king will accept the first proposition, but it is possible that he may accede to the third. In that case, how many Protestants would you take with you?”

“Ten thousand of all ages and both sexes.”

“The number is excessive, sir. I believe that His Majesty is not disposed to go beyond three thousand.”

“Then,” replied Cavalier, “there is nothing more to be said, for I could not accept passports for any smaller number, and I could accept for the ten thousand only on condition that the king would grant us three months in which to dispose of our possessions and withdraw from the country without being molested. Should His Majesty, however, not be pleased to allow us to leave the kingdom, then we beg that our edicts be re-enacted and our privileges restored, whereupon we shall become once more, what we were formerly, His Majesty’s loyal and obedient servants.”

“Sir,” said Lalande, “I shall lay your conditions before M. le Marechal, and if no satisfactory conclusion can be arrived at, it will be to me a matter of profound regret. And now, sir, will you permit me to inspect more closely the gallant men with whose help you have done such astounding deeds?” Cavalier smiled; for these “gallant men” when caught had been broken on the wheel, burnt at the stake, or hanged like brigands. His sole answer was an inclination of the head as he turned and led the way to his little escort. M. de Lalande followed him with perfect confidence, and, passing by the eight horsemen who were grouped on the road, he walked up to the infantry, and taking out of his pocket a handful of gold, he scattered it before them, saying:

“There, my men! that is to drink the king’s health with.”

Not a man stooped to pick the money up, and one of them said, shaking his head

“It is not money we want, but liberty of conscience.”

“My men,” answered Lalande, “it is unfortunately not in my power to grant your demand, but I advise you to submit to the king’s will and trust in his clemency.”

“Sir,” answered Cavalier, “we are all ready to obey him, provided that he graciously grant us our just demands; if not, we shall die weapon in hand, rather than expose ourselves once more to such outrages as have already been inflicted on us.”

“Your demands shall be transmitted word for word to M. de Villars, who will lay them before the king,” said Lalande, “and you may be sure, sir, that my most sincere wish is that His Majesty may not find them exorbitant.”

With these words, M. de Lalande saluted Cavalier, and turned to rejoin his escort; but Cavalier, wishing to return confidence with confidence, crossed the bridge with him, and accompanied the general to where his soldiers had halted. There, with another salute, the two chiefs parted, M. de Lalande taking the road to Uzes, while Cavalier rejoined his comrades.

Meantime d’Aygaliers, who, as we have seen, had not left Uzes until the 5th May, in order to join Cavalier, did not come up with him until the 13th, that is to say, the day after his conference with Lalande. D’Aygaliers gives us an account of their interview, and we cannot do better than quote it.

“Although it was the first time that we had met face to face, we embraced each other as if we were old acquaintances. My little band mixed with his and sang psalms together, while Cavalier and I talked. I was very much pleased with what he said, and convinced him without difficulty that he should submit for the sake of the brethren, who could then choose whichever course best suited them, and either leave the kingdom or serve the king. I said that I believed the last course to be the best, provided we were allowed to worship God according to our consciences; because I hoped that, seeing their faithful service, His Majesty would recognise that he had been imposed upon by those who had described us as disloyal subjects, and that we should thus obtain for the whole nation that liberty of conscience which had been granted to us; that in no other way, as far as I could see, could our deplorable condition be ameliorated, for although Cavalier and his men might be able to exist for some time longer in the forests and mountains, they would never be strong enough to save the inhabitants of towns and other enclosed places from perishing.

“Upon this he replied, that although the Catholics seldom kept a promise made to those of our religion, he was willing to risk his life for the welfare of his brethren and the province but that he trusted if he confided in the clemency of the king for whom he had never ceased to pray, no harm would happen him.”

Thereupon d’Aygaliers, delighted to find him so well inclined, begged him to give him a letter for M. de Villars, and as Cavalier knew the marechal to be loyal and zealous, and had great confidence in him, he wrote without any hesitation the following letter:

“MONSEIGNEUR,—Permit me to address your Excellency in order to beg humbly for the favour of your protection for myself and for my soldiers. We are filled with the most ardent desire to repair the fault which we have committed by bearing arms, not against the king, as our enemies have so falsely asserted, but to defend our lives against those who persecuted us, attacking us so fiercely that we believed it was done by order of His Majesty. We know that it was written by St. Paul that subjects ought to submit themselves to their king, and if in spite of these sincere protestations our sovereign should still demand our blood, we shall soon be ready to throw ourselves on his justice or his mercy; but we should, Monseigneur, regard ourselves as happy, if His Majesty, moved by our repentance, would grant us his pardon and receive us into his service, according to the example of the God of mercy whose representative His Majesty is on earth. We trust, Monseigneur, by our faithfulness and zeal to acquire the honour of your protection, and we glory in the thought of being permitted, under the command of such an illustrious and noble-minded general as yourself, to shed our blood for the king; this being so, I hope that your Excellency will be pleased to allow me to inscribe myself with profound respect and humility, Monseigneur, your most humble and obedient servant,

“CAVALIER.”

D’Aygaliers, as soon as he got possession of this letter, set out for Nimes in the best of spirits; for he felt sure that he was bringing M. de Villars more than he had expected. And, indeed, as soon as the marechal saw how far things had gone, in spite of everything that Lalande could say, who in his jealousy asserted that d’Aygaliers would spoil everything, he sent him back to Cavalier with an invitation to come to Nimes. D’Aygaliers set out at once, promising to bring the

young chief back with him, at which Lalande laughed loudly, pretending to be very much amused at the baron's confident way of speaking, and protesting that Cavalier would not come.

In the meantime events were happening in the mountains which might easily have changed the state of mind of the young chief. The Comte de Tournan, who was in command at Florae, had encountered Roland's army in the plain of Fondmortes, and had lost two hundred men, a considerable sum of money, and eighty mules loaded with provisions. The anxiety which this news caused to M. de Villars was soon relieved; for six days after the defeat he received a letter from Cavalier by the hands of Lacombe, the same who had brought about the interview on the bridge of Avenes. In this letter Cavalier expressed the greatest regret for what had just happened.

D'Aygaliers therefore found Cavalier in the best of humours when he joined him at Tarnac. The first feeling that the young chief felt on receiving the invitation was one of stupefaction; for an interview with the marechal was an honour so unexpected and so great, that his impression was that some treason lay behind it; but he was soon reassured when he recalled the character for loyalty which the marechal bore, and how impossible it was that d'Aygaliers should lend himself to treachery. So Cavalier sent back word that he would obey the marechal's orders; and that he put himself entirely into his hands in what concerned the arrangements for the interview. M. de Villars let him know that he would expect him on the 16th in the garden of the convent of the Recollets of Nimes, which lay just outside the city, between the gates of Beaucaire and the Madeleine, and that Lalande would meet him beyond Carayrac to receive him and to bring him hostages.

CHAPTER IV

On the 15th May Cavalier set out from Tarnac at the head of one hundred and sixty foot-soldiers and fifty horse; he was accompanied by his young brother and by d'Aygaliens and Lacombe. They all passed the night at Langlade.

The next day they set out for Nimes, and, as had been agreed upon, were met by Lalande between Saint-Cesaire and Carayrac. Lalande advanced to greet Cavalier and present the hostages to him. These hostages were M. de La Duretiere, captain of the Fimarcon regiment, a captain of infantry, several other officers, and ten dragoons. Cavalier passed them over to his lieutenant, Ravanel, who was in command of the infantry, and left them in his charge at Saint-Cesaire. The cavalry accompanied him to within a musket-shot of Nimes, and encamped upon the heights. Besides this, Cavalier posted sentinels and mounted orderlies at all the approaches to the camp, and even as far off as the fountain of Diana and the tennis-court. These precautions taken, he entered the city, accompanied by his brother, d'Aygaliens, Lacombe, and a bodyguard of eighteen cavalry, commanded by Catinat. Lalande rode on before to announce their arrival to the marechal, whom he found waiting with MM. de Baviile and Sandricourt, in the garden of the Recollets, dreading every moment to receive word that Cavalier had refused to come; for he expected great results from this interview. Lalande, however, reassured him by telling him the young Huguenot was behind.

In a few minutes a great tumult was heard: it was the people hastening to welcome their hero. Not a Protestant, except paralytic old people and infants in the cradle, remained indoors; for the Huguenots, who had long looked on Cavalier as their champion, now considered him their saviour, so that men and women threw themselves under the feet of his horse in their efforts to kiss the skirts of his coat. It was more like a victor making his entry into a conquered town than a rebel chief coming to beg for an amnesty for himself and his adherents. M. de Villars heard the outcry from the garden of Recollets, and when he learned its cause his esteem for Cavalier rose higher, for every day since his arrival as governor had showed him more and more clearly how great was the young chief's influence. The tumult increased as Cavalier came nearer, and it flashed through the marechal's mind that instead of giving hostages he should have claimed them. At this moment Cavalier appeared at the gate, and seeing the marechal's guard drawn up in line, he caused his own to form a line opposite

them. The memoirs of the time tell us that he was dressed in a coffee-coloured coat, with a very full white muslin cravat; he wore a cross-belt from which depended his sword, and on his head a gold-laced hat of black felt. He was mounted on a magnificent bay horse, the same which he had taken from M. de La Jonquiere on the bloody day of Vergenne.

The lieutenant of the guard met him at the gate. Cavalier quickly dismounted, and throwing the bridle of his horse to one of his men, he entered the garden, and advanced towards the expectant group, which was composed, as we have said, of Villars, Baviile, and Sandricourt. As he drew near, M. de Villars regarded him with growing astonishment; for he could not believe that in the young man, or rather boy, before him he saw the terrible Cevenol chief, whose name alone made the bravest soldiers tremble. Cavalier at this period had just completed his twenty-fourth year, but, thanks to his fair hair which fell in long locks over his shoulders, and to the gentle expression of his eyes he did not appear more than eighteen. Cavalier was acquainted with none of the men in whose presence he stood, but he noticed M. de Villars' rich dress and air of command. He therefore saluted him first; afterwards, turning towards the others, he bowed to each, but less profoundly, then somewhat embarrassed and with downcast eyes he stood motionless and silent. The marechal still continued to look at him in silent astonishment, turning from time to time to Baviile and Sandricourt, as if to assure himself that there was no mistake and that it was really the man whom they expected who stood before them. At last, doubting still, in spite of the signs they made to reassure him, he asked—

“Are you really Jean Cavalier?”

“Yes, monseigneur,” was the reply, given in an unsteady voice.

“But I mean Jean Cavalier, the Camisard general, he who has assumed the title of Duke of the Cevennes.”

“I have not assumed that title, monseigneur, only some people call me so in joke: the king alone has the right to confer titles, and I rejoice exceedingly, monseigneur, that he has given you that of governor of Languedoc.”

“When you are speaking of the king, why do you not say ‘His Majesty’?” said M. de Baviile. “Upon my soul, the king is too good to treat thus with a rebel.”

The blood rushed to Cavalier's head, his face flamed, and after a moment's

pause, fixing his eye boldly upon M. de Baviile, and speaking in a voice which was now as firm as it had been tremulous a moment before, he said, "If you have only brought me here, sir, to speak to me in such a manner, you might better have left me in my mountains, and come there yourself to take a lesson in hospitality. If I am a rebel, it is not I who am answerable, for it was the tyranny and cruelty of M. de Baviile which forced us to have recourse to arms; and if history takes exception to anything connected with the great monarch for whose pardon I sue to-day, it will be, I hope, not that he had foes like me, but friends like him."

M. de Baviile grew pale with anger; for whether Cavalier knew to whom he was speaking or not, his words had the effect of a violent blow full in his face; but before he could reply M. de Villars interposed.

"Your business is only with me, sir," he said; "attend to me alone, I beg: I speak in the name of the king; and the king, of his clemency, wishes to spare his subjects by treating them with tenderness."

Cavalier opened his mouth to reply, but the intendant cut him short.

"I should hope that that suffices," he said contemptuously: "as pardon is more than you could have hoped for, I suppose you are not going to insist on the other conditions you laid down?"

"But it is precisely those other conditions," said Cavalier, addressing himself to M. de Villars, and not seeming to see that anyone else was present, "for which we have fought. If I were alone, sir, I should give myself up, bound hand and foot, with entire confidence in your good faith, demanding no assurances and exacting no conditions; but I stand here to defend the interests of my brethren and friends who trust me; and what is more, things have gone so far that we must either die weapon in hand, or obtain our rights."

The intendant was about to speak, but the marechal stopped him with such an imperative gesture that he stepped back as if to show that he washed his hands of the whole matter.

"What are those rights? Are they those which M. Lalande has transmitted to me by word of mouth?"

"Yes, sir."

“It would be well to commit them to writing.”

“I have done so, monseigneur, and sent a copy to M. d’Aygaliens.”

“I have not seen it, sir; make me another copy and place it in my hands, I beg.”

“I shall go and set about it directly, monseigneur,” stepping back as if about to withdraw.

“One moment!” said the marechal, detaining him by a smile. “Is it true that you are willing to enter the king’s army?”

“I am more than willing, I desire it with all my heart,” exclaimed Cavalier, with the frank enthusiasm natural to his age, “but I cannot do so till our just demands are granted.”

“But if they were granted—?”

“Then, sir,” replied Cavalier, “the king has never had more loyal subjects than we shall be.”

“Well, have a little patience and everything will be arranged, I hope.”

“May God grant it!” said Cavalier. “He is my witness that we desire peace beyond everything.” And he took another step backwards.

“You will not go too far away, I hope,” said the marechal.

“We shall remain wherever your excellency may appoint,” said Cavalier.

Very well,” continued M. de Villars; “halt at Calvisson, and try all you can to induce the other leaders to follow your example.”

“I shall do my best, monseigneur; but while we await His Majesty’s reply shall we be allowed to fulfil our religious duties unimpeded?”

“Yes, I shall give orders that you are to have full liberty in that respect.”

“Thanks, monseigneur.”

Cavalier bowed once more, and was about to go; but M. de Villars accompanied

him and Lalande, who had now joined them, and who stood with his hand on Cavalier's shoulder, a few steps farther. Catinat seeing that the conference was at an end, entered the garden with his men. Thereupon M. de Villars took leave, saying distinctly, "Adieu, Seigneur Cavalier," and withdrew, leaving the young chief surrounded by a dozen persons all wanting to speak to him at once. For half an hour he was detained by questions, to all of which he replied pleasantly. On one finger was an emerald taken from a naval officer named Didier, whom he had killed with his own hand in the action at Devois de Martignargues; he kept time by a superb watch which had belonged to M. d'Acqueville, the second in command of the marines; and he offered his questioners from time to time perfumed snuff from a magnificent snuffbox, which he had found in the holsters when he took possession of M. de La Jonquiere's horse. He told everyone who wished to listen that he had never intended to revolt against the king; and that he was now ready to shed the last drop of his blood in his service; that he had several times offered to surrender on condition that liberty of conscience was granted to those of the new faith, but that M. de Montrevel had always rejected his offers, so that he had been obliged to remain under arms, in order to deliver those who were in prison, and to gain permission for those who were free to worship God in their own way.

He said these things in an unembarrassed and graceful manner, hat in hand; then passing through the crowd which had gathered outside the garden of the Recollets, he repaired to the Hotel de la Poste for lunch, and afterwards walked along the Esplanade to the house of one Guy Billard, a gardener, who was his head prophet's father. As he thus moved about he was preceded by two Camisards with drawn swords, who made way for him; and several ladies were presented to him who were happy to touch his doublet. The visit over, he once again passed along the Esplanade, still preceded by his two Camisards, and just as he passed the Little Convent he and those with him struck up a psalm tune, and continued singing till they reached Saint-Cesaire, where the hostages were. These he at once sent back.

Five hundred persons from Nimes were awaiting him; refreshments were offered to him, which he accepted gratefully, thanking all those who had gathered together to meet him. At last he went off to St. Denoise, where he was to sup and sleep; but before going to bed he offered up supplications in a loud voice for the king, for M. de Villars, for M. de Lalande, and even for M. de Baviile.

The next morning, Cavalier, according to promise, sent a copy of his demands to

M. de Villars, who caused it to be laid before the king, along with a full report of all that had passed at the interview at Nimes. As soon as the young chief had sent off his missive, he rejoined his troops at Tarnac, and related all that had passed to Roland, urging him to follow his example. That night he slept at Sauves, having passed through Durfort at the head of his men; a captain of dragoons named Montgros, with twenty-five soldiers, accompanying him everywhere, by M. de Villars' orders, and seeing that the villages through which they passed furnished him with all that was needed. They left Sauves on May 16th very early in the morning, in order to get to Calvisson, which, as our readers may remember, was the place appointed for the residence of Cavalier during the truce. In passing through Quissac, where they stopped for refreshments, they were joined by Castanet who delivered a long sermon, at which all the Protestants of the neighbourhood were present.

The two battalions of the Charolais regiment which were quartered at Calvisson had received orders on the evening of the 17th to march out next morning, so as to make room for the Camisards.

On the 18th the head of the commissary department, Vincel, ordered suitable accommodation to be provided for Cavalier and his troops; the muster roll being in the hands of M. d'Aygaliers, it would be sent by him or brought in the course of the day. In the meantime, vans were arriving filled with all sorts of provisions, followed by droves of cattle, while a commissary and several clerks, charged with the distribution of rations, brought up the rear.

On the 19th, Catinat, accompanied by twelve Camisards, rode into the town, and was met at the barrier by the commandant and eighty townspeople. As soon as the little band came in sight the commandant reiterated his orders that nothing should be said or done in the town, on pain of corporal punishment, that could offend the Camisards.

At one o'clock P. M. Baron d'Aygaliers arrived, followed in his turn by the chief of the commissariat, Vincel, by Captain Cappon, two other officers named Viala and Despuech, and six dragoons. These were the hostages Cavalier had given.

At six o'clock there was heard a great noise; and shouts of "Cavalier! Cavalier!" resounded on all sides. The young Cevenol was in sight, and the whole population hastened to meet him. He rode at the head of his cavalry, the infantry following, and the whole number—about six hundred men—sang psalms in a

loud voice.

When they reached the church, Cavalier drew up before it with all his men in review order, and for some time the singing went on. When it stopped, a long prayer was offered up, which was most edifying to all the bystanders; and this being over, Cavalier went to the quarters assigned him, which were in the best house in Calvisson. Arrived there, he sent out for a dozen loaves that he might judge how his men were going to be fed; not finding them white enough, he complained to M. Vincel, whom he sent for, and who promised that in future the bread should be of a better quality. Having received this assurance, Cavalier gave orders that the loaves in hand should be distributed for that day, but probably fearing poison, he first made M. de Vincel and his clerks taste them in his presence. These duties accomplished, he visited in person all the gates of the town, placed guards and posted sentinels at all the entrances and along all the avenues, the most advanced being three-quarters of a league from the town. Besides this, he placed guards in the streets, and a sentinel at each door of the house he occupied; in addition, thirty guards always slept outside the door of his bedroom, and these accompanied him as an escort when he went out; not that he was afraid, for he was not of a mistrustful character, but that he thought it politic to give people an exalted idea of his importance. As to his soldiers, they were billeted on the inhabitants, and received each as daily rations a pound of meat, a quart of wine, and two and a half pounds of bread.

The same day a convocation was held on the site of the old meetinghouse which had been destroyed by the Catholics. It was a very numerous assembly, to which crowds of people came from all parts; but on the following days it was still more numerous; for, as the news spread, people ran with great eagerness to hear the preaching of the word of which they had been so long deprived. D'Aygaliers tells us in his Memoirs that—"No one could help being touched to see a whole people just escaped from fire and sword, coming together in multitudes to mingle their tears and sighs. So famished were they for the manna divine, that they were like people coming out of a besieged city, after a long and cruel famine, to whom peace has brought food in abundance, and who, first devouring it with their eyes, then throw themselves on it, devouring it bodily—meat, bread, and fruit—as it comes to hand. So it was with the unfortunate inhabitants of La Vannage, and even of places more distant still. They saw their brethren assembling in the meadows and at the gates of Calvisson, gathering in crowds and pressing round anyone who started singing a psalm, until at last four or five thousand persons, singing, weeping, and praying, were gathered together, and

remained there all day, supplicating God with a devotion that went to every heart and made a deep impression. All night the same things went on; nothing was to be heard but preaching, singing, praying, and prophesying.”

But if it was a time of joy for the Protestants, it was a time of humiliation for the Catholics. “Certainly,” says a contemporary historian, “it was a very surprising thing, and quite a novelty, to see in a province like Languedoc, where so many troops were quartered, such a large number of villains—all murderers, incendiaries, and guilty of sacrilege—gathered together in one place by permission of those in command of the troops; tolerated in their eccentricities, fed at the public expense, flattered by everyone, and courteously, received by people sent specially to meet them.”

One of those who was most indignant at this state of things was M. de Baviile. He was so eager to put an end to it that he went to see the governor, and told him the scandal was becoming too great in his opinion: the assemblies ought to be put an end to by allowing the troops to fall upon them and disperse them; but the governor thought quite otherwise, and told Baviile that to act according to his advice would be to set fire to the province again and to scatter for ever people whom they had got together with such difficulty. In any case, he reminded Baviile that what he objected to would be over in a few days. His opinion was that de Baviile might stifle the expression of his dissatisfaction for a little, to bring about a great good. “More than that,” added the marechal, “the impatience of the priests is most ridiculous. Besides your remonstrances, of which I hope I have now heard the last, I have received numberless letters full of such complaints that it would seem as if the prayers of the Camisards not only grated on the ears of the clergy but flayed them alive. I should like above everything to find out the writers of these letters, in order to have them flogged; but they have taken good care to put no signatures. I regard it as a very great impertinence for those who caused these disturbances to grumble and express their disapproval at my efforts to bring them to an end.” After this speech, M. de Baviile saw there was nothing for him to do but to let things take their course.

The course that they took turned Cavalier’s head more and more; for thanks to the injunctions of M. de Villars, all the orders that Cavalier gave were obeyed as if they had been issued by the governor himself. He had a court like a prince, lieutenants like a general, and secretaries like a statesman. It was the duty of one secretary to give leave of absence to those Camisards who had business to attend to or who desired to visit their relations. The following is a copy of the form

used for these passports:

“We, the undersigned, secretary to Brother Cavalier, generalissimo of the Huguenots, permit by this order given by him to absent himself on business for three days. “(Signed) DUPONT. “Calvisson, this—”

And these safe-conducts were as much respected as if they had been signed “Marechal de Villars.”

On the 22nd M. de Saint-Pierre arrived from the court, bringing the reply of the king to the proposals which Cavalier had submitted to M. de Lalande. What this reply was did not transpire; probably it was not in harmony with the pacific intentions of the marechal. At last, on the 25th, the answer to the demands which Cavalier had made to M. de Villars himself arrived. The original paper written by the Camisard chief himself had been sent to Louis XIV, and he returned it with notes in his own writing; thus these two hands, to one of which belonged the shepherd’s crook and to the other the sceptre, had rested on the same sheet of paper. The following is the text of the agreement as given by Cavalier in his Memoirs:

“THE HUMBLE PETITION OF THE REFORMERS OF LANGUEDOC TO THE KING

“1. That it may please the king to grant us liberty of conscience throughout the province, and to permit us to hold religious meetings in every suitable place, except fortified places and walled cities.

‘Granted, on condition that no churches be built.

“2. That all those in prison or at the galleys who have been sent there since the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, because of their religion, be set at liberty within six weeks from the date of this petition.

‘Granted.

“3. That all those who have left the kingdom because of their religion be allowed to return in freedom and safety, and that their goods and privileges be restored to them.

‘Granted on condition that they take the oath of fidelity to the king.

“4. That the Parliament of Languedoc be reestablished on its ancient footing, and with all its former privileges.

‘The king reserves decision on this point.

“5. That the province of Languedoc be exempted from the poll tax for ten years, this to apply, to Catholics and Protestants alike, both sides having equally suffered.

‘Refused.

“6. That the cities of Perpignan, Montpellier, Cette, and Aiguemortes be assigned us as cities of refuge.

‘Refused.

“7. That the inhabitants of the Cevennes whose houses were burnt or otherwise destroyed during the war be exempt from taxes for seven years.

‘Granted.

“8. That it may please His Majesty to permit Cavalier to choose 2000 men, both from among his own troops and from among those who may be delivered from the prisons and galleys, to form a regiment of dragoons for the service of His Majesty, and that this regiment when formed may at once be ordered to serve His Majesty in Portugal.

‘Granted: and on condition that all the Huguenots everywhere lay down their arms, the king will permit them to live quietly in the free exercise of their religion.’”

“I had been a week at Calvisson,” says Cavalier in his Memoirs, “when I received a letter from M. le Marechal de Villars ordering me to repair to Nimes, as he wished to see me, the answer to my demands. having arrived. I obeyed at once, and was very much displeased to find that several of my demands, and in particular the one relating to the cities of refuge, had been refused; but M. le

marechal assured me that the king's word was better than twenty cities of refuge, and that after all the trouble we had given him we should regard it as showing great clemency on his part that he had granted us the greater part of what we had asked. This reasoning was not entirely convincing, but as there was no more time for deliberation, and as I was as anxious for peace as the king himself, I decided to accept gracefully what was offered."

All the further advantage that Cavalier could obtain from M. de Villars was that the treaty should bear the date of the day on which it had been drawn up; in this manner the prisoners who were to be set at liberty in six weeks gained one week.

M. de Villars wrote at the bottom of the treaty, which was signed the same day by him and M. de Baviile on the part of the king, and by Cavalier and Daniel Billard on the part of the Protestants, the following ratification:

"In virtue of the plenary powers which we have received from the king, we have granted to the Reformers of Languedoc the articles above made known.

"MARECHAL DE VILLARS J. CAVALIER

"LAMOIGNON DE BAVILLE DANIEL BILLARD

"Given at Nimes, the 17th of May 1704"

These two signatures, all unworthy as they were to stand beside their own, gave such great delight to MM. de Villars and de Baviile, that they at once sent off fresh orders to Calvisson that the wants of the Camisards should be abundantly supplied until the articles of the treaty were executed—that is to say, until the prisoners and the galley slaves were set at liberty, which, according to article 2 of the treaty, would be within the next six weeks. As to Cavalier, the marechal gave him on the spot a commission as colonel, with a pension of 1200 livres attached, and the power of nominating the subordinate officers in his regiment, and at the same time he handed him a captain's commission for his young brother.

Cavalier drew up the muster-roll of the regiment the same day, and gave it to the marechal. It was to consist of seven hundred and twelve men, forming fifteen companies, with sixteen captains, sixteen lieutenants, a sergeant-major, and a

surgeon-major.

While all this was happening, Roland, taking advantage of the suspension of hostilities, was riding up and down the province as if he were viceroy of the Cevennes, and wherever he appeared he had a magnificent reception. Like Cavalier, he gave leave of absence and furnished escorts, and held himself haughtily, sure that he too would soon be negotiating treaties on terms of equality with marshals of France and governors of provinces. But Roland was much mistaken: M. de Villars had made great concessions to the popularity of Cavalier, but they were the last he intended to make. So, instead of being in his turn summoned to Nimes, or Uzes, to confer with M. de Villars, Roland merely received an intimation from Cavalier that he desired to speak with him on important business.

They met near Anduze, and Cavalier, faithful to the promise given to M. de Villars, neglected no argument that he could think of to induce Roland to follow his example; but Roland would listen to nothing. Then, when Cavalier saw that arguments and promises were of no avail, he raised his voice in anger; but Roland, laying his hand on his shoulder, told him that his head was turned, that he should remember that he, Roland, was his senior in command, and therefore bound by nothing that had been promised in his name by his junior, and that he had registered a vow in Heaven that nothing would persuade him to make peace unless complete liberty of conscience were granted to all. The young Cevenol, who was unaccustomed to such language, laid his hand on the hilt of his sword, Roland, stepping back, drew his, and the consultation would have ended in a duel if the prophets had not thrown themselves between them, and succeeded in getting Roland to consent to one of their number, a man much esteemed among the Huguenots, named Salomon, going back to Nimes with Cavalier to learn from M. de Villars' own mouth what the exact terms were which Cavalier had accepted and now offered to Roland.

In a couple of hours Cavalier and Salomon set out together, and arrived at Nimes on the 27th May, escorted by twenty-five men; they halted at the tower of Magne, and the Protestants of the city came out to meet them, bringing refreshments; then, after prayers and a hasty meal, they advanced to the barracks and crossed the courtyards. The concourse of people and the enthusiasm was no whit less than on Cavalier's first entry, more than three hundred persons kissing his hands and knees. Cavalier was dressed on this occasion in a doublet of grey cloth, and a beaver hat, laced with gold, and adorned with a white feather.

Cavalier and his travelling-companion went direct to the garden of the Recollets, and hardly had they got there than MM. de Villars and de Baviile, accompanied by Lalande and Sandricourt, came out to meet them: the conference lasted three hours, but all that could be learned of the result was that Salomon had declared that his brethren would never lay down their arms till full liberty of conscience had been secured to them. In consequence of this declaration, it was decided that Cavalier and his regiment should be despatched to Spain without delay, in order to weaken the Calvinist forces to that extent; meantime Salomon was sent back to Roland with a positive promise that if he would surrender, as Cavalier had done, he would be granted the same conditions—that is to say, receive a commission as colonel, have the right to name the officers of his regiment, and receive a pension of 1200 livres. On quitting the garden of the Recollets, Cavalier found as great a crowd as ever waiting for him, and so closely did they press on him that two of his men were obliged to ride before him with drawn sabres to clear a way for him till the Montpellier road was reached. He lay that night at Langlade, in order to rejoin his troops early next morning.

But during his absence things had happened among these men, who had hitherto obeyed him blindly, which he little expected. He had left, as usual, Ravanel in command; but hardly had he ridden away when Ravanel began to take all kinds of precautions, ordering the men not to lay aside their arms. The negotiations with M. de Villars had made him most anxious; he looked upon all the promises given as snares, and he regarded the compromise favoured by his chief as a defection on Cavalier's part. He therefore called all the officers and men together, told them of his fears, and ended by imbuing them with his suspicions. This was all the more easily done, as it was very well known that Cavalier had joined the Huguenots less from devotion to the cause than to avenge a private wrong, and on many occasions had given rise to the remark that he had more genius than religion.

So, on getting back to Calvisson, the young chief found his principal officers, Ravanel at their head, drawn up in the marketplace, waiting for him. As soon as he drew near they told him that they were determined to know at once what were the conditions of the treaty he had signed with the marechal; they had made up their minds to have a plain answer without delay. Such a way of speaking to him was so strange and unexpected, that Cavalier shrugged his shoulders and replied that such matters were no business of theirs, being too high for their intelligence; that it was his business to decide what course to take and theirs to take it; it had always been so in the past, and with the help of God and his own, Cavalier's,

goodwill, it should still be so in future; and having so spoken, he told them to disperse. Ravanel upon this came forward, and in the name of all the others said they would not go away until they knew what orders Cavalier was about to give the troops, that they might consult among themselves whether they should obey them or not. This insubordination was too much for Cavalier's patience.

"The orders are," he said, "to put on the uniforms that are being made for you, and to follow me to Portugal."

The effect of such words on men who were expecting nothing less than the re-enactment of the Edict of Nantes, can be easily imagined; the words "coward" and "traitor" could be distinguished above the murmurs, as Cavalier noticed with increasing astonishment. Raising himself in his stirrups, and glancing round with that look before which they had been used to tremble, he asked in a voice as calm as if all the demons of anger were not raging in his heart, "Who called Jean Cavalier traitor and coward?"

"I," said Ravanel, crossing his arms on his breast.

Cavalier drew a pistol from his holsters, and striking those near him with the butt end, opened a way towards his lieutenant, who drew his sword; but at this moment the commissary-general, Vincel, and Captain Cappon threw themselves between the two and asked the cause of the quarrel.

"The cause," said Ravanel, "is that the Cadets of the Cross, led by the 'Hermit,' have just knocked out the brains of two of our brethren, who were coming to join us, and are hindering others from attending our meetings to worship God: the conditions of the truce having been thus broken, is it likely they will keep those of the treaty? We refuse to accept the treaty."

"Sir," said Vincel, "if the 'Hermit' has done what you say, it is against the orders of the marachal, and the misdoer will be punished; besides, the large number of strangers at present in Calvisson ought to be sufficient proof that no attempt has been made to prevent the new converts from coming to the town, and it seems to me that you have been too easily led to believe everything that malicious people have told you."

"I believe what I choose to believe," said Ravanel impatiently; "but what I know and say is, that I shall never lay down arms till the king grants us full liberty of conscience, permission to rebuild our places of worship, and sends us back all

prisoners and exiles.”

“But, judging by your tone,” said Cavalier, who had till now remained silent while toying with his pistol, “you seem to be in command here; have we changed, parts without my being aware?”

“It is possible,” said Ravanel.

Cavalier burst out laughing.

“It seems to astonish you,” said Ravanel, “but it is true. Make peace for yourself, lay down what conditions suit you, sell yourself for whatever you will bring; my only reply is, You are a coward and a traitor. But as to the troops, they will not lay down arms except on the conditions formulated by me.”

Cavalier tried to get at Ravanel, but seeing from his paleness and his smile that terrible things would happen if he reached his lieutenant, Vincel and Cappon, backed by some Camisards, threw themselves before his horse. Just then the whole band shouted with one voice, “No peace! no peace! no reconciliation till our temples are restored!” Cavalier then saw for the first time that things were more serious than he had believed, but Vincel, Cappon, Berlie, and about twenty Camisards surrounded the young chief and forced him to enter a house; it was the house of Vincel.

They had hardly got indoors when the ‘generale’ was sounded: resisting all entreaties, Cavalier sprang to the door, but was detained by Berlie, who said that the first thing he ought to do was to write M. de Villars an account of what had happened, who would then take measures to put things straight.

“You are right,” said Cavalier; “as I have so many enemies, the general might be told if I were killed that I had broken my word. Give me pen and ink.”

Writing materials were brought, and he wrote to M. de Villars.

“Here,” he said, giving the letter unsealed to Vincel, “set out for Nimes and give this to the marechal, and tell him, if I am killed in the attempt I am about to make, I died his humble servant.”

With these words, he darted out of the house and mounted his horse, being met at the door by twelve to fifteen men who had remained faithful to him. He asked

them where Ravanel and his troops were, not seeing a single Camisard in the streets; one of the soldiers answered that they were probably still in town, but that they were moving towards Les Garrigues de Calvisson. Cavalier set off at a gallop to overtake them.

In crossing the marketplace he met Catinat, walking between two prophets, one called Moses and the other Daniel Guy; Catinat was just back from a visit to the mountains, so that he had taken no part in the scene of insubordination that had so lately been enacted.

Cavalier felt a ray of hope; he was sure he could depend on Catinat as on himself. He hurried to greet him, holding out his hand; but Catinat drew back his.

“What does this mean?” cried Cavalier, the blood mounting to his forehead.

“It means,” answered Catinat, “that you are a traitor, and I cannot give my hand to a traitor.”

Cavalier gave a cry of rage, and advancing on Catinat, raised his cane to strike him; but Moses and Daniel Guy threw themselves between, so that the blow aimed at Catinat fell on Moses. At the same moment Catinat, seeing Cavalier’s gesture, drew a pistol from his belt. As it was at full cock, it went off in his hand, a bullet piercing Guy’s hat, without, however, wounding him.

At the noise of the report shouts were heard about a hundred yards away. It was the Camisards, who had been on the point of leaving the town, but hearing the shot had turned back, believing that some of their brethren were being murdered. On seeing them appear, Cavalier forgot Catinat, and rode straight towards them. As soon as they caught sight of him they halted, and Ravanel advanced before them ready for every danger.

“Brethren,” he cried, “the traitor has come once more to tempt us. Begone, Judas! You have no business here.”

“But I have,” exclaimed Cavalier. “I have to punish a scoundrel called Ravanel, if he has courage to follow me.”

“Come on, then,” cried Ravanel, darting down a small side-street, “and let us have done with it.” The Camisards made a motion as if to follow them, but

Ravel turning towards them ordered them to remain where they were.

They obeyed, and thus Cavalier could see that, insubordinate as they had been towards him, they were ready to obey another.

Just at the moment as he turned into the narrow street where the dispute was to be settled once for all, Moses and Guy came up, and seizing the bridle of his horse stopped him, while the Camisards who were on the side of Cavalier surrounded Ravel and forced him to return to his soldiers. The troops struck up a psalm, and resumed their march, while Cavalier was held back by force.

At last, however, the young Cevenol succeeded in breaking away from those who surrounded him, and as the street by which the Camisards had retired was blocked, he dashed down another. The two prophets suspecting his intention, hurried after the troops by the most direct route, and got up with them, just as Cavalier, who had made the circuit of the town, came galloping across the plain to intercept their passage. The troops halted, and Ravel gave orders to fire. The first rank raised their muskets and took aim, thus indicating that they were ready to obey. But it was not a danger of this kind that could frighten Cavalier; he continued to advance. Then Moses seeing his peril, threw himself between the Camisards and him, stretching out his arms and shouting, "Stop! stop! misguided men! Are you going to kill Brother Cavalier like a highwayman and thief? You must pardon him, my brethren! you must pardon him! If he has done wrong in the past, he will do better in future."

Then those who had taken aim at Cavalier grounded their muskets, and Cavalier changing menace for entreaty, begged them not to break the promise that he had made in their name; whereupon the prophets struck up a psalm, and the rest of the soldiers joining in, his voice was completely drowned. Nevertheless, Cavalier did not lose heart, but accompanied them on their march to Saint-Esteve, about a league farther on, unable to relinquish all hope. On reaching Saint-Esteve the singing ceased for a moment, and he made another attempt to recall them to obedience. Seeing, however, that it was all in vain, he gave up hope, and calling out, "At least defend yourselves as well as you can, for the dragoons will soon be on you," he set his horse's head towards the town. Then turning to them for the last time, he said, "Brethren, let those who love me follow me!" He pronounced these words in tones so full of grief and affection that many were shaken in their resolution; but Ravel and Moses seeing the effect he had produced, began to shout, "The sword of the Lord!" Immediately

all the troops turned their back on Cavalier except about forty men who had joined him on his first appearance.

Cavalier went into a house near by, and wrote another letter to M. de Villars, in which he told him what had just taken place, the efforts he had made to win back his troops, and the conditions they demanded. He ended by assuring him that he would make still further efforts, and promised the marechal that he would keep him informed of everything that went on. He then withdrew to Cardet, not venturing to return to Calvisson.

Both Cavalier's letters reached M. de Villars at the same time; in the first impulse of anger aroused by this unexpected check, he issued the following order:

“Since coming to this province and taking over the government by order of the king, our sole thought has been how to put an end to the disorders we found existing here by gentle measures, and to restore peace and to preserve the property of those who had taken no part in the disturbances. To that end we obtained His Majesty's pardon for those rebels who had, by the persuasion of their chiefs, been induced to lay down their arms; the only condition exacted being that they should throw themselves on the king's clemency and beg his permission to expiate their crime by adventuring their lives in his service. But, being informed that instead of keeping the engagements they had made by signing petitions, by writing letters, and by speaking words expressing their intentions, some among them have been trying to delude the minds of the people with false hopes of full liberty for the exercise of this so-called Reformed religion, which there has never been any intention of granting, but which we have always declared as clearly as we could, to be contrary to the will of the king and likely to bring about great evils for which it would be difficult to find a remedy, it becomes necessary to prevent those who give belief to these falsehoods from expecting to escape from well-deserved chastisement. We therefore declare hereby that all religious assemblies are expressly forbidden under the penalties proclaimed in the edicts and ordinances of His Majesty, and that these will be more strictly enforced in the future than in the past.

“Furthermore, we order all the troops under our command to break up such assemblies by force, as having been always illegal, and we desire to impress on the new converts of this province that they are to give their obedience where it is due, and we forbid them to give any credence to the false reports which the

enemies of their repose are spreading abroad. If they let themselves be led astray, they will soon find themselves involved in troubles and misfortunes, such as the loss of their lands, the ruin of their families, and the desolation of their country; and we shall take care that the true authors of these misfortunes shall receive punishment proportioned to their crime.

“MARECHAL DE VILLARS

“Given at Nimes the 27th day of May 1704”

This order, which put everything back upon the footing on which it had been in the time of M. de Montrevel, had hardly been issued than d’Aygaliers, in despair at seeing the result of so much labour destroyed in one day, set off for the mountains to try and find Cavalier. He found him at Cardet, whither, as we have said, he had retired after the day of Calvisson. Despite the resolution which Cavalier had taken never to show his face again to the marechal, the baron repeated to him so many times that M. de Villars was thoroughly convinced that what had happened had not been his fault, he having done everything that he could to prevent it, that the young chief began to feel his self-confidence and courage returning, and hearing that the marachal had expressed himself as very much pleased with his conduct, to which Vincel had borne high testimony, made up his mind to return to Nimes. They left Cardet at once, followed by the forty men who had remained true to Cavalier, ten on horse and thirty on foot, and arrived on the 31st May at Saint-Genies, whither M. de Villars had come to meet them.

The assurances of d’Aygaliers were justified. The marechal received Cavalier as if he were still the chief of a powerful party and able to negotiate with him on terms of equality. At Cavalier’s request, in order to prove to him that he stood as high in his good opinion as ever, the marechal returned once more to gentle methods, and mitigated the severity of his first proclamation by a second, granting an extension of the amnesty:

“The principal chiefs of the rebels, with the greater number of their followers, having surrendered, and having received the king’s pardon, we declare that we give to all those who have taken up arms until next Thursday, the 5th instant inclusive, the opportunity of receiving the like pardon, by surrendering to us at

Anduze, or to M. le Marquis de Lalande at Alais, or to M. de Menon at Saint Hippolyte, or to the commandants of Uzes, Nimes, and Lunel. But the fifth day passed, we shall lay a heavy hand on all rebels, pillaging and burning all the places which have given them refuge, provisions, or help of any kind; and that they may not plead ignorance of this proclamation, we order it to be publicly read and posted up in every suitable place.

“MARECHAL DE VILLARS

“At Saint-Genies, the 1st June 1704”

The next day, in order to leave no doubt as to his good intentions, the marechal had the gibbets and scaffolds taken down, which until then had been permanent erections.

At the same time all the Huguenots were ordered to make a last effort to induce the Camisard chiefs to accept the conditions offered them by M. de Villars. The towns of Alais, Anduze, Saint-Jean, Sauve, Saint-Hippolyte, and Lasalle, and the parishes of Cros, Saint-Roman, Manoblet, Saint-Felix, Lacadiere, Cesas, Cambo, Cognac, and Vabre were ordered to send deputies to Durfort to confer as to the best means of bringing about that peace which everyone desired. These deputies wrote at once to M. de Villars to beg him to send them M. d’Aygaliens, and to M. d’Aygaliens to request him to come.

Both consented to do as they were asked, and M. d’Aygaliens arrived at Durfort on the 3rd of June 1704.

The deputies having first thanked him for the trouble which he had taken to serve the common cause during the past year, resolved to divide their assembly into two parts, one of which, was to remain permanently sitting, while the other went to seek Roland and Ravanel to try and obtain a cessation of hostilities. The deputies charged with this task were ordered to make it quite clear to the two chiefs that if they did not accept the proposals made by M. de Villars, the Protestants in general would take up arms and hunt them down, and would cease to supply them with the means of subsistence.

On hearing this, Roland made reply that the deputies were to go back at once to those who sent them, and threatened, should they ever show him their faces again, to fire on them.

This answer put an end to the assembly, the deputies dispersed, and d'Aygaliers returned to the Marechal de Villars to make his report.

Hardly had he done this when a letter from Roland arrived, in which the Camisard chief asked M. de Villars to grant him an interview, such as he had granted to Cavalier. This letter was addressed to d'Aygaliers, who immediately communicated its contents to the marechal, from whom he received orders to set out at once to find Roland and to spare no pains to bring him round.

D'Aygaliers, who was always indefatigable when working for his country, started the same day, and went to a mountain about three-quarters of a league from Anduze, where Roland awaited him. After a conference of two hours, it was agreed that hostages should be exchanged and negotiations entered upon.

Consequently, M. de Villars on his side sent Roland M. de Montrevel, an officer commanding a battalion of marines, and M. de la Maison-Blanche, captain of the Froulay regiment; while Roland in return sent M. de Villars four of his principal officers with the title of plenipotentiaries.

Unskilled in diplomacy as these envoys were, and laughable as they appeared to contemporary historians, they received nevertheless the marechal's consent to the following conditions:

1. That Cavalier and Roland should each be placed in charge of a regiment serving abroad, and that each of them should be allowed a minister.
2. That all the prisoners should be released and the exiles recalled.
3. That the Protestants should be permitted to leave the kingdom, taking their effects with them.
4. That those Camisards who desired to remain might do so, on giving up their arms.
5. That those who were abroad might return.
6. That no one should be molested on account of his religion provided everyone remained quietly at home.
7. That indemnities should be borne by the whole province, and not exacted

specially from the Protestants.

8. That a general amnesty should be granted to all without reserve.

These articles were laid before Roland and Ravanel by d'Aygaliers. Cavalier, who from the day he went back to Nimes had remained in the governor's suite, asked leave to return with the baron, and was permitted to do so. D'Aygaliers and he set out together in consequence for Anduze, and met Roland and Ravanel about a quarter of a league from the town, waiting to know the result of the negotiations. They were accompanied by MM. de Montbel and de Maison-Blanche, the Catholic hostages.

As soon as Cavalier and Roland met they burst out into recriminations and reproaches, but through the efforts of d'Aygaliers they soon became more friendly, and even embraced on parting.

But Ravanel was made of harder stuff: as soon as he caught sight of Cavalier he called him "traitor," saying that for his part he would never surrender till the Edict of Nantes was re-enacted; then, having warned them that the governor's promises were not to be trusted, and having predicted that a day would come when they would regret their too great confidence in him, he left the conference and rejoined his troops, which, with those of Roland, were drawn up on a mountain about three-quarters of a league distant.

The negotiators did not, however, despair. Ravanel had gone away, but Roland had debated with them at some length, so they determined to speak to "the brethren"—that is, to the troops under Roland and Ravanel, whose headquarters at the moment were at Leuzies, in order that they might know exactly what articles had been agreed on between Roland's envoys and the marechal. Those who made up their minds to take this step were, Cavalier, Roland, Moise, Saint-Paul, Laforet, Maille, and d'Aygaliers. We take the following account of what happened in consequence of this decision from d'Aygaliers' Memoirs:

"We had no sooner determined on this plan, than, anxious to carry it out, we set off. We followed a narrow mountain path on the face of the cliff which rose up to our right; to our left flowed the Gardon.

"Having gone about a league, we came in sight of the troops, about 3000 strong; an advanced post barred our way.

“Thinking it was placed there in our honour, I was advancing unsuspectingly, when suddenly we found our road cut off by Camisards to right and left, who threw themselves on Roland and forced him in among their troops. Maille and Malplach were dragged from their horses. As to Cavalier, who was somewhat behind, as soon as he saw people coming towards him with uplifted sabres and shouting Traitor! he put spurs to his horse and went off at full gallop, followed by some townspeople from Anduze who had come with us, and who, now that they saw the reception we met with, were ready to die with fear.

“I was too far forward to escape: five or six muskets rested on my breast and a pistol pressed each ear; so I made up my mind to be bold. I told the troopers to fire; I was willing to die in the service of my prince, my country, and my religion, as well as for themselves, whom I was trying to benefit by procuring them the king’s goodwill.

“These words, which I repeated several times in the midst of the greatest uproar, gave them pause.

“They commanded me to retire, as they did not want to kill me. I said I should do nothing of the kind: I was going into the middle of the troops to defend Roland against the charge of treason, or be put to death myself, unless I could convince them that what I had proposed to him and Cavalier was for the good of the country, of our religion, and the brethren; and having thus expostulated at the top of my voice against thirty voices all trying to drown mine for about an hour, I offered to fight the man who had induced them to oppose us.

“At this offer they pointed their muskets at me once more; but Maille, Malplach, and some others threw themselves before me, and although they were unarmed, had enough influence to hinder my being insulted; I was forced, however, to retreat.

“In leaving, I warned them that they were about to bring great misfortunes on the province, whereupon a man named Claris stepped out from among the troops, and approaching me exclaimed, ‘Go on, sir, and God bless you! We know that you mean well, and were the first to be taken in. But go on working for the good of the country, and God will bless you.’”

D’Aygaliers returned to the marechal, who, furious at the turn things had taken, resolved instantly to break off all negotiations and have recourse once more to

measures of severity. However, before actually carrying out this determination, he wrote the following letter to the king:

“SIRE,—It is always my glory to execute faithfully your Majesty’s orders, whatever those orders may be; but I should have been able, on many occasions since coming here, to display my zeal for your Majesty’s service in other ways if I had not had to deal with madmen on whom no dependence could be placed. As soon as we were ready to attack them, they offered to submit, but a little later changed their minds again. Nothing could be a greater proof of madness than their hesitation to accept a pardon of which they were unworthy, and which was so generously offered by your Majesty. If they do not soon make up their minds, I shall bring them back to the paths of duty by force, and thus restore this province to that state of peace which has been disturbed by these fools.”

The day after writing this letter to the king, Roland sent Maille to M. de Villars to beg him to wait till Saturday and Sunday the 7th and the 8th June were over, before resorting to severity, that being the end of the truce. He gave him a solemn promise that he would, in the interval, either bring in his troops to the last man, or would himself surrender along with a hundred and fifty followers. The marechal consented to wait till Saturday morning, but as soon as Saturday arrived he gave orders to attack the Camisards, and the next day led a considerable body of troops to Carnoulet, intending to take the Huguenots by surprise, as word had been brought that they were all gathered there. They, however, received intelligence of his plan, and evacuated the village during the night.

The village had to pay dearly for its sin of hospitality; it was pillaged and burnt down: the miquelets even murdered two women whom they found there, and d’Aygaliens failed to obtain any satisfaction for this crime. In this manner M. de Villars kept the fatal promise he had given, and internecine war raged once more.

Furious at having missed the Camisards, de Menon having heard from his scouts that Roland was to sleep next night at the chateau de Prade, went to M. de Villars and asked leave to conduct an expedition against the chief. He was almost sure of taking Roland by surprise, having procured a guide whose knowledge of the country was minute. The marechal gave him carte blanche. In the evening Menon set out with two hundred grenadiers. He had already put three-quarters of the way behind him without being discovered, when an Englishman met them by chance. This man was serving under Roland, but had been visiting his sweetheart

in a neighbouring village, and was on his way home when he fell among Menon's grenadiers. Without a thought for his own safety, he fired off his gun, shouting, "Fly! fly! The royals are upon you!"

The sentinels took up the cry, Roland jumped out of bed, and, without staying for clothes or horse, ran off in his shirt, escaping by a postern gate which opened on the forest just as de Menon entered by another. He found Roland's bed still warm, and took possession of his clothes, finding in a coat pocket a purse containing thirty-five Louis, and in the stables three superb horses. The Camisards answered this beginning of hostilities by a murder. Four of them, thinking they had reasons for displeasure against one of M. de Baviille's subordinates, named Daude, who was both mayor and magistrate; at Le Vigan, hid in a corn-field which he had to pass on his way back from La Valette, his country place. Their measures were successful: Daude came along just as was expected, and as he had not the slightest suspicion of the impending danger, he continued conversing with M. de Mondardier, a gentleman of the neighbourhood who had asked for the hand of Daude's daughter in marriage that very day. Suddenly he found himself surrounded by four men, who, upbraiding him for his exactions and cruelties, shot him twice through the head with a pistol. They offered no violence to M. de Mondardier except to deprive him of his laced hat and sword. The day on which M. de Villars heard of its murder he set a price on the heads of Roland, Ravanel, and Catinat. Still the example set by Cavalier, joined to the resumption of hostilities, was not without influence on the Camisards; every day letters arrived from single troopers offering to lay down their arms, and in one day thirty rebels came in and put themselves into Lalande's hands, while twenty surrendered to Grandval; these were accorded not only pardon, but received a reward, in hopes that they might be able to induce others to do like them; and on the 15th June eight of the troops which had abandoned Cavalier at Calvisson made submission; while twelve others asked to be allowed to return to their old chief to follow him wherever he went. This request was at once granted: they were sent to Valabregues, where they found forty-two of their old comrades, amongst whom were Duplan and Cavalier's young brother, who had been ordered there a few days before. As they arrived they were given quarters in the barracks, and received good pay—the chiefs forty sous a day, and the privates ten. So they felt as happy as possible, being well fed and well lodged, and spent their time preaching, praying, and psalm-singing, in season and out of season. All this, says La Baume, was so disagreeable to the inhabitants of the place, who were Catholics, that if they had not been guarded by the king's soldiers they would have been pitched into the

Rhone.

CHAPTER V

Meantime the date of Cavalier's departure drew near. A town was to be named in which he was to reside at a sufficient distance from the theatre of war to prevent the rebels from depending on him any more; in this town he was to organise his regiment, and as soon as it was complete it was to go, under his command, to Spain, and fight for the king. M. de Villars was still on the same friendly terms with him, treating him, not like a rebel, but according to his new rank in the French army. On the 21st June he told him that he was to get ready to leave the next day, and at the same time he handed him an advance on their future pay—fifty Louis for himself, thirty for Daniel Billard, who had been made lieutenant-colonel in the place of Ravanel, ten for each captain, five for each lieutenant, two for each sergeant, and one for each private. The number of his followers had then reached one hundred and fifty, only sixty of whom were armed. M. de Vassiniac, major in the Fimarcon regiment, accompanied them with fifty dragoons and fifty of the rank and file from Hainault.

All along the road Cavalier and his men met with a courteous reception; at Macon they found orders awaiting them to halt. Cavalier at once wrote to M. de Chamillard to tell him that he had things of importance to communicate to him, and the minister sent a courier of the Cabinet called Lavallee to bring Cavalier to Versailles. This message more than fulfilled all Cavalier's hopes: he knew that he had been greatly talked about at court, and in spite of his natural modesty the reception he had met with at Times had given him new ideas, if not of his own merit, at least of his own importance. Besides, he felt that his services to the king deserved some recognition.

The way in which Cavalier was received by Chamillard did not disturb these golden dreams: the minister welcomed the young colonel like a man whose worth he appreciated, and told him that the great lords and ladies of the court were not less favourably disposed towards him. The next day Chamillard announced to Cavalier that the king desired to see him, and that he was to keep himself prepared for a summons to court. Two days later, Cavalier received a letter from the minister telling him to be at the palace at four o'clock in the afternoon, and he would place him on the grand staircase, up which the king would pass.

Cavalier put on his handsomest clothes, for the first time in his life perhaps taking trouble with his toilet. He had fine features, to which his extreme youth, his long fair hair, and the gentle expression of his eyes lent much charm. Two years of warfare had given him a martial air; in short, even among the most elegant, he might pass as a beau cavalier.

At three o'clock he reached Versailles, and found Chamillard waiting for him; all the courtiers of every rank were in a state of great excitement, for they had learned that the great Louis had expressed a wish to meet the late Cevenol chief, whose name had been pronounced so loud and so often in the mountains of Languedoc that its echoes had resounded in the halls of Versailles. Cavalier had not been mistaken in thinking that everyone was curious to see him, only as no one yet knew in what light the king regarded him, the courtiers dared not accost him for fear of compromising their dignity; the manner of his reception by His Majesty would regulate the warmth of his reception by everyone else.

Met thus by looks of curiosity and affected silence, the young colonel felt some embarrassment, and this increased when Chamillard, who had accompanied him to his appointed place, left him to rejoin the king. However, in a few moments he did what embarrassed people so often do, hid his shyness under an air of disdain, and, leaning on the balustrade, crossed his legs and played with the feather of his hat.

When half an hour had passed in this manner, a great commotion was heard: Cavalier turned in the direction from which it came, and perceived the king just entering the vestibule. It was the first time he had seen him, but he recognized him at once. Cavalier's knees knocked together and his face flushed.

The king mounted the stairs step by step with his usual dignity, stopping from time to time to say a word or make a sign with head or hand. Behind him, two steps lower, came Chamillard, moving and stopping as the king moved and stopped, and answering the questions which His Majesty put to him in a respectful but formal and precise manner.

Reaching the level on which Cavalier stood, the king stopped under pretext of pointing out to Chamillard a new ceiling which Le Brun had just finished, but really to have a good look at the singular man who had maintained a struggle against two marshals of France and treated with a third on equal terms. When he had examined him quite at his ease, he turned to Chamillard, pretending he had

only just caught sight of the stranger, and asked:

“Who is this young gentleman?”

“Sire,” answered the minister, stepping forward to present him to the king, “this is Colonel Jean Cavalier.”

“Ah yes,” said the king contemptuously, “the former baker of Anduze!”

And shrugging his shoulders disdainfully, he passed on.

Cavalier on his side had, like Chamillard, taken a step forward, when the scornful answer of the great king changed him into a statue. For an instant he stood motionless and pale as death, then instinctively he laid his hand on his sword, but becoming conscious that he was lost if he remained an instant longer among these people, whom not one of his motions escaped, although they pretended to despise him too much to be aware of his presence, he dashed down the staircase and through the hall, upsetting two or three footmen who were in his way, hurried into the garden, ran across it at full speed, and regaining his room at the hotel, threw himself on the floor, where he rolled like a maniac, uttering cries of rage, and cursing the hour when, trusting to the promises of M. de Villars, he had abandoned the mountains where he was as much a king as Louis XIV at Versailles. The same evening he received orders to leave Paris and rejoin his regiment at Macon. He therefore set out the next morning, without seeing M. de Chamillard again.

Cavalier on arriving at Macon found that his comrades had had a visit from M. d’Aygaliers, who had come again to Paris, in the hope of obtaining more from the king than M. de Villars could or would grant.

Cavalier, without telling his comrades of the strange manner in which the king had received him, gave them to understand that he was beginning to fear that not only would the promises they had received be broken, but that some strange trick would be played upon them.

Thereupon these men, whose chief and oracle he had been for so long, asked him what they ought to do; Cavalier replied that if they would follow him, their best course and his would be to take the first opportunity of gaining the frontier and leaving the country. They all declared themselves ready to follow him anywhere. This caused Cavalier a new pang of regret, for he could not help recollecting that

he had once had under his command fifteen hundred men like these.

The next day Cavalier and his comrades set out on their march without knowing whither they were being taken, not having been able to obtain any information as to their destination from their escort—a silence which confirmed them in their resolution. As soon, therefore, as they reached Onnan, Cavalier declared that he considered that the looked-for opportunity had arrived, asking them if they were still in the same mind: they returned that they would do whatever he advised. Cavalier then ordered them to hold themselves in readiness, Daniel offered up a prayer, and the prayer ended, the whole company deserted in a body, and, crossing Mont Belliard, entered Porentruy, and took the road to Lausanne.

Meantime d'Aygaliers, in his turn, arrived at Versailles, with letters from M. de Villars for the Duke of Beauvilliers, president of the king's council, and for Chamillard. The evening of his arrival he delivered these letters to those to whom they were addressed, and both gentlemen promised to present him to the king.

Four days later, Chamillard sent word to d'Aygaliers that he was to be next day at the door of the king's chamber at the time when the council entered. D'Aygaliers was punctual, the king appeared at the usual hour, and as he paused before d'Aygaliers, Chamillard came forward and said

Baron d'Aygaliers, sire.”

“I am very glad to see you, sir,” said the king, “for I am very much pleased with the zeal you have displayed in Languedoc in my service —very much pleased indeed.”

“Sire,” answered d'Aygaliers, “I consider myself most unfortunate in that I have been able to accomplish nothing deserving of the gracious words which your Majesty deigns to address me, and I pray God of His grace to grant me in the future an opportunity of proving my zeal and loyalty in your Majesty's service more clearly than hitherto.”

“Never mind, never mind,” said the king. “I repeat, sir, that I am very much pleased with what you have done.”

And he entered the room where the council was waiting.

D'Aygaliers went away only half satisfied: he had not come so far only to receive commendation from the king, but in the hope of obtaining some concession for his brethren; but with Louis XIV it was impossible either to intercede or complain, one could only wait.

The same evening Chamillard sent for the baron, and told him that as Marechal Villars had mentioned in his letter that the Camisards had great confidence in him, d'Aygaliers, he wished to ask him if he were willing to go once more to them and try and bring them back to the path of duty.

“Certainly I am willing; but I fear things have now got so far that there will be great difficulty in calming the general perturbation of mind.”

“But what can these people want?” asked Chamillard, as if he had just heard them spoken of for the first time, “and by what means can we pacify them?”

“In my opinion,” said the baron, “the king should allow to all his subjects the free exercise of their religion.”

“What! legalise once more the exercise of the so-called Reformed religion!” exclaimed the minister. “Be sure you never mention such a thing again. The king would rather see his kingdom destroyed than consent to such a measure.”

“Monseigneur,” replied the baron, “if that is the case, then I must say with great regret that I know of no other way to calm the discontent which will ultimately result in the ruin of one of the fairest provinces in France.”

“But that is unheard-of obstinacy,” said the minister, lost in astonishment; “these people will destroy themselves, and drag their country down with them. If they cannot conform to our religion, why do they not worship God in their own way at home? No one will disturb them as long as they don't insist on public worship.”

“At first that was all they wanted, monseigneur; and I am convinced that if people had not been dragged to confession and communion by force, it would have been easy to keep them in that submissive frame of mind from which they were only driven by despair; but at present they say that it is not enough to pray at home, they want to be married, to have their children baptised and instructed, and to die and be buried according to the ordinances of their own faith.”

“Where may you have seen anyone who was ever made to communicate by force?” asked Chamillard.

D’Aygaliers looked at the minister in surprise, thinking he spoke in joke; but seeing he was quite serious, he answered:

“Alas, monseigneur, my late father and my mother, who is still living, are both instances of people subjected to this indignity.”

“Are you, then, not a Catholic?” asked Chamillard.

“No, monseigneur,” replied d’Aygaliers.

“Then how did you manage to return to France?”

“To speak the truth, sir, I only came back to help my mother to escape; but she never could make up her mind to leave France, as such a step was surrounded by many difficulties which she feared she could never surmount. So she asked my other relations to persuade me to remain. I yielded to their importunities on condition that they would never interfere with my beliefs. To accomplish this end they got a priest with whom they were intimate to say that I had changed my views once more, and I did not contradict the report. It was a great sin on my part, and I deeply repent it. I must add, however, that whenever anyone has asked me the question your Excellency asked me just now I have always given the same reply.”

The minister did not seem to take the baron’s frankness in bad part; only he remarked, when dismissing him, that he hoped he would find out some way of ridding the kingdom of those who refused to think in religious matters as His Majesty commanded.

D’Aygaliers replied that it was a problem to which he had given much thought, but without ever being able to find a solution, but that he would think about it more earnestly in future. He then withdrew.

Some days later, Chamillard sent word to d’Aygaliers that the king would graciously give him a farewell audience. The baron relates what took place at this second interview, as follows.

“His Majesty,” says he, “received me in the council chamber, and was so good as

to repeat once more in the presence of all his ministers that he was very much pleased with my services, but that there was one thing about me he should like to correct. I begged His Majesty to tell me what the fault was, and I should try to get rid of it at, the peril of my life.”

“‘It is your religion,’ said the king. ‘I should like to have you become a good Catholic, so that I might be able to grant you favours and enable you to serve me better.’ His Majesty added that I ought to seek instruction, and that then I should one day recognise what a great benefit he desired to bring within my reach.

“I answered that I would esteem myself happy if at the cost of my life I could prove the burning zeal with which I was filled for the service of the greatest of earthly kings, but that I should be unworthy of the least of his favours if I obtained it by hypocrisy or by anything of which my conscience did not approve, but that I was grateful for the goodness which made him anxious for my salvation. I told him also that I had already taken every opportunity of receiving instruction, and had tried to put aside the prejudices arising from my birth, such as often hindered people from recognising the truth, with the result that I had at one time almost lost all sense of religion, until God, taking pity on me, had opened my eyes and brought me out of that deplorable condition, making me see that the faith in which I had been born was the only one for me. ‘And I can assure your Majesty,’ I added, ‘that many of the Languedoc bishops who ought, it seems to me, to try to make us Catholics, are the instruments which Providence uses to prevent us from becoming so. For instead of attracting us by gentleness and good example, they ceaselessly subject us to all kinds of persecutions, as if to convince us that God is punishing us for our cowardice in giving up a religion which we know to be good, by delivering us up to pastors who, far from labouring to assure our salvation, use all their efforts to drive us to despair.’”

“At this the king shrugged his shoulders and said, ‘Enough, do not say any more.’ I asked for his blessing as the king and father of all his subjects. The king burst out laughing, and told me that M. de Chamillard would give me his orders.”

In virtue of this intimation d’Aygaliers went next day to the minister’s country house; for Chamillard had given him that address, and there he learned that the king had granted him a pension of 800 livres. The baron remarked that, not having worked for money, he had hoped for a better reward; as far as money was

concerned, he desired only the reimbursement of the actual expenses of his journeys to and from, but Chamillard answered that the king expected all that he offered and whatever he offered to be accepted with gratitude. To this there was no possible reply, so the same evening d'Aygaliers set out on his return to Languedoc.

Three months later, Chamillard forwarded him an order to leave the kingdom, telling him that he was to receive a pension of four hundred crowns per annum, and enclosing the first quarter in advance.

As there was no means of evading this command, D'Aygaliers set out for Geneva, accompanied by thirty-three followers, arriving there on the 23rd of September. Once rid of him, Louis the Magnificent thought that he had done his part nobly and that he owed him nothing further, so that d'Aygaliers waited a whole year in vain for the second quarter of his pension.

At the end of this time, as his letters to Chamillard remained unanswered, and finding himself without resources in a foreign country, he believed himself justified in returning to France and taking up his residence on his family estate. Unfortunately, on his way through Lyons, the provost of merchants, hearing of his return, had him arrested, and sent word to the king, who ordered him to be taken to the chateau de Loches. After a year's imprisonment, d'Aygaliers, who had just entered on his thirty-fifth year, resolved to try and escape, preferring to die in the attempt rather than remain a prisoner for life. He succeeded in getting possession of a file with which he removed one of the bars of his window, and by means of knotting his sheets together, he got down, taking the loosened bar with him to serve, in case of need, as a weapon. A sentinel who was near cried, "Who goes there?" but d'Aygaliers stunned him with his bar. The cry, however, had given the alarm: a second sentinel saw a man flying, fired at him, and killed him on the spot.

Such was the reward of the devoted patriotism of Baron d'Aygaliers!

Meantime Roland's troops had increased greatly in number, having been joined by the main body of those who had once been commanded by Cavalier, so that he had, about eight hundred men at his disposal. Some distance away, another chief, named Joanny, had four hundred; Larose, to whom Castanet had transferred his command, found himself at the head of three hundred; Boizeau de Rochegude was followed by one hundred, Saltet de Soustel by two hundred,

Louis Coste by fifty, and Catinat by forty, so that, in spite of the victory of Montrevel and the negotiations of M. de Villars, the Camisards still formed an effective force of eighteen hundred and ninety men, not to speak of many single troopers who owned no commander but acted each for himself, and were none the less mischievous for that. All these troops, except these latter, obeyed Roland, who since the defection of Cavalier had been recognised as generalissimo of the forces. M. de Villars thought if he could separate Roland from his troops as he had separated Cavalier, his plans would be more easy to carry out.

So he made use of every means within his reach to gain over Roland, and as soon as one plan failed he tried another. At one moment he was almost sure of obtaining his object by the help of a certain Jourdan de Mianet, a great friend of his, who offered his services as an intermediary, but who failed like all the others, receiving from Roland a positive refusal, so that it became evident that resort must be had to other means than those of persuasion. A sum of 100 Louis had already been set on Roland's head: this sum was now doubled.

Three days afterwards, a young man from Uzes, by name Malarte, in whom Roland had every confidence, wrote to M. de Paratte that the Camisard general intended to pass the night of the 14th of August at the chateau Castelnau.

De Paratte immediately made his dispositions, and ordered Lacoste-Badie, at the head of two companies of dragoons, and all the officers at Uzes who were well mounted, to hold themselves in readiness to start on an expedition at eight o'clock in the evening, but not revealing its object to them till the time came. At eight o'clock, having been told what they had to do, they set off at such a pace that they came in sight of the chateau within an hour, and were obliged to halt and conceal themselves, lest they should appear too soon, before Roland had retired for the night. But they need not have been afraid; the Camisard chief, who was accustomed to rely on all his men as on himself, had gone to bed without any suspicion, having full confidence in the vigilance of one of his officers, named Grimaud, who had stationed himself as sentinel on the roof of the chateau. Led by Malarte, Lacoste-Badie and his dragoons took a narrow covered way, which led them to the foot of the walls, so that when Grimaud saw them it was already too late, the chateau being surrounded on all sides. Firing off his gun, he cried, "To arms!" Roland, roused by the cry and the shot, leaped out of bed, and taking his clothes in one hand and his sword in the other, ran out of his room. At the door he met Grimaud, who, instead of thinking of his own

safety, had come to watch over that of his chief. They both ran to the stables to get horses, but three of their men—Marchand, Bourdalie, and Bayos—had been before them and had seized on the best ones, and riding them barebacked had dashed through the front gates before the dragoons could stop them. The horses that were left were so wretched that Roland felt there was no chance of outdistancing the dragoons by their help, so he resolved to fly on foot, thus avoiding the open roads and being able to take refuge in every ravine and every bush as cover. He therefore hastened with Grimaud and four other officers who had gathered round him towards a small back gate which opened on the fields, but as there was, besides the troops which entered the chateau, a ring of dragoons round it, they fell at once into the hands of some men who had been placed in ambush. Seeing himself surrounded, Roland let fall the clothes which he had not yet had time to put on, placed his back against a tree, drew his sword, and challenged the boldest, whether officer or private, to approach. His features expressed such resolution, that when he thus, alone and half naked, defied them all, there was a moment's hesitation, during which no one ventured to take a forward step; but this pause was broken by the report of a gun: the arm which Roland had stretched out against his adversaries fell to his side, the sword with which he had threatened them escaped from his hand, his knees gave way, so that his body, which was only supported by the tree against which he leaned, after remaining an instant erect, gradually sank to the ground. Collecting all his strength, Roland raised his two hands to Heaven, as if to call down the vengeance of God upon his murderers, then, without having uttered a single word, he fell forward dead, shot through the heart. The name of the dragoon who killed him was Soubeyrand.

Maillie, Grimaud, Coutereau, Guerin, and Ressal, the five Camisard officers, seeing their chief dead, let themselves be taken as if they were children, without thinking of making any resistance.

The dead body of Roland was carried back in triumph to Uzes, and from there to Nimes, where it was put upon trial as if still alive. It was sentenced to be dragged on hurdles and then burnt. The execution of this sentence was carried out with such pomp as made it impossible for the one party to forget the punishment and for the other to forget the martyrdom. At the end the ashes of Roland were scattered to the four winds of heaven.

The execution of the five officers followed close on that of their chief's body; they were condemned to be broken on the wheel, and the sentence was carried

out on all at once. But their death, instead of inspiring the Calvinists with terror, gave them rather fresh courage, for, as an eye-witness relates, the five Camisards bore their tortures not only with fortitude, but with a light-heartedness which surprised all present, especially those who had never seen a Camisard executed before.

Malarte received his 200 Louis, but to-day his name is coupled with that of Judas in the minds of his countrymen.

>From this time on fortune ceased to smile on the Camisards. Genius had gone with Cavalier, and, faith with Roland. The very day of the death of the latter, one of their stores, containing more than eighty sacks of corn, had been taken at Toiras. The next day, Catinat, who, with a dozen men, was in hiding in a vineyard of La Vaunage, was surprised by a detachment of Soissonnais; eleven of his men were killed, the twelfth made prisoner, and he himself barely escaped with a severe wound. The 25th of the same month, a cavern near Sauve, which the rebels used as a store, and which contained one hundred and fifty sacks of fine wheat, was discovered; lastly, Chevalier de Froulay had found a third hiding-place near Mailet. In this, which had been used not only as a store but as a hospital, besides a quantity of salt beef, wine, and flour, six wounded Camisards were found, who were instantly shot as they lay.

The only band which remained unbroken was Ravanel's, but since the departure of Cavalier things had not gone well with his lieutenant.

In consequence of this, and also on account of the successive checks which the other bodies of Camisard troops had met with, Ravanel proclaimed a solemn fast, in order to intercede with God to protect the Huguenot cause. On Saturday, the 13th September, he led his entire force to the wood of St. Benazet, intending to pass the whole of the next day with them there in prayer. But treason was rife. Two peasants who knew of this plan gave information to M. Lenoir, mayor of Le Vigan, and he sent word to the marechal and M. de Saville, who were at Anduze.

Nothing could have been more welcome to the governor than this important information: he made the most careful disposition of his forces, hoping to destroy the rebellion at one blow. He ordered M. de Courten, a brigadier-colonel in command at Alais, to take a detachment of the troops under him and patrol the banks of the Gardon between Ners and Castagnols. He was of opinion that if the Camisards were attacked on the other side by a body of soldiers drawn from

Anduze, which he had stationed during the night at Dommersargues, they would try to make good their retreat towards the river. The force at Dommersargues might almost be called a small army; for it was composed of a Swiss battalion, a battalion of the Hainault regiment, one from the Charolais regiment, and four companies of dragoons from Fimarcon and Saint-Sernin.

Everything took place as the peasants had said: on Saturday the 13th, the Camisards entered, as we have seen, the wood of St. Benazet, and passed the night there.

At break of day the royals from Dommersargues began their advance. The Camisard outposts soon perceived the movement, and warned Ravanel, who held his little council of war. Everyone was in favour of instant retreat, so they retired towards Ners, intending to cross the Gardon below that town: just as M. de Villars had foreseen, the Camisards did everything necessary for the success of his plans, and ended by walking right into the trap set for them.

On emerging from the wood of St. Benazet, they caught sight of a detachment of royals drawn up and waiting for them between Marvejols and a mill called the Moulin-du-Pont. Seeing the road closed in this direction, they turned sharp to the left, and gained a rocky valley which ran parallel to the Gardon. This they followed till they came out below Marvejols, where they crossed the river. They now thought themselves out of danger, thanks to this manoeuvre, but suddenly they saw another detachment of royals lying on the grass near the mill of La Scie. They at once halted again, and then, believing themselves undiscovered, turned back, moving as noiselessly as possible, intending to recross the river and make for Cardet. But they only avoided one trap to fall into another, for in this direction they were met by the Hainault battalion, which swooped down upon them. A few of these illfated men rallied at the sound of Ravanel's voice and made an effort to defend themselves in spite of the prevailing confusion; but the danger was so imminent, the foes so numerous, and their numbers decreased so rapidly under the fierce assault, that their example failed of effect, and flight became general: every man trusted to chance for guidance, and, caring nothing for the safety of others, thought only of his own.

Then it ceased to be a battle and become a massacre, for the royals were ten to one; and among those they encountered, only sixty had firearms, the rest, since the discovery of their various magazines, having been reduced to arm themselves with bad swords, pitchforks, and bayonets attached to sticks. Hardly a man

survived the fray. Ravanel himself only succeeded in escaping by throwing himself into the river, where he remained under water between two rocks for seven hours, only coming to the surface to breathe. When night fell and the dragoons had retired, he also fled.

This was the last battle of the war, which had lasted four years. With Cavalier and Roland, those two mountain giants, the power of the rebels disappeared. As the news of the defeat spread, the Camisard chiefs and soldiers becoming convinced that the Lord had hidden His face from them, surrendered one by one. The first to set an example was Castanet. On September 6th, a week after the defeat of Ravanel, he surrendered to the marechal. On the 19th, Catinat and his lieutenant, Francois Souvayre, tendered their submission; on the 22nd, Amet, Roland's brother, came in; on October 4th, Joanny; on the 9th, Larose, Valette, Salomon, Laforet, Moulieres, Salles, Abraham and Marion; on the 20th, Fidele; and on the 25th, Rochegude.

Each made what terms he could; in general the conditions were favourable. Most of those who submitted received rewards of money, some more, some less; the smallest amount given being 200 livres. They all received passports, and were ordered to leave the kingdom, being sent, accompanied by an escort and at the king's expense, to Geneva. The following is the account given by Marion of the agreement he came to with the Marquis Lalande; probably all the others were of the same nature.

"I was deputed," he says, "to treat with this lieutenant-general in regard to the surrender of my own troops and those of Larose, and to arrange terms for the inhabitants of thirty-five parishes who had contributed to our support during the war. The result of the negotiations was that all the prisoners from our cantons should be set at liberty, and be reinstated in their possessions, along with all the others. The inhabitants of those parishes which had been ravaged by fire were to be exempt from land-tax for three years; and in no parish were the inhabitants to be taunted with the past, nor molested on the subject of religion, but were to be free to worship God in their own houses according to their consciences."

These agreements were fulfilled with such punctuality, that Larose was permitted to open the prison doors of St. Hippolyte to forty prisoners the very day he made submission.

As we have said, the Camisards, according as they came in, were sent off to

Geneva. D'Aygaliers, whose fate we have anticipated, arrived there on September 23rd, accompanied by Cavalier's eldest brother, Malpach, Roland's secretary, and thirty-six Camisards. Catinat and Castanet arrived there on the 8th October, along with twenty-two other persons, while Larose, Laforet, Salomon, Moulieres, Salles, Marion, and Fidele reached it under the escort of forty dragoons from Fimarcon in the month of November.

Of all the chiefs who had turned Languedoc for four years into a vast arena, only Ravanel remained, but he refused either to surrender or to leave the country. On the 8th October the marechal issued an order declaring he had forfeited all right to the favour of an amnesty, and offering a reward of 150 Louis to whoever delivered him up living, and 2400 livres to whoever brought in his dead body, while any hamlet, village, or town which gave him refuge would be burnt to the ground and the inhabitants put to the sword.

The revolt seemed to be at an end and peace established. So the marechal was recalled to court, and left Nimes on January the 6th. Before his departure he received the States of Languedoc, who bestowed on him not only the praise which was his due for having tempered severity with mercy, but also a purse of 12,000 livres, while a sum of 8000 livres was presented to his wife. But all this was only a prelude to the favours awaiting him at court. On the day he returned to Paris the king decorated him with all the royal orders and created him a duke. On the following day he received him, and thus addressed him: "Sir, your past services lead me to expect much of those you will render me in the future. The affairs of my kingdom would be better conducted if I had several Villars at my disposal. Having only one, I must always send him where he is most needed. It was for that reason I sent you to Languedoc. You have, while there, restored tranquillity to my subjects, you must now defend them against their enemies; for I shall send you to command my army on the Moselle in the next campaign."

The Duke of Berwick arrived at Montpellier on the 17th March to replace Marechal Villars. His first care was to learn from M. de Baille the exact state of affairs. M. de Baille told him that they were not at all settled as they appeared to be on the surface. In fact, England and Holland, desiring nothing so much as that an intestine war should waste France, were making unceasing efforts to induce the exiles to return home, promising that this time they would really support them by lending arms, ammunition, and men, and it was said that some were already on their way back, among the number Castanet.

And indeed the late rebel chief, tired of inaction, had left Geneva in the end of February, and arrived safely at Vivarais. He had held a religious meeting in a cave near La Goree, and had drawn to his side Valette of Vals and Boyer of Valon. Just as the three had determined to penetrate into the Cevennes, they were denounced by some peasants before a Swiss officer named Muller, who was in command of a detachment of troops in the village of Riviere. Muller instantly mounted his horse, and guided by the informers made his way into the little wood in which the Camisards had taken refuge, and fell upon them quite unexpectedly. Boyer was killed in trying to escape; Castanet was taken and brought to the nearest prison, where he was joined the next day by Valette, who had also been betrayed by some peasants whom he had asked for assistance.

The first punishment inflicted on Castanet was, that he was compelled to carry in his hand the head of Boyer all the way from La Goree to Montpellier. He protested vehemently at first, but in vain: it was fastened to his wrist by the hair; whereupon he kissed it on both cheeks, and went through the ordeal as if it were a religious act, addressing words of prayer to the head as he might have done to a relic of a martyr.

Arrived at Montpellier, Castanet was examined, and at first persisted in saying that he had only returned from exile because he had not the wherewithal to live abroad. But when put to the torture he was made to endure such agony that, despite his courage and constancy, he confessed that he had formed a plan to introduce a band of Huguenot soldiers with their officers into the Cevennes by way of Dauphine or by water, and while waiting for their arrival he had sent on emissaries in advance to rouse the people to revolt; that he himself had also shared in this work; that Catinat was at the moment in Languedoc or Vivarais engaged in the same task, and provided with a considerable sum of money sent him by foreigners for distribution, and that several persons of still greater importance would soon cross the frontier and join him.

Castanet was condemned to be broken on the wheel. As he was about to be led to execution, Abbe Tremondy, the cure of Notre-Dame, and Abbe Plomet, canon of the cathedral, came to his cell to make a last effort to convert him, but he refused to speak. They therefore went on before, and awaited him on the scaffold. There they appeared to inspire Castanet with more horror than the instruments of torture, and while he addressed the executioner as "brother," he called out to the priests, "Go away out of my sight, imps from the bottomless pit! What are you doing here, you accursed tempters? I will die in the religion in

which I was born. Leave me alone, ye hypocrites, leave me alone!" But the two abbes were unmoved, and Castanet expired cursing, not the executioner but the two priests, whose presence during his death-agony disturbed his soul, turning it away from things which should have filled it.

Valette was sentenced to be hanged, and was executed on the same day as Castanet.

In spite of the admissions wrung from Castanet in March, nearly a month passed without any sign of fresh intrigues or any attempt at rebellion. But on the 17th of April, about seven o'clock in the evening, M. de Baviile received intelligence that several Camisards had lately returned from abroad, and were in hiding somewhere, though their retreat was not known. This information was laid before the Duke of Berwick, and he and M. de Baviile ordered certain houses to be searched, whose owners were in their opinion likely to have given refuge to the malcontents. At midnight all the forces which they could collect were divided into twelve detachments, composed of archers and soldiers, and at the head of each detachment was placed a man that could be depended upon. Dumayne, the king's lieutenant, assigned to each the districts they were to search, and they all set out at once from the town hall, at half-past twelve, marching in silence, and separating at signs from their leaders, so anxious were they to make no noise. At first all their efforts were of no avail, several houses being searched without any result; but at length Jausserand, the diocesan provost, having entered one of the houses which he and Villa, captain of the town troops, had had assigned to them, they found three men sleeping on mattresses laid on the floor. The provost roused them by asking them who they were, whence they came, and what they were doing at Montpellier, and as they, still half asleep, did not reply quite promptly, he ordered them to dress and follow him.

These three men were Flessiere, Gaillard, and Jean-Louis. Flessiere was a deserter from the Fimarcon regiment: he it was who knew most about the plot. Gaillard had formerly served in the Hainault regiment; and Jean-Louis, commonly called "the Genevois," was a deserter from the Courten regiment.

Flessiere, who was the leader, felt that it would be a great disgrace to let themselves be taken without resistance; he therefore pretended to obey, but in lifting up his clothes, which lay upon a trunk, he managed to secure two pistols, which he cocked. At the noise made by the hammers the provost's suspicions

were aroused, and throwing himself on Flessiere, he seized him round the waist from behind. Flessiere, unable to turn, raised his arm and fired over his shoulder. The shot missed the provost, merely burning a lock of his hair, but slightly wounded one of his servants, who was carrying a lantern. He then tried to fire a second shot, but Jausserand, seizing him by the wrist with one hand, blew out his brains with the other. While Jausserand and Flessiere were thus struggling, Gaillard threw himself on Villa, pinning his arms to his sides. As he had no weapons, he tried to push him to the wall, in order to stun him by knocking his head against it; but when the servant, being wounded, let the lantern fall, he took advantage of the darkness to make a dash for the door, letting go his hold of his antagonist. Unfortunately for him, the doors, of which there were two, were guarded, and the guards, seeing a half-naked man running away at the top of his speed, ran after him, firing several shots. He received a wound which, though not dangerous, impeded his flight, so that he was soon overtaken and captured. They brought him back a prisoner to the town hall, where Flessiere's dead body already lay.

Meanwhile Jean-Louis had had better luck. While the two struggles as related above were going on, he slipped unnoticed to an open window and got out into the street. He ran round the corner of the house, and disappeared like a shadow in the darkness before the eyes of the guards. For a long time he wandered from street to street, running down one and up another, till chance brought him near La Poissonniere. Here he perceived a beggar propped against a post and fast asleep; he awoke him, and proposed that they should exchange clothes. As Jean-Louis' suit was new and the beggar's in rags, the latter thought at first it was a joke. Soon perceiving, however, that the offer was made in all seriousness, he agreed to the exchange, and the two separated, each delighted with his bargain. Jean-Louis approached one of the gates of the town, in order to be able to get out as soon as it was opened, and the beggar hastened off in another direction, in order to get away from the man who had let him have so good a bargain, before he had time to regret the exchange he had made.

But the night's adventures were far from being over. The beggar was taken a prisoner, Jean-Louis' coat being recognised, and brought to the town hall, where the mistake was discovered. The Genevois meantime got into a dark street, and lost his way. Seeing three men approach, one of whom carried a lantern, he went towards the light, in order to find out where he was, and saw, to his surprise, that one of the men was the servant whom Flessiere had wounded, and who was now going to have his wound dressed. The Genevois tried to draw back into the

shade, but it was too late: the servant had recognised him. He then tried to fly; but the wounded man soon overtook him, and although one of his hands was disabled, he held him fast with the other, so that the two men who were with him ran up and easily secured him. He also was brought to the town hall, where he found the Duke of Berwick and M. de Baviile, who were awaiting the result of the affray.

Hardly had the prisoner caught sight of them than, seeing himself already hanged, which was no wonder considering the marvellous celerity with which executions were conducted at that epoch, he threw himself on his knees, confessed who he was, and related for what reason he had joined the fanatics. He went on to say that as he had not joined them of his own free will, but had been forced to do so, he would, if they would spare his life, reveal important secrets to them, by means of which they could arrest the principal conspirators.

His offer was so tempting and his life of so little worth that the duke and de Baviile did not long hesitate, but pledged their word to spare his life if the revelations he was about to make proved to be of real importance. The bargain being concluded, the Genevois made the following statement:

“That several letters having arrived from foreign countries containing promises of men and money, the discontented in the provinces had leagued together in order to provoke a fresh rebellion. By means of these letters and other documents which were scattered abroad, hopes were raised that M. de Miremont, the last Protestant prince of the house of Bourbon, would bring them reinforcements five or six thousand strong. These reinforcements were to come by sea and make a descent on Aigues-Mortes or Cette,—and two thousand Huguenots were to arrive at the same time by way of Dauphine and join the others as they disembarked.

“That in this hope Catinat, Clary, and Jonquet had left Geneva and returned to France, and having joined Ravanel had gone secretly through those parts of the country known to be infected with fanaticism, and made all necessary arrangements, such as amassing powder and lead, munitions of war, and stores of all kinds, as well as enrolling the names of all those who were of age to bear arms. Furthermore, they had made an estimate of what each city, town, and village ought to contribute in money or in kind to the—League of the Children of God, so that they could count on having eight or ten thousand men ready to rise at the first signal. They had furthermore resolved that there should be risings

in several places at the same time, which places were already chosen, and each of those who were to take part in the movement knew his exact duty. At Montpellier a hundred of the most determined amongst the disaffected were to set fire in different quarters to the houses of the Catholics, killing all who attempted to extinguish the fires, and with the help of the Huguenot inhabitants were, to slaughter the garrison, seize the citadel, and carry off the Duke of Berwick and M. de Baille. The same things were to be done at Nimes, Uzès, Alais, Anduze, Saint-Hippolyte, and Sommieres. Lastly, he said, this conspiracy had been going on for more than three months, and the conspirators, in order not to be found out, had only revealed their plans to those whom they knew to be ready to join them: they had not admitted a single woman to their confidence, or any man whom it was possible to suspect. Further, they had only met at night and a few persons at a time, in certain country houses, to which admittance was gained by means of a countersign; the 25th of April was the day fixed for the general rising and the execution of these projects.”

As may be seen, the danger was imminent, as there was only six days' interval between the revelation and the expected outburst; so the Genevois was consulted, under renewed promises of safety for himself, as to the best means of seizing on the principal chiefs in the shortest possible time. He replied that he saw no other way but to accompany them himself to Nimes, where Catinat and Ravanel were in hiding, in a house of which he did not know the number and in a street of which he did not know the name, but which he was sure of recognising when he saw them. If this advice were to be of any avail, there was no time to be lost, for Ravanel and Catinat were to leave Nimes on the 20th or the 21st at latest; consequently, if they did not set off at once, the chiefs would no longer be there when they arrived. The advice seemed good, so the marechal and the intendant hastened to follow it: the informer was sent to Nimes guarded by six archers, the conduct of the expedition was given to Barnier, the provost's lieutenant, a man of intellect and common sense, and in whom the provost had full confidence. He carried letters for the Marquis of Sandricourt.

As they arrived late on the evening of the 19th, the Genevois was at once led up and down the streets of Nimes, and, as he had promised, he pointed out several houses in the district of Sainte-Eugenie. Sandricourt at once ordered the garrison officers, as well as those of the municipal and Courten regiments, to put all their soldiers under arms and to station them quietly throughout the town so as to surround that district. At ten o'clock, the Marquis of Sandricourt, having made certain that his instructions had been carefully carried out, gave orders to MM.

de L'Estrade, Barnier, Joseph Martin, Eusebe, the major of the Swiss regiment, and several other officers, along with ten picked men, to repair to the house of one Alison, a silk merchant, this house having been specially pointed out by the prisoner. This they did, but seeing the door open, they had little hope of finding the chiefs of a conspiracy in a place so badly guarded; nevertheless, determined to obey their instructions, they glided softly into the hall. In a few moments, during which silence and darkness reigned, they heard people speaking rather loudly in an adjoining room, and by listening intently they caught the following words: "It is quite sure that in less than three weeks the king will be no longer master of Dauphine, Vivarais, and Languedoc. I am being sought for everywhere, and here I am in Nimes, with nothing to fear."

It was now quite clear to the listeners that close at hand were some at least of those for whom they were looking. They ran to the door, which was ajar, and entered the room, sword in hand. They found Ravanel, Jonquet, and Villas talking together, one sitting on a table, another standing on the hearth, and the third lolling on a bed.

Jonquet was a young man from Sainte-Chatte, highly thought of among the Camisards. He had been, it may be remembered, one of Cavalier's principal officers. Villas was the son of a doctor in Saint-Hippolyte; he was still young, though he had seen ten years' service, having been cornet in England in the Galloway regiment. As to Ravanel, he is sufficiently known to our readers to make any words of introduction unnecessary.

De l'Estrade threw himself on the nearest of the three, and, without using his sword, struck him with his fist. Ravanel (for it was he) being half stunned, fell back a step and asked the reason of this violent assault; while Barnier exclaimed, "Hold him fast, M. de l'Estrade; it is Ravanel!" "Well, yes, I am Ravanel," said the Camisard," but that is no reason for making so much noise." As he said these words he made an attempt to reach his weapons, but de l'Estrade and Barnier prevented him by throwing themselves on him, and succeeded in knocking him down after a fierce struggle. While, this was going on, his two companions were secured, and the three were removed to the fort, where their guard never left them night or day.

The Marquis of Sandricourt immediately sent off a courier to the Duke of Berwick and M. de Baille to inform them of the important capture he had made. They were so delighted at the news that they came next day to Nimes.

They found the town intensely excited, soldiers with fixed bayonets at every street corner, all the houses shut up, and the gates of the town closed, and no one allowed to leave without written permission from Sandricourt. On the 20th, and during the following night, more than fifty persons were arrested, amongst whom were Alison, the merchant in whose house Ravanel, Villas, and Jonquet were found; Delacroix, Alison's brother-in-law, who, on hearing the noise of the struggle, had hidden on the roof and was not discovered till next day; Jean Lauze, who was accused of having prepared Ravanel's supper; Lauze's mother, a widow; Tourelle, the maid-servant; the host of the Coupe d'Or, and a preacher named La Jeunesse.

Great, however, as was the joy felt by the duke, the marquis, and de Baviile, it fell short of full perfection, for the most dangerous man among the rebels was still at large; in spite of every effort, Catinat's hiding-place had not till now been discovered.

Accordingly, the duke issued a proclamation offering a reward of one hundred Louis-d'or to whoever would take Catinat, or cause him to be taken prisoner, and granting a free pardon to anyone who had sheltered him, provided that he was denounced before the house-to-house visitation which was about to be made took place. After the search began, the master of the house in which he might be found would be hung at his own door, his family thrown into prison, his goods confiscated, his house razed to the ground, without any form of trial whatever.

This proclamation had the effect expected by the duke: whether the man in whose house Catinat was concealed grew frightened and asked him to leave, or whether Catinat thought his best course would be to try and get away from the town, instead of remaining shut up in it, he dressed himself one morning in suitable clothes, and went to a barber's, who shaved him, cut his hair, and made up his face so as to give him as much the appearance of a nobleman as possible; and then with wonderful assurance he went out into the streets, and pulling his hat over his eyes and holding a paper in his hand as if reading it, he crossed the town to the gate of St. Antoine. He was almost through when Charreau, the captain of the guard, having his attention directed to Catinat by a comrade to whom he was talking, stopped him, suspecting he was trying to escape. Catinat asked what he wanted with him, and Charreau replied that if he would enter the guardhouse he would learn; as under such circumstances any examination was to be avoided, Catinat tried to force his way out; whereupon he was seized by Charreau and his brother-officer, and Catinat seeing that resistance would be not

only useless but harmful, allowed himself to be taken to the guard-room.

He had been there about an hour without being recognised by any of those who, drawn by curiosity, came to look at him, when one of the visitors in going out said he bore a strong resemblance to Catinat; some children hearing these words, began to shout, "Catinat is taken! Catinat is taken!" "This cry drew a large crowd to the guardhouse, among others a man whose name was Anglejas, who, looking closely at the prisoner, recognised him and called him by name.

Instantly the guard was doubled, and Catinat searched: a psalm-book with a silver clasp and a letter addressed to "M. Maurel, called Catinat," were found on him, leaving no doubt as to his identity; while he himself, growing impatient, and desiring to end all these investigations, acknowledged that he was Catinat and no other.

He was at once taken to the palace, where the Presidial Court was sitting, M. de Baille and the president being occupied in trying Ravanel, Villas, and Jonquet. On hearing the news of this important capture, the intendant, hardly daring to believe his ears, rose and went out to meet the prisoner, in order to convince himself that it was really Catinat.

>From the Presidial Court he was brought before the Duke of Berwick, who addressed several questions to him, which Catinat answered; he then told the duke he had something of importance to impart to him and to him alone. The duke was not very anxious for a tete-a-tete with Catinat; however, having ordered his hands to be securely bound, and telling Sandricourt not to go away, he consented to hear what the prisoner had to say.

Catinat then, in the presence of the duke and Sandricourt, proposed that an exchange of prisoners should be made, the Marechal de Tallard, who was a prisoner of war in England, being accepted in his place. Catinat added that if this offer was not accepted, the marechal would meet the same treatment from the English as might be meted out to him, Catinat, in France. The duke, full of the aristocratic ideas to which he was born, found the proposal insolent, and said, "If that is all you have to propose, I can assure you that your hours are numbered."

Thereupon Catinat was promptly sent back to the palace, where truly his trial did not occupy much time. That of the three others was already finished, and soon his was also at an end, and it only remained to pronounce sentence on all four.

Catinat and Ravanel, as the most guilty, were condemned to be burnt at the stake. Some of the councillors thought Catinat should have been torn apart by four horses, but the majority were for the stake, the agony lasting longer, being more violent and more exquisite than in the of other case.

Villas and Jonquet were sentenced to be broken on the wheel alive —the only difference between them being that Jonquet was to be taken while still living and thrown into the fire lit round Catinat and Ravael. It was also ordered that the four condemned men before their execution should be put to the torture ordinary and extraordinary. Catinat, whose temper was fierce, suffered with courage, but cursed his torturers. Ravanel bore all the torments that could be inflicted on him with a fortitude that was more than human, so that the torturers were exhausted before he was. Jonquet spoke little, and the revelations he made were of slight importance. Villas confessed that the conspirators had the intention of carrying off the duke and M. de Baviile when they were out walking or driving, and he added that this plot had been hatched at the house of a certain Boeton de Saint-Laurent-d'Aigozre, at Milhaud, in Rouergue.

Meanwhile all this torturing and questioning had taken so much time that when the stake and the scaffold were ready it was almost dark, so that the duke put off the executions until the next day, instead of carrying them out by torchlight. Brueys says that this was done in order that the most disaffected amongst the fanatics should not be able to say that it was not really Catinat, Ravanel, Villas, and Jonquet who had been executed but some other unknown men; but it is more probable that the duke and Baviile were afraid of riots, as was proved by their ordering the scaffold and the stake to be erected at the end of the Cours and opposite the glacis of the fortress, so that the garrison might be at hand in case of any disturbance.

Catinat was placed in a cell apart, and could be, heard cursing and complaining all night through. Ravanel, Villas, and Jonquet were confined together, and passed the night singing and praying.

The next day, the 22nd April, 1705, they were taken from the prison and drawn to the place of execution in two carts, being unable to walk, on account of the severe torture to which they had been subjected, and which had crushed the bones of their legs. A single pile of wood had been prepared for Catinat and Ravanel, who were to be burnt together; they were in one cart, and Villas and Jonquet, for whom two wheels had been prepared, were in the other.

The first operation was to bind Catinat and Ravanel back to back to the same stake, care being taken to place Catinat with his face to windward, so that his agony might last longer, and then the pile was lit under Ravanel.

As had been foreseen, this precaution gave great pleasure to those people who took delight in witnessing executions. The wind being rather high, blew the flames away from Catinat, so that at first the fire burnt his legs only—a circumstance which, the author of the History of the Camisards tells us, aroused Catinat's impatience. Ravanel, however, bore everything to the end with the greatest heroism, only pausing in his singing to address words of encouragement to his companion in suffering, whom he could not see, but whose groans and curses he could hear; he would then return to his psalms, which he continued to sing until his voice was stifled in the flames. Just as he expired, Jonquet was removed from the wheel, and carried, his broken limbs dangling, to the burning pile, on which he was thrown. From the midst of the flames his voice was heard saying, "Courage, Catinat; we shall soon meet in heaven." A few moments later, the stake, being burnt through at the base, broke, and Catinat falling into the flames, was quickly suffocated. That this accident had not been foreseen and prevented by proper precautions caused great displeasure to spectators who found that the three-quarter of an hour which the spectacle had lasted was much too brief a time.

Villas lived three hours longer on his wheel, and expired without having uttered a single complaint.

Two days later, there was another trial, at which six persons were condemned to death and one to the galleys; these were the two Alisons, in whose house Villas, Ravanel, and Jonquet had been found; Alegre, who was accused of having concealed Catinat, and of having been the Camisard treasurer; Rougier, an armourer who was found guilty of having repaired the muskets of the rebels; Jean Lauze, an innkeeper who had prepared meals for Ravanel; La Jeunesse, a preacher, convicted of having preached sermons and sung psalms; and young Delacroix, brother-in-law to one of the Alisons. The first three were condemned to be broken on the wheel, their houses demolished, and their goods confiscated. The next three were to be hanged. Jean Delacroix, partly because of his youth, but more because of the revelations he made, was only sent to the galleys. Several years later he was liberated and returned to Arles, and was carried off by the plague in 1720.

All these sentences were carried out with the utmost rigour.

Thus, as may be seen, the suppression of the revolt proceeded apace; only two young Camisard chiefs were still at large, both of whom had formerly served under Cavalier and Catinat. The name of the one was Brun and of the other Francezet. Although neither of them possessed the genius and influence of Catinat and Ravanel, yet they were both men to be feared, the one on account of his personal strength, the other for his skill and agility. Indeed, it was said of him that he never missed a shot, and that one day being pursued by dragoons he had escaped by jumping over the Gardon at a spot where it was twenty-two feet wide.

For a long time all search was in vain, but one day the wife of a miller named Semenil came into town ostensibly to buy provisions, but really to denounce them as being concealed, with two other Camisards, in her husband's house.

This information was received with an eager gratitude, which showed the importance which the governor of Nimes attached to their capture. The woman was promised a reward of fifty Louis if they were taken, and the Chevalier de la Valla, Grandidier, and fifty Swiss, the major of the Saint-Sernin regiment, a captain, and thirty dragoons, were sent off to make the capture. When they were within a quarter of a league of the mill, La Valla, who was in command of the expedition, made the woman give him all the necessary topographical information.

Having learned that besides the door by which they hoped to effect an entrance, the mill possessed only one other, which opened on a bridge over the Vistre, he despatched ten dragoons and five Swiss to occupy this bridge, whilst he and the rest of the troops bore down on the main entrance. As soon as the four Camisards perceived the approach of the soldiers, their first thought was to escape by the bridge, but one of them having gone up to the roof to make sure that the way was clear, came down exclaiming that the bridge was occupied. On hearing this, the four felt that they were lost, but nevertheless resolved to defend themselves as valiantly and to sell their lives as dearly as possible. As soon as the royals were within musket range of the mill, four shots were fired, and two dragoons, one Swiss, and one horse, fell. M. de Valla thereupon ordered the troops to charge at full gallop, but before the mill door was reached three other shots were heard, and two more men killed. Nevertheless, seeing they could not long hold out against such numbers, Francezet gave the signal for retreat, calling

out, "Sauve qui petit!" at the same instant he jumped out of a lattice window twenty feet from the ground, followed by Brun. Neither of them being hurt, both set off across country, one trusting to his strength and the other to his fleetness of foot. The two other Camisards, who had tried to escape by the door, were captured.

The soldiers, horse and foot, being now free to give all their attention to Brun and Francezet, a wonderful race began; for the two fugitives, being strong and active, seemed to play with their pursuers, stopping every now and then, when they had gained sufficient headway, to shoot at the nearest soldiers; when Francezet, proving worthy of his reputation, never missed a single shot. Then, resuming their flight and loading their weapons as they ran, they leaped rivers and ditches, taking advantage of the less direct road which the troops were obliged to follow, to stop and take breath, instead of making for some cover where they might have found safety. Two or three times Brun was on the point of being caught, but each time the dragoon or Swiss who had got up to him fell, struck by Francezet's unerring bullet. The chase lasted four hours, during which time five officers, thirty dragoons, and fifty Swiss were baffled by two men, one of whom Francezet was almost a boy, being only twenty years old! Then the two Camisards, having exhausted their ammunition, gave each other the name of a village as a rendezvous, and each taking a different direction, bounded away with the lightness of a stag. Francezet ran in the direction of Milhaud with such rapidity that he gained on the dragoons, although they put their horses at full speed. He was within an inch of safety, when a peasant named La Bastide, who was hoeing in a field, whence he had watched the contest with interest from the moment he had first caught sight of it, seeing the fugitive make for an opening in a wall, ran along at the foot of the wall on the other side, and, just as Francezet dashed through the opening like a flash of lightning, struck him such a heavy blow on the head with his hoe that the skull was laid open, and he fell bathed in blood.

The dragoons, who had seen in the distance what had happened, now came up, and rescued Francezet from the hands of his assailant, who had continued to rain blows upon him, desiring to put an end to him. The unconscious Camisard was carried to Milhaud, where his wounds were bandaged, and himself revived by means of strong spirits forced into mouth and nostrils.

We now return to Brun. At first it seemed as if he were more fortunate than his comrade; for, meeting with no obstacle, he was soon not only out of reach, but

out of sight of his enemies. He now, however, felt broken by fatigue, and taught caution by the treachery to which he had almost fallen a victim, he dared not ask for an asylum, so, throwing himself down in a ditch, he was soon fast asleep. The dragoons, who had not given up the search, presently came upon him, and falling on him as he lay, overpowered him before he was well awake.

When both Camisards met before the governor, Francezet replied to all interrogations that since the death of brother Catinat his sole desire had been to die a martyr's death like him; while Brun said that he was proud and happy to die in the cause of the Lord along with such a brave comrade as Francezet. This manner of defence led to the application of the question both ordinary and extraordinary, and to the stake; and our readers already know what such a double sentence meant. Francezet and Brun paid both penalties on the 30th of April, betraying no secrets and uttering no complaints.

Boeton, who had been denounced by Villas when under torture (and who thereby abridged his agony) as the person in whose house the plot to carry off the Duke of Berwick and de Baviile had been arranged, still remained to be dealt with.

He was moderate in his religious views, but firm and full of faith; his principles resembled those of the Quakers in that he refused to carry arms; he was, however, willing to aid the good cause by all other means within his reach. He was at home waiting, with that calm which perfect trust in God gives, for the day to come which had been appointed for the execution of the plan, when suddenly his house was surrounded during the night by the royals. Faithful to his principles, he offered no resistance, but held out his hands to be bound. He was taken in triumph to Nimes, and from there to the citadel of Montpellier. On the way he encountered his wife and his son, who were going to the latter town to intercede for him. When they met him, they dismounted from their horse, for the mother was riding on a pillion behind the son, and kneeling on the highroad, asked for Boeton's blessing. Unfeeling though the soldiers were, they yet permitted their prisoner to stop an instant, while he, raising his fettered hands to heaven, gave the double blessing asked for. So touched was Baron Saint-Chatte by the scene (be it remarked in passing that the baron and Boeton were cousins by marriage) that he permitted them to embrace one another, so for a few moments they stood, the husband and father clasped to the hearts of his dear ones; then, on a sign from Boeton, they tore themselves away, Boeton commanding them to pray for M. de Saint-Chatte, who had given them this consolation. As he resumed his march the prisoner set them the example by

beginning to sing a psalm for the benefit of M. de Saint-Chatte.

The next day, despite the intercession of his wife and son, Boeton was condemned to torture both ordinary and extraordinary, and then to be broken on the wheel. On hearing this cruel sentence, he said that he was ready to suffer every ill that God might send him in order to prove the steadfastness of his faith.

And indeed he endured his torture with such firmness, that M. de Baviile, who was present in the hope of obtaining a confession, became more impatient than the sufferer, and, forgetting his sacred office, the judge struck and insulted the prisoner. Upon this Baeton raised his eyes to heaven and cried, "Lord, Lord! how long shall the wicked triumph? How long shall innocent blood be shed? How long wilt Thou not judge and avenge our blood with cries to Thee? Remember Thy jealousy, O Lord, and Thy loving-kindness of old!" Then M. de Baviile withdrew, giving orders that he was to be brought to the scaffold.

The scaffold was erected on the Esplanade: being, as was usual when this sort of death was to be inflicted, a wooden platform five or six feet high, on which was fastened flat a St. Andrew's cross, formed of two beams of wood in the form of an X. In each of the four arms two square pieces were cut out to about half the depth of the beam, and about a foot apart, so that when the victim was bound on the cross the outstretched limbs were easy to break by a blow at these points, having no support beneath. Lastly, near the cross, at one corner of the scaffold an upright wooden post was fixed, on which was fastened horizontally a small carriage wheel, as on a pivot, the projecting part of the nave being sawn off to make it flat. On this bed of pain the sufferer was laid, so that the spectators might enjoy the sight of his dying convulsions when, the executioner having accomplished his part, the turn of death arrived.

Boeton was carried to execution in a cart, and drums were beaten that his exhortations might not be heard. But above the roll of drums his voice rose unflinching, as he admonished his brethren to uphold their fellowship in Christ.

Half-way to the Esplanade a friend of the condemned man, who happened to be in the street, met the procession, and fearing that he could not support the sight, he took refuge in a shop. When Boeton was opposite the door, he stopped the cart and asked permission of the provost to speak to his friend. The request being granted, he called him out, and as he approached, bathed in tears, Boeton said, "Why do you run away from me? Is it because you see me covered with the

tokens of Jesus Christ? Why do you weep because He has graciously called me to Himself, and all unworthy though I be, permits me to seal my faith with my blood?" Then, as the friend threw himself into Boeton's arms and some signs of sympathetic emotion appeared among the crowd; the procession was abruptly ordered to move on; but though the leave-taking was thus roughly broken short, no murmur passed the lips of Boeton.

In turning out of the first street, the scaffold came in sight; the condemned man raised his hands towards heaven, and exclaimed in a cheerful voice, while a smile lit up his face, "Courage, my soul! I see thy place of triumph, whence, released from earthly bonds, thou shalt take flight to heaven."

When he got to the foot of the scaffold, it was found he could not mount without assistance; for his limbs, crushed in the terrible "boot," could no longer sustain his weight. While they were preparing to carry him up, he exhorted and comforted the Protestants, who were all weeping round him. When he reached the platform he laid himself of his own accord on the cross; but hearing from the executioner that he must first be undressed, he raised himself again with a smile, so that the executioner's assistant could remove his doublet and small-clothes. As he wore no stockings, his legs being bandaged the man also unwound these bandages, and rolled up Boeton's shirts-sleeves to the elbow, and then ordered him to lay himself again on the cross. Boeton did so with unbroken calm. All his limbs were then bound to the beams with cords at every joint; this accomplished, the assistant retired, and the executioner came forward. He held in his hand a square bar of iron, an inch and a half thick, three feet long, and rounded at one end so as to form a handle.

When Boeton saw it he began singing a psalm, but almost immediately the melody was interrupted by a cry: the executioner had broken a bone of Boeton's right leg; but the singing was at once resumed, and continued without interruption till each limb had been broken in two places. Then the executioner unbound the formless but still living body from the cross, and while from its lips issued words of faith in God he laid it on the wheel, bending it back on the legs in such a manner that the heels and head met; and never once during the completion of this atrocious performance did the voice of the sufferer cease to sound forth the praises of the Lord.

No execution till then had ever produced such an effect on the crowd, so that Abbe Massilla, who was present, seeing the general emotion, hastened to call M.

de Baviille's attention to the fact that, far from Boeton's death inspiring the Protestants with terror, they were only encouraged to hold out, as was proved by their tears, and the praises they lavished on the dying man.

M, de Baviille, recognising the truth of this observation, ordered that Boeton should be put out of misery. This order being conveyed to the executioner, he approached the wheel to break in Boeton's chest with one last blow; but an archer standing on the scaffold threw himself before the sufferer, saying that the Huguenot had not yet suffered half enough. At this, Boeton, who had heard the dreadful dispute going on beside him, interrupted his prayers for an instant, and raising his head, which hung down over the edge of the wheel, said, "Friend, you think I suffer, and in truth I do; but He for whom I suffer is beside me and gives me strength to bear everything joyfully." Just then M. de Baviille's order was repeated, and the archer, no longer daring to interfere, allowed the executioner to approach. Then Boeton, seeing his last moment had come, said, "My dear friends, may my death be an example to you, to incite you to preserve the gospel pure; bear faithful testimony that I died in the religion of Christ and His holy apostles." Hardly had these words passed his lips, than the deathblow was given and his chest crushed; a few inarticulate sounds, apparently prayers, were heard; the head fell back, the martyrdom was ended.

This execution ended the war in Languedoc. A few imprudent preachers still delivered belated sermons, to which the rebels listened trembling with fear, and for which the preachers paid on the wheel or gibbet. There were disturbances in Vivarais, aroused by Daniel Billard, during which a few Catholics were found murdered on the highway; there were a few fights, as for instance at Sainte-Pierre- Ville, where the Camisards, faithful to the old traditions which had come to them from Cavalier, Catinat, and Ravenal, fought one to twenty, but they were all without importance; they were only the last quiverings of the dying civil strife, the last shudderings of the earth when the eruption of the volcano is over.

Even Cavalier understood that the end had come, for he left Holland for England. There Queen Anne distinguished him by a cordial welcome; she invited him to enter her service, an offer which he accepted, and he was placed in command of a regiment of refugees; so that he actually received in England the grade of colonel, which he had been offered in France. At the battle of Almanza the regiment commanded by Cavalier found itself opposed by a French regiment. The old enemies recognised each other, and with a howl of rage, without waiting for the word of command or executing any military evolutions,

they hurled themselves at each other with such fury that, if we may believe the Duke of Berwick, who was present, they almost annihilated each other in the conflict. Cavalier, however, survived the slaughter, in which he had performed his part with energy; and for his courage was made general and governor of the island of Jersey. He died at Chelsea in May 1740, aged sixty years. "I must confess," says Malesherbes, "that this soldier, who without training became a great general by means of his natural gifts; this Camisard, who dared in the face of fierce troopers to punish a crime similar to those by which the troopers existed; this rude peasant, who, admitted into the best society; adopted its manners and gained its esteem and love; this man, who though accustomed to an adventurous life, and who might justly have been puffed up by success, had yet enough philosophy to lead for thirty-five years a tranquil private existence, appears to me to be one of the rarest characters to be met with in the pages of history."

CHAPTER VI

At length Louis XIV, bowed beneath the weight of a reign of sixty years, was summoned in his turn to appear before God, from whom, as some said, he looked for reward, and others for pardon. But Nimes, that city with the heart of fire, was quiet; like the wounded who have lost the best part of their blood, she thought only, with the egotism of a convalescent, of being left in peace to regain the strength which had become exhausted through the terrible wounds which Montrevel and the Duke of Berwick had dealt her. For sixty years petty ambition had taken the place of sublime self-sacrifice, and disputes about etiquette succeeded mortal combats. Then the philosophic era dawned, and the sarcasms of the encyclopedists withered the monarchical intolerance of Louis XIV and Charles IX. Thereupon the Protestants resumed their preaching, baptized their children and buried their dead, commerce flourished once more, and the two religions lived side by side, one concealing under a peaceful exterior the memory of its martyrs, the other the memory of its triumphs. Such was the mood on which the blood-red orb of the sun of '89 rose. The Protestants greeted it with cries of joy, and indeed the promised liberty gave them back their country, their civil rights, and the status of French citizens.

Nevertheless, whatever were the hopes of one party or the fears of the other, nothing had as yet occurred to disturb the prevailing tranquillity, when, on the 19th and 20th of July, 1789, a body of troops was formed in the capital of La Gard which was to bear the name of the Nimes Militia: the resolution which authorised this act was passed by the citizens of the three orders sitting in the hall of the palace.

It was as follows:—

“Article 10. The Nimes Legion shall consist of a colonel, a lieutenant-colonel, a major, a lieutenant-major, an adjutant, twenty-four captains, twenty-four lieutenants, seventy-two sergeants, seventy-two corporals, and eleven hundred and fifty-two privates—in all, thirteen hundred and forty-nine men, forming eighty companies.

“Article 11. The place of general assembly shall be, the Esplanade.

“Article 12. The eighty companies shall be attached to the four quarters of the

town mentioned below—viz., place de l’Hotel-de- Ville, place de la Maison-Carree, place Saint-Jean, and place du Chateau.

“Article 13. The companies as they are formed by the permanent council shall each choose its own captain, lieutenant, sergeants and corporals, and from the date of his nomination the captain shall have a seat on the permanent council.”

The Nimes Militia was deliberately formed upon certain lines which brought Catholics and Protestants closely together as allies, with weapons in their hands; but they stood over a mine which was bound to explode some day, as the slightest friction between the two parties would produce a spark.

This state of concealed enmity lasted for nearly a year, being augmented by political antipathies; for the Protestants almost to man were Republicans, and the Catholics Royalists.

In the interval—that is to say, towards January, 1790—a Catholic called Francois Froment was entrusted by the Marquis de Foucault with the task of raising, organising, and commanding a Royalist party in the South. This we learn from one of his own letters to the marquis, which was printed in Paris in 1817. He describes his mode of action in the following words:—

It is not difficult to understand that being faithful to my religion and my king, and shocked at the seditious ideas which were disseminated on all sides, I should try to inspire others with the same spirit with which I myself was animated, so, during the year 1789, I published several articles in which I exposed the dangers which threatened altar and throne. Struck with the justice of my criticisms, my countrymen displayed the most zealous ardor in their efforts to restore to the king the full exercise of all his rights. Being anxious to take advantage of this favourable state of feeling, and thinking that it would be dangerous to hold communication with the ministers of Louis XVI, who were watched by the conspirators, I went secretly to Turin to solicit the approbation and support of the French princes there. At a consultation which was held just after my arrival, I showed them that if they would arm not only the partisans of the throne, but those of the altar, and advance the interests of religion while advancing the interests of royalty, it would be easy to save both.

“My plan had for sole object to bind a party together, and give it as far as I was

able breadth and stability.

“As the revolutionists placed their chief dependence on force, I felt that they could only be met by force; for then as now I was convinced of this great truth, that one strong passion can only be overcome by another stronger, and that therefore republican fanaticism could only be driven out by religious zeal.

“The princes being convinced of the correctness of my reasoning and the efficacy of my remedies, promised me the arms and supplies necessary to stem the tide of faction, and the Comte d’Artois gave me letters of recommendation to the chief nobles in Upper Languedoc, that I might concert measures with them; for the nobles in that part of the country had assembled at Toulouse to deliberate on the best way of inducing the other Orders to unite in restoring to the Catholic religion its useful influence, to the laws their power, and to the king his liberty and authority.

“On my return to Languedoc, I went from town to town in order to meet those gentlemen to whom the Comte d’Artois had written, among whom were many of the most influential Royalists and some members of the States of Parliament. Having decided on a general plan, and agreed on a method of carrying on secret correspondence with each other, I went to Nimes to wait for the assistance which I had been promised from Turin, but which I never received. While waiting, I devoted myself to awakening and sustaining the zeal of the inhabitants, who at my suggestion, on the 20th April, passed a resolution, which was signed by 5,000 inhabitants.”

This resolution, which was at once a religious and political manifesto, was drafted by Viala, M. Froment’s secretary, and it lay for signature in his office. Many of the Catholics signed it without even reading it, for there was a short paragraph prefixed to the document which contained all the information they seemed to desire.

“GENTLEMEN,—The aspirations of a great number of our Catholic and patriotic fellow-citizens are expressed in the resolution which we have the honour of laying before you. They felt that under present circumstances such a resolution was necessary, and they feel convinced that if you give it your support, as they do not doubt you will, knowing your patriotism, your religious zeal, and your love for our august sovereign, it will conduce to the happiness of France, the maintenance of the true religion, and the rightful authority of the

king.

“We are, gentlemen, with respect, your very humble and obedient servants, the President and Commissioners of the Catholic Assembly of Nimes.

“(Signed)

“FROMENT, Commissioner LAPIERRE, President FOLACHER, ” LEVELUT, Commissioner FAURE, ” MELCHIOND, ” ROBIN, ” VIGNE, ” “

At the same time a number of pamphlets, entitled Pierre Roman to the Catholics of Nimes, were distributed to the people in the streets, containing among other attacks on the Protestants the following passages:

“If the door to high positions and civil and military honours were closed to the Protestants, and a powerful tribunal established at Nimes to see that this rule were strictly kept, you would soon see Protestantism disappear.

“The Protestants demand to share all the privileges which you enjoy, but if you grant them this, their one thought will then be to dispossess you entirely, and they will soon succeed.

“Like ungrateful vipers, who in a torpid state were harmless, they will when warmed by your benefits turn and kill you.

“They are your born enemies: your fathers only escaped as by a miracle from their bloodstained hands. Have you not often heard of the cruelties practised on them? It was a slight thing when the Protestants inflicted death alone, unaccompanied by the most horrible tortures. Such as they were such they are.”

It may easily be imagined that such attacks soon embittered minds already disposed to find new causes for the old hatred, and besides the Catholics did not long confine themselves to resolutions and pamphlets. Froment, who had already got himself appointed Receiver-General of the Chapter and captain of one of the Catholic companies, insisted on being present at the installation of the Town Council, and brought his company with him armed with pitchforks, in spite of

the express prohibition of the colonel of the legion. These forks were terrible weapons, and had been fabricated in a particular form for the Catholics of Nimes, Uzes, and Alais. But Froment and his company paid no attention to the prohibition, and this disobedience made a great impression on the Protestants, who began to divine the hostility of their adversaries, and it is very possible that if the new Town Council had not shut their eyes to this act of insubordination, civil war might have burst forth in Nimes that very day.

The next day, at roll-call, a sergeant of another company, one Allien, a cooper by trade, taunted one of the men with having carried a pitchfork the day before, in disobedience to orders. He replied that the mayor had permitted him to carry it; Allien not believing this, proposed to some of the men to go with him to the mayor's and ask if it were true. When they saw M. Marguerite, he said that he had permitted nothing of the kind, and sent the delinquent to prison. Half an hour later, however, he gave orders for his release.

As soon as he was free he set off to find his comrades, and told them what had occurred: they, considering that an insult to one was an insult to the whole company, determined on having satisfaction at once, so about eleven o'clock P.M. they went to the cooper's house, carrying with them a gallows and ropes ready greased. But quietly as they approached, Allien heard them, for his door being bolted from within had to be forced. Looking out of the window, he saw a great crowd, and as he suspected that his life was in danger, he got out of a back window into the yard and so escaped. The militia being thus disappointed, wreaked their vengeance on some passing Protestants, whose unlucky stars had led them that way; these they knocked about, and even stabbed one of them three times with a knife.

On the 22nd April, 1790, the royalists—that is to say, the Catholics—assumed the white cockade, although it was no longer the national emblem, and on the 1st May some of the militia who had planted a maypole at the mayor's door were invited to lunch with him. On the 2nd, the company which was on guard at the mayor's official residence shouted several times during the day, "Long live the king! Up with the Cross and down with the black throats!" (This was the name which they had given to the Calvinists.) "Three cheers for the white cockade! Before we are done, it will be red with the blood of the Protestants!" However, on the 5th of May they ceased to wear it, replacing it by a scarlet tuft, which in their patois they called the red pouf, which was immediately adopted as the Catholic emblem.

Each day as it passed brought forth fresh brawls and provocations: libels were invented by the Capuchins, and spread abroad by three of their number.

Meetings were held every day, and at last became so numerous that the town authorities called in the aid of the militia-dragoons to disperse them. Now these gatherings consisted chiefly of those tillers of the soil who are called cebets, from a Provençal word cebe, which means “onion,” and they could easily be recognised as Catholics by their red pouf, which they wore both in and out of uniform. On the other hand, the dragoons were all Protestants.

However, these latter were so very gentle in their admonitions, that although the two parties found themselves, so to speak, constantly face to face and armed, for several days the meetings were dispersed without bloodshed. But this was exactly what the cebets did not want, so they began to insult the dragoons and turn them into ridicule. Consequently, one morning they gathered together in great numbers, mounted on asses, and with drawn swords began to patrol the city.

At the same time, the lower classes, who were nearly all Catholics, joined the burlesque patrols in complaining loudly of the dragoons, some saying that their horses had trampled on their children, and others that they had frightened their wives.

The Protestants contradicted them, both parties grew angry, swords were half drawn, when the municipal authorities came on the scene, and instead of apprehending the ringleaders, forbade the dragoons to patrol the town any more, ordering them in future to do nothing more than send twenty men every day to mount guard at the episcopal palace and to undertake no other duty except at the express request of the Town Council. Although it was expected that the dragoons would revolt against such a humiliation, they submitted, which was a great disappointment to the cebets, who had been longing for a chance to indulge in new outrages. For all that, the Catholics did not consider themselves beaten; they felt sure of being able to find some other way of driving their quarry to bay.

Sunday, the 13th of June, arrived. This day had been selected by the Catholics for a great demonstration. Towards ten o'clock in the morning, some companies wearing the red tuft, under pretext of going to mass, marched through the city armed and uttering threats. The few dragoons, on the other hand, who were on guard at the palace, had not even a sentinel posted, and had only five muskets in the guardhouse. At two o'clock P.M. there was a meeting held in the Jacobin

church, consisting almost exclusively of militia wearing the red tuft. The mayor pronounced a panegyric on those who wore it, and was followed by Pierre Froment, who explained his mission in much the same words as those quoted above. He then ordered a cask of wine to be broached and distributed among the cebets, and told them to walk about the streets in threes, and to disarm all the dragoons whom they might meet away from their post. About six o'clock in the evening a red-tuft volunteer presented himself at the gate of the palace, and ordered the porter to sweep the courtyard, saying that the volunteers were going to get up a ball for the dragoons. After this piece of bravado he went away, and in a few moments a note arrived, couched in the following terms:

“The bishop’s porter is warned to let no dragoon on horse or on foot enter or leave the palace this evening, on pain of death.

“13th June 1790.”

This note being brought to the lieutenant, he came out, and reminded the volunteer that nobody but the town authorities could give orders to the servants at the palace. The volunteer gave an insolent answer, the lieutenant advised him to go away quietly, threatening if he did not to put him out by force. This altercation attracted a great many of the red-tufts from outside, while the dragoons, hearing the noise, came down into the yard; the quarrel became more lively, stones were thrown, the call to arms was heard, and in a few moments about forty cebets, who were prowling around in the neighbourhood of the palace, rushed into the yard carrying guns and swords. The lieutenant, who had only about a dozen dragoons at his back, ordered the bugle to sound, to recall those who had gone out; the volunteers threw themselves upon the bugler, dragged his instrument from his hands, and broke it to pieces. Then several shots were fired by the militia, the dragoons returned them, and a regular battle began. The lieutenant soon saw that this was no mere street row, but a deliberate rising planned beforehand, and realising that very serious consequences were likely to ensue, he sent a dragoon to the town hall by a back way to give notice to the authorities.

M. de Saint-Pons, major of the Nimes legion, hearing some noise outside, opened his window, and found the whole city in a tumult: people were running in every direction, and shouting as they ran that the dragoons were being killed

at the palace. The major rushed out into the streets at once, gathered together a dozen to fifteen patriotic citizens without weapons, and hurried to the town hall: There he found two officials of the town, and begged them to go at once to the place de l'Eveche, escorted by the first company, which was on guard at the town hall. They agreed, and set off. On the way several shots were fired at them, but no one was hit. When they arrived at the square, the cebets fired a volley at them with the same negative result. Up the three principal streets which led to the palace numerous red-tufts were hurrying; the first company took possession of the ends of the streets, and being fired at returned the fire, repulsing the assailants and clearing the square, with the loss of one of their men, while several of the retreating cebets were wounded.

While this struggle was going on at the palace, the spirit of murder broke loose in the town.

At the gate of the Madeleine, M. de Jalabert's house was broken into by the red-tufts; the unfortunate old man came out to meet them and asked what they wanted. "Your life and the lives of all the other dogs of Protestants!" was the reply. Whereupon he was seized and dragged through the streets, fifteen insurgents hacking at him with their swords.

At last he managed to escape from their hands, but died two days later of his wounds.

Another old man named Astruc, who was bowed beneath the weight of seventy-two years and whose white hair covered his shoulders, was met as he was on his way to the gate of Carmes. Being recognised as a Protestant, he received five wounds from some of the famous pitchforks belonging to the company of Froment. He fell, but the assassins picked him up, and throwing him into the moat, amused themselves by flinging stones at him, till one of them, with more humanity than his fellows, put a bullet through his head.

Three electors—M. Massador from near Beaucaire, M. Vialla from the canton of Lasalle, and M. Puech of the same place—were attacked by red-tufts on their way home, and all three seriously wounded. The captain who had been in command of the detachment on guard at the Electoral Assembly was returning to his quarters, accompanied by a sergeant and three volunteers of his own company, when they were stopped on the Petit-Cours by Froment, commonly called Damblay, who, pressing the barrel of a pistol to the captain's breast, said, "Stand,

you rascal, and give up your arms.” At the same time the red-tufts, seizing the captain from behind by the hair, pulled him down. Froment fired his pistol, but missed. As he fell the captain drew his sword, but it was torn from his hands, and he received a cut from Froment’s sword. Upon this the captain made a great effort, and getting one of his arms free, drew a pistol from his pocket, drove back his assassins, fired at Froment, and missed him. One of the men by his side was wounded and disarmed.

A patrol of the regiment of Guienne, attached to which was M. Boudon, a dragoon officer, was passing the Calquieres. M. Boudon was attacked by a band of red-tufts and his casque and his musket carried off. Several shots were fired at him, but none of them hit him; the patrol surrounded him to save him, but as he had received two bayonet wounds, he desired revenge, and, breaking through his protectors, darted forward to regain possession of his musket, and was killed in a moment. One of his fingers was cut off to get at a diamond ring which he wore, his pockets were rifled of his purse and watch, and his body was thrown into the moat.

Meantime the places-Recollets, the Cours, the places-Carmes, the Grand-Rue, and rue de Notre Dame-de-l’Esplanade were filled with men armed with guns, pitchforks, and swords. They had all come from Froment’s house, which overlooked that part of Nimes called Les Calquieres, and the entrance to which was on the ramparts near the Dominican Towers. The three leaders of the insurrection—Froment, Folacher, and Descombiez—took possession of these towers, which formed a part of the old castle; from this position the Catholics could sweep the entire quay of Les Calquieres and the steps of the Salle de Spectacle with their guns, and if it should turn out that the insurrection they had excited did not attain the dimensions they expected nor gain such enthusiastic adherents, it would be quite feasible for them to defend themselves in such a position until relief came.

These arrangements were either the result of long meditation or were the inspiration of some clever strategist. The fact is that everything leads one to believe that it was a plan which had been formed with great care, for the rapidity with which all the approaches to the fortress were lined with a double row of militiamen all wearing the red tuft, the care which was taken to place the most eager next the barracks in which the park of artillery was stationed, and lastly, the manner in which the approach to the citadel was barred by an entire company (this being the only place where the patriots could procure arms), combine to

prove that this plan was the result of much forethought; for, while it appeared to be only defensive, it enabled the insurrectionists to attack without much, danger; it caused others to believe that they had been first attacked. It was successfully carried out before the citizens were armed, and until then only a part of the foot guard and the twelve dragoons at the palace had offered any resistance to the conspirators.

The red flag round which, in case of civil war, all good citizens were expected to gather, and which was kept at the town hall, and which should have been brought out at the first shot, was now loudly called for. The Abbe de Belmont, a canon, vicar-general, and municipal official, was persuaded, almost forced, to become standard-bearer, as being the most likely on account of his ecclesiastical position to awe rebels who had taken up arms in the name of religion. The abbe himself gives the following account of the manner in which he fulfilled this mandate:

“About seven o’clock in the evening I was engaged with MM. Porthier and Ferrand in auditing accounts, when we heard a noise in the court, and going out on the lobby, we saw several dragoons coming upstairs, amongst whom was M. Paris. They told us that fighting was going on in the place de-l’Eveche, because some one or other had brought a note to the porter ordering him to admit no more dragoons to the palace on pain of death. At this point I interrupted their story by asking why the gates had not been closed and the bearer of the letter arrested, but they replied to me that it had not been possible; thereupon MM. Ferrand and Ponthier put on their scarfs and went out.

“A few instants later several dragoons, amongst whom I recognised none but MM. Lezan du Pontet, Paris junior, and Boudon, accompanied by a great number of the militia, entered, demanding that the red flag should be brought out. They tried to open the door of the council hall, and finding it locked, they called upon me for the key. I asked that one of the attendants should be sent for, but they were all out; then I went to the hall-porter to see if he knew where the key was. He said M. Berding had taken it. Meanwhile, just as the volunteers were about to force an entrance, someone ran up with the key. The door was opened, and the red flag seized and forced into my hands. I was then dragged down into the courtyard, and from thence to the square.

“It was all in vain to tell them that they ought first to get authority, and to represent to them that I was no suitable standard-bearer on account of my profession; but they would not listen to any objection, saying that my life

depended upon my obedience, and that my profession would overawe the disturbers of the public peace. So I went on, followed by a detachment of the Guienne regiment, part of the first company of the legion, and several dragoons; a young man with fixed bayonet kept always at my side. Rage was depicted on the faces of all those who accompanied me, and they indulged in oaths and threats, to which I paid no attention.

“In passing through the rue des Greffes they complained that I did not carry the red flag high enough nor unfurl it fully. When we got to the guardhouse at the Crown Gate, the guard turned out, and the officer was commanded to follow us with his men. He replied that he could not do that without a written order from a member of the Town Council. Thereupon those around me told me I must write such an order, but I asked for a pen and ink; everybody was furious because I had none with me. So offensive were the remarks indulged in by the volunteers and some soldiers of the Guienne regiment, and so threatening their gestures, that I grew alarmed. I was hustled and even received several blows; but at length M. de Boudon brought me paper and a pen, and I wrote:—‘I require the troops to assist us to maintain order by force if necessary.’ Upon this, the officer consented to accompany us. We had hardly taken half a dozen steps when they all began to ask what had become of the order I had just written, for it could not be found. They surrounded me, saying that I had not written it at all, and I was on the point of being trampled underfoot, when a militiaman found it all crumpled up in his pocket. The threats grew louder, and once more it was because I did not carry the flag high enough, everyone insisting that I was quite tall enough to display it to better advantage.

“However, at this point the militiamen with the red tufts made their appearance, a few armed with muskets but the greater number with swords; shots were exchanged, and the soldiers of the line and the National Guard arranged themselves in battle order, in a kind of recess, and desired me to go forward alone, which I refused to do, because I should have been between two fires.

“Upon this, curses, threats, and blows reached their height. I was dragged out before the troops and struck with the butt ends of their muskets and the flat of their swords until I advanced. One blow that I received between the shoulders filled my mouth with blood.

“All this time those of the opposite party were coming nearer, and those with whom I was continued to yell at me to go on. I went on until I met them. I

besought them to retire, even throwing myself at their feet. But all persuasion was in vain; they swept me along with them, making me enter by the Carmelite Gate, where they took the flag from me and allowed me to enter the house of a woman whose name I have never known. I was spitting such a quantity of blood that she took pity on me and brought me everything she could think of as likely to do me good, and as soon as I was a little revived I asked to be shown the way to M. Ponthier's."

While Abbe de Belmont was carrying the red flag the militia forced the Town Councillors to proclaim martial law. This had just been done when word was brought that the first red flag had been carried off, so M. Ferrand de Missol got out another, and, followed by a considerable escort, took the same road as his colleague, Abbe de Belmont. When he arrived at the Calquieres, the red-tufts, who still adorned the ramparts and towers, began to fire upon the procession, and one of the militia was disabled; the escort retreated, but M. Ferrand advanced alone to the Carmelite Gate, like M. de Belmont, and like him, he too, was taken prisoner.

He was brought to the tower, where he found Froment in a fury, declaring that the Council had not kept its promise, having sent no relief, and having delayed to give up the citadel to him.

The escort, however, had only retreated in order to seek help; they rushed tumultuously to the barracks, and finding the regiment of Guienne drawn up in marching order in command of Lieutenant-Colonel Bonne, they asked him to follow them, but he refused without a written order from a Town Councillor. Upon this an old corporal shouted, "Brave soldiers of Guienne! the country is in danger, let us not delay to do our duty." "Yes, yes," cried the soldiers; "let us march" The lieutenant colonel no longer daring to resist, gave the word of command, and they set off for the Esplanade.

As they came near the rampart with drums beating, the firing ceased, but as night was coming on the newcomers did not dare to risk attacking, and moreover the silence of the guns led them to think that the rebels had given up their enterprise. Having remained an hour in the square, the troops returned to their quarters, and the patriots went to pass the night in an inclosure on the Montpellier road.

It almost seemed as if the Catholics were beginning to recognise the futility of their plot; for although they had appealed to fanaticism, forced the Town Council

to do their will, scattered gold lavishly and made wine flow, out of eighteen companies only three had joined them. "Fifteen companies," said M. Alquier in his report to the National Assembly, "although they had adopted the red tuft, took no part in the struggle, and did not add to the number of crimes committed either on that day or during the days that followed. But although the Catholics gained few partisans among their fellow-citizens, they felt certain that people from the country would rally to their aid; but about ten o'clock in the evening the rebel ringleaders, seeing that no help arrived from that quarter either, resolved to apply a stimulus to those without. Consequently, Froment wrote the following letter to M. de Bonzols, under-commandant of the province of Languedoc, who was living at Lunel:

"SIR, Up to the present all my demands, that the Catholic companies should be put under arms, have been of no avail. In spite of the order that you gave at my request, the officials of the municipality were of opinion that it would be more prudent to delay the distribution of the muskets until after the meeting of the Electoral Assembly. This day the Protestant dragoons have attacked and killed several of our unarmed Catholics, and you may imagine the confusion and alarm that prevail in the town. As a good citizen and a true patriot, I entreat you to send an order to the regiment of royal dragoons to repair at once to Nimes to restore tranquillity and put down all who break the peace. The Town Council does not meet, none of them dares to leave his house; and if you receive no requisition from them just now, it is because they go in terror of their lives and fear to appear openly. Two red flags have been carried about the streets, and municipal officers without guards have been obliged to take refuge in patriotic houses. Although I am only a private citizen, I take the liberty of asking for aid from you, knowing that the Protestants have sent to La Vannage and La Gardoninque to ask you for reinforcements, and the arrival of fanatics from these districts would expose all good patriots to slaughter. Knowing as I do of your kindness and justice, I have full trust that my prayer will receive your favourable attention.

"FROMENT, Captain of Company No. 39

"June 13, 1790, 11 o'clock p.m."

Unfortunately for the Catholic party, Dupre and Lieutaud, to whom this letter

was entrusted for delivery, and for whom passports were made out as being employed on business connected with the king and the State, were arrested at Vehaud, and their despatches laid before the Electoral Assembly. Many other letters of the same kind were also intercepted, and the red-tufts went about the town saying that the Catholics of Nimes were being massacred.

The priest of Courbessac, among others, was shown a letter saying that a Capuchin monk had been murdered, and that the Catholics were in need of help. The agents who brought this letter to him wanted him to put his name to it that they might show it everywhere, but were met by a positive refusal.

At Bouillargues and Manduel the tocsin was sounded: the two villages joined forces, and with weapons in their hands marched along the road from Beaucaire to Nimes. At the bridge of Quart the villagers of Redressan and Marguerite joined them. Thus reinforced, they were able to bar the way to all who passed and subject them to examination; if a man could show he was a Catholic, he was allowed to proceed, but the Protestants were murdered then and there. We may remind our readers that the “Cadets de la Croix” pursued the same method in 1704.

Meantime Descombiez, Froment, and Folacher remained masters of the ramparts and the tower, and when very early one morning their forces were augmented by the insurgents from the villages (about two hundred men), they took advantage of their strength to force a way into the house of a certain Therond, from which it was easy to effect an entrance to the Jacobin monastery, and from there to the tower adjoining, so that their line now extended from the gate at the bridge of Calquieres to that at the end of College Street. From daylight to dusk all the patriots who came within range were fired at whether they were armed or not.

On the 14th June, at four o'clock in the morning, that part of the legion which was against the Catholics gathered together in the square of the Esplanade, where they were joined by the patriots from the adjacent towns and villages, who came in in small parties till they formed quite an army. At five A.M. M. de St. Pons, knowing that the windows of the Capuchin monastery commanded the position taken up by the patriots, went there with a company and searched the house thoroughly, and also the Amphitheatre, but found nothing suspicious in either.

Immediately after, news was heard of the massacres that had taken place during

the night.

The country-house belonging to M. and *Mme.* Noguies had been broken into, the furniture destroyed, the owners killed in their beds, and an old man of seventy who lived with them cut to pieces with a scythe.

A young fellow of fifteen, named Payre, in passing near the guard placed at the Pont des files, had been asked by a red-tuft if he were Catholic or Protestant. On his replying he was Protestant, he was shot dead on the spot. "That was like killing a lamb," said a comrade to the murderer. "Pooh!" said he, "I have taken a vow to kill four Protestants, and he may pass for one."

M. Maigre, an old man of eighty-two, head of one of the most respected families in the neighbourhood, tried to escape from his house along with his son, his daughter-in-law, two grandchildren, and two servants; but the carriage was stopped, and while the rebels were murdering him and his son, the mother and her two children succeeded in escaping to an inn, whither the assassins pursued them, Fortunately, however, the two fugitives having a start, reached the inn a few minutes before their pursuers, and the innkeeper had enough presence of mind to conceal them and open the garden gate by which he said they had escaped. The Catholics, believing him, scattered over the country to look for them, and during their absence the mother and children were rescued by the mounted patrol.

The exasperation of the Protestants rose higher and higher as reports of these murders came in one by one, till at last the desire for vengeance could no longer be repressed, and they were clamorously insisting on being led against the ramparts and the towers, when without warning a heavy fusillade began from the windows and the clock tower of the Capuchin monastery. M. Massin, a municipal officer, was killed on the spot, a sapper fatally wounded, and twenty-five of the National Guard wounded more or less severely. The Protestants immediately rushed towards the monastery in a disorderly mass; but the superior, instead of ordering the gates to be opened, appeared at a window above the entrance, and addressing the assailants as the vilest of the vile, asked them what they wanted at the monastery. "We want to destroy it, we want to pull it down till not one stone rests upon another," they replied. Upon this, the reverend father ordered the alarm bells to be rung, and from the mouths of bronze issued the call for help; but before it could arrive, the door was burst in with hatchets, and five Capuchins and several of the militia who wore the red tuft were killed, while all

the other occupants of the monastery ran away, taking refuge in the house of a Protestant called Paulhan. During this attack the church was respected; a man from Sornmieres, however, stole a pyx which he found in the sacristy, but as soon as his comrades perceived this he was arrested and sent to prison.

In the monastery itself, however, the doors were broken in, the furniture smashed, the library and the dispensary wrecked. The sacristy itself was not spared, its presses being broken into, its chests destroyed, and two monstresses broken; but nothing further was touched. The storehouses and the small cloth-factory connected with the monastery remained intact, like the church.

But still the towers held out, and it was round them that the real fighting took place, the resistance offered from within being all the more obstinate that the besieged expected relief from moment to moment, not knowing that their letters had been intercepted by the enemy. On every side the rattling of shot was heard, from the Esplanade, from the windows, from the roofs; but very little effect was produced by the Protestants, for Descombiez had told his men to put their caps with the red tufts on the top of the wall, to attract the bullets, while they fired from the side. Meantime the conspirators, in order to get a better command of the besiegers, reopened a passage which had been long walled up between the tower Du Poids and the tower of the Dominicans. Descombiez, accompanied by thirty men, came to the door of the monastery nearest the fortifications and demanded the key of another door which led to that part of the ramparts which was opposite the place des Carmes, where the National Guards were stationed. In spite of the remonstrances of the monks, who saw that it would expose them to great danger, the doors were opened, and Froment hastened to occupy every post of vantage, and the battle began in that quarter, too, becoming fiercer as the conspirators remarked that every minute brought the Protestants reinforcements from Gardonnique and La Vaunage. The firing began at ten o'clock in the morning, and at four o'clock in the afternoon it was going on with unabated fury.

At four o'clock, however, a servant carrying a flag of truce appeared; he brought a letter from Descombiez, Fremont, and Folacher, who styled themselves "Captains commanding the towers of the Castle." It was couched in the following words:—

"To the Commandant of the troops of the line, with the request that the contents be communicated to the militia stationed in the Esplanade.

“SIR,—We have just been informed that you are anxious for peace. We also desire it, and have never done anything to break it. If those who have caused the frightful confusion which at present prevails in the city are willing to bring it to an end, we offer to forget the past and to live with them as brothers.

“We remain, with all the frankness and loyalty of patriots and Frenchmen, your humble servants,

“The Captains of the Legion of Nimes, in command of the towers of the Castle,

“FROMENT, DESCOMBIEZ, FOLACHER NIMES, the 14th June 1790, 4.00 P.M.”

On the receipt of this letter, the city herald was sent to the towers to offer the rebels terms of capitulation. The three “captains in command” came out to discuss the terms with the commissioners of the electoral body; they were armed and followed by a great number of adherents. However, as the negotiators desired peace before all things, they proposed that the three chiefs should surrender and place themselves in the hands of the Electoral Assembly. This offer being refused, the electoral commissioners withdrew, and the rebels retired behind their fortifications. About five o’clock in the evening, just as the negotiations were broken off, M. Aubry, an artillery captain who had been sent with two hundred men to the depot of field artillery in the country, returned with six pieces of ordnance, determined to make a breach in the tower occupied by the conspirators, and from which they were firing in safety at the soldiers, who had no cover. At six o’clock, the guns being mounted, their thunder began, first drowning the noise of the musketry and then silencing it altogether; for the cannon balls did their work quickly, and before long the tower threatened to fall. Thereupon the electoral commissioners ordered the firing to cease for a moment, in the hope that now the danger had become so imminent the leaders would accept the conditions which they had refused one hour before; and not desiring to drive them to desperation, the commissioners advanced again down College Street, preceded by a bugler, and the captains were once more summoned to a parley. Froment and Descombiez came out to meet them, and seeing the condition of the tower, they agreed to lay down their arms and send them for the palace, while they themselves would proceed to the Electoral Assembly and place themselves under its protection. These proposals being accepted, the

commissioners waved their hats as a sign that the treaty was concluded.

At that instant three shots were fired from the ramparts, and cries of “Treachery! treachery!” were heard on every side. The Catholic chiefs returned to the tower, while the Protestants, believing that the commissioners were being assassinated, reopened the cannonade; but finding that it took too long to complete the breach, ladders were brought, the walls scaled, and the towers carried by assault. Some of the Catholics were killed, the others gained Froment’s house, where, encouraged by him, they tried to organise a resistance; but the assailants, despite the oncoming darkness, attacked the place with such fury that doors and windows were shattered in an instant. Froment and his brother Pierre tried to escape by a narrow staircase which led to the roof, but before they reached it Pierre was wounded in the hip and fell; but Froment reached the roof, and sprang upon an adjacent housetop, and climbing from roof to roof, reached the college, and getting into it by a garret window, took refuge in a large room which was always unoccupied at night, being used during the day as a study.

Froment remained hidden there until eleven o’clock. It being then completely dark, he got out of the window, crossed the city, gained the open country, and walking all night, concealed himself during the day in the house of a Catholic. The next night he set off again, and reached the coast, where he embarked on board a vessel for Italy, in order to report to those who had sent him the disastrous result of his enterprise.

For three whole days the carnage lasted. The Protestants losing all control over themselves, carried on the work of death not only without pity but with refined cruelty. More than five hundred Catholics lost their lives before the 17th, when peace was restored.

For a long time recriminations went on between Catholics and Protestants, each party trying to fix on the other the responsibility for those dreadful three days; but at last Franquois Froment put an end to all doubt on the subject, by publishing a work from which are set forth many of the details just laid before our readers, as well as the reward he met with when he reached Turin. At a meeting of the French nobles in exile, a resolution was passed in favour of M. Pierre Froment and his children, inhabitants of Nimes.

We give a literal reproduction of this historic document:

“We the undersigned, French nobles, being convinced that our Order was instituted that it might become the prize of valour and the encouragement of virtue, do declare that the Chevalier de Guer having given us proof of the devotion to their king and the love of their country which have been displayed by M. Pierre Froment, receiver of the clergy, and his three sons, Mathieu Froment citizen, Jacques Froment canon, Francois Froment advocate, inhabitants of Nimes, we shall henceforward regard them and their descendants as nobles and worthy to enjoy all the distinctions which belong to the true nobility. Brave citizens, who perform such distinguished actions as fighting for the restoration of the monarchy, ought to be considered as the equals of those French chevaliers whose ancestors helped to found it. Furthermore, we do declare that as soon as circumstances permit we shall join together to petition His Majesty to grant to this family, so illustrious through its virtue, all the honours and prerogatives which belong to those born noble.

“We depute the Marquis de Meran, Comte d’Espinchal, the Marquis d’Escars, Vicomte de Pons, Chevalier de Guer, and the Marquis de la Feronniere to go to Mgr. le Comte d’Artois, Mgr. le Duc d’Angouleme, Mgr. le Duc de Berry, Mgr. le Prince de Conde, Mgr. le Due de Bourbon, and Mgr. le Duc d’Enghien, to beg them to put themselves at our head when we request His Majesty to grant to MM. Froment all the distinctions and advantages reserved for the true nobility.

“At TURIN, 12th September 1790.”

The nobility of Languedoc learned of the honours conferred on their countryman, M. Froment, and addressed the following letter to him:

“LORCH, July 7, 1792

“MONSIEUR, The nobles of Languedoc hasten to confirm the resolution adopted in your favour by the nobles assembled at Turin. They appreciate the zeal and the courage which have distinguished your conduct and that of your family; they have therefore instructed us to assure you of the pleasure with which they will welcome you among those nobles who are under the orders of Marshal de Castries, and that you are at liberty to repair to Lorch to assume your proper rank in one of the companies.

“We have the honour to be, monsieur, your humble and obedient servants,

“COMTE DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC

“MARQUIS DE LA JONQUIERE “ETC.”

CHAPTER VII

The Protestants, as we have said, hailed the golden dawn of the revolution with delight; then came the Terror, which struck at all without distinction of creed. A hundred and thirty-eight heads fell on the scaffold, condemned by the revolutionary tribunal of the Gard. Ninety-one of those executed were Catholic, and forty-seven Protestants, so that it looked as if the executioners in their desire for impartiality had taken a census of the population.

Then came the Consulate: the Protestants being mostly tradesmen and manufacturers, were therefore richer than the Catholics, and had more to lose; they seemed to see more chance of stability in this form of government than in those preceding it, and it was evident that it had a more powerful genius at its head, so they rallied round it with confidence and sincerity. The Empire followed, with its inclination to absolutism, its Continental system, and its increased taxation; and the Protestants drew back somewhat, for it was towards them who had hoped so much from him that Napoleon in not keeping the promises of Bonaparte was most perjured.

The first Restoration, therefore, was greeted at Nimes with a universal shout of joy; and a superficial-observer might have thought that all trace of the old religious leaven had disappeared. In fact, for seventeen years the two faiths had lived side by side in perfect peace and mutual goodwill; for seventeen years men met either for business or for social purposes without inquiring about each other's religion, so that Nimes on the surface might have been held up as an example of union and fraternity.

When Monsieur arrived at Nimes, his guard of honour was drawn from the city guard, which still retained its organisation of 1812, being composed of citizens without distinction of creed. Six decorations were conferred on it—three on Catholics, and three on Protestants. At the same time, M. Daunant, M. Olivier Desmonts, and M. de Seine, the first the mayor, the second the president of the Consistory, and the third a member of the Prefecture, all three belonging to the Reformed religion, received the same favour.

Such impartiality on the part of Monsieur almost betrayed a preference, and this offended the Catholics. They muttered to one another that in the past there had

been a time when the fathers of those who had just been decorated by the hand of the prince had fought against his faithful adherents. Hardly had Monsieur left the town, therefore, than it became apparent that perfect harmony no longer existed.

The Catholics had a favorite cafe, which during the whole time the Empire lasted was also frequented by Protestants without a single dispute caused by the difference of religion ever arising. But from this time forth the Catholics began to hold themselves aloof from the Protestants; the latter perceiving this, gave up the cafe by degrees to the Catholics, being determined to keep the peace whatever it might cost, and went to a cafe which had been just opened under the sign of the "Isle of Elba." The name was enough to cause them to be regarded as Bonapartists, and as to Bonapartists the cry "Long live the king!" was supposed to be offensive, they were saluted at every turn with these words, pronounced in a tone which became every day more menacing. At first they gave back the same cry, "Long live the king!" but then they were called cowards who expressed with their lips a sentiment which did not come from their hearts. Feeling that this accusation had some truth in it, they were silent, but then they were accused of hating the royal family, till at length the cry which at first had issued from full hearts in a universal chorus grew to be nothing but an expression of party hatred, so that on the 21st February, 1815, M. Daunant the mayor, by a decree, prohibited the public from using it, as it had become a means of exciting sedition. Party feeling had reached this height at Nimes when, on the 4th March, the news of the landing of Napoleon arrived.

Deep as was the impression produced, the city remained calm, but somewhat sullen; in any case, the report wanted confirmation. Napoleon, who knew of the sympathy that the mountaineers felt for him, went at once into the Alps, and his eagle did not as yet take so high a flight that it could be seen hovering above Mount Geneve.

On the 12th, the Duc d'Angouleme arrived: two proclamations calling the citizens to arms signalled his presence. The citizens answered the call with true Southern ardour: an army was formed; but although Protestants and Catholics presented themselves for enrolment with equal alacrity, the Protestants were excluded, the Catholics denying the right of defending their legitimate sovereign to any but themselves.

This species of selection apparently went on without the knowledge of the Duc

d'Angouleme. During his stay in Nimes he received Protestants and Catholics with equal cordiality, and they set at his table side by side. It happened once, on a Friday, at dinner, that a Protestant general took fish and a Catholic general helped himself to fowl. The duke being amused, drew attention to this anomaly, whereupon the Catholic general replied, "Better more chicken and less treason." This attack was so direct, that although the Protestant general felt that as far as he was concerned it had no point, he rose from table and left the room. It was the brave General Gilly who was treated in this cruel manner.

Meanwhile the news became more disastrous every day: Napoleon was moving about with the rapidity of his eagles. On the 24th March it was reported in Nimes that Louis XVIII had left Paris on the 19th and that Napoleon had entered on the 20th. This report was traced to its source, and it was found that it had been spread abroad by M. Vincent de Saint-Laurent, a councillor of the Prefecture and one of the most respected men in Nimes. He was summoned at once before the authorities and asked whence he had this information; he replied, "From a letter received from M. Bragueres," producing the letter. But convincing as was this proof, it availed him nothing: he was escorted from brigade to brigade till he reached the Chateau d'If. The Protestants sided with M. Vincent de Saint-Laurent, the Catholics took the part of the authorities who were persecuting him, and thus the two factions which had been so long quiescent found themselves once more face to face, and their dormant hatred awoke to new life. For the moment, however, there was no explosion, although the city was at fever heat, and everyone felt that a crisis was at hand.

On the 22nd March two battalions of Catholic volunteers had already been enlisted at Nimes, and had formed part of the eighteen hundred men who were sent to Saint-Esprit. Just before their departure fleurs-de-lys had been distributed amongst them, made of red cloth; this change in the colour of the monarchical emblem was a threat which the Protestants well understood.

The prince left Nimes in due course, taking with him the rest of the royal volunteers, and leaving the Protestants practically masters of Nimes during the absence of so many Catholics. The city, however, continued calm, and when provocations began, strange to say they came from the weaker party.

On the 27th March six men met in a barn; dined together, and then agreed to make the circuit of the town. These men were Jacques Dupont, who later acquired such terrible celebrity under the name of Trestaillons, Truphemy the

butcher, Morenet the dog shearer, Hours, Servant, and Gilles. They got opposite the cafe "Isle of Elba," the name of which indicated the opinion of those who frequented it. This cafe was faced by a guardhouse which was occupied by soldiers of the 67th Regiment. The six made a halt, and in the most insulting tones raised the cry of "Long live the king!" The disturbance that ensued was so slight that we only mention it in order to give an idea of the tolerance of the Protestants, and to bring upon the stage the men mentioned above, who were three months later to play such a terrible part.

On April 1st the mayor summoned to a meeting at his official residence the municipal council, the members of all the variously constituted administrative bodies in Nimes, the officers of the city guards, the priests, the Protestant pastors, and the chief citizens. At this meeting, M. Trinquelague, advocate of the Royal Courts, read a powerful address, expressing the love, of the citizens for their king and country, and exhorting them to union and peace. This address was unanimously adopted and signed by all present, and amongst the signatures were those of the principal Protestants of Nimes. But this was not all: the next day it was printed and published, and copies sent to all the communes in the department over which the white flag still floated. And all this happened, as we have said, on April and, eleven days after Napoleon's return to Paris.

The same day word arrived that the Imperial Government had been proclaimed at Montpellier.

The next day, April 3rd, all the officers on half-pay assembled at the fountain to be reviewed by a general and a sub-inspector, and as these officers were late, the order of the day issued by General Ambert, recognising the Imperial Government, was produced and passed along the ranks, causing such excitement that one of the officers drew his sword and cried, "Long live the emperor!" These magic words were re-echoed from every side, and they all hastened to the barracks of the 63rd Regiment, which at once joined the officers. At this juncture Marshal Pelissier arrived, and did not appear to welcome the turn things had taken; he made an effort to restrain the enthusiasm of the crowd, but was immediately arrested by his own soldiers. The officers repaired in a body to the headquarters of General Briche, commandant of the garrison, and asked for the official copy of the order of the day. He replied that he had received none, and when questioned as to which side he was on he refused to answer. The officers upon this took him prisoner. Just as they had consigned him to the barracks for confinement, a post-office official arrived bringing a despatch from General

Ambert. Learning that General Briche was a prisoner, the messenger carried his packet to the colonel of the 63rd Regiment, who was the next in seniority after the general. In opening it, it was found to contain the order of the day.

Instantly the colonel ordered the 'gineyale' to sound: the town guards assumed arms, the troops left the barracks and formed in line, the National Guards in the rear of the regular troops, and when they were all thus drawn up; the order of the day was read; it was then snatched out of the colonel's hands, printed on large placards, and in less time than seemed possible it was posted up in every street and at every street corner; the tricolour replaced the white cockade, everyone being obliged to wear the national emblem or none at all, the city was proclaimed in a state of seige, and the military officers formed a vigilance committee and a police force.

While the Duc d'Angouleme had been staying at Nimes, General Gilly had applied for a command in that prince's army, but in spite of all his efforts obtained nothing; so immediately after the dinner at which he was insulted he had withdrawn to Avernede, his place in the country. He was awoke in the night of the 5th-6th April by a courier from General Ambert, who sent to offer him the command of the 2nd Subdivision. On the 6th, General Gilly went to Nimes, and sent in his acceptance, whereby the departments of the Gard, the Lozere, and Ardeche passed under his authority.

Next day General Gilly received further despatches from General Ambert, from which he learned that it was the general's intention, in order to avoid the danger of a civil war, to separate the Duc d'Angouleme's army from the departments which sympathised with the royal cause; he had therefore decided to make Pont-Saint-Esprit a military post, and had ordered the 10th Regiment of mounted chasseurs, the 13th artillery, and a battalion of infantry to move towards this point by forced marches. These troops were commanded by Colonel Saint-Laurent, but General Ambert was anxious that if it could be done without danger, General Gilly should leave Nimes, taking with him part of the 63rd Regiment, and joining the other forces under the command of Colonel Saint-Laurent, should assume the chief command. As the city was quite tranquil, General Gilly did not hesitate to obey this order: he set out from Nimes on the 7th, passed the night at Uzes, and finding that town abandoned by the magistrates, declared it in a state of siege, lest disturbances should arise in the absence of authority. Having placed M. de Bresson in command, a retired chief of battalion who was born in Uzes, and who usually lived there, he continued his

march on the morning of the 8th.

Beyond the village of Conans, General Gilly met an orderly sent to him by Colonel Saint-Laurent to inform him that he, the colonel, had occupied Pont Saint-Esprit, and that the Duc d'Angouleme, finding himself thus caught between two fires, had just sent General d'Aultanne, chief of staff in the royal army, to him, to enter into negotiations for a surrender. Upon this, General Gilly quickened his advance, and on reaching Pont-Saint-Esprit found General d'Aultanne and Colonel Saint-Laurent conferring together at the Hotel de la Poste.

As Colonel Saint-Laurent had received his instructions directly from the commander-in-chief, several points relating to the capitulation had already been agreed upon; of these General Gilly slightly altered some, and approved of the others, and the same day the following convention was signed:

“Convention concluded between General Gilly and Baron de Damas

“S.A.R. Mgr. le Duc d'Angouleme, Commander-in-Chief of the royal army in the South, and Baron de Gilly, General of Division and Commander-in-Chief of the first corps of the Imperial Army, being most anxiously desirous to prevent any further effusion of French blood, have given plenary powers to arrange the terms of a convention to S.A.R. M. le Baron de Damas, Field-Marshal and Under-Chief of Staff, and General de Gilly and Adjutant Lefevre, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, and Chief of the Staff of the first Army Corps; who, having shown each other their respective credentials, have agreed on the following terms:—

“Art. 1. The royal army is to be disbanded; and the National Guards which are enrolled in it, under whatever name they may have been levied, will return to their homes, after laying down their arms. Safe conducts will be provided, and the general of division commanding-in-chief guarantees that they shall never be molested for anything they may have said or done in connection with the events preceding the present convention.

“The officers will retain their swords; the troops of the line who form part of this army will repair to such garrisons as may be assigned to them.

“Art. 2. The general officers, superior staff officers and others of all branches of the service, and the chiefs and subordinates of the administrative departments, of

whose names a list will be furnished to the general-in-chief, will retire to their homes and there await the orders of His Majesty the Emperor.

“Art. 3. Officers of every rank who wish to resign their commissions are competent to do so. They will receive passports for their homes.

“Art. 4. The funds of the army and the lists of the paymaster-general will be handed over at once to commissioners appointed for that purpose by the commander-in-chief.

“Art. 5. The above articles apply to the corps commanded by Mgr. le Duc d’Angouleme in person, and also to those who act separately but under his orders, and as forming part of the royal army of the South.

“Art. 6. H.R.H. will post to Cette, where the vessels necessary for him and his suite will be waiting to take him wherever he may desire. Detachments of the Imperial Army will be placed at all the relays on the road to protect His Royal Highness during the journey, and the honours due to his rank will be everywhere paid him, if he so desire.

“Art. 7. All the officers and other persons of His Royal Highness’ suite who desire to follow him will be permitted to do so, and they may either embark with him at once or later, should their private affairs need time for arrangement.

“Art. 8. The present treaty will be kept secret until His Royal Highness have quitted the limits of the empire.

“Executed in duplicate and agreed upon between the above-mentioned plenipotentiaries the 8th day of April in the year 1815, with the approval of the general commanding-in-chief, and signed,

“At the headquarters at Pont-Saint-Esprit on the day and year above written

“(Signed) LEFEVRE Adjutant and Chief of Staff of the First Corps of the Imperial Army of the South

“(Signed) BARON DE DAMAS Field-Marshal and Under-Chief of Staff

“The present convention is approved of by the General of Division Commanding-in-Chief the Imperial Army of the South.

“(Signed) GILLY”

After some discussion between General Gilly and General Grouchy, the capitulation was carried into effect. On the 16th April, at eight o'clock in the morning, the Duc d'Angouleme arrived at Cette, and went on board the Swedish vessel Scandinavia, which, taking advantage of a favourable wind, set sail the same day.

Early in the morning of the 9th an officer of high rank had been sent to La Palud to issue safe-conducts to the troops, who according to Article I of the capitulation were to return home “after laying down their arms.” But during the preceding day and night some of the royal volunteers had evaded this article by withdrawing with their arms and baggage. As this infraction of the terms led to serious consequences, we propose, in order to establish the fact, to cite the depositions of three royal volunteers who afterwards gave evidence.

“On leaving the army of the Duc d'Angouleme after the capitulation,” says Jean Saunier, “I went with my officers and my corps to Saint-Jean-des-Anels. From there we marched towards Uzes. In the middle of a forest, near a village, the name of which I have forgotten, our General M. de Vogue told us that we were all to return to our own homes. We asked him where we should deposit the flag. Just then Commandant Magne detached it from the staff and put it in his pocket. We then asked the general where we should deposit our arms; he replied, that we had better keep them, as we should probably find use for them before long, and also to take our ammunition with us, to ensure our safety on the road.

“From that time on we all did what we thought best: sixty-four of us remained together, and took a guide to enable us to avoid Uzes.”

Nicholas Marie, labourer, deposed as follows:

“On leaving the army of the Duc d'Angouleme after the capitulation, I went with my officers and my corps to Saint-Jean-des-Anels. We marched towards Uzes, but when we were in the middle of a forest, near a village the name of which I have forgotten, our general, M. de Vogue, told us that we were to go to our own homes as soon as we liked. We saw Commandant Magne loose the flag from its

staff, roll it up and put it in his pocket. We asked the general what we were to do with our arms; he replied that we were to keep both them and our ammunition, as we should find them of use. Upon this, our chiefs left us, and we all got away as best we could.”

“After the capitulation of the Duc d’Angouleme I found myself,” deposes Paul Lambert, lace-maker of Nimes, “in one of several detachments under the orders of Commandant Magne and General Vogue. In the middle of a forest near a village, the name of which I do not know, M. de Vogue and the other officer, told us we might go home. The flag was folded up, and M. Magne put it in his pocket. We asked our chiefs what we were to do with our arms. M. de Vogue told us that we had better keep them, as we should need them before very long; and in any case it would be well to have them with us on the road, lest anything should happen to us.”

The three depositions are too much alike to leave room for any doubt. The royal volunteers contravened Article I of the convention.

Being thus abandoned by their chiefs, without general and without flag, M. de Vogue’s soldiers asked no further counsel of anyone but themselves, and, as one of them has already told us, sixty-four of them joined together to hire a guide who was to show them how to get by Uzes without going through it, for they were afraid of meeting with insult there. The guide brought them as far as Montarem without anyone opposing their passage or taking notice of their arms.

Suddenly a coachman named Bertrand, a confidential servant of Abbe Rafin, former Grand-Vicar of Alais, and of Baroness Arnaud-Wurmeser (for the abbe administered the estate of Aureillac in his own name and that of the baroness), galloped into the village of Arpaillargues, which was almost entirely Protestant and consequently Napoleonist, announcing that the miquelets (for after one hundred and ten years the old name given to the royal troops was revived) were on the way from Montarem, pillaging houses, murdering magistrates, outraging women, and then throwing them out of the windows. It is easy to understand the effect of such a story. The people gathered together in groups; the mayor and his assistant being absent, Bertrand was taken before a certain Boucarut, who on receiving his report ordered the generale to be beaten and the tocsin to be rung. Then the consternation became general: the men seized their muskets, the women and children stones and pitchforks, and everyone made ready to face a danger which only existed in the imagination of Bertrand, for there was not a

shadow of foundation for the story he had told.

While the village was in this state of feverish excitement the royal volunteers came in sight. Hardly were they seen than the cry, "There they are! There they are!" arose on all sides, the streets were barricaded with carts, the tocsin rang out with redoubled frenzy, and everyone capable of carrying arms rushed to the entrance of the village.

The volunteers, hearing the uproar and seeing the hostile preparations, halted, and to show that their intentions were peaceful, put their shakos on their musket stocks and waved them above their heads, shouting that no one need fear, for they would do no harm to anyone. But alarmed as they were by the terrible stories told by Bertrand, the villagers shouted back that they could not trust to such assurances, and that if they wanted to pass through the village they must first give up their weapons. It may easily be imagined that men who had broken the convention in order to keep their weapons were not likely to give them up to these villagers—in fact, they obstinately refused to let them out of their hands, and by doing so increased the suspicions of the people. A parley of a very excited character took place between M. Fournier for the royal guards and M. Boucarut, who was chosen spokesman by the villagers. From words they came to deeds: the miquelets tried to force their way through, some shots were fired, and two miquelets, Calvet and Fournier, fell. The others scattered, followed by a lively discharge, and two more miquelets were slightly wounded. Thereupon they all took to flight through the fields on either side of the road, pursued for a short distance by the villagers, but soon returned to examine the two wounded men, and a report was drawn up by Antoine Robin, advocate and magistrate of the canton of Uzes, of the events just related.

This accident was almost the only one of its kind which happened during the Hundred Days: the two parties remained face to face, threatening but self-controlled. But let there be no mistake: there was no peace; they were simply awaiting a declaration of war. When the calm was broken, it was from Marseilles that the provocation came. We shall efface ourselves for a time and let an eye-witness speak, who being a Catholic cannot be suspected of partiality for the Protestants.

"I was living in Marseilles at the time of Napoleon's landing, and I was a witness of the impression which the news produced upon everyone. There was one great cry; the enthusiasm was universal; the National Guard wanted to join him to the

last man, but Marshal Massena did not give his consent until it was too late, for Napoleon had already reached the mountains, and was moving with such swiftness that it would have been impossible to overtake him. Next we heard of his triumphal entry into Lyons, and of his arrival in Paris during the night. Marseilles submitted like the rest of France; Prince d'Essling was recalled to the capital, and Marshal Brune, who commanded the 6th corps of observation, fixed his headquarters at Marseilles.

“With quite incomprehensible fickleness, Marseilles, whose name during the Terror had been, as one may say, the symbol of the most advanced opinions, had become almost entirely Royalist in 1815. Nevertheless, its inhabitants saw without a murmur the tricolour flag after a year's absence floating once more above the walls. No arbitrary interference on the part of the authorities, no threats, and no brawling between the citizens and the soldiers, troubled the peace of old Phocea; no revolution ever took place with such quietness and facility.

“It must, however, be said, that Marshal Brune was just the man to accomplish such a transformation without friction; in him the frankness and loyalty of an old soldier were combined with other qualities more solid than brilliant. Tacitus in hand, he looked on at modern revolutions as they passed, and only interfered when the voice of his country called him to her defence. The conqueror of Harlem and Bakkun had been for four years forgotten in retirement, or rather in exile, when the same voice which sent him away recalled him, and at the summons Cincinnatus left his plough and grasped his weapons. Physically he was at this period a man of about fifty-five, with a frank and open face framed by large whiskers; his head was bald except for a little grizzled hair at the temples; he was tall and active, and had a remarkably soldierly bearing.

“I had been brought into contact with him by a report which one of my friends and I had drawn up on the opinions of the people of the South, and of which he had asked to have a copy. In a long conversation with us, he discussed the subject with the impartiality of a man who brings an open mind to a debate, and he invited us to come often to see him. We enjoyed ourselves so much in his society that we got into the habit of going to his house nearly every evening.

“On his arrival in the South an old calumny which had formerly pursued him again made its appearance, quite rejuvenated by its long sleep. A writer whose name I have forgotten, in describing the Massacres of the Second of September and the death of the unfortunate Princesse de Lamballe, had said, ‘Some people

thought they recognised in the man who carried her head impaled on a pike, General Brune in disguise,' and this accusation; which had been caught up with eagerness under the Consulate, still followed him so relentlessly in 1815, that hardly a day passed without his receiving an anonymous letter, threatening him with the same fate which had overtaken the princess. One evening while we were with him such a letter arrived, and having read it he passed it on to us. It was as follows:

“Wretch,—We are acquainted with all your crimes, for which you will soon receive the chastisement you well deserve. It was you who during the revolution brought about the death of the Princesse de Lamballe; it was you who carried her head on a pike, but your head will be impaled on something longer. If you are so rash as to be present at the review of the Allies it is all up with you, and your head will be stuck on the steeple of the Accoules. Farewell, SCOUNDREL!’

“We advised him to trace this calumny to its source, and then to take signal vengeance on the authors. He paused an instant to reflect, and then lit the letter at a candle, and looking at it thoughtfully as it turned to ashes in his hand, said,—Vengeance! Yes, perhaps by seeking that I could silence the authors of these slanders and preserve the public tranquillity which they constantly imperil. But I prefer persuasion to severity. My principle is, that it is better to bring men’s heads back to a right way of thinking than to cut them off, and to be regarded as a weak man rather than as a bloodthirsty one.’

“The essence of Marshal Brune’s character was contained in these words.

“Public tranquillity was indeed twice endangered at Marseilles during the Hundred Days, and both times in the same manner. The garrison officers used to gather at a coffee-house in the place Necker, and sing songs suggested by passing events. This caused an attack by the townspeople, who broke the windows by throwing stones, some of which struck the officers. These rushed out, crying, ‘To arms!’ The townspeople were not slow to respond, but the commandant ordered the ‘geneydle’ to beat, sent out numerous patrols, and succeeded in calming the excitement and restoring quietness without any casualties.

“The day of the Champ du Mai orders for a general illumination were given, and that the tricolour flag should be displayed from the windows. The greater number of the inhabitants paid no attention to the desires of the authorities, and

the officers being annoyed at this neglect, indulged in reprehensible excesses, which, however, resulted in nothing more serious than some broken windows belonging to houses which had not illuminated, and in some of the householders being forced to illuminate according to order.

“In Marseilles as in the rest of France, people began to despair of the success of the royal cause, and those who represented this cause, who were very numerous at Marseilles, gave up annoying the military and seemed to resign themselves to their fate. Marshal Brune had left the city to take up his post on the frontier, without any of the dangers with which he was threatened having come across his path.

“The 25th of June arrived, and the news of the successes obtained at Fleurus and at Ligny seemed to justify the hopes of the soldiers, when, in the middle of the day, muttered reports began to spread in the town, the distant reverberations of the cannon of Waterloo. The silence of the leaders, the uneasiness of the soldiers, the delight of the Royalists, foretold the outbreak of a new struggle, the results of which it was easy to anticipate. About four o’clock in the afternoon, a man, who had probably got earlier information than his fellow-townpeople, tore off his tricoloured cockade and trampled it under foot, crying, “Long live the king!” The angry soldiers seized him and were about to drag him to the guardhouse, but the National Guards prevented them, and their interference led to a fight. Shouts were heard on all sides, a large ring was formed round the soldiers, a few musket shots heard, others answered, three or four men fell, and lay there weltering in their blood. Out of this confused uproar the word “Waterloo” emerged distinct; and with this unfamiliar name pronounced for the first time in the resounding voice of history, the news of the defeat of the French army and the triumph of the Allies spread apace. Then General Verdier, who held the chief command in the absence of Marshal Brune, tried to harangue the people, but his voice was drowned by the shouts of the mob who had gathered round a coffee-house where stood a bust of the emperor, which they insisted should be given up to them. Verdier, hoping to calm, what he took to be a simple street row, gave orders that the bust should be brought out, and this concession, so significant on the part of a general commanding in the emperor’s name, convinced the crowd that his cause was lost. The fury of the populace grew greater now that they felt that they could indulge it with impunity; they ran to the Town Hall, and tearing down and burning the tricoloured, raised the white flag. The roll of the generale, the clang of the tocsin were heard, the neighbouring villages poured in their populations and increased the throng in the streets; single acts of violence began to occur,

wholesale massacres were approaching. I had arrived in the town with my friend M_____ the very beginning of the tumult, so we had seen the dangerous agitation and excitement grow under our eyes, but we were still ignorant of its true cause, when, in the rue de Noailles, we met an acquaintance, who, although his political opinions did not coincide with ours, had always shown himself very friendly to us. 'Well,' said I, 'what news?' 'Good for me and bad for you,' he answered; 'I advise you to go away at once.' Surprised and somewhat alarmed at these words, we begged him to explain. 'Listen,' said he; 'there are going to be riots in the town; it is well known that you used to go to Brune's nearly every evening, and that you are in consequence no favourite with your neighbours; seek safety in the country.' I addressed some further question to him, but, turning his back on me, he left me without another word.

"M_____ and I were still looking at each other in stupefaction, when the increasing uproar aroused us to a sense that if we desired to follow the advice just given we had not a moment to lose. We hastened to my house, which was situated in the Allees de Meilhan. My wife was just going out, but I stopped her.

"'We are not safe here,' I said; 'we must get away into the country.'

"'But where can we go?'

"'Wherever luck takes us. Let us start.'

"She was going to put on her bonnet, but I told her to leave it behind; for it was most important that no one should think we suspected anything, but were merely going for a stroll. This precaution saved us, for we learned the next day that if our intention to fly had been suspected we should have been stopped.

"We walked at random, while behind us we heard musket shots from every part of the town. We met a company of soldiers who were hurrying to the relief of their comrades, but heard later that they had not been allowed to pass the gate.

"We recollected an old officer of our acquaintance who had quitted the service and withdrawn from the world some years before, and had taken a place in the country near the village of Saint-Just; we directed our course towards his house.

"'Captain,' said I to him, 'they are murdering each other in the town, we are pursued and without asylum, so we come to you.' 'That's right, my children,' said he; 'come in and welcome. I have never meddled with political affairs, and

no one can have anything against me. No one will think of looking for you here.'

"The captain had friends in the town, who, one after another, reached his house, and brought us news of all that went on during that dreadful day. Many soldiers had been killed, and the Mamelukes had been annihilated. A negress who had been in the service of these unfortunates had been taken on the quay. 'Cry "Long live the king!"' shouted the mob. 'No,' she replied. 'To Napoleon I owe my daily bread; long live Napoleon!' A bayonet-thrust in the abdomen was the answer. 'Villains!' said she, covering the wound with her hand to keep back the protruding entrails. 'Long live Napoleon!' A push sent her into the water; she sank, but rose again to the surface, and waving her hand, she cried for the last time, 'Long live Napoleon!' a bullet shot putting an end to her life.

"Several of the townspeople had met with shocking deaths. For instance, M. Angles, a neighbour of mine, an old man and no inconsiderable scholar, having unfortunately, when at the palace some days before, given utterance before witnesses to the sentiment that Napoleon was a great man, learned that for this crime he was about to be arrested. Yielding to the prayers of his family, he disguised himself, and, getting into a waggon, set off to seek safety in the country. He was, however, recognised and brought a prisoner to the place du Chapitre, where, after being buffeted about and insulted for an hour by the populace, he was at last murdered.

"It may easily be imagined that although no one came to disturb us we did not sleep much that night. The ladies rested on sofas or in armchairs without undressing, while our host, M_____ and myself took turns in guarding the door, gun in hand.

"As soon as it was light we consulted what course we should take: I was of the opinion that we ought to try to reach Aix by unfrequented paths; having friends there, we should be able to procure a carriage and get to Nimes, where my family lived. But my wife did not agree with me. 'I must go back to town for our things,' said she; 'we have no clothes but those on our backs. Let us send to the village to ask if Marseilles is quieter to-day than yesterday.' So we sent off a messenger.

"The news he brought back was favourable; order was completely restored. I could not quite believe this, and still refused to let my wife return to the town unless I accompanied her. But in that everyone was against me: my presence

would give rise to dangers which without me had no existence. Where were the miscreants cowardly enough to murder a woman of eighteen who belonged to no-party and had never injured anyone? As for me, my opinions were well known. Moreover, my mother-in-law offered to accompany her daughter, and both joined in persuading me that there was no danger. At last I was forced to consent, but only on one condition.

“‘I cannot say,’ I observed, ‘whether there is any foundation for the reassuring tidings we have heard, but of one thing you may be sure: it is now seven o’clock in the morning, you can get to Marseilles in an hour, pack your trunks in another hour, and return in a third; let us allow one hour more for unforeseen delays. If you are not back by eleven o’clock, I shall believe something has happened, and take steps accordingly.’ ‘Very well,’ said my wife; ‘if I am not back by then, you may think me dead, and do whatever you think best.’ And so she and her mother left me.

“An hour later, quite different news came to hand. Fugitives, seeking like ourselves safety in the country, told us that the rioting, far from ceasing, had increased; the streets were encumbered with corpses, and two people had been murdered with unheard-of cruelty.

“An old man named Bessieres, who had led a simple and blameless life, and whose only crime was that he had served under the Usurper, anticipating that under existing circumstances this would be regarded as a capital crime, made his will, which was afterwards found among his papers. It began with the following words:

“‘As it is possible that during this revolution I may meet my death, as a partisan of Napoleon, although I have never loved him, I give and bequeath, etc., etc.

“The day before, his brother-in-law, knowing he had private enemies, had come to the house and spent the night trying to induce him to flee, but all in vain. But the next morning, his house being attacked, he yielded, and tried to escape by the back door. He was stopped by some of the National Guard, and placed himself under their protection.

“They took him to the Cours St. Louis, where, being hustled by the crowd and very ineffectually defended by the Guards, he tried to enter the Cafe Mercantier, but the door was shut in his face. Being broken by fatigue, breathless, and

covered with dust and sweat, he threw himself on one of the benches placed against the wall, outside the house. Here he was wounded by a musket bullet, but not killed. At the sight of his blood shrieks of joy were heard, and then a young man with a pistol in each hand forced his way through the throng and killed the old man by two shots fired point blank in his face.

“Another still more atrocious murder took place in the course of the same morning. A father and son, bound back to back, were delivered over to the tender mercies of the mob. Stoned and beaten and covered with each other’s blood, for two long hours their death-agony endured, and all the while those who could not get near enough to strike were dancing round them.

“Our time passed listening to such stories; suddenly I saw a friend running towards the house. I went to meet him. He was so pale that I hardly dared to question him. He came from the city, and had been at my house to see what had become of me. There was no one in it, but across the door lay two corpses wrapped in a bloodstained sheet which he had not dared to lift.

“At these terrible words nothing could hold me back. I set off for Marseilles. M_____ who would not consent to let me return alone, accompanied me. In passing through the village of Saint-Just we encountered a crowd of armed peasants in the main street who appeared to belong to the free companies. Although this circumstance was rather alarming, it would have been dangerous to turn back, so we continued our way as if we were not in the least uneasy. They examined our bearing and our dress narrowly, and then exchanged some sentences in a low, voice, of which we only caught the word *austaniers*. This was the name by which the Bonapartists were called by the peasants, and means ‘eaters of chestnuts,’ this article of food being brought from Corsica to France. However, we were not molested in any way, for as we were going towards the city they did not think we could be fugitives. A hundred yards beyond the village we came up with a crowd of peasants, who were, like us, on the way to Marseilles. It was plain to see that they had just been pillaging some country house, for they were laden with rich stuffs, chandeliers and jewels. It proved to be that of M. R____, inspector of reviews. Several carried muskets. I pointed out to my companion a stain of blood on the trousers of one of the men, who began to laugh when he saw what we were looking at. Two hundred yards outside the city I met a woman who had formerly been a servant in my house. She was very much astonished to see me, and said, ‘Go away at once; the massacre is horrible, much worse than yesterday.’

“‘But my wife,’ I cried, ‘do you know anything about her?’

“‘No, sir,’ she replied; ‘I was going to knock at the door, but some people asked me in a threatening manner if I could tell them where the friend of that rascal Brine was, as they were going to take away his appetite for bread. So take my advice,’ she continued, ‘and go back to where you came from.’

“‘This advice was the last I could make up my mind to follow, so we went on, but found a strong guard at the gate, and saw that it would be impossible to get through without being recognised. At the same time, the cries and the reports of firearms from within were coming nearer; it would therefore have been to court certain death to advance, so we retraced our steps. In passing again through the village of Saint-Just we met once more our armed peasants. But this time they burst out into threats on seeing us, shouting, ‘Let us kill them! Let us kill them!’ Instead of running away, we approached them, assuring them that we were Royalists. Our coolness was so convincing that we got through safe and sound.

“‘On getting back to the captain’s I threw myself on the sofa, quite overcome by the thought that only that morning my wife had been beside me under my protection, and that I had let her go back to the town to a cruel and inevitable death. I felt as if my heart would break, and nothing that our host and my friend could say gave me the slightest comfort. I was like a madman, unconscious of everything round me.

“‘M_____ went out to try to pick up some news, but in an instant we heard him running back, and he dashed into the room, calling out

“‘They are coming! There they are!’

“‘Who are coming?’ we asked.

“‘The assassins!’

“‘My first feeling, I confess, was one of joy. I pounced upon a pair of double-barrelled pistols, resolved not to let myself be slaughtered like a sheep. Through the window I could see some men climbing over the wall and getting down into the garden. We had just sufficient time to escape by a back staircase which led to a door, through which we passed, shutting it behind us. We found ourselves on a road, at the other side of which was a vineyard. We crossed the road and crept under the vines, which completely concealed us.

“As we learned later, the captain’s house had been denounced as a Bonapartist nest, and the assassins had hoped to take it by surprise; and, indeed, if they had come a little sooner we had been lost, for before we had been five minutes in our hiding-place the murderers rushed out on the road, looking for us in every direction, without the slightest suspicion that we were not six yards distant. Though they did not see us I could see them, and I held my pistols ready cocked, quite determined to kill the first who came near. However, in a short time they went away.

” As soon as they were out of hearing we began to consider our situation and weigh our chances. There was no use in going back to the captain’s, for he was no longer there, having also succeeded in getting away. If we were to wander about the country we should be recognised as fugitives, and the fate that awaited us as such was at that moment brought home to us, for a few yards away we suddenly heard the shrieks of a man who was being murdered. They were the first cries of agony I had ever heard, and for a few moments, I confess, I was frozen with terror. But soon a violent reaction took place within me, and I felt that it would be better to march straight to meet peril than to await its coming, and although I knew the danger of trying to go through Saint-Just again, I resolved to risk it, and to get to Marseilles at all costs. So, turning to M____, I said:

“‘You can remain here without danger until the evening, but I am going to Marseilles at once; for I cannot endure this uncertainty any longer. If I find Saint-Just clear, I shall come back and rejoin you, but if not I shall get away as best I can alone.’

“Knowing the danger that we were running, and how little chance there was that we should ever see each other again, he held out his hand to me, but I threw myself into his arms and gave him a last embrace.

“I started at once: when I reached Saint-Just I found the freebooters still there; so I walked up to them, trolling a melody, but one of them seized me by the collar and two others took aim at me with their muskets.

“If ever in my life I shouted ‘Long live the king!’ with less enthusiasm than the cry deserves, it was then: to assume a rollicking air, to laugh with cool carelessness when there is nothing between you and death but the more or less strong pressure of a highwayman’s finger on the trigger of a musket, is no easy

task; but all this I accomplished, and once more got through the village with a whole skin indeed, but with the unalterable resolution to blow my brains out rather than again try such an experiment.

“Having now a village behind me which I had vowed never to reenter, and there being no road available by which I could hope to get round Marseilles, the only course open to me was to make my way into the city. At that moment this was a thing of difficulty, for many small bodies of troops, wearing the white cockade, infested the approaches. I soon perceived that the danger of getting in was as great as ever, so I determined to walk up and down till night, hoping the darkness would come to my aid; but one of the patrols soon gave me to understand that my prowling about had aroused suspicion, and ordered me either to go on to the city, in which by all accounts there was small chance of safety for me, or back to the village; where certain death awaited me. A happy inspiration flashed across my mind, I would get some refreshment, and seeing an inn near by, I went in and ordered a mug of beer, sitting down near the window, faintly hoping that before the necessity for a final decision arrived, someone who knew me would pass by. After waiting half an hour, I did indeed see an acquaintance—no other than M_____, whom I had left in the vineyard. I beckoned him, and he joined me. He told me that, being too impatient to await my return, he had soon made up his mind to follow me, and by joining a band of pillagers was lucky enough to get safely through Saint-Just. We consulted together as to what we had better do next, and having applied to our host, found he could supply us with a trusty messenger, who would carry the news of our whereabouts to my brother-in-law. After an anxious wait of three hours, we saw him coming. I was about to run out to meet him, but M_____ held me back, pointing out the danger of such a step; so we sat still our eyes fixed on the approaching figure. But when my brother-in-law reached the inn, I could restrain my impatience no longer, but rushing out of the room met him on the stairs.

“‘My wife?’ I cried. ‘Have you seen my wife?’

“‘She is at my house,’ was the reply, and with a cry of joy I threw myself into his arms.

“My wife, who had been threatened, insulted, and roughly treated because of my opinions, had indeed found safety at my brother-in-law’s.

“Night was coming on. My brother-in-law, who wore the uniform of the

National Guard, which was at that moment a safeguard, took us each by an arm, and we passed the barrier without anyone asking us who we were. Choosing quiet streets, we reached his house unmolested; but in fact the whole city was quiet, for the carnage was practically at an end.

“My wife safe! this thought filled my heart with joy almost too great to bear.

“Her adventures were the following:

“My wife and her mother had gone to our house, as agreed upon, to pack our trunks. As they left their rooms, having accomplished their task, they found the landlady waiting on the staircase, who at once overwhelmed my wife with a torrent of abuse.

“The husband, who until then had known nothing of their tenant’s return, hearing the noise, came out of his room, and, seizing his wife by the arm, pulled her in and shut the door. She, however, rushed to the window, and just as my wife and her mother reached the street, shouted to a free band who were on guard across the way, ‘Fire! they are Bonapartists!’ Fortunately the men, more merciful than the woman, seeing two ladies quite alone, did not hinder their passage, and as just then my brother-in-law came by, whose opinions were well known and whose uniform was respected, he was allowed to take them under his protection and conduct them to his house in safety.

“A young man, employed at the Prefecture, who had called at my house the day before, I having promised to help him in editing the *Journal des Bouches-du-Rhone*, was not so lucky. His occupation and his visit to me laid him under suspicion of possessing dangerous opinions, and his friends urged him to fly; but it was too late. He was attacked at the corner of the rue de Noailles, and fell wounded by a stab from a dagger. Happily, however, he ultimately recovered.

“The whole day was passed in the commission of deeds still more bloody than those of the day before; the sewers ran blood, and every hundred yards a dead body was to be met. But this sight, instead of satiating the thirst for blood of the assassins, only seemed to awaken a general feeling of gaiety. In the evening the streets resounded with song and roundelay, and for many a year to come that which we looked back on as ‘the day of the massacre’ lived in the memory of the Royalists as ‘the day of the farce.’

“As we felt we could not live any longer in the midst of such scenes, even

though, as far as we were concerned, all danger was over, we set out for Nimes that same evening, having been offered the use of a carriage.

“Nothing worthy of note happened on the road to Orgon, which we reached next day; but the isolated detachments of troops which we passed from time to time reminded us that the tranquillity was nowhere perfect. As we neared the town we saw three men going about arm in arm; this friendliness seemed strange to us after our recent experiences, for one of them wore a white cockade, the second a tricolour, and the third none at all, and yet they went about on the most brotherly terms, each awaiting under a different banner the outcome of events. Their wisdom impressed me much, and feeling I had nothing to fear from such philosophers, I went up to them and questioned them, and they explained their hopes to me with the greatest innocence, and above all, their firm determination to belong to what ever party got the upper hand. As we drove into Orgon we saw at a glance that the whole town was simmering with excitement. Everybody’s face expressed anxiety. A man who, we were told, was the mayor, was haranguing a group. As everyone was listening, with the greatest attention, we drew near and asked them the cause of the excitement.

“‘Gentlemen,’ said he, ‘you ought to know the news: the king is in his capital, and we have once more hoisted the white flag, and there has not been a single dispute to mar the tranquillity of the day; one party has triumphed without violence, and the other has submitted with resignation. But I have just learned that a band of vagabonds, numbering about three hundred, have assembled on the bridge over the Durance, and are preparing to raid our little town tonight, intending by pillage or extortion to get at what we possess. I have a few guns left which I am about to distribute, and each man will watch over the safety of all.’

“Although he had not enough arms to go round, he offered to supply us, but as I had my double-barrelled pistols I did not deprive him of his weapons. I made the ladies go to bed, and, sitting at their door, tried to sleep as well as I could, a pistol in each hand. But at every instant the noise of a false alarm sounded through the town, and when day dawned my only consolation was that no one else in Orgon had slept any better than I.

“The next day we continued our journey to Tarascon, where new excitements awaited us. As we got near the town we heard the tocsin clanging and drums beating the generale. We were getting so accustomed to the uproar that we were not very much astonished. However, when we got in we asked what was going

on, and we were told that twelve thousand troops from Nimes had marched on Beaucaire and laid it waste with fire and sword. I insinuated that twelve thousand men was rather a large number for one town to furnish, but was told that that included troops from the Gardonnique and the Cevennes. Nimes still clung to the tricolour, but Beaucaire had hoisted the white flag, and it was for the purpose of pulling it down and scattering the Royalists who were assembling in numbers at Beaucaire that Nimes had sent forth her troops on this expedition. Seeing that Tarascon and Beaucaire are only separated by the Rhone, it struck me as peculiar that such quiet should prevail on one bank, while such fierce conflict was raging on the other. I did not doubt that something had happened, but not an event of such gravity as was reported. We therefore decided to push on to Beaucaire, and when we got there we found the town in the most perfect order. The expedition of twelve thousand men was reduced to one of two hundred, which had been easily repulsed, with the result that of the assailants one had been wounded and one made prisoner. Proud of this success, the people of Beaucaire entrusted us with a thousand objurgations to deliver to their inveterate enemies the citizens of Nimes.

“If any journey could give a correct idea of the preparations for civil war and the confusion which already prevailed in the South, I should think that without contradiction it would be that which we took that day. Along the four leagues which lie between Beaucaire and Nimes were posted at frequent intervals detachments of troops displaying alternately the white and the tricoloured cockade. Every village upon our route except those just outside of Nimes had definitely joined either one party or the other, and the soldiers, who were stationed at equal distances along the road, were now Royalist and now Bonapartist. Before leaving Beaucaire we had all provided ourselves, taking example by the men we had seen at Orgon, with two cockades, one white, and one tricoloured, and by peeping out from carriage windows we were able to see which was worn by the troops we were approaching in time to attach a similar one to our hats before we got up to them, whilst we hid the other in our shoes; then as we were passing we stuck our heads, decorated according to circumstances, out of the windows, and shouted vigorously, ‘Long live the king!’ or ‘Long live the emperor!’ as the case demanded. Thanks to this concession to political opinions on the highway, and in no less degree to the money which we gave by way of tips to everybody everywhere, we arrived at length at the barriers of Nimes, where we came up with the National Guards who had been repulsed by the townspeople of Beaucaire.

“This is what had taken place just before we arrived in the city:

“The National Guard of Nimes and the troops of which the garrison was composed had resolved to unite in giving a banquet on Sunday, the 28th of June, to celebrate the success of the French army. The news of the battle of Waterloo travelled much more quickly to Marseilles than to Nimes, so the banquet took place without interruption. A bust of Napoleon was carried in procession all over the town, and then the regular soldiers and the National Guard devoted the rest of the day to rejoicings, which were followed by no excess.

“But the day was not quite finished before news came that numerous meetings were taking place at Beaucaire, so although the news of the defeat at Waterloo reached Nimes on the following Tuesday, the troops which we had seen returning at the gates of the city had been despatched on Wednesday to disperse these assemblies. Meantime the Bonapartists, under the command of General Gilly, amongst whom was a regiment of chasseurs, beginning to despair of the success of their cause, felt that their situation was becoming very critical, especially as they learnt that the forces at Beaucaire had assumed the offensive and were about to march upon Nimes. As I had had no connection with anything that had taken place in the capital of the Gard, I personally had nothing to fear; but having learned by experience how easily suspicions arise, I was afraid that the ill-luck which had not spared either my friends or my family might lead to their being accused of having received a refugee from Marseilles, a word which in itself had small significance, but which in the mouth of an enemy might be fatal. Fears for the future being thus aroused by my recollections of the past, I decided to give up the contemplation of a drama which might become redoubtable, asked to bury myself in the country with the firm intention of coming back to Nimes as soon as the white flag should once more float from its towers.

“An old castle in the Cevennes, which from the days when the Albigenses were burnt, down to the massacre of La Bagarre, had witnessed many a revolution and counter revolution, became the asylum of my wife, my mother, M_____, and myself. As the peaceful tranquillity of our life there was unbroken by any event of interest, I shall not pause to dwell on it. But at length we grew weary, for such is man, of our life of calm, and being left once for nearly a week without any news from outside, we made that an excuse for returning to Nimes in order to see with our own eyes how things were going on.

“When we were about two leagues on our way we met the carriage of a friend, a rich landed proprietor from the city; seeing that he was in it, I alighted to ask him what was happening at Nimes. ‘I hope you do not think of going there,’ said he, ‘especially at this moment; the excitement is intense, blood has already flowed, and a catastrophe is imminent.’ So back we went to our mountain castle, but in a few days became again a prey to the same restlessness, and, not being able to overcome it, decided to go at all risks and see for ourselves the condition of affairs; and this time, neither advice nor warning having any effect, we not only set out, but we arrived at our destination the same evening.

“We had not been misinformed, frays having already taken place in the streets which had heated public opinion. One man had been killed on the Esplanade by a musket shot, and it seemed as if his death would be only the forerunner of many. The Catholics were awaiting with impatience the arrival of those doughty warriors from Beaucaire on whom they placed their chief reliance. The Protestants went about in painful silence, and fear blanched every face. At length the white flag was hoisted and the king proclaimed without any of the disorders which had been dreaded taking place, but it was plainly visible that this calm was only a pause before a struggle, and that on the slightest pretext the pent-up passions would break loose again.

“Just at this time the memory of our quiet life in the mountains inspired us with a happy idea. We had learned that the obstinate resolution of Marshal Brune never to acknowledge Louis XVIII as king had been softened, and that the marshal had been induced to hoist the white flag at Toulon, while with a cockade in his hat he had formally resigned the command of that place into the hands of the royal authorities.

“Henceforward in all Provence there was no spot where he could live unmarked. His ultimate intentions were unknown to us, indeed his movements seemed to show great hesitation on his part, so it occurred to us to offer him our little country house as a refuge where he could await the arrival of more peaceful times. We decided that M_____ and another friend of ours who had just arrived from Paris should go to him and make the offer, which he would at once accept all the more readily because it came from the hearts which were deeply devoted to him. They set out, but to my great surprise returned the same day. They brought us word that Marshal Brune had been assassinated at Avignon.

“At first we could not believe the dreadful news, and took it for one of those

ghastly rumours which circulate with such rapidity during periods of civil strife; but we were not left long in uncertainty, for the details of the catastrophe arrived all too soon.”

CHAPTER VIII

For some days Avignon had its assassins, as Marseilles had had them, and as Nimes was about to have them; for some days all Avignon shuddered at the names of five men—Pointu, Farges, Roquefort, Naudaud, and Magnan.

Pointu was a perfect type of the men of the South, olive-skinned and eagle-eyed, with a hook nose, and teeth of ivory. Although he was hardly above middle height, and his back was bent from bearing heavy burdens, his legs bowed by the pressure of the enormous masses which he daily carried, he was yet possessed of extraordinary strength and dexterity. He could throw over the Loulle gate a 48-pound cannon ball as easily as a child could throw its ball. He could fling a stone from one bank of the Rhone to the other where it was two hundred yards wide. And lastly, he could throw a knife backwards while running at full speed with such strength and precision of aim that this new kind of Parthian arrow would go whistling through the air to hide two inches of its iron head in a tree trunk no thicker than a man's thigh. When to these accomplishments are added an equal skill with the musket, the pistol, and the quarter-staff, a good deal of mother wit, a deep hatred for Republicans, against whom he had vowed vengeance at the foot of the scaffold on which his father and mother had perished, an idea can be formed of the terrible chief of the assassins of Avignon, who had for his lieutenants, Farges the silk-weaver, Roquefort the porter, Naudaud the baker, and Magnan the secondhand clothes dealer.

Avignon was entirely in the power of these five men, whose brutal conduct the civil and military authorities would not or could not repress, when word came that Marshal Brune, who was at Luc in command of six thousand troops, had been summoned to Paris to give an account of his conduct to the new Government.

The marshal, knowing the state of intense excitement which prevailed in the South, and foreseeing the perils likely to meet him on the road, asked permission to travel by water, but met with an official refusal, and the Duc de Riviere, governor of Marseilles, furnished him with a safe-conduct. The cutthroats bellowed with joy when they learned that a Republican of '89, who had risen to the rank of marshal under the Usurper, was about to pass through Avignon. At the same time sinister reports began to run from mouth to mouth, the harbingers

of death. Once more the infamous slander which a hundred times had been proved to be false, raised its voice with dogged persistence, asserting that Brune, who did not arrive at Paris until the 5th of September, 1792, had on the 2nd, when still at Lyons, carried the head of the Princesse de Lamballe impaled on a pike. Soon the news came that the marshal had just escaped assassination at Aix, indeed he owed his safety to the fleetness of his horses. Pointu, Forges, and Roquefort swore that they would manage things better at Avignon.

By the route which the marshal had chosen there were only two ways open by which he could reach Lyons: he must either pass through Avignon, or avoid it by taking a crossroad, which branched off the Pointet highway, two leagues outside the town. The assassins thought he would take the latter course, and on the 2nd of August, the day on which the marshal was expected, Pointu, Magnan, and Naudaud, with four of their creatures, took a carriage at six o'clock in the morning, and, setting out from the Rhone bridge, hid themselves by the side of the high road to Pointet.

When the marshal reached the point where the road divided, having been warned of the hostile feelings so rife in Avignon, he decided to take the crossroad upon which Pointu and his men were awaiting him; but the postillion obstinately refused to drive in this direction, saying that he always changed horses at Avignon, and not at Pointet. One of the marshal's aides-de-camp tried, pistol in hand, to force him to obey; but the marshal would permit no violence to be offered him, and gave him orders to go on to Avignon.

The marshal reached the town at nine o'clock in the morning, and alighted at the Hotel du Palais Royal, which was also the post-house. While fresh horses were being put to and the passports and safe-conduct examined at the Loulle gate, the marshal entered the hotel to take a plate of soup. In less than five minutes a crowd gathered round the door, and M. Moulin the proprietor noticing the sinister and threatening expression many of the faces bore, went to the marshal's room and urged him to leave instantly without waiting for his papers, pledging his word that he would send a man on horseback after him, who would overtake him two or three leagues beyond the town, and bring him his own safe-conduct and the passports of his aides-de-camp. The marshal came downstairs, and finding the horses ready, got into the carriage, on which loud murmurs arose from the populace, amongst which could be distinguished the terrible word 'zaou!' that excited cry of the Provençal, which according to the tone in which it is uttered expresses every shade of threat, and which means at once in a single

syllable, "Bite, rend, kill, murder!"

The marshal set out at a gallop, and passed the town gates unmolested, except by the howlings of the populace, who, however, made no attempt to stop him. He thought he had left all his enemies behind, but when he reached the Rhone bridge he found a group of men armed with muskets waiting there, led by Farges and Roquefort. They all raised their guns and took aim at the marshal, who thereupon ordered the postillion to drive back. The order was obeyed, but when the carriage had gone about fifty yards it was met by the crowd from the "Palais Royal," which had followed it, so the postillion stopped. In a moment the traces were cut, whereupon the marshal, opening the door, alighted, followed by his valet, and passing on foot through the Loulle gate, followed by a second carriage in which were his aides-de-camp, he regained the "Palais Royal," the doors of which were opened to him and his suite, and immediately secured against all others.

The marshal asked to be shown to a room, and M. Moulin gave him No. 1, to the front. In ten minutes three thousand people filled the square; it was as if the population sprang up from the ground. Just then the carriage, which the marshal had left behind, came up, the postillion having tied the traces, and a second time the great yard gates were opened, and in spite of the press closed again and barricaded by the porter Vernet, and M. Moulin himself, both of whom were men of colossal strength. The aides-de-camp, who had remained in the carriage until then, now alighted, and asked to be shown to the marshal; but Moulin ordered the porter to conceal them in an outhouse. Vernet taking one in each hand, dragged them off despite their struggles, and pushing them behind some empty barrels, over which he threw an old piece of carpet, said to them in a voice as solemn as if he were a prophet, "If you move, you are dead men," and left them. The aides-de-camp remained there motionless and silent.

At that moment M. de Saint-Chamans, prefect of Avignon, who had arrived in town at five o'clock in the morning, came out into the courtyard. By this time the crowd was smashing the windows and breaking in the street door. The square was full to overflowing, everywhere threatening cries were heard, and above all the terrible *zaou*, which from moment to moment became more full of menace. M. Moulin saw that if they could not hold out until the troops under Major Lambot arrived, all was lost; he therefore told Vernet to settle the business of those who were breaking in the door, while he would take charge of those who were trying to get in at the window. Thus these two men, moved by a common

impulse and of equal courage, undertook to dispute with a howling mob the possession of the blood for which it thirsted.

Both dashed to their posts, one in the hall, the other in the diningroom, and found door and windows already smashed, and several men in the house. At the sight of Vernet, with whose immense strength they were acquainted, those in the hall drew back a step, and Vernet, taking advantage of this movement, succeeded in ejecting them and in securing the door once more. Meantime M. Moulin, seizing his double-barrelled gun, which stood in the chimney-corner, pointed it at five men who had got into the diningroom, and threatened to fire if they did not instantly get out again. Four obeyed, but one refused to budge; whereupon Moulin, finding himself no longer outnumbered, laid aside his gun, and, seizing his adversary round the waist, lifted him as if he were a child and flung him out of the window. The man died three weeks later, not from the fall but from the squeeze.

Moulin then dashed to the window to secure it, but as he laid his hand on it he felt his head seized from behind and pressed violently down on his left shoulder; at the same instant a pane was broken into splinters, and the head of a hatchet struck his right shoulder. M. de Saint-Chamans, who had followed him into the room, had seen the weapon thrown at Moulin's head, and not being able to turn aside the iron, had turned aside the object at which it was aimed. Moulin seized the hatchet by the handle and tore it out of the hands of him who had delivered the blow, which fortunately had missed its aim. He then finished closing the window, and secured it by making fast the inside shutters, and went upstairs to see after the marshal.

Him he found striding up and down his room, his handsome and noble face as calm as if the voices of all those shouting men outside were not demanding his death. Moulin made him leave No. 1 for No. 3, which, being a back room and looking out on the courtyard, seemed to offer more chances of safety than the other. The marshal asked for writing materials, which Moulin brought, whereupon the marshal sat down at a little table and began to write.

Just then the cries outside became still more uproarious. M. de Saint-Chamans had gone out and ordered the crowd to disperse, whereupon a thousand people had answered him with one voice, asking who he was that he should give such an order. He announced his rank and authority, to which the answer was, "We only know the prefect by his clothes." Now it had unfortunately happened that

M. de Chamans having sent his trunks by diligence they had not yet arrived, and being dressed in a green coat; nankeen trousers, and a pique vest, it could hardly be expected that in such a suit he should overawe the people under the circumstances; so, when he got up on a bench to harangue the populace, cries arose of "Down with the green coat! We have enough of charlatans like that!" and he was forced to get down again. As Vernet opened the door to let him in, several men took advantage of the circumstance to push in along with him; but Vernet let his fist fall three times, and three men rolled at his feet like bulls struck by a club. The others withdrew. A dozen champions such as Vernet would have saved the marshal. Yet it must not be forgotten that this man was a Royalist, and held the same opinions as those against whom he fought; for him as for them the marshal was a mortal enemy, but he had a noble heart, and if the marshal were guilty he desired a trial and not a murder. Meantime a certain onlooker had heard what had been said to M. de Chamans about his unofficial costume, and had gone to put on his uniform. This was M. de Puy, a handsome and venerable old man, with white hair, pleasant expression, and winning voice. He soon came back in his mayor's robes, wearing his scarf and his double cross of St. Louis and the Legion of Honour. But neither his age nor his dignity made the slightest impression on these people; they did not even allow him to get back to the hotel door, but knocked him down and trampled him under foot, so that he hardly escaped with torn clothes and his white hair covered with dust and blood. The fury of the mob had now reached its height.

At this juncture the garrison of Avignon came in sight; it was composed of four hundred volunteers, who formed a battalion known as the Royal Angouleme. It was commanded by a man who had assumed the title of Lieutenant-General of the Emancipating Army of Vaucluse. These forces drew up under the windows of the "Palais Royal." They were composed almost entirely of Provenceaux, and spoke the same dialect as the people of the lower orders. The crowd asked the soldiers for what they had come, why they did not leave them to accomplish an act of justice in peace, and if they intended to interfere. "Quite the contrary," said one of the soldiers; "pitch him out of the window, and we will catch him on the points of our bayonets." Brutal cries of joy greeted this answer, succeeded by a short silence, but it was easy to see that under the apparent calm the crowd was in a state of eager expectation. Soon new shouts were heard, but this time from the interior of the hotel; a small band of men led by Forges and Roquefort had separated themselves from the throng, and by the help of ladders had scaled the walls and got on the roof of the house, and, gliding down the other side, had dropped into the balcony outside the windows of the rooms where the marshal

was writing.

Some of these dashed through the windows without waiting to open them, others rushed in at the open door. The marshal, thus taken by surprise, rose, and not wishing that the letter he was writing to the Austrian commandant to claim his protection should fall into the hands of these wretches, he tore it to pieces. Then a man who belonged to a better class than the others, and who wears to-day the Cross of the Legion of Honour, granted to him perhaps for his conduct on this occasion, advanced towards the marshal, sword in hand, and told him if he had any last arrangements to make, he should make them at once, for he had only ten minutes to live.

“What are you thinking of?” exclaimed Forges. “Ten minutes! Did he give the Princesse de Lamballe ten minutes?” and he pointed his pistol at the marshal’s breast; but the marshal striking up the weapon, the shot missed its aim and buried itself in the ceiling.

“Clumsy fellow!” said the marshal, shrugging his shoulders, “not to be able to kill a man at such close range.”

“That’s true,” replied Roquefort in his patois. “I’ll show you how to do it”; and, receding a step, he took aim with his carbine at his victim, whose back was partly towards him. A report was heard, and the marshal fell dead on the spot, the bullet which entered at the shoulder going right through his body and striking the opposite wall.

The two shots, which had been heard in the street, made the howling mob dance for joy. One cowardly fellow, called Cadillan, rushed out on one of the balconies which looked on the square, and, holding a loaded pistol in each hand, which he had not dared to discharge even into the dead body of the murdered man, he cut a caper, and, holding up the innocent weapons, called out, “These have done the business!” But he lied, the braggart, and boasted of a crime which was committed by braver cutthroats than he.

Behind him came the general of the “Emancipating Army of Vaucluse,” who, graciously saluting the crowd, said, “The marshal has carried out an act of justice by taking his own life.” Shouts of mingled joy, revenge, and hatred rose from the crowd, and the king’s attorney and the examining magistrate set about drawing up a report of the suicide.

Now that all was over and there was no longer any question of saving the marshal, M. Moulin desired at least to save the valuables which he had in his carriage. He found in a cash box 40,000 francs, in the pockets a snuffbox set with diamonds, and a pair of pistols and two swords; the hilt of one of these latter was studded with precious stones, a gift from the ill-starred Selim. M. Moulin returned across the court, carrying these things. The Damascus blade was wrenched from his hands, and the robber kept it five years as a trophy, and it was not until the year 1820 that he was forced to give it up to the representative of the marshal's widow. Yet this man was an officer, and kept his rank all through the Restoration, and was not dismissed the army till 1830. When M. Moulin had placed the other objects in safety, he requested the magistrate to have the corpse removed, as he wished the crowds to disperse, that he might look after the aides-de camp. While they were undressing the marshal, in order to certify the cause of death, a leathern belt was found on him containing 5536 francs. The body was carried downstairs by the gravediggers without any opposition being offered, but hardly had they advanced ten yards into the square when shouts of "To the Rhone! to the Rhone!" resounded on all sides. A police officer who tried to interfere was knocked down, the bearers were ordered to turn round; they obeyed, and the crowd carried them off towards the wooden bridge. When the fourteenth arch was reached, the bier was torn from the bearers' hands, and the corpse was flung into the river. "Military honours!" shouted some one, and all who had guns fired at the dead body, which was twice struck. "Tomb of Marshal Brune" was then written on the arch, and the crowd withdrew, and passed the rest of the day in holiday-making.

Meanwhile the Rhone, refusing to be an accomplice in such a crime, bore away the corpse, which the assassins believed had been swallowed up for ever. Next day it was found on the sandy shore at Tarascon, but the news of the murder had preceded it, and it was recognised by the wounds, and pushed back again into the waters, which bore it towards the sea.

Three leagues farther on it stopped again, this time by a grassy bank, and was found by a man of forty and another of eighteen. They also recognised it, but instead of shoving it back into the current, they drew it up gently on the bank and carried it to a small property belonging to one of them, where they reverently interred it. The elder of the two was M. de Chartruse, the younger M. Amedee Pichot.

The body was exhumed by order of the marshal's widow, and brought to her

castle of Saint-Just, in Champagne; she had it embalmed, and placed in a bedroom adjoining her own, where it remained, covered only by a veil, until the memory of the deceased was cleansed from the accusation of suicide by a solemn public trial and judgment. Then only it was finally interred, along with the parchment containing the decision of the Court of Riom.

The ruffians who killed Marshal Brune, although they evaded the justice of men, did not escape the vengeance of God: nearly every one of them came to a miserable end. Roquefort and Farges were attacked by strange and hitherto unknown diseases, recalling the plagues sent by God on the peoples whom He desired to punish in bygone ages. In the case of Farges, his skin dried up and became horny, causing him such intense irritation, that as the only means of allaying it he had to be kept buried up to the neck while still alive. The disease under which Roquefort suffered seemed to have its seat in the marrow, for his bones by degrees lost all solidity and power of resistance, so that his limbs refused to bear his weight, and he went about the streets crawling like a serpent. Both died in such dreadful torture that they regretted having escaped the scaffold, which would have spared them such prolonged agony.

Pointu was condemned to death, in his absence, at the Assizes Court of La Drome, for having murdered five people, and was cast off by his own faction. For some time his wife, who was infirm and deformed, might be seen going from house to house asking alms for him, who had been for two months the arbiter of civil war and assassination. Then came a day when she ceased her quest, and was seen sitting, her head covered by a black rag: Pointu was dead, but it was never known where or how. In some corner, probably, in the crevice of a rock or in the heart of the forest, like an old tiger whose talons have been clipped and his teeth drawn.

Naudaud and Magnan were sentenced to the galleys for ten years. Naudaud died there, but Magnan finished his time and then became a scavenger, and, faithful to his vocation as a dealer of death, a poisoner of stray dogs.

Some of these cutthroats are still living, and fill good positions, wearing crosses and epaulets, and, rejoicing in their impunity, imagine they have escaped the eye of God.

We shall wait and see!

CHAPTER IX

It was on Saturday that the white flag was hoisted at Nimes. The next day a crowd of Catholic peasants from the environs marched into the city, to await the arrival of the Royalist army from Beaucaire. Excitement was at fever heat, the desire of revenge filled every breast, the hereditary hatred which had slumbered during the Empire again awoke stronger than ever. Here I may pause to say that in the account which follows of the events which took place about this time, I can only guarantee the facts and not the dates: I relate everything as it happened; but the day on which it happened may sometimes have escaped my memory, for it is easier to recollect a murder to which one has been an eye-witness, than to recall the exact date on which it happened.

The garrison of Nimes was composed of one battalion of the 13th Regiment of the line, and another battalion of the 79th Regiment, which not being up to its full war-strength had been sent to Nimes to complete its numbers by enlistment. But after the battle of Waterloo the citizens had tried to induce the soldiers to desert, so that of the two battalions, even counting the officers, only about two hundred men remained.

When the news of the proclamation of Napoleon II reached Nimes, Brigadier-General Malmont, commandant of the department, had him proclaimed in the city without any disturbance being caused thereby. It was not until some days later that a report began to be circulated that a royal army was gathering at Beaucaire, and that the populace would take advantage of its arrival to indulge in excesses. In the face of this twofold danger, General Malmont had ordered the regular troops, and a part of the National Guard of the Hundred Days, to be drawn up under arms in the rear of the barracks upon an eminence on which he had mounted five pieces of ordnance. This disposition was maintained for two days and a night, but as the populace remained quiet, the troops returned to the barracks and the Guards to their homes.

But on Monday a concourse of people, who had heard that the army from Beaucaire would arrive the next day, made a hostile demonstration before the barracks, demanding with shouts and threats that the five cannons should be handed over to them. The general and the officers who were quartered in the town, hearing of the tumult, repaired at once to the barracks, but soon came out

again, and approaching the crowd tried to persuade it to disperse, to which the only answer they received was a shower of bullets. Convinced by this, as he was well acquainted with the character of the people with whom he had to deal, that the struggle had begun in earnest and must be fought out to the bitter end, the general retreated with his officers, step by step, to the barracks, and having got inside the gates, closed and bolted them.

He then decided that it was his duty to repulse force by force, for everyone was determined to defend, at no matter what cost, a position which, from the first moment of revolt, was fraught with such peril. So, without waiting for orders, the soldiers, seeing that some of their windows had been broken by shots from without, returned the fire, and, being better marksmen than the townspeople, soon laid many low. Upon this the alarmed crowd retired out of musket range, and entrenched themselves in some neighbouring houses.

About nine o'clock in the evening, a man bearing something resembling a white flag approached the walls and asked to speak to the general. He brought a message inquiring on what terms the troops would consent to evacuate Nimes. The general sent back word that the conditions were, that the troops should be allowed to march out fully armed and with all their baggage; the five guns alone would be left behind. When the forces reached a certain valley outside the city they would halt, that the men might be supplied with means sufficient to enable them either to rejoin the regiments to which they belonged, or to return to their own homes.

At two o'clock A. M. the same envoy returned, and announced to the general that the conditions had been accepted with one alteration, which was that the troops, before marching out, should lay down their arms. The messenger also intimated that if the offer he had brought were not quickly accepted—say within two hours—the time for capitulation would have gone by, and that he would not be answerable for what the people might then do in their fury. The general accepted the conditions as amended, and the envoy disappeared.

When the troops heard of the agreement, that they should be disarmed before being allowed to leave the town, their first impulse was to refuse to lay down their weapons before a rabble which had run away from a few musket shots; but the general succeeded in soothing their sense of humiliation and winning their consent by representing to them that there could be nothing dishonourable in an action which prevented the children of a common fatherland from shedding each

other's blood.

The gendarmerie, according to one article of the treaty, were to close in at the rear of the evacuating column; and thus hinder the populace from molesting the troops of which it was composed. This was the only concession obtained in return for the abandoned arms, and the farce in question was already drawn up in field order, apparently waiting to escort the troops out of the city.

At four o'clock P.M. the troops got ready, each company stacking its arms in the courtyard before: marching out; but hardly had forty or fifty men passed the gates than fire was opened on them at such close range that half of them were killed or disabled at the first volley. Upon this, those who were still within the walls closed the courtyard gates, thus cutting off all chance of retreat from their comrades. In the event; however, it turned out that several of the latter contrived to escape with their lives and that they lost nothing through being prevented from returning; for as soon as the mob saw that ten or twelve of their victims had slipped through their hands they made a furious attack on the barracks, burst in the gates, and scaled the walls with such rapidity, that the soldiers had no time to repossess themselves of their muskets, and even had they succeeded in seizing them they would have been of little use, as ammunition was totally wanting. The barracks being thus carried by assault, a horrible massacre ensued, which lasted for three hours. Some of the wretched men, being hunted from room to room, jumped out of the first window they could reach, without stopping to measure its height from the ground, and were either impaled on the bayonets held in readiness below, or, falling on the pavement, broke their limbs and were pitilessly despatched.

The gendarmes, who had really been called out to protect the retreat of the garrison, seemed to imagine they were there to witness a judicial execution, and stood immovable and impassive while these horrid deeds went on before their eyes. But the penalty of this indifference was swiftly exacted, for as soon as the soldiers were all done with, the mob, finding their thirst for blood still unslacked, turned on the gendarmes, the greater number of whom were wounded, while all lost their horses, and some their lives.

The populace was still engaged at its bloody task when news came that the army from Beaucaire was within sight of the town, and the murderers, hastening to despatch some of the wounded who still showed signs of life, went forth to meet the long expected reinforcements.

Only those who saw the advancing army with their own eyes can form any idea of its condition and appearance, the first corps excepted. This corps was commanded by M. de Barre, who had put himself at its head with the noble purpose of preventing, as far as he could, massacre and pillage. In this he was seconded by the officers under him, who were actuated by the same philanthropic motives as their general in identifying themselves with the corps. Owing to their exertions, the men advanced in fairly regular order, and good discipline was maintained. All the men carried muskets.

But the first corps was only a kind of vanguard to the second, which was the real army, and a wonderful thing to see and hear. Never were brought together before or since so many different kinds of howl, so many threats of death, so many rags; so many odd weapons, from the matchlock of the time of the Michelade to the steel-tipped goad of the bullock drovers of La Camargue, so that when the Nimes mob; which in all conscience was howling and ragged enough, rushed out to offer a brotherly welcome to the strangers, its first feeling was one of astonishment and dismay as it caught sight of the motley crew which held out to it the right hand of fellowship.

The newcomers soon showed that it was through necessity and not choice that their outer man presented such a disreputable appearance; for they were hardly well within the gates before demanding that the houses of the members of the old Protestant National Guard should be pointed out to them.

This being done, they promptly proceeded to exact from each household a musket, a coat, a complete kit, or a sum of money, according to their humour, so that before evening those who had arrived naked and penniless were provided with complete uniforms and had money in their pockets. These exactions were levied under the name of a contribution, but before the day was ended naked and undisguised pillage began.

Someone asserted that during the assault on the barracks a certain individual had fired out of a certain house on the assailants. The indignant people now rushed to the house indicated, and soon left nothing of it in existence but its walls. A little later it was clearly proved that the individual accused was quite innocent of the crime laid to his charge.

The house of a rich merchant lay in the path of the advancing army. A cry arose that the owner was a Bonapartist, and nothing more was needed. The house was

broken into and pillaged, and the furniture thrown out of the windows.

Two days later it turned out that not only was the merchant no Bonapartist, but that his son had been one of those who had accompanied the Duc d'Angouleme to Cette when he left the country. The pillagers excused themselves by saying they had been misled by a resemblance between two names, and this excuse, as far as appears, was accepted as valid by the authorities.

It was not long before the populace of Nimes began to think they might as well follow the example set them by their brothers from Beaucaire. In twenty-four hours free companies were formed, headed by Trestailons, Trupheny, Graffan, and Morinet. These bands arrogated to themselves the title of National Guard, and then what took place at Marseilles in the excitement of the moment was repeated at Nimes with deliberation and method, inspired by hate and the desire of vengeance. A revolt broke out which followed the ordinary course: first pillage, then fire, then murder, laid waste the city.

M. V_____’s house, which stood in the middle of the town, was sacked and then burnt to the ground, without a hand being raised to prevent the crime.

M. T_____’s house, on the road to Montpellier, was sacked and wrecked and a bonfire made of the furniture, round which the crowd danced; as if it had been an occasion of public rejoicing. Then cries were raised for the proprietor, that he might be killed, and as he could not be found the baffled fury of the mob vented itself on the dead. A child three months buried was dragged from its grave, drawn by the feet through the sewers and wayside puddles, and then flung on a dungheap; and, strange to say, while incendiarism and sacrilege thus ran riot, the mayor of the place slept so sound that when he awoke he was “quite astonished,” to use his own expression, to hear what had taken place during the night.

This expedition completed, the same company which had brought this expedition to a successful issue next turned their attention to a small country house occupied by a widow, whom I had often begged to take refuge with us. But, secure in her insignificance, she had always declined our offers, preferring to live solitary and retired in her own home. But the freebooters sought her out, burst in her doors, drove her away with blows and insults, destroyed her house and burnt her furniture. They then proceeded to the vault in which lay the remains of her family, dragged them out of their coffins and scattered them about the fields. The next day the poor woman-ventured back, collected the desecrated

remains with pious care, and replaced them in the vault. But this was counted to her as a crime; the company returned, once more cast forth the contents of the coffins, and threatened to kill her should she dare to touch them again. She was often seen in the days that followed shedding bitter tears and watching over the sacred relics as they lay exposed on the ground.

The name of this widow was Pepin, and the scene of the sacrilege was a small enclosure on the hill of the Moulins-a-Vent.

Meantime the people in the Faubourg des Bourgades had invented a new sort of game, or rather, had resolved to vary the serious business of the drama that was being enacted by the introduction of comic scenes. They had possessed themselves of a number of beetles such as washerwomen use, and hammered in long nails, the points of which projected an inch on the other side in the form of a fleur-de-lis. Every Protestant who fell into their hands, no matter what his age or rank, was stamped with the bloody emblem, serious wounds being inflicted in many cases.

Murders were now becoming common. Amongst other names of victims mentioned were Loriol, Bigot, Dumas, Lhermet, Heritier, Domaison, Combe, Clairon, Begomet, Poujas, Imbert, Vigal, Pourchet, Vignole. Details more or less shocking came to light as to the manner in which the murderers went to work. A man called Dalbos was in the custody of two armed men; some others came to consult with them. Dalbos appealed for mercy to the newcomers. It was granted, but as he turned to go he was shot dead. Another of the name of Rambert tried to escape by disguising himself as a woman, but was recognised and shot down a few yards outside his own door. A gunner called Saussine was walking in all security along the road to Uzes, pipe in mouth, when he was met by five men belonging to Trestailon's company, who surrounded him and stabbed him to the heart with their knives. The elder of two brothers named Chivas ran across some fields to take shelter in a country house called Rouviere, which, unknown to him, had been occupied by some of the new National Guard. These met him on the threshold and shot him dead.

Rant was seized in his own house and shot. Clos was met by a company, and seeing Trestailons, with whom he had always been friends, in its ranks, he went up to him and held out his hand; whereupon Trestailons drew a pistol from his belt and blew his brains out. Calandre being chased down the rue des Soeurs-Grises, sought shelter in a tavern, but was forced to come out, and was killed

with sabres. Courbet was sent to prison under the escort of some men, but these changed their minds on the way as to his punishment, halted, and shot him dead in the middle of the street.

A wine merchant called Cabanot, who was flying from Trestaillons, ran into a house in which there was a venerable priest called Cure Bonhomme. When the cutthroat rushed in, all covered with blood, the priest advanced and stopped him, crying:

“What will happen, unhappy man, when you come to the confessional with bloodstained hands?”

“Pooh!” replied Trestaillons, “you must put on your wide gown; the sleeves are large enough to let everything pass.”

To the short account given above of so many murders I will add the narrative of one to which I was an eye-witness, and which made the most terrible impression on me of, anything in my experience.

It was midnight. I was working beside my wife’s bed; she was just becoming drowsy, when a noise in the distance caught our attention. It gradually became more distinct, and drums began to beat the ‘generale’ in every direction. Hiding my own alarm for fear of increasing hers, I answered my wife, who was asking what new thing was about to happen, that it was probably troops marching in or out of garrison. But soon reports of firearms, accompanied by an uproar with which we were so familiar that we could no longer mistake its meaning, were heard outside. Opening my window, I heard bloodcurdling imprecations, mixed with cries of “Long live the king!” going on. Not being able to remain any longer in this uncertainty, I woke a captain who lived in the same house. He rose, took his arms, and we went out together, directing our course towards the point whence the shouts seemed to come. The moon shone so bright that we could see everything almost as distinctly as in broad daylight.

A concourse of people was hurrying towards the Cours yelling like madmen; the greater number of them, half naked, armed with muskets, swords, knives, and clubs, and swearing to exterminate everything, waved their weapons above the heads of men who had evidently been torn from their houses and brought to the square to be put to death. The rest of the crowd had, like ourselves, been drawn thither by curiosity, and were asking what was going on. “Murder is abroad,”

was the answer; “several people have been killed in the environs, and the patrol has been fired on.” While this questioning was going on the noise continued to increase. As I had really no business to be on a spot where such things were going on, and feeling that my place was at my wife’s side, to reassure her for the present and to watch over her should the rioters come our way, I said goodbye to the captain, who went on to the barracks, and took the road back to the suburb in which I lived.

I was not more than fifty steps from our house when I heard loud talking behind me, and, turning, saw gun barrels glittering in the moonlight. As the speakers seemed to be rapidly approaching me, I kept close in the shadow of the houses till I reached my own door, which I laid softly to behind me, leaving myself a chink by which I could peep out and watch the movements of the group which was drawing near. Suddenly I felt something touch my hand; it was a great Corsican dog, which was turned loose at night, and was so fierce that it was a great protection to our house. I felt glad to have it at my side, for in case of a struggle it would be no despicable ally.

Those approaching turned out to be three armed men leading a fourth, disarmed and a prisoner. They all stopped just opposite my door, which I gently closed and locked, but as I still wished to see what they were about, I slipped into the garden, which lay towards the street, still followed by my dog. Contrary to his habit, and as if he understood the danger, he gave a low whine instead of his usual savage growl. I climbed into a fig tree the branches of which overhung the street, and, hidden by the leaves, and resting my hands on the top of the wall, I leaned far enough forward to see what the men were about.

They were still on the same spot, but there was a change in their positions. The prisoner was now kneeling with clasped hands before the cutthroats, begging for his life for the sake of his wife and children, in heartrending accents, to which his executioners replied in mocking tones, “We have got you at last into our hands, have we? You dog of a Bonapartist, why do you not call on your emperor to come and help you out of this scrape?” The unfortunate man’s entreaties became more pitiful and their mocking replies more pitiless. They levelled their muskets at him several times, and then lowered them, saying; “Devil take it, we won’t shoot yet; let us give him time to see death coming,” till at last the poor wretch, seeing there was no hope of mercy, begged to be put out of his misery.

Drops of sweat stood on my forehead. I felt my pockets to see if I had nothing on

me which I could use as a weapon, but I had not even a knife. I looked at my dog; he was lying flat at the foot of the tree, and appeared to be a prey to the most abject terror. The prisoner continued his supplications, and the assassins their threats and mockery. I climbed quietly down out of the fig tree, intending to fetch my pistols. My dog followed me with his eyes, which seemed to be the only living things about him. Just as my foot touched the ground a double report rang out, and my dog gave a plaintive and prolonged howl. Feeling that all was over, and that no weapons could be of any use, I climbed up again into my perch and looked out. The poor wretch was lying face downwards writhing in his blood; the assassins were reloading their muskets as they walked away.

Being anxious to see if it was too late to help the man whom I had not been able to save, I went out into the street and bent over him. He was bloody, disfigured, dying, but was yet alive, uttering dismal groans. I tried to lift him up, but soon saw that the wounds which he had received from bullets fired at close range were both mortal, one being in the head, and the other in the loins. Just then a patrol, of the National Guard turned round the corner of the street. This, instead of being a relief, awoke me to a sense of my danger, and feeling I could do nothing for the wounded man, for the death rattle had already begun, I entered my house, half shut the door, and listened.

“Qui vive?” asked the corporal.

“Idiot!” said someone else, “to ask ‘Qui vive?’ of a dead man!”

“He is not dead,” said a third voice; “listen to him singing”; and indeed the poor fellow in his agony was giving utterance to dreadful groans.

“Someone has tickled him well,” said a fourth, “but what does it matter? We had better finish the job.”

Five or six musket shots followed, and the groans ceased.

The name of the man who had just expired was Louis Lichaire; it was not against him, but against his nephew, that the assassins had had a grudge, but finding the nephew out when they burst into the house, and a victim being indispensable, they had torn the uncle from the arms of his wife, and, dragging him towards the citadel, had killed him as I have just related.

Very early next morning I sent to three commissioners of police, one after the

other, for permission to have the corpse carried to the hospital, but these gentlemen were either not up or had already gone out, so that it was not until eleven o'clock and after repeated applications that they condescended to give me the needed authorisation.

Thanks to this delay, the whole town came to see the body of the unfortunate man. Indeed, the day which followed a massacre was always kept as a holiday, everyone leaving his work undone and coming out to stare at the slaughtered victims. In this case, a man wishing to amuse the crowd took his pipe out of his mouth and put it between the teeth of the corpse—a joke which had a marvellous success, those present shrieking with laughter.

Many murders had been committed during the night; the companies had scoured the streets singing some doggerel, which one of the bloody wretches, being in poetic vein, had composed, the chorus of which was—,

“Our work’s well done, We spare none!”

Seventeen fatal outrages were committed, and yet neither the reports of the firearms nor the cries of the victims broke the peaceful slumbers of M, le Prefet and M. le Commissaire General de la Police. But if the civil authorities slept, General Lagarde, who had shortly before come to town to take command of the city in the name of the king, was awake. He had sprung from his bed at the first shot, dressed himself, and made a round of the posts; then sure that everything was in order, he had formed patrols of chasseurs, and had himself, accompanied by two officers only, gone wherever he heard cries for help. But in spite of the strictness of his orders the small number of troops at his disposition delayed the success of his efforts, and it was not until three o'clock in the morning that he succeeded in securing Trestaillons. When this man was taken he was dressed as usual in the uniform of the National Guard, with a cocked hat and captain's epaulets. General Lagarde ordered the gens d'armes who made the capture to deprive him of his sword and carbine, but it was only after a long struggle that they could carry out this order, for Trestaillons protested that he would only give up his carbine with his life. However, he was at last obliged to yield to numbers, and when disarmed was removed to the barracks; but as there could be no peace in the town as long as he was in it, the general sent him to the citadel of Montpellier next morning before it was light.

The disorders did not, however, cease at once. At eight o'clock A.M. they were

still going on, the mob seeming to be animated by the spirit of Trestaillons, for while the soldiers were occupied in a distant quarter of the town a score of men broke into the house of a certain Scipion Chabrier, who had remained hidden from his enemies for a long time, but who had lately returned home on the strength of the proclamations published by General Lagarde when he assumed the position of commandant of the town. He had indeed been sure that the disturbances in Nimes were over, when they burst out with redoubled fury on the 16th of October; on the morning of the 17th he was working quietly at home at his trade of a silk weaver, when, alarmed by the shouts of a parcel of cutthroats outside his house, he tried to escape. He succeeded in reaching the "Coupe d'Or," but the ruffians followed him, and the first who came up thrust him through the thigh with his bayonet. In consequence of this wound he fell from top to bottom of the staircase, was seized and dragged to the stables, where the assassins left him for dead, with seven wounds in his body.

This was, however, the only murder committed that day in the town, thanks to the vigilance and courage of General Lagarde.

The next day a considerable crowd gathered, and a noisy deputation went to General Lagarde's quarters and insolently demanded that Trestaillons should be set at liberty. The general ordered them to disperse, but no attention was paid to this command, whereupon he ordered his soldiers to charge, and in a moment force accomplished what long-continued persuasion had failed to effect. Several of the ringleaders were arrested and taken to prison.

Thus, as we shall see, the struggle assumed a new phase: resistance to the royal power was made in the name of the royal power, and both those who broke or those who tried to maintain the public peace used the same cry, "Long live the king!"

The firm attitude assumed by General Lagarde restored Nimes to a state of superficial peace, beneath which, however, the old enmities were fermenting. An occult power, which betrayed itself by a kind of passive resistance, neutralised the effect of the measures taken by the military commandant. He soon became cognisant of the fact that the essence of this sanguinary political strife was an hereditary religious animosity, and in order to strike a last blow at this, he resolved, after having received permission from the king, to grant the general request of the Protestants by reopening their places of worship, which had been closed for more than four months, and allowing the public exercise of the

Protestant religion, which had been entirely suspended in the city for the same length of time.

Formerly there had been six Protestant pastors resident in Nimes, but four of them, had fled; the two who remained were MM. Juillerat and Olivier Desmonts, the first a young man, twenty-eight years of age, the second an old man of seventy.

The entire weight of the ministry had fallen during this period of proscription on M. Juillerat, who had accepted the task and religiously fulfilled it. It seemed as if a special providence had miraculously protected him in the midst of the many perils which beset his path. Although the other pastor, M. Desmonts, was president of the Consistory, his life was in much less danger; for, first, he had reached an age which almost everywhere commands respect, and then he had a son who was a lieutenant in, one of the royal corps levied at Beaucaire, who protected him by his name when he could not do so by his presence. M. Desmonts had therefore little cause for anxiety as to his safety either in the streets of Nimes or on the road between that and his country house.

But, as we have said, it was not so with M. Juillerat. Being young and active, and having an unfaltering trust in God, on him alone devolved all the sacred duties of his office, from the visitation of the sick and dying to the baptism of the newly born. These latter were often brought to him at night to be baptized, and he consented, though unwillingly, to make this concession, feeling that if he insisted on the performance of the rite by day he would compromise not only his own safety but that of others. In all that concerned him personally, such as consoling the dying or caring for the wounded, he acted quite openly, and no danger that he encountered on his way ever caused him to flinch from the path of duty.

One day, as M. Juillerat was passing through the rue des Barquettes on his way to the prefecture to transact some business connected with his ministry, he saw several men lying in wait in a blind alley by which he had to pass. They had their guns pointed at him. He continued his way with tranquil step and such an air of resignation that the assassins were overawed, and lowered their weapons as he approached, without firing a single shot. When M. Juillerat reached the prefecture, thinking that the prefect ought to be aware of everything connected with the public order, he related this incident to M. d'Arbaud-Jouques, but the latter did not think the affair of enough importance to require any investigation.

It was, as will be seen, a difficult enterprise to open once again the Protestant places of worship, which had been so long closed, in present circumstances, and in face of the fact that the civil authorities regarded such a step with disfavour, but General Lagarde was one of those determined characters who always act up to their convictions. Moreover, to prepare people's minds for this stroke of religious policy, he relied on the help of the Duc d'Angouleme, who in the course of a tour through the South was almost immediately expected at Nimes.

On the 5th of November the prince made his entry into the city, and having read the reports of the general to the King Louis XVIII, and having received positive injunctions from his uncle to pacify the unhappy provinces which he was about to visit, he arrived full of the desire to display whether he felt it or not, a perfect impartiality; so when the delegates from the Consistory were presented to him, not only did he receive them most graciously, but he was the first to speak of the interests of their faith, assuring them that it was only a few days since he had learned with much regret that their religious services had been; suspended since the 16th of July. The delegates replied that in such a time of agitation the closing of their places of worship was, a measure of prudence which they had felt ought to be borne, and which had been borne, with resignation. The prince expressed his approval of this attitude with regard to the past, but said that his presence was a guarantee for the future, and that on Thursday the 9th inst. the two meetinghouses should be reopened and restored to their proper use. The Protestants were alarmed at, having a favour accorded to them which was much more than they would have dared to ask and for which they were hardly prepared. But the prince reassured them by saying that all needful measures would be taken to provide against any breach of the public peace, and at the same time invited M. Desmonts, president, and M. Roland-Lacoste, member of the Consistory, to dine with him.

The next deputation to arrive was a Catholic one, and its object was to ask that Trestailions might be set at liberty. The prince was so indignant at this request that his only answer was to turn his back on those who proffered it.

The next day the duke, accompanied by General Lagarde, left for Montpellier; and as it was on the latter that the Protestants placed their sole reliance for the maintenance of those rights guaranteed for the future by the word of the prince, they hesitated to take any new step in his absence, and let the 9th of November go by without attempting to resume public worship, preferring to wait for the return of their protector, which took place on Saturday evening the 11th of

November.

When the general got back, his first thought was to ask if the commands of the prince had been carried out, and when he heard that they had not, without waiting to hear a word in justification of the delay, he sent a positive order to the president of the Consistory to open both places of worship the next morning.

Upon this, the president carrying self-abnegation and prudence to their extreme limits, went to the general's quarters, and having warmly thanked him, laid before him the dangers to which he would expose himself by running counter to the opinions of those who had had their own way in the city for the last four months. But General Lagarde brushed all these considerations aside: he had received an order from the prince, and to a man of his military cast of mind no course was open but to carry that order out.

Nevertheless, the president again expressed his doubts and fears.

"I will answer with my head," said the general, "that nothing happens." Still the president counselled prudence, asking that only one place of worship at first be opened, and to this the general gave his consent.

This continued resistance to the reestablishment of public worship on the part of those who most eagerly desired it enabled the general at last to realise the extent of the danger which would be incurred by the carrying out of this measure, and he at once took all possible precautions. Under the pretext that he was going to have a general review, he brought the entire civil and military forces of Nimes under his authority, determined, if necessary, to use the one to suppress the other. As early as eight o'clock in the morning a guard of gens d'armes was stationed at the doors of the meetinghouse, while other members of the same force took up their positions in the adjacent streets. On the other hand, the Consistory had decided that the doors were to be opened an hour sooner than usual, that the bells were not to be rung, and that the organ should be silent.

These precautions had both a good and a bad side. The gens d'armes at the door of the meetinghouse gave if not a promise of security at least a promise of support, but they showed to the citizens of the other party what was about to be done; so before nine o'clock groups of Catholics began to form, and as it happened to be Sunday the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages arriving constantly by twos and threes soon united these groups into a little army. Thus

the streets leading to the church being thronged, the Protestants who pushed their way through were greeted with insulting remarks, and even the president of the Consistory, whose white, hair and dignified expression had no effect upon the mob, heard the people round him saying, "These brigands of Protestants are going again to their temple, but we shall soon give them enough of it."

The anger of the populace soon grows hot; between the first bubble and the boiling-point the interval is short. Threats spoken in a low voice were soon succeeded by noisy objurgations. Women, children, and men brake out into yells, "Down with the broilers!" (for this was one of the names by which the Protestants were designated). "Down with the broilers! We do not want to see them using our churches: let them give us back our churches; let them give us back our churches, and go to the desert. Out with them! Out with them! To the desert! To the desert!"

As the crowd did not go beyond words, however insulting, and as the Protestants were long inured to much worse things, they plodded along to their meetinghouse, humble and silent, and went in, undeterred by the displeasure they aroused, whereupon the service commenced.

But some Catholics went in with them, and soon the same shouts which had been heard without were heard also within. The general, however, was on the alert, and as soon as the shouts arose inside the gens d'armes entered the church and arrested those who had caused the disturbance. The crowds tried to rescue them on their way to prison, but the general appeared at the head of imposing forces, at the sight of which they desisted. An apparent calm succeeded the tumult, and the public worship went on without further interruption.

The general, misled by appearances, went off himself to attend a military mass, and at eleven o'clock returned to his quarters for lunch. His absence was immediately perceived and taken advantage of. In the twinkling of an eye, the crowds, which had dispersed, gathered together in even greater numbers and the Protestants, seeing themselves once more in danger, shut the doors from within, while the gens d'armes guarded them without. The populace pressed so closely round the gens d'armes, and assumed such a threatening attitude, that fearing he and his men would not be able to hold their own in such a throng, the captain ordered M. Delbose, one of his officers, to ride off and warn the general. He forced his way through the crowd with great trouble, and went off at a gallop. On seeing this, the people felt there was no time to be lost; they knew of what kind

the general was, and that he would be on the spot in a quarter of an hour. A large crowd is invincible through its numbers; it has only to press forward, and everything gives way, men, wood, iron. At this moment the crowd, swayed by a common impulse, swept forward, the gens d'armes and their horses were crushed against the wall, doors gave way, and instantly with a tremendous roar a living wave flooded the church. Cries of terror and frightful imprecations were heard on all sides, everyone made a weapon of whatever came to hand, chairs and benches were hurled about, the disorder was at its height; it seemed as if the days of the Michelade and the Bagarre were about to return, when suddenly the news of a terrible event was spread abroad, and assailants and assailed paused in horror. General Lagarde had just been assassinated.

As the crowd had foreseen, no sooner did the messenger deliver his message than the general sprang on his horse, and, being too brave, or perhaps too scornful, to fear such foes, he waited for no escort, but, accompanied by two or three officers, set off at full gallop towards the scene of the tumult. He had passed through the narrow streets which led to the meetinghouse by pushing the crowd aside with his horse's chest, when, just as he got out into the open square, a young man named Boisson, a sergeant in the Nimes National Guard, came up and seemed to wish to speak to him. The general seeing a man in uniform, bent down without a thought of danger to listen to what he had to say, whereupon Boisson drew a pistol out and fired at him. The ball broke the collar-bone and lodged in the neck behind the carotid artery, and the general fell from his horse.

The news of this crime had a strange and unexpected effect; however excited and frenzied the crowd was, it instantly realised the consequences of this act. It was no longer like the murder of Marshal Brune at Avignon or General Ramel at Toulouse, an act of vengeance on a favourite of Napoleon, but open and armed rebellion against the king. It was not a simple murder, it was high treason.

A feeling of the utmost terror spread through the town; only a few fanatics went on howling in the church, which the Protestants, fearing still greater disasters, had by this time resolved to abandon. The first to come out was President Olivier Desmonts, accompanied by M. Vallongues, who had only just arrived in the city, but who had immediately hurried to the spot at the call of duty.

M. Juillerat, his two children in his arms, walked behind them, followed by all the other worshippers. At first the crowd, threatening and ireful, hooted and threw stones at them, but at the voice of the mayor and the dignified aspect of

the president they allowed them to pass. During this strange retreat over eighty Protestants were wounded, but not fatally, except a young girl called Jeannette Cornilliere, who had been so beaten and illused that she died of her injuries a few days later.

In spite of the momentary slackening of energy which followed the assassination of General Lagarde, the Catholics did not remain long in a state of total inaction. During the rest of the day the excited populace seemed as if shaken by an earthquake. About six o'clock in the evening, some of the most desperate characters in the town possessed themselves of a hatchet, and, taking their way to the Protestant church, smashed the doors, tore the pastors' gowns, rifled the poor-box, and pulled the books to pieces. A detachment of troops arrived just in time to prevent their setting the building on fire.

The next day passed more quietly. This time the disorders were of too important a nature for the prefect to ignore, as he had ignored so many bloody acts in the past; so in due time a full report was laid before the king. It became known the same evening that General Lagarde was still living, and that those around him hoped that the wound would not prove mortal. Dr. Delpech, who had been summoned from Montpellier, had succeeded in extracting the bullet, and though he spoke no word of hope, he did not expressly declare that the case was hopeless.

Two days later everything in the town had assumed its ordinary aspect, and on the 21st of November the king issued the following edict:—

“Louis, by the grace of God, King of France and of Navarre,

“To all those to whom these presents shall come, greeting:

“An abominable crime has cast a stain on Our city of Nimes. A seditious mob has dared to oppose the opening of the Protestant place of worship, in contempt of the constitutional charter, which while it recognises the Catholic religion as the religion of the State, guarantees to the other religious bodies protection and freedom of worship. Our military commandant, whilst trying to disperse these crowds by gentle means before having resort to force, was shot down, and his assassin has till now successfully evaded the arm of the law. If such an outrage were to remain unpunished, the maintenance of good government and public order would be impossible, and Our ministers would be guilty of neglecting the

law.

“Wherefore We have ordered and do order as follows:

“Art. 1. Proceedings shall be commenced without delay by Our attorney, and the attorney-general, against the perpetrator of the murderous attack on the person of Sieur Lagarde, and against the authors, instigators, and accomplices of the insurrection which took place in the city of Nimes on the 12th of the present month.

“Art. 2. A sufficient number of troops shall be quartered in the said city, and shall remain there at the cost of the inhabitants, until the assassin and his accomplices have been produced before a court of law.

“Art. 3. All those citizens whose names are not entitled to be on the roll of the National Guard shall be disarmed.

“Our Keeper of the Seals, Our Minister of War, Our Minister of the Interior, and Our Minister of Police, are entrusted with the execution of this edict.

“Given at Paris at Our Castle of the Tuileries on the 21st of November in the year of grace 1815, and of Our reign the 21st.

“(Signed) Louis”

Boissin was acquitted.

This was the last crime committed in the South, and it led fortunately to no reprisals.

Three months after the murderous attempt to which he had so nearly fallen a victim, General Lagarde left Nimes with the rank of ambassador, and was succeeded as prefect by M. d’Argont.

During the firm, just, and independent administration of the latter, the disarming of the citizens decreed by the royal edict was carried out without bloodshed.

Through his influence, MM. Chabot-Latour, Saint-Aulaire, and Lascour were

elected to the Chamber of Deputies in place of MM. De Calviere, De Vogue, and De Trinquelade.

And down to the present time the name of M. d'Argont is held in veneration at Nimes, as if he had only quitted the city yesterday.

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MARY STUART

1587

by Alexandre Dumas, Pere

CHAPTER I

Some royal names are predestined to misfortune: in France, there is the name “Henry”. Henry I was poisoned, Henry II was killed in a tournament, Henry III and Henry IV were assassinated. As to Henry V, for whom the past is so fatal already, God alone knows what the future has in store for him.

In Scotland, the unlucky name is “Stuart”. Robert I, founder of the race, died at twenty-eight of a lingering illness. Robert II, the most fortunate of the family, was obliged to pass a part of his life, not merely in retirement, but also in the dark, on account of inflammation of the eyes, which made them blood-red. Robert III succumbed to grief, the death of one son and the captivity of other. James I was stabbed by Graham in the abbey of the Black Monks of Perth. James II was killed at the siege of Roxburgh, by a splinter from a burst cannon. James III was assassinated by an unknown hand in a mill, where he had taken refuge during the battle of Sauchie. James IV, wounded by two arrows and a blow from a halberd, fell amidst his nobles on the battlefield of Flodden. James V died of grief at the loss of his two sons, and of remorse for the execution of Hamilton. James VI, destined to unite on his head the two crowns of Scotland and England, son of a father who had been assassinated, led a melancholy and timorous existence, between the scaffold of his mother, Mary Stuart, and that of his son, Charles I. Charles II spent a portion of his life in exile. James II died in it. The Chevalier Saint-George, after having been proclaimed King of Scotland as James VIII, and of England and Ireland as James III, was forced to flee, without having been able to give his arms even the lustre of a defeat. His son, Charles Edward, after the skirmish at Derby and the battle of Culloden, hunted from mountain to mountain, pursued from rock to rock, swimming from shore to shore, picked up half naked by a French vessel, betook himself to Florence to die there, without the European courts having ever consented to recognise him as a sovereign. Finally, his brother, Henry Benedict, the last heir of the Stuarts, having lived on a pension of three thousand pounds sterling, granted him by George III, died completely forgotten, bequeathing to the House of Hanover all the crown jewels which James II had carried off when he passed over to the Continent in 1688—a tardy but complete recognition of the legitimacy of the family which had succeeded his.

In the midst of this unlucky race, Mary Stuart was the favourite of misfortune.

As Brantome has said of her, “Whoever desires to write about this illustrious queen of Scotland has, in her, two very, large subjects, the one her life, the other her death,” Brantome had known her on one of the most mournful occasions of her life—at the moment when she was quitting France for Scotland.

It was on the 9th of August, 1561, after having lost her mother and her husband in the same year, that Mary Stuart, Dowager of France and Queen of Scotland at nineteen, escorted by her uncles, Cardinals Guise and Lorraine, by the Duke and Duchess of Guise, by the Duc d’Aumale and M. de Nemours, arrived at Calais, where two galleys were waiting to take her to Scotland, one commanded by M. de Mevillon and the other by Captain Albize. She remained six days in the town. At last, on the 15th of the month, after the saddest adieus to her family, accompanied by Messieurs d’Aumale, d’Elboeuf, and Damville, with many nobles, among whom were Brantome and Chatelard, she embarked in M. Mevillon’s galley, which was immediately ordered to put out to sea, which it did with the aid of oars, there not being sufficient wind to make use of the sails.

Mary Stuart was then in the full bloom of her beauty, beauty even more brilliant in its mourning garb—a beauty so wonderful that it shed around her a charm which no one whom she wished to please could escape, and which was fatal to almost everyone. About this time, too, someone made her the subject of a song, which, as even her rivals confessed, contained no more than the truth. It was, so it was said, by M. de Maison-Fleur, a cavalier equally accomplished in arms and letters: Here it is:—

“In robes of whiteness, lo, Full sad and mournfully, Went pacing to and fro
Beauty’s divinity; A shaft in hand she bore >From Cupid’s cruel store, And he,
who fluttered round, Bore, o’er his blindfold eyes And o’er his head uncrowned,
A veil of mournful guise, Whereon the words were wrought: ‘You perish or are
caught.’”

Yes, at this moment, Mary Stuart, in her deep mourning of white, was more lovely than ever; for great tears were trickling down her cheeks, as, weaving a handkerchief, standing on the quarterdeck, she who was so grieved to set out, bowed farewell to those who were so grieved to remain.

At last, in half an hour’s time, the harbour was left behind; the vessel was out at sea. Suddenly, Mary heard loud cries behind her: a boat coming in under press of sail, through her pilot’s ignorance had struck upon a rock in such a manner that it

was split open, and after having trembled and groaned for a moment like someone wounded, began to be swallowed up, amid the terrified screams of all the crew. Mary, horror-stricken, pale, dumb, and motionless, watched her gradually sink, while her unfortunate crew, as the keel disappeared, climbed into the yards and shrouds, to delay their death-agony a few minutes; finally, keel, yards, masts, all were engulfed in the ocean's gaping jaws. For a moment there remained some black specks, which in turn disappeared one after another; then wave followed upon wave, and the spectators of this horrible tragedy, seeing the sea calm and solitary as if nothing had happened, asked themselves if it was not a vision that had appeared to them and vanished.

“Alas!” cried Mary, falling on a seat and leaning both arms on the vessel's stern, “what a sad omen for such a sad voyage!” Then, once more fixing on the receding harbour her eyes, dried for a moment by terror, and beginning to moisten anew, “Adieu, France!” she murmured, “adieu, France!” and for five hours she remained thus, weeping and murmuring, “Adieu, France! adieu, France!”

Darkness fell while she was still lamenting; and then, as the view was blotted out and she was summoned to supper, “It is indeed now, dear France,” said she, rising, “that I really lose you, since jealous night heaps mourning upon mourning, casting a black veil before my sight. Adieu then, one last time, dear France; for never shall I see you more.”

With these words, she went below, saying that she was the very opposite of Dido, who, after the departure of AENEAS, had done nothing but look at the waves, while she, Mary, could not take her eyes off the land. Then everyone gathered round her to try to divert and console her. But she, growing sadder, and not being able to respond, so overcome was she with tears, could hardly eat; and, having had a bed got ready on the stern deck, she sent for the steersman, and ordered him if he still saw land at daybreak, to come and wake her immediately. On this point Mary was favoured; for the wind having dropped, when daybreak came the vessel was still within sight of France.

It was a great joy when, awakened by the steersman, who had not forgotten the order he had received, Mary raised herself on her couch, and through the window that she had had opened, saw once more the beloved shore. But at five o'clock in the morning, the wind having freshened, the vessel rapidly drew farther away, so that soon the land completely disappeared. Then Mary fell back

upon her bed, pale as death, murmuring yet once again—“Adieu, France! I shall see thee no more.”

Indeed, the happiest years of her life had just passed away in this France that she so much regretted. Born amid the first religious troubles, near the bedside of her dying father, the cradle mourning was to stretch for her to the grave, and her stay in France had been a ray of sunshine in her night. Slandered from her birth, the report was so generally spread abroad that she was malformed, and that she could not live to grow up, that one day her mother, Mary of Guise, tired of these false rumours, undressed her and showed her naked to the English ambassador, who had come, on the part of Henry VIII, to ask her in marriage for the Prince of Wales, himself only five years old. Crowned at nine months by Cardinal Beaton, archbishop of St. Andrews, she was immediately hidden by her mother, who was afraid of treacherous dealing in the King of England, in Stirling Castle. Two years later, not finding even this fortress safe enough, she removed her to an island in the middle of the Lake of Menteith, where a priory, the only building in the place, provided an asylum for the royal child and for four young girls born in the same year as herself, having like her the sweet name which is an anagram of the word “aimer,” and who, quitting her neither in her good nor in her evil fortune, were called the “Queen’s Marys”. They were Mary Livingston, Mary Fleming, Mary Seyton, and Mary Beaton. Mary stayed in this priory till Parliament, having approved her marriage with the French dauphin, son of Henry II, she was taken to Dumbarton Castle, to await the moment of departure. There she was entrusted to M. de Breze, sent by Henry II to fetch her. Having set out in the French galleys anchored at the mouth of the Clyde, Mary, after having been hotly pursued by the English fleet, entered Brest harbour, 15th August, 1548, one year after the death of Francis! Besides the queen’s four Marys, the vessels also brought to France three of her natural brothers, among whom was the Prior of St. Andrews, James Stuart, who was later to abjure the Catholic faith, and with the title of Regent, and under the name of the Earl of Murray, to become so fatal to poor Mary. From Brest, Mary went to St. Germain-en-Laye, where Henry II, who had just ascended the throne, overwhelmed her with caresses, and then sent her to a convent where the heiresses of the noblest French houses were brought up. There Mary’s happy qualities developed. Born with a woman’s heart and a man’s head, Mary not only acquired all the accomplishments which constituted the education of a future queen, but also that real knowledge which is the object of the truly learned.

Thus, at fourteen, in the Louvre, before Henry II, Catherine de Medici, and the

whole court, she delivered a discourse in Latin of her own composition, in which she maintained that it becomes women to cultivate letters, and that it is unjust and tyrannical to deprive flowery of their perfumes, by banishing young girls from all but domestic cares. One can imagine in what manner a future queen, sustaining such a thesis, was likely to be welcomed in the most lettered and pedantic court in Europe. Between the literature of Rabelais and Marot verging on their decline, and that of Ronsard and Montaigne reaching their zenith, Mary became a queen of poetry, only too happy never to have to wear another crown than that which Ronsard, Dubellay, Maison-Fleur, and Brantome placed daily on her head. But she was predestined. In the midst of those fetes which a waning chivalry was trying to revive came the fatal joust of Tournelles: Henry II, struck by a splinter of a lance for want of a visor, slept before his time with his ancestors, and Mary Stuart ascended the throne of France, where, from mourning for Henry, she passed to that for her mother, and from mourning for her mother to that for her husband. Mary felt this last loss both as woman and as poet; her heart burst forth into bitter tears and plaintive harmonies. Here are some lines that she composed at this time:—

“Into my song of woe, Sung to a low sad air, My cruel grief I throw, For loss beyond compare; In bitter sighs and tears Go by my fairest years.

Was ever grief like mine Imposed by destiny? Did ever lady pine, In high estate, like me, Of whom both heart and eye Within the coffin lie?

Who, in the tender spring And blossom of my youth, Taste all the sorrowing Of life’s extremest ruth, And take delight in nought Save in regretful thought.

All that was sweet and gay Is now a pain to see; The sunniness of day Is black as night to me; All that was my delight Is hidden from my sight.

My heart and eye, indeed, One face, one image know, The which this mornful weed On my sad face doth show, Dyed with the violet’s tone That is the lover’s own.

Tormented by my ill, I go from place to place, But wander as I will My woes can nought efface; My most of bad and good I find in solitude.

But wheresoe’er I stay, In meadow or in copse, Whether at break of day Or when the twilight drops, My heart goes sighing on, Desiring one that’s gone.

If sometimes to the skies My weary gaze I lift, His gently shining eyes Look
from the cloudy drift, Or stooping o'er the wave I see him in the grave.

Or when my bed I seek, And-sleep begins to steal, Again I hear him speak,
Again his touch I feel; In work or leisure, he Is ever near to me.

No other thing I see, However fair displayed, By which my heart will be A
tributary made, Not having the perfection Of that, my lost affection.

Here make an end, my verse, Of this thy sad lament, Whose burden shall
rehearse Pure love of true intent, Which separation's stress Will never render
less."

"It was then," says Brantorne, "that it was delightful to see her; for the whiteness
of her countenance and of her veil contended together; but finally the artificial
white yielded, and the snow-like pallor of her face vanquished the other. For it
was thus," he adds, "that from the moment she became a widow, I always saw
her with her pale hue, as long as I had the honour of seeing her in France, and
Scotland, where she had to go in eighteen months' time, to her very great regret,
after her widowhood, to pacify her kingdom, greatly divided by religious
troubles. Alas! she had neither the wish nor the will for it, and I have often heard
her say so, with a fear of this journey like death; for she preferred a hundred
times to dwell in France as a dowager queen, and to content herself with
Touraine and Poitou for her jointure, than to go and reign over there in her wild
country; but her uncles, at least some of them, not all, advised her, and even
urged her to it, and deeply repented their error."

Mary was obedient, as we have seen, and she began her journey under such
auspices that when she lost sight of land she was like to die. Then it was that the
poetry of her soul found expression in these famous lines:

"Farewell, delightful land of France, My motherland, The best beloved! Foster-
nurse of my young years! Farewell, France, and farewell my happy days! The
ship that separates our loves Has borne away but half of me; One part is left thee
and is throe, And I confide it to thy tenderness, That thou may'st hold in mind
the other part."

[Translator's note.-It has not been found possible to make a rhymed version of

these lines without sacrificing the simplicity which is their chief charm.]

This part of herself that Mary left in France was the body of the young king, who had taken with him all poor Mary's happiness into his tomb.

Mary had but one hope remaining, that the sight of the English fleet would compel her little squadron to turn back; but she had to fulfil her destiny. This same day, a fog, a very unusual occurrence in summer-time, extended all over the Channel, and caused her to escape the fleet; for it was such a dense fog that one could not see from stern to mast. It lasted the whole of Sunday, the day after the departure, and did not lift till the following day, Monday, at eight o'clock in the morning. The little flotilla, which all this time had been sailing haphazard, had got among so many reefs that if the fog had lasted some minutes longer the galley would certainly have grounded on some rock, and would have perished like the vessel that had been seen engulfed on leaving port. But, thanks to the fog's clearing, the pilot recognised the Scottish coast, and, steering his four boats with great skill through all the dangers, on the 20th August he put in at Leith, where no preparation had been made for the queen's reception. Nevertheless, scarcely had she arrived there than the chief persons of the town met together and came to felicitate her. Meanwhile, they hastily collected some wretched nags, with harness all falling in pieces, to conduct the queen to Edinburgh.

At sight of this, Mary could not help weeping again; for she thought of the splendid palfreys and hackneys of her French knights and ladies, and at this first view Scotland appeared to her in all its poverty. Next day it was to appear to her in all its wildness.

After having passed one night at Holyrood Palace, "during which," says Brantome, "five to six hundred rascals from the town, instead of letting her sleep, came to give her a wild morning greeting on wretched fiddles and little rebecks," she expressed a wish to hear mass. Unfortunately, the people of Edinburgh belonged almost entirely to the Reformed religion; so that, furious at the queen's giving such a proof of papistry at her first appearance, they entered the church by force, armed with knives, sticks and stones, with the intention of putting to death the poor priest, her chaplain. He left the altar, and took refuge near the queen, while Mary's brother, the Prior of St. Andrews, who was more inclined from this time forward to be a soldier than an ecclesiastic, seized a

sword, and, placing himself between the people and the queen, declared that he would kill with his own hand the first man who should take another step. This firmness, combined with the queen's imposing and dignified air, checked the zeal of the Reformers.

As we have said, Mary had arrived in the midst of all the heat of the first religious wars. A zealous Catholic, like all her family on the maternal side, she inspired the Huguenots with the gravest fears: besides, a rumour had got about that Mary, instead of landing at Leith, as she had been obliged by the fog, was to land at Aberdeen. There, it was said, she would have found the Earl of Huntly, one of the peers who had remained loyal to the Catholic faith, and who, next to the family of Hamilton, was, the nearest and most powerful ally of the royal house. Seconded by him and by twenty thousand soldiers from the north, she would then have marched upon Edinburgh, and have reestablished the Catholic faith throughout Scotland. Events were not slow to prove that this accusation was false.

As we have stated, Mary was much attached to the Prior of St. Andrews, a son of James V and of a noble descendant of the Earls of Mar, who had been very handsome in her youth, and who, in spite of the well-known love for her of James V, and the child who had resulted, had none the less wedded Lord Douglas of Lochleven, by whom she had had two other sons, the elder named William and the younger George, who were thus half-brothers of the regent. Now, scarcely had she reascended the throne than Mary had restored to the Prior of St. Andrews the title of Earl of Mar, that of his maternal ancestors, and as that of the Earl of Murray had lapsed since the death of the famous Thomas Randolph, Mary, in her sisterly friendship for James Stuart, hastened to add, this title to those which she had already bestowed upon him.

But here difficulties and complications arose; for the new Earl of Murray, with his character, was not a man to content himself with a barren title, while the estates which were crown property since the extinction of the male branch of the old earls, had been gradually encroached upon by powerful neighbours, among whom was the famous Earl of Huntly, whom we have already mentioned: the result was that, as the queen judged that in this quarter her orders would probably encounter opposition, under pretext of visiting her possessions in the north, she placed herself at the head of a small army, commanded by her brother, the Earl of Mar and Murray.

The Earl of Huntly was the less duped by the apparent pretext of this expedition, in that his son, John Cordon, for some abuse of his powers, had just been condemned to a temporary imprisonment. He, notwithstanding, made every possible submission to the queen, sending messengers in advance to invite her to rest in his castle; and following up the messengers in person, to renew his invitation viva voce. Unfortunately, at the very moment when he was about to join the queen, the governor of Inverness, who was entirely devoted to him, was refusing to allow Mary to enter this castle, which was a royal one. It is true that Murray, aware that it does not do to hesitate in the face of such rebellions, had already had him executed for high treason.

This new act of firmness showed Huntly that the young queen was not disposed to allow the Scottish lords a resumption of the almost sovereign power humbled by her father; so that, in spite of the extremely kind reception she accorded him, as he learned while in camp that his son, having escaped from prison, had just put himself at the head of his vassals, he was afraid that he should be thought, as doubtless he was, a party to the rising, and he set out the same night to assume command of his troops, his mind made up, as Mary only had with her seven to eight thousand men, to risk a battle, giving out, however, as Buccleuch had done in his attempt to snatch James V from the hands of the Douglasses, that it was not at the queen he was aiming, but solely at the regent, who kept her under his tutelage and perverted her good intentions.

Murray, who knew that often the entire peace of a reign depends on the firmness one displays at its beginning, immediately summoned all the northern barons whose estates bordered on his, to march against Huntly. All obeyed, for the house of Cordon was already so powerful that each feared it might become still more so; but, however, it was clear that if there was hatred for the subject there was no great affection for the queen, and that the greater number came without fixed intentions and with the idea of being led by circumstances.

The two armies encountered near Aberdeen. Murray at once posted the troops he had brought from Edinburgh, and of which he was sure, on the top of rising ground, and drew up in tiers on the hill slope all his northern allies. Huntly advanced resolutely upon them, and attacked his neighbours the Highlanders, who after a short resistance retired in disorder. His men immediately threw away their lances, and, drawing their swords, crying, "Cordon, Cordon!" pursued the fugitives, and believed they had already gained the battle, when they suddenly ran right against the main body of Murray's army, which remained motionless as

a rampart of iron, and which, with its long lances, had the advantage of its adversaries, who were armed only with their claymores. It was then the turn of the Cordons to draw back, seeing which, the northern clans rallied and returned to the fight, each soldier having a sprig of heather in his cap that his comrades might recognise him. This unexpected movement determined the day: the Highlanders ran down the hillside like a torrent, dragging along with them everyone who could have wished to oppose their passage. Then Murray seeing that the moment had come for changing the defeat into a rout, charged with his entire cavalry: Huntly, who was very stout and very heavily armed, fell and was crushed beneath the horses' feet; John Cordon, taken prisoner in his flight, was executed at Aberdeen three days afterwards; finally, his brother, too young to undergo the same fate at this time, was shut up in a dungeon and executed later, the day he reached the age of sixteen.

Mary had been present at the battle, and the calm and courage she displayed had made a lively impression on her wild defenders, who all along the road had heard her say that she would have liked to be a man, to pass her days on horseback, her nights under a tent, to wear a coat of mail, a helmet, a buckler, and at her side a broadsword.

Mary made her entry into Edinburgh amid general enthusiasm; for this expedition against the Earl of Huntly, who was a Catholic, had been very popular among the inhabitants, who had no very clear idea of the real motives which had caused her to undertake it: They were of the Reformed faith, the earl was a papist, there was an enemy the less; that is all they thought about. Now, therefore; the Scotch, amid their acclamations, whether viva voce or by written demands, expressed the wish that their queen, who was without issue by Francis II, should remarry: Mary agreed to this, and, yielding to the prudent advice of those about her, she decided to consult upon this marriage Elizabeth, whose heir she was, in her title of granddaughter of Henry VII, in the event of the Queen of England's dying without posterity. Unfortunately, she had not always acted with like circumspection; for at the death of Mary Tudor, known as Bloody Mary, she had laid claim to the throne of Henry VIII, and, relying on the illegitimacy of Elizabeth's birth, had with the dauphin assumed sovereignty over Scotland, England, and Ireland, and had had coins struck with this new title, and plate engraved with these new armorial bearings.

Elizabeth was nine years older than Mary—that is to say, that at this time she had not yet attained her thirtieth year; she was not merely her rival as queen,

then, but as woman. As regards education, she could sustain comparison with advantage; for if she had less charm of mind, she had more solidity of judgment: versed in politics, philosophy, history; rhetoric, poetry and music, besides English, her maternal tongue, she spoke and wrote to perfection Greek, Latin, French, Italian and Spanish; but while Elizabeth excelled Mary on this point, in her turn Mary was more beautiful, and above all more attractive, than her rival. Elizabeth had, it is true, a majestic and agreeable appearance, bright quick eyes, a dazzlingly white complexion; but she had red hair, a large foot,—[Elizabeth bestowed a pair of her shoes on the University of Oxford; their size would point to their being those of a man of average stature.]—and a powerful hand, while Mary, on the contrary, with her beautiful ashy-fair hair,—[Several historians assert that Mary Stuart had black hair; but Brantome, who had seen it, since, as we have said, he accompanied her to Scotland, affirms that it was fair. And, so saying, he (the executioner) took off her headdress, in a contemptuous manner, to display her hair already white, that while alive, however, she feared not to show, nor yet to twist and frizz as in the days when it was so beautiful and so fair.]—her noble open forehead, eyebrows which could be only blamed for being so regularly arched that they looked as if drawn by a pencil, eyes continually beaming with the witchery of fire, a nose of perfect Grecian outline, a mouth so ruby red and gracious that it seemed that, as a flower opens but to let its perfume escape, so it could not open but to give passage to gentle words, with a neck white and graceful as a swan's, hands of alabaster, with a form like a goddess's and a foot like a child's, Mary was a harmony in which the most ardent enthusiast for sculptured form could have found nothing to reproach.

This was indeed Mary's great and real crime: one single imperfection in face or figure, and she would not have died upon the scaffold. Besides, to Elizabeth, who had never seen her, and who consequently could only judge by hearsay, this beauty was a great cause of uneasiness and of jealousy, which she could not even disguise, and which showed itself unceasingly in eager questions. One day when she was chatting with James Melville about his mission to her court, Mary's offer to be guided by Elizabeth in her choice of a husband,—a choice which the queen of England had seemed at first to wish to see fixed on the Earl of Leicester,—she led the Scotch ambassador into a cabinet, where she showed him several portraits with labels in her own handwriting: the first was one of the Earl of Leicester. As this nobleman was precisely the suitor chosen by Elizabeth, Melville asked the queen to give it him to show to his mistress; but Elizabeth refused, saying that it was the only one she had. Melville then replied, smiling, that being in possession of the original she might well part with the copy; but

Elizabeth would on no account consent. This little discussion ended, she showed him the portrait of Mary Stuart, which she kissed very tenderly, expressing to Melville a great wish to see his mistress. "That is very easy, madam," he replied: "keep your room, on the pretext that you are indisposed, and set out incognito for Scotland, as King James V set out for France when he wanted to see Madeleine de Valois, whom he afterwards married."

"Alas!" replied Elizabeth, "I would like to do so, but it is not so easy as you think. Nevertheless, tell your queen that I love her tenderly, and that I wish we could live more in friendship than we have done up to the present". Then passing to a subject which she seemed to have wanted to broach for a long time, "Melville," she continued, "tell me frankly, is my sister as beautiful as they say?"

"She has that reputation," replied Melville; "but I cannot give your Majesty any idea of her beauty, having no point of comparison."

"I will give you one," the queen said. "Is she more beautiful than I?"

"Madam," replied Melville, "you are the most beautiful woman in England, and Mary Stuart is the most beautiful woman in Scotland."

"Then which of the two is the taller?" asked Elizabeth, who was not entirely satisfied by this answer, clever as it was.

"My mistress, madam," responded Melville; "I am obliged to confess it."

"Then she is too tall," Elizabeth said sharply, "for I am tall enough. And what are her favourite amusements?" she continued.

"Madam," Melville replied, "hunting, riding, performing on the lute and the harpsichord."

"Is she skilled upon the latter?" Elizabeth inquired. "Oh yes, madam," answered Melville; "skilled enough for a queen."

There the conversation stopped; but as Elizabeth was herself an excellent musician, she commanded Lord Hunsdon to bring Melville to her at a time when she was at her harpsichord, so that he could hear her without her seeming to have the air of playing for him. In fact, the same day, Hunsdon, agreeably to her

instructions, led the ambassador into a gallery separated from the queen's apartment merely by tapestry, so that his guide having raised it. Melville at his leisure could hear Elizabeth, who did not turn round until she had finished the piece, which, however, she was playing with much skill. When she saw Melville, she pretended to fly into a passion, and even wanted to strike him; but her anger calmed down by little and little at the ambassador's compliments, and ceased altogether when he admitted that Mary Stuart was not her equal. But this was not all: proud of her triumph, Elizabeth desired also that Melville should see her dance. Accordingly, she kept back her despatches for two days that he might be present at a ball that she was giving. These despatches, as we have said, contained the wish that Mary Stuart should espouse Leicester; but this proposal could not be taken seriously. Leicester, whose personal worth was besides sufficiently mediocre, was of birth too inferior to aspire to the hand of the daughter of so many kings; thus Mary replied that such an alliance would not become her. Meanwhile, something strange and tragic came to pass.

CHAPTER II

Among the lords who had followed Mary Stuart to Scotland was, as we have mentioned, a young nobleman named Chatelard, a true type of the nobility of that time, a nephew of Bayard on his mother's side, a poet and a knight, talented and courageous, and attached to Marshal Damville, of whose household he formed one. Thanks to this high position, Chatelard, throughout her stay in France, paid court to Mary Stuart, who, in the homage he rendered her in verse, saw nothing more than those poetical declarations of gallantry customary in that age, and with which she especially was daily overwhelmed. But it happened that about the time when Chatelard was most in love with the queen she was obliged to leave France, as we have said. Then Marshal Damville, who knew nothing of Chatelard's passion, and who himself, encouraged by Mary's kindness, was among the candidates to succeed Francis II as husband, set out for Scotland with the poor exile, taking Chatelard with him, and, not imagining he would find a rival in him, he made a confidant of him, and left him with Mary when he was obliged to leave her, charging the young poet to support with her the interests of his suit. This post as confidant brought Mary and Chatelard more together; and, as in her capacity as poet, the queen treated him like a brother, he made bold in his passion to risk all to obtain another title. Accordingly, one evening he got into Mary Stuart's room, and hid himself under the bed; but at the moment when the queen was beginning to undress, a little dog she had began to yelp so loudly that her women came running at his barking, and, led by this indication, perceived Chatelard. A woman easily pardons a crime for which too great love is the excuse: Mary Stuart was woman before being queen—she pardoned.

But this kindness only increased Chatelard's confidence: he put down the reprimand he had received to the presence of the queen's women, and supposed that if she had been alone she would have forgiven him still more completely; so that, three weeks after, this same scene was repeated. But this time, Chatelard, discovered in a cupboard, when the queen was already in bed, was placed under arrest.

The moment was badly chosen: such a scandal, just when the queen was about to remarry, was fatal to Mary, let alone to Chatelard. Murray took the affair in hand, and, thinking that a public trial could alone save his sister's reputation, he urged the prosecution with such vigour, that Chatelard, convicted of the crime of lese-

majeste, was condemned to death. Mary entreated her brother that Chatelard might be sent back to France; but Murray made her see what terrible consequences such a use of her right of pardon might have, so that Mary was obliged to let justice take its course: Chatelard was led to execution. Arrived on the scaffold, which was set up before the queen's palace, Chatelard, who had declined the services of a priest, had Ronsard's Ode on Death read; and when the reading, which he followed with evident pleasure, was ended, he turned—towards the queen's windows, and, having cried out for the last time, "Adieu, loveliest and most cruel of princesses!" he stretched out his neck to the executioner, without displaying any repentance or uttering any complaint. This death made all the more impression upon Mary, that she did not dare to show her sympathy openly.

Meanwhile there was a rumour that the queen of Scotland was consenting to a new marriage, and several suitors came forward, sprung from the principal reigning families of Europe: first, the Archduke Charles, third son of the Emperor of Germany; then the Duke of Anjou, who afterwards became Henry III. But to wed a foreign prince was to give up her claims to the English crown. So Mary refused, and, making a merit of this to Elizabeth, she cast her eyes on a relation of the latter's, Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, son of the Earl of Lennox. Elizabeth, who had nothing plausible to urge against this marriage, since the Queen of Scotland not only chose an Englishman for husband, but was marrying into her own family, allowed the Earl of Lennox and his son to go to the Scotch court, reserving it to herself, if matters appeared to take a serious turn, to recall them both—a command which they would be constrained to obey, since all their property was in England.

Darnley was eighteen years of age: he was handsome, well-made, elegant; he talked in that attractive manner of the young nobles of the French and English courts that Mary no longer heard since her exile in Scotland; she let herself be deceived by these appearances, and did not see that under this brilliant exterior Darnley hid utter insignificance, dubious courage, and a fickle and churlish character. It is true that he came to her under the auspices of a man whose influence was as striking as the risen fortune which gave him the opportunity to exert it. We refer to David Rizzio.

David Rizzio, who played such a great part in the life of Mary Stuart, whose strange favour for him has given her enemies, probably without any cause, such cruel weapons against her, was the son of a Turin musician burdened with a

numerous family, who, recognising in him a pronounced musical taste, had him instructed in the first principles of the art. At the age of fifteen he had left his father's house and had gone on foot to Nice, where the Duke of Savoy held his court; there he entered the service of the Duke of Moreto, and this lord having been appointed, some years afterwards, to the Scottish embassy, Rizzio followed him to Scotland. As this young man had a very fine voice, and accompanied on the viol and fiddle songs of which both the airs and the words were of his own composition, the ambassador spoke of him to Mary, who wished to see him. Rizzio, full of confidence in himself, and seeing in the queen's desire a road to success, hastened to obey her command, sang before her, and pleased her. She begged him then of Moreto, making no more of it than if she had asked of him a thoroughbred dog or a well-trained falcon. Moreto presented him to her, delighted at finding such an opportunity to pay his court; but scarcely was Rizzio in her service than Mary discovered that music was the least of his gifts, that he possessed, besides that, education if not profound at least varied, a supple mind, a lively imagination, gentle ways, and at the same time much boldness and presumption. He reminded her of those Italian artists whom she had seen at the French court, and spoke to her the tongue of Marot and Ronsard, whose most beautiful poems he knew by heart: this was more than enough to please Mary Stuart. In a short time he became her favourite, and meanwhile the place of secretary for the French despatches falling vacant, Rizzio was provided for with it.

Darnley, who wished to succeed at all costs, enlisted Rizzio in his interests, unconscious that he had no need of this support; and as, on her side, Mary, who had fallen in love with him at first sight, fearing some new intrigue of Elizabeth's, hastened on this union so far as the proprieties permitted, the affair moved forward with wonderful rapidity; and in the midst of public rejoicing, with the approbation of the nobility, except for a small minority, with Murray at its head, the marriage was solemnised under the happiest auspices, 29th July 1565. Two days before, Darnley and his father, the Earl of Lennox, had received a command to return to London, and as they had not obeyed it, a week after the celebration of the marriage they learned that the Countess of Lennox, the only one of the family remaining in Elizabeth's power, had been arrested and taken to the Tower. Thus Elizabeth, in spite of her dissimulation, yielding to that first impulse of violence that she always had such trouble to overcome, publicly displayed her resentment.

However, Elizabeth was not the woman to be satisfied with useless vengeance:

she soon released the countess, and turned her eyes towards Murray, the most discontented of the nobles in opposition, who by this marriage was losing all his personal influence. It was thus easy for Elizabeth to put arms in his hand. In fact, when he had failed in his first attempt to seize Darnley, he called to his aid the Duke of Chatellerauld, Glencairn, Argyll, and Rothes, and collecting what partisans they could, they openly rebelled against the queen. This was the first ostensible act of that hatred which was afterwards so fatal to Mary.

The queen, on her side, appealed to her nobles, who in response hastened to rally to her, so that in a month's time she found herself at the head of the finest army that ever a king of Scotland had raised. Darnley assumed the command of this magnificent assembly, mounted on a superb horse, arrayed in gilded armour; and accompanied by the queen, who, in a riding habit, with pistols at her saddlebow, wished to make the campaign with him, that she might not quit his side for a moment. Both were young, both were handsome, and they left Edinburgh amidst the cheers of the people and the army.

Murray and his accomplices did not even try to stand against them, and the campaign consisted of such rapid and complex marches and countermarches, that this rebellion is called the Run-about Raid—that is to say, the run in every sense of the word. Murray and the rebels withdrew into England, where Elizabeth, while seeming to condemn their unlucky attempt, afforded them all the assistance they needed.

Mary returned to Edinburgh delighted at the success of her two first campaigns, not suspecting that this new good fortune was the last she would have, and that there her short-lived prosperity would cease. Indeed, she soon saw that in Darnley she had given herself not a devoted and very attentive husband, as she had believed, but an imperious and brutal master, who, no longer having any motive for concealment, showed himself to her just as he was, a man of disgraceful vices, of which drunkenness and debauchery was the least. Accordingly, serious differences were not long in springing up in this royal household.

Darnley in wedding Mary had not become king, but merely the queen's husband. To confer on him authority nearly equalling a regent's, it was necessary that Mary should grant him what was termed the crown matrimonial—a crown Francis II had worn during his short royalty, and that Mary, after Darnley's conduct to herself, had not the slightest intention of bestowing on him. Thus, to

whatever entreaties he made, in whatever form they were wrapped, Mary merely replied with an unvaried and obstinate refusal. Darnley, amazed at this force of will in a young queen who had loved him enough to raise him to her, and not believing that she could find it in herself, sought in her entourage for some secret and influential adviser who might have inspired her with it. His suspicions fell on Rizzio.

In reality, to whatever cause Rizzio owed his power (and to even the most clear-sighted historians this point has always remained obscure), be it that he ruled as lover, be it that he advised as minister, his counsels as long as he lived were always given for the greater glory of the queen. Sprung from so low, he at least wished to show himself worthy, of having risen so high, and owing everything to Mary, he tried to repay her with devotion. Thus Darnley was not mistaken, and it was indeed Rizzio who, in despair at having helped to bring about a union which he foresaw must become so unfortunate, gave Mary the advice not to give up any of her power to one who already possessed much more than he deserved, in possessing her person.

Darnley, like all persons of both weak and violent character, disbelieved in the persistence of will in others, unless this will was sustained by an outside influence. He thought that in ridding himself of Rizzio he could not fail to gain the day, since, as he believed, he alone was opposing the grant of this great desire of his, the crown matrimonial. Consequently, as Rizzio was disliked by the nobles in proportion as his merits had raised him above them, it was easy for Darnley to organise a conspiracy, and James Douglas of Morton, chancellor of the kingdom, consented to act as chief.

This is the second time since the beginning of our narrative that we inscribe this name Douglas, so often pronounced, in Scottish history, and which at this time, extinct in the elder branch, known as the Black Douglasses, was perpetuated in the younger branch, known as the Red Douglasses. It was an ancient, noble, and powerful family, which, when the descent in the male line from Robert Bruce had lapsed, disputed the royal title with the first Stuart, and which since then had constantly kept alongside the throne, sometimes its support, sometimes its enemy, envying every great house, for greatness made it uneasy, but above all envious of the house of Hamilton, which, if not its equal, was at any rate after itself the next most powerful.

During the whole reign of James V, thanks to the hatred which the king bore

them, the Douglasses had: not only lost all their influence, but had also been exiled to England. This hatred was on account of their having seized the guardianship of the young prince and kept him prisoner till he was fifteen. Then, with the help of one of his pages, James V had escaped from Falkland, and had reached Stirling, whose governor was in his interests. Scarcely was he safe in the castle than he made proclamation that any Douglas who should approach within a dozen miles of it would be prosecuted for high treason. This was not all: he obtained a decree from Parliament, declaring them guilty of felony, and condemning them to exile; they remained proscribed, then, during the king's lifetime, and returned to Scotland only upon his death. The result was that, although they had been recalled about the throne, and though, thanks to the past influence of Murray, who, one remembers, was a Douglas on the mother's side, they filled the most important posts there, they had not forgiven to the daughter the enmity borne them by the father.

This was why James Douglas, chancellor as he was, and consequently entrusted with the execution of the laws, put himself at the head of a conspiracy which had for its aim the violation of all laws; human and divine.

Douglas's first idea had been to treat Rizzio as the favourites of James III had been treated at the Bridge of Lauder—that is to say, to make a show of having a trial and to hang him afterwards. But such a death did not suffice for Darnley's vengeance; as above everything he wished to punish the queen in Rizzio's person, he exacted that the murder should take place in her presence.

Douglas associated with himself Lord Ruthven, an idle and dissolute sybarite, who under the circumstances promised to push his devotion so far as to wear a cuirass; then, sure of this important accomplice, he busied himself with finding other agents.

However, the plot was not woven with such secrecy but that something of it transpired; and Rizzio received several warnings that he despised. Sir James Melville, among others, tried every means to make him understand the perils a stranger ran who enjoyed such absolute confidence in a wild, jealous court like that of Scotland. Rizzio received these hints as if resolved not to apply them to himself; and Sir James Melville, satisfied that he had done enough to ease his conscience, did not insist further. Then a French priest, who had a reputation as a clever astrologer, got himself admitted to Rizzio, and warned him that the stars predicted that he was in deadly peril, and that he should beware of a certain

bastard above all. Rizzio replied that from the day when he had been honoured with his sovereign's confidence, he had sacrificed in advance his life to his position; that since that time, however, he had had occasion to notice that in general the Scotch were ready to threaten but slow to act; that, as to the bastard referred to, who was doubtless the Earl of Murray, he would take care that he should never enter Scotland far enough for his sword to reach him, were it as long as from Dumfries to Edinburgh; which in other words was as much as to say that Murray should remain exiled in England for life, since Dumfries was one of the principal frontier towns.

Meanwhile the conspiracy proceeded, and Douglas and Ruthven, having collected their accomplices and taken their measures, came to Darnley to finish the compact. As the price of the bloody service they rendered the king, they exacted from him a promise to obtain the pardon of Murray and the nobles compromised with him in the affair of the "run in every sense". Darnley granted all they asked of him, and a messenger was sent to Murray to inform him of the expedition in preparation, and to invite him to hold himself in readiness to reenter Scotland at the first notice he should receive. Then, this point settled, they made Darnley sign a paper in which he acknowledged himself the author and chief of the enterprise. The other assassins were the Earl of Morton, the Earl of Ruthven, George Douglas the bastard of Angus, Lindley, and Andrew, Carew. The remainder were soldiers, simple murderers' tools, who did not even know what was afoot. Darnley reserved it for himself to appoint the time.

Two days after these conditions were agreed upon, Darnley having been notified that the queen was alone with Rizzio, wished to make himself sure of the degree of her favour enjoyed by the minister. He accordingly went to her apartment by a little door of which he always kept the key upon him; but though the key turned in the lock, the door did not open. Then Darnley knocked, announcing himself; but such was the contempt into which he had fallen with the queen, that Mary left him outside, although, supposing she had been alone with Rizzio, she would have had time to send him away. Darnley, driven to extremities by this, summoned Morton, Ruthven, Lennox, Lindley, and Douglas's bastard, and fixed the assassination of Rizzio for two days later.

They had just completed all the details, and had, distributed the parts that each must play in this bloody tragedy, when suddenly, and at the moment when they least expected it, the door opened and, Mary Stuart appeared on the threshold.

“My lords,” said she, “your holding these secret counsels is useless. I am informed of your plots, and with God’s help I shall soon apply a remedy”.

With these words, and before the conspirators had had time to collect themselves, she shut the door again, and vanished like a passing but threatening vision. All remained thunderstruck. Morton was the first to find his tongue.

“My lords,” said he, “this is a game of life and death, and the winner will not be the cleverest or the strongest, but the readiest. If we do not destroy this man, we are lost. We must strike him down, this very evening, not the day after tomorrow.”

Everyone applauded, even Ruthven, who, still pale and feverish from riotous living, promised not to be behindhand. The only point changed, on Morton’s suggestion, was that the murder should take place next day; for, in the opinion of all, not less than a day’s interval was needed to collect the minor conspirators, who numbered not less than five hundred.

The next day, which was Saturday, March 9th, 1566, Mary Stuart, who had inherited from her father, James V, a dislike of ceremony and the need of liberty, had invited to supper with her six persons, Rizzio among the number. Darnley, informed of this in the morning, immediately gave notice of it to the conspirators, telling them that he himself would let them into the palace between six and seven o’clock in the evening. The conspirators replied that they would be in readiness.

The morning had been dark and stormy, as nearly all the first days of spring are in Scotland, and towards evening the snow and wind redoubled in depth and violence. So Mary had remained shut up with Rizzio, and Darnley, who had gone to the secret door several times, could hear the sound of instruments and the voice of the favourite, who was singing those sweet melodies which have come down to our time, and which Edinburgh people still attribute to him. These songs were for Mary a reminder of her stay in France, where the artists in the train of the Medicis had already brought echoes from Italy; but for Darnley they were an insult, and each time he had withdrawn strengthened in his design.

At the appointed time, the conspirators, who had been given the password during the day, knocked at the palace gate, and were received there so much the more easily that Darnley himself, wrapped in a great cloak, awaited them at the

postern by which they were admitted. The five hundred soldiers immediately stole into an inner courtyard, where they placed themselves under some sheds, as much to keep themselves from the cold as that they might not be seen on the snow-covered ground. A brightly lighted window looked into this courtyard; it was that of the queen's study: at the first signal give them from this window, the soldiers were to break in the door and go to the help of the chief conspirators.

These instructions given, Darnley led Morton, Ruthven, Lennox, Lindley, Andrew Carew, and Douglas's bastard into the room adjoining the study, and only separated from it by a tapestry hanging before the door. From there one could overhear all that was being said, and at a single bound fall upon the guests.

Darnley left them in this room, enjoining silence; then, giving them as a signal to enter the moment when they should hear him cry, "To me, Douglas!" he went round by the secret passage, so that seeing him come in by his usual door the queen's suspicions might not be roused by his unlooked-for visit.

Mary was at supper with six persons, having, say de Thou and Melville, Rizzio seated on her right; while, on the contrary, Carapden assures us that he was eating standing at a sideboard. The talk was gay and intimate; for all were giving themselves up to the ease one feels at being safe and warm, at a hospitable board, while the snow is beating against the windows and the wind roaring in the chimneys. Suddenly Mary, surprised that the most profound silence had succeeded to the lively and animated flow of words among her guests since the beginning of supper, and suspecting, from their glances, that the cause of their uneasiness was behind her, turned round and saw Darnley leaning on the back of her chair. The queen shuddered; for although her husband was smiling when looking at Rizzio, this smile had assumed such a strange expression that it was clear that something terrible was about to happen. At the same moment, Mary heard in the next room a heavy, dragging step drew near the cabinet, then the tapestry was raised, and Lord Ruthven, in armour of which he could barely support the weight, pale as a ghost, appeared on the threshold, and, drawing his sword in silence, leaned upon it.

The queen thought he was delirious.

"What do you want, my lord?" she said to him; "and why do you come to the palace like this?"

“Ask the king, madam,” replied Ruthven in an indistinct voice. “It is for him to answer.”

“Explain, my lord,” Mary demanded, turning again towards Darnley; “what does such a neglect of ordinary propriety mean?”

“It means, madam,” returned Darnley, pointing to Rizzio, “that that man must leave here this very minute.”

“That man is mine, my lord,” Mary said, rising proudly, “and consequently takes orders only from me.”

“To me, Douglas!” cried Darnley.

At these words, the conspirators, who for some moments had drawn nearer Ruthven, fearing, so changeable was Darnley’s character, lest he had brought them in vain and would not dare to utter the signal —at these words, the conspirators rushed into the room with such haste that they overturned the table. Then David Rizzio, seeing that it was he alone they wanted, threw himself on his knees behind the queen, seizing the hem of her robe and crying in Italian, “Giustizia! giustizia!” Indeed, the queen, true to her character, not allowing herself to be intimidated by this terrible irruption, placed herself in front of Rizzio and sheltered him behind her Majesty. But she counted too much on the respect of a nobility accustomed to struggle hand to hand with its kings for five centuries. Andrew Carew held a dagger to her breast and threatened to kill her if she insisted on defending any longer him whose death was resolved upon. Then Darnley, without consideration for the queen’s pregnancy, seized her round the waist and bore her away from Rizzio, who remained on his knees pale and trembling, while Douglas’s bastard, confirming the prediction of the astrologer who had warned Rizzio to beware of a certain bastard, drawing the king’s own dagger, plunged it into the breast of the minister, who fell wounded, but not dead. Morton immediately took him by the feet and dragged him from the cabinet into the larger room, leaving on the floor that long track of blood which is still shown there; then, arrived there, each rushed upon him as upon a quarry, and set upon the corpse, which they stabbed in fifty-six places. Meanwhile Darnley held the queen, who, thinking that all was not over, did not cease crying for mercy. But Ruthven came back, paler than at first, and at Darnley’s inquiry if Rizzio were dead, he nodded in the affirmative; then, as he could not bear further fatigue in his convalescent state, he sat down, although the queen, whom

Darnley had at last released, remained standing on the same spot. At this Mary could not contain herself.

“My lord,” cried she, “who has given you permission to sit down in my presence, and whence comes such insolence?”

“Madam,” Ruthven answered, “I act thus not from insolence, but from weakness; for, to serve your husband, I have just taken more exercise than my doctors allow”. Then turning round to a servant, “Give me a glass of wine,” said he, showing Darnley his bloody dagger before putting it back in its sheath, “for here is the proof that I have well earned it”. The servant obeyed, and Ruthven drained his glass with as much calmness as if he had just performed the most innocent act.

“My lord,” the queen then said, taking a step towards him, “it may be that as I am a woman, in spite of my desire and my will, I never find an opportunity to repay you what you are doing to me; but,” she added, energetically striking her womb with her hand, “he whom I bear there, and whose life you should have respected, since you respect my Majesty so little, will one day revenge me for all these insults”. Then, with a gesture at once superb and threatening, she withdrew by Darnley’s door, which she closed behind her.

At that moment a great noise was heard in the queen’s room. Huntly, Athol, and Bothwell, who, we are soon about to see, play such an important part in the sequel of this history, were supping together in another hall of the palace, when suddenly they had heard outcries and the clash of arms, so that they had run with all speed. When Athol, who came first, without knowing whose it was, struck against the dead body of Rizzio, which was stretched at the top of the staircase, they believed, seeing someone assassinated, that the lives of the king and queen were threatened, and they had drawn their swords to force the door that Morton was guarding. But directly Darnley understood what was going on, he darted from the cabinet, followed by Ruthven, and showing himself to the newcomers —

“My lords,” he said, “the persons of the queen and myself are safe, and nothing has occurred here but by our orders. Withdraw, then; you will know more about it in time. As to him,” he added, holding up Rizzio’s head by the hair, whilst the bastard of Douglas lit up the face with a torch so that it could be recognised, “you see who it is, and whether it is worth your while to get into trouble for

him”.

And in fact, as soon as Huntly, Athol, and Bothwell had recognised the musician-minister, they sheathed their swords, and, having saluted the king, went away.

Mary had gone away with a single thought in her heart, vengeance. But she understood that she could not revenge herself at one and the same time on her husband and his companions: she set to work, then, with all the charms of her wit and beauty to detach the kind from his accomplices. It was not a difficult task: when that brutal rage which often carried Darnley beyond all bounds was spent, he was frightened himself at the crime he had committed, and while the assassins, assembled by Murray, were resolving that he should have that greatly desired crown matrimonial, Darnley, as fickle as he was violent, and as cowardly as he was cruel, in Mary’s very room, before the scarcely dried blood, made another compact, in which he engaged to deliver up his accomplices. Indeed, three days after the event that we have just related, the murderers learned a strange piece of news—that Darnley and Mary, accompanied by Lord Seyton, had escaped together from Holyrood Palace. Three days later still, a proclamation appeared, signed by Mary and dated from Dunbar, which summoned round the queen, in her own name and the king’s, all the Scottish lords and barons, including those who had been compromised in the affair of the “run in every sense,” to whom she not only granted full and complete pardon, but also restored her entire confidence. In this way she separated Murray’s cause from that of Morton and the other assassins, who, in their turn, seeing that there was no longer any safety for them in Scotland, fled to England, where all the queen’s enemies were always certain to find a warm welcome, in spite of the good relations which reigned in appearance between Mary and Elizabeth. As to Bothwell, who had wanted to oppose the assassination, he was appointed Warden of all the Marches of the Kingdom.

Unfortunately for her honour, Mary, always more the woman than the queen, while, on the contrary, Elizabeth was always more the queen than the woman, had no sooner regained her power than her first royal act was to exhume Rizzio, who had been quietly buried on the threshold of the chapel nearest Holyrood Palace, and to have him removed to the burial-place of the Scottish kings, compromising herself still more by the honours she paid him dead than by the favour she had granted him living.

Such an imprudent demonstration naturally led to fresh quarrels between Mary and Darnley: these quarrels were the more bitter that, as one can well understand, the reconciliation between the husband and wife, at least on the latter's side, had never been anything but a pretence; so that, feeling herself in a stronger position still on account of her pregnancy, she restrained herself no longer, and, leaving Darnley, she went from Dunbar to Edinburgh Castle, where on June 19th, 1566, three months after the assassination of Rizzio, she gave birth to a son who afterwards became James VI.

CHAPTER III

Directly she was delivered, Mary sent for James Melville, her usual envoy to Elizabeth, and charged him to convey this news to the Queen of England, and to beg her to be godmother to the royal child at the same time. On arriving in London, Melville immediately presented himself at the palace; but as there was a court ball, he could not see the queen, and contented himself with making known the reason for his journey to the minister Cecil, and with begging him to ask his mistress for an audience next day. Elizabeth was dancing in a quadrille at the moment when Cecil, approaching her, said in a low voice, "Queen Mary of Scotland has just given birth to a son". At these words she grew frightfully pale, and, looking about her with a bewildered air, and as if she were about to faint, she leaned against an armchair; then, soon, not being able to stand upright, she sat down, threw back her head, and plunged into a mournful reverie. Then one of the ladies of her court, breaking through the circle which had formed round the queen, approached her, ill at ease, and asked her of what she was thinking so sadly. "Ah! madam," Elizabeth replied impatiently, "do you not know that Mary Stuart has given birth to a son, while I am but a barren stock, who will die without offspring?"

Yet Elizabeth was too good a politician, in spite of her liability to be carried away by a first impulse, to compromise herself by a longer display of her grief. The ball was not discontinued on that account, and the interrupted quadrille was resumed and finished.

The next day, Melville had his audience. Elizabeth received him to perfection, assuring him of all the pleasure that the news he brought had caused her, and which, she said, had cured her of a complaint from which she had suffered for a fortnight. Melville replied that his mistress had hastened to acquaint her with her joy, knowing that she had no better friend; but he added that this joy had nearly cost Mary her life, so grievous had been her confinement. As he was returning to this point for the third time, with the object of still further increasing the queen of England's dislike to marriage—

"Be easy, Melville," Elizabeth answered him; "you need not insist upon it. I shall never marry; my kingdom takes the place of a husband for me, and my subjects are my children. When I am dead, I wish graven on my tombstone: 'Here lies

Elizabeth, who reigned so many years, and who died a virgin.’”

Melville availed himself of this opportunity to remind Elizabeth of the desire she had shown to see Mary, three or four years before; but Elizabeth said, besides her country's affairs, which necessitated her presence in the heart of her possessions, she did not care, after all she had heard said of her rival's beauty, to expose herself to a comparison disadvantageous to her pride. She contented herself, then, with choosing as her proxy the Earl of Bedford, who set out with several other noblemen for Stirling Castle, where the young prince was christened with great pomp, and received the name of Charles James.

It was remarked that Darnley did not appear at this ceremony, and that his absence seemed to scandalise greatly the queen of England's envoy. On the contrary, James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, had the most important place there.

This was because, since the evening when Bothwell, at Mary's cries, had run to oppose the murder of Rizzio, he had made great way in the queen's favour; to her party he himself appeared to be really attached, to the exclusion of the two others, the king's and the Earl of Murray's. Bothwell was already thirty-five years old, head of the powerful family of Hepburn, which had great influence in East Lothian and the county of Berwick; for the rest, violent, rough, given to every kind of debauchery, and capable of anything to satisfy an ambition that he did not even give himself the trouble to hide. In his youth he had been reputed courageous, but for long he had had no serious opportunity to draw the sword.

If the king's authority had been shaken by Rizzio's influence, it was entirely upset by Bothwell's. The great nobles, following the favourite's example, no longer rose in the presence of Darnley, and ceased little by little to treat him as their equal: his retinue was cut down, his silver plate taken from him, and some officers who remained about him made him buy their services with the most bitter vexations. As for the queen, she no longer even took the trouble to conceal her dislike for him, avoiding him without consideration, to such a degree that one day when she had gone with Bothwell to Alway, she left there again immediately, because Darnley came to join her. The king, however, still had patience; but a fresh imprudence of Mary's at last led to the terrible catastrophe that, since the queen's liaison with Bothwell, some had already foreseen.

Towards the end of the month of October, 1566, while the queen was holding a court of justice at Jedburgh, it was announced to her that Bothwell, in trying to

seize a malefactor called John Elliot of Park, had been badly wounded in the hand; the queen, who was about to attend the council, immediately postponed the sitting till next day, and, having ordered a horse to be saddled, she set out for Hermitage Castle, where Bothwell was living, and covered the distance at a stretch, although it was twenty miles, and she had to go across woods, marshes, and rivers; then, having remained some hours *tete-d- tete* with him, she set out again with the same speed for Jedburgh, to which she returned in the night.

Although this proceeding had made a great deal of talk, which was inflamed still more by the queen's enemies, who chiefly belonged to the Reformed religion, Darnley did not hear of it till nearly two months afterwards—that is to say, when Bothwell, completely recovered, returned with the queen to Edinburgh.

Then Darnley thought that he ought not to put up any longer with such humiliations. But as, since his treason to his accomplices, he had not found in all Scotland a noble who would have drawn the sword for him, he resolved to go and seek the Earl of Lennox, his father, hoping that through his influence he could rally the malcontents, of whom there were a great number since Bothwell had been in favour. Unfortunately, Darnley, indiscreet and imprudent as usual, confided this plan to some of his officers, who warned Bothwell of their master's intention. Bothwell did not seem to oppose the journey in any way; but Darnley was scarcely a mile from Edinburgh when he felt violent pains none the less, he continued his road, and arrived very ill at Glasgow. He immediately sent for a celebrated doctor, called James Abrenets, who found his body covered with pimples, and declared without any hesitation that he had been poisoned. However, others, among them Walter Scott, state that this illness was nothing else than smallpox.

Whatever it may have been, the queen, in the presence of the danger her husband ran, appeared to forget her resentment, and at the risk of what might prove troublesome to herself, she went to Darnley, after sending her doctor in advance. It is true that if one is to believe in the following letters, dated from Glasgow, which Mary is accused of having written to Bothwell, she knew the illness with which he was attacked too well to fear infection. As these letters are little known, and seem to us very singular we transcribe them here; later we shall tell how they fell into the power of the Confederate lords, and from their hands passed into Elizabeth's, who, quite delighted, cried on receiving them, "God's death, then I hold her life and honour in my hands!"

FIRST LETTER

“When I set out from the place where I had left my heart, judge in what a condition I was, poor body without a soul: besides, during the whole of dinner I have not spoken to anyone, and no one has dared to approach me, for it was easy to see that there was something amiss. When I arrived within a league of the town, the Earl of Lennox sent me one of his gentlemen to make me his compliments, and to excuse himself for not having come in person; he has caused me to be informed, moreover, that he did not dare to present himself before me after the reprimand that I gave Cunningham. This gentleman begged me, as if of his own accord, to examine his master’s conduct, to ascertain if my suspicions were well founded. I have replied to him that fear was an incurable disease, that the Earl of Lennox would not be so agitated if his conscience reproached him with nothing, and that if some hasty words had escaped me, they were but just reprisals for the letter he had written me.

“None of the inhabitants visited me, which makes me think they are all in his interests; besides, they speak of him very favourably, as well as of his son. The king sent for Joachim yesterday, and asked him why I did not lodge with him, adding that my presence would soon cure him, and asked me also with what object I had come: if it were to be reconciled with him; if you were here; if I had taken Paris and Gilbert as secretaries, and if I were still resolved to dismiss Joseph? I do not know who has given him such accurate information. There is nothing, down to the marriage of Sebastian, with which he has not made himself acquainted. I have asked him the meaning of one of his letters, in which he complains of the cruelty of certain people. He replied that he was—stricken, but that my presence caused him so much joy that he thought he should die of it. He reproached me several times for being dreamy; I left him to go to supper; he begged me to return: I went back. Then he told me the story of his illness, and that he wished to make a will leaving me everything, adding that I was a little the cause of his trouble, and that he attributed it to my coldness. ‘You ask me,’ added he, ‘who are the people of whom I complain: it is of you, cruel one, of you, whom I have never been able to appease by my tears and my repentance. I know that I have offended you, but not on the matter that you reproach me with: I have also offended some of your subjects, but that you have forgiven me. I am young, and you say that I always relapse into my faults; but cannot a young man like me, destitute of experience, gain it also, break his promises, repent directly,

and in time improve? If you will forgive me yet once more, I will promise to offend you never again. All the favour I ask of you is that we should live together like husband and wife, to have but one bed and one board: if you are inflexible, I shall never rise again from here. I entreat you, tell me your decision: God alone knows what I suffer, and that because I occupy myself with you only, because I love and adore only you. If I have offended you sometimes, you must bear the reproach; for when someone offends me, if it were granted me to complain to you, I should not confide my griefs to others; but when we are on bad terms, I am obliged to keep them to myself, and that maddens me.'

"He then urged me strongly to stay with him and lodge in his house; but I excused myself, and replied that he ought to be purged, and that he could not be, conveniently, at Glasgow; then he told me that he knew I had brought a letter for him, but that he would have preferred to make the journey with me. He believed, I think, that I meant to send him to some prison: I replied that I should take him to Craigmiller, that he would find doctors there, that I should remain near him, and that we should be within reach of seeing my son. He has answered that he will go where I wish to take him, provided that I grant him what he has asked. He does not, however, wish to be seen by anyone.

"He has told me more than a hundred pretty things that I cannot repeat to you, and at which you yourself would be surprised: he did not want to let me go; he wanted to make me sit up with him all night. As for me, I pretended to believe everything, and I seemed to interest myself really in him. Besides, I have never seen him so small and humble; and if I had not known how easily his heart overflows, and how mine is impervious to every other arrow than those with which you have wounded it, I believe that I should have allowed myself to soften; but lest that should alarm you, I would die rather than give up what I have promised you. As for you, be sure to act in the same way towards those traitors who will do all they can to separate you from me. I believe that all those people have been cast in the same mould: this one always has a tear in his eye; he bows down before everyone, from the greatest to the smallest; he wishes to interest them in his favour, and make himself pitied. His father threw up blood to-day through the nose and mouth; think what these symptoms mean. I have not seen him yet, for he keeps to the house. The king wants me to feed him myself; he won't eat unless I do. But, whatever I may do, you will be deceived by it no more than I shall be deceiving myself. We are united, you and I, to two kinds of very detestable people [Mary means Miss Huntly, Bothwell's wife, whom he repudiated, at the king's death, to marry the queen.]: that hell may sever these

knots then, and that heaven may form better ones, that nothing can break, that it may make of us the most tender and faithful couple that ever was; there is the profession of faith in which I would die.

“Excuse my scrawl: you must guess more than the half of it, but I know no help for this. I am obliged to write to you hastily while everyone is asleep here: but be easy, I take infinite pleasure in my watch; for I cannot sleep like the others, not being able to sleep as I would like—that is to say, in your arms.

“I am going to get into bed; I shall finish my letter tomorrow: I have too many things to tell to you, the night is too far advanced: imagine my despair. It is to you I am writing, it is of myself that I converse with you, and I am obliged to make an end.

“I cannot prevent myself, however, from filling up hastily the rest of my paper. Cursed be the crazy creature who torments me so much! Were it not for him, I could talk to you of more agreeable things: he is not greatly changed; and yet he has taken a great deal of %t. But he has nearly killed me with the fetid smell of his breath; for now his is still worse than your cousin’s: you guess that this is a fresh reason for my not approaching him; on the contrary, I go away as far as I can, and sit on a chair at the foot of his bed.

“Let us see if I forget anything.

“His father’s messenger on the road; The question about Joachim; The-state of my house; The people of my suite; Subject of my arrival; Joseph; Conversation between him and me; His desire to please me and his repentance; The explanation of his letter; Mr. Livingston.

“Ah! I was forgetting that. Yesterday Livingston during supper told de Rere in a low voice to drink to the health of one I knew well, and to beg me to do him the honour. After supper, as I was leaning on his shoulder near the fire, he said to me, ‘Is it not true that there are visits very agreeable for those who pay them and those who receive them? But, however satisfied they seem with your arrival, I challenge their delight to equal the grief of one whom you have left alone to-day, and who will never be content till he sees you again.’ I asked him of whom he wished to speak to me. He then answered me by pressing my arm: ‘Of one of those who have not followed you; and among those it is easy for you to guess of whom I want to speak.’

“I have worked till two o’clock at the bracelet; I have enclosed a little key which is attached by two strings: it is not as well worked as I should like, but I have not had time to make it better; I will make you a finer one on the first occasion. Take care that it is not seen on you; for I have worked at it before everyone, and it would be recognised to a certainty.

“I always return, in spite of myself, to the frightful attempt that you advise. You compel me to concealments, and above all to treacheries that make me shudder; I would rather die, believe me, than do such things; for it makes my heart bleed. He does not want to follow me unless I promise him to have the selfsame bed and board with him as before, and not to abandon him so often. If I consent to it, he says he will do all I wish, and will follow me everywhere; but he has begged me to put off my departure for two days. I have pretended to agree to all he wishes; but I have told him not to speak of our reconciliation to anyone, for fear it should make some lords uneasy. At last I shall take him everywhere I wish.... Alas! I have never deceived anyone; but what would I not do to please you? Command, and whatever happens, I shall obey. But see yourself if one could not contrive some secret means in the shape of a remedy. He must purge himself at Craigmiller and take baths there; he will be some days without going out. So far as I can see, he is very uneasy; but he has great trust in what I tell him: however, his confidence does not go so far as to allow him to open his mind to me. If you like, I will tell him every thing: I can have no pleasure in deceiving someone who is trusting. However, it will be just as you wish: do not esteem me the less for that. It is you advised it; never would vengeance have taken me so far. Sometimes he attacks me in a very sensitive place, and he touches me to the quick when he tells me that his crimes are known, but that every day greater ones are committed that one uselessly attempts to hide, since all crimes, whatsoever they be, great or small, come to men’s knowledge and form the common subject of their discourse. He adds sometimes, in speaking to me of Madame de Rere, ‘I wish her services may do you honour.’ He has assured me that many people thought, and that he thought himself, that I was not my own mistress; this is doubtless because I had rejected the conditions he offered me. Finally, it is certain that he is very uneasy about you know what, and that he even suspects that his life is aimed at. He is in despair whenever the conversation turns on you, Livingston, and my brother. However, he says neither good nor ill of absent people; but, on the contrary, he always avoids speaking of them. His father keeps to the house: I have not seen him yet. A number of the Hamiltons are here, and accompany me everywhere; all the friends of the other one follow me each time I go to see him. He has begged me to be at his rising

tomorrow. My messenger will tell you the rest.

“Burn my letter: there would be danger in keeping it. Besides, it is hardly worth the trouble, being filled only with dark thoughts.

“As for you, do not be offended if I am sad and uneasy to-day, that to please you I rise above honour, remorse, and dangers. Do not take in bad part what I tell you, and do not listen to the malicious explanations of your wife’s brother; he is a knave whom you ought not to hear to the prejudice of the most tender and most faithful mistress that ever was. Above all, do not allow yourself to be moved by that woman: her sham tears are nothing in comparison with the real tears that I shed, and with what love and constancy make me suffer at succeeding her; it is for that alone that in spite of myself I betray all those who could cross my love. God have mercy on me, and send you all the prosperity that a humble and tender friend who awaits from you soon another reward wishes you. It is very late; but it is always with regret that I lay down my pen when I write to you; however, I shall not end my letter until I shall have kissed your hands. Forgive me that it is so ill-written: perhaps I do so expressly that you may be obliged to re-read it several times: I have transcribed hastily what I had written down on my tablets, and my paper has given out. Remember a tender friend, and write to her often: love me as tenderly as I love you, and remember

“Madame de Rere’s words; The English; His mother; The Earl of Argyll; The Earl of Bothwell; The Edinburgh dwelling.”

SECOND LETTER

“It seems that you have forgotten me during your absence, so much the more that you had promised me, at setting out, to let me know in detail everything fresh that should happen. The hope of receiving your news was giving me almost as much delight as your return could have brought me: you have put it off longer than you promised me. As for me, although you do not write, I play my part always. I shall take him to Craigmiller on Monday, and he will spend the whole of Wednesday there. On that day I shall go to Edinburgh to be bled there, unless you arrange otherwise at least. He is more cheerful than usual, and he is better than ever.

“He says everything he can to persuade me that he loves me; he has a thousand

attentions for me, and he anticipates me in everything: all that is so pleasant for me, that I never go to him but the pain in my side comes on again, his company weighs on me so much. If Paris brought me what I asked him, I should be soon cured. If you have not yet returned when I go you know where, write to me, I beg you, and tell me what you wish me to do; for if you do not manage things prudently, I foresee that the whole burden will fall on me: look into everything and weigh the affair maturely. I send you my letter by Beaton, who will set out the day which has been assigned to Balfour. It only remains for me to beg you to inform me of your journey.

“Glasgow, this Saturday morning.”

THIRD LETTER

“I stayed you know where longer than I should have done, if it had not been to get from him something that the bearer of these presents will tell you it was a good opportunity for covering up our designs: I have promised him to bring the person you know tomorrow. Look after the rest, if you think fit. Alas! I have failed in our agreement, for you have forbidden me to write to you, or to despatch a messenger to you. However, I do not intend to offend you: if you knew with what fears I am agitated, you would not have yourself so many doubts and suspicions. But I take them in good part, persuaded as I am that they have no other cause than love—love that I esteem more than anything on earth.

“My feelings and my favours are to me sure warrants for that love, and answer to me for your heart; my trust is entire on this head: but explain yourself, I entreat you, and open your soul to me; otherwise, I shall fear lest, by the fatality of my star, and by the too fortunate influence of the stars on women less tender and less faithful than I, I may be supplanted in your heart as Medea was in Jason’s; not that I wish to compare you to a lover as unfortunate as Jason, and to parallel myself with a monster like Medea, although you have enough influence over me to force me to resemble her each time our love exacts it, and that it concerns me to keep your heart, which belongs to me, and which belongs to me only. For I name as belonging to me what I have purchased with the tender and constant love with which I have burned for you, a love more alive to-day than ever, and which will end only with my life; a love, in short, which makes me despise both the dangers and the remorse which will be perhaps its sad sequel. As the price of

this sacrifice, I ask you but one favour, it is to remember a spot not far from here: I do not exact that you should keep your promise tomorrow; but I want to see you to disperse your suspicions. I ask of God only one thing: it is that He should make you read my heart, which is less mine than yours, and that He should guard you from every ill, at least during my life: this life is dear to me only in so far as it pleases you, and as I please you myself. I am going to bed: adieu; give me your news tomorrow morning; for I shall be uneasy till I have it. Like a bird escaped from its cage, or the turtle-dove which has lost her mate, I shall be alone, weeping your absence, short as it may be. This letter, happier than I, will go this evening where I cannot go, provided that the messenger does not find you asleep, as I fear. I have not dared to write it in the presence of Joseph, of Sebastian, and of Joachim, who had only just left me when I began it.”

Thus, as one sees, and always supposing these letters to be genuine, Mary had conceived for Bothwell one of those mad passions, so much the stronger in the women who are a prey to them, that one the less understands what could have inspired them. Bothwell was no longer young, Bothwell was not handsome, and yet Mary sacrificed for him a young husband, who was considered one of the handsomest men of his century. It was like a kind of enchantment. Darnley, the sole obstacle to the union, had been already condemned for a long time, if not by Mary, at least by Bothwell; then, as his strong constitution had conquered the poison, another kind of death was sought for.

The queen, as she announces in her letter to Bothwell, had refused to bring back Darnley with her, and had returned alone to Edinburgh. Arrived there, she gave orders for the king to be moved, in his turn, in a litter; but instead of taking him to Stirling or Holyrood, she decided to lodge him in the abbey of the Kirk of Field. The king made some objections when he knew of this arrangement; however, as he had no power to oppose it, he contented himself with complaining of the solitude of the dwelling assigned him; but the queen made answer that she could not receive him at that moment, either at Holyrood or at Stirling, for fear, if his illness were infectious, lest he might give it to his son: Darnley was then obliged to make the best of the abode allotted him.

It was an isolated abbey, and little calculated by its position to dissipate the fears that the king entertained; for it was situated between two ruined churches and two cemeteries: the only house, which was distant about a shot from a crossbow,

belonged to the Hamiltons, and as they were Darnley's mortal enemies the neighbourhood was none the more reassuring: further, towards the north, rose some wretched huts, called the "Thieves' crossroads". In going round his new residence, Darnley noticed that three holes, each large enough for a man to get through, had been made in the walls; he asked that these holes, through which ill-meaning persons could get in, should be stopped up: it was promised that masons should be sent; but nothing was done, and the holes remained open.

The day after his arrival at Kirk of Field, the king saw a light in that house near his which he believed deserted; next day he asked Alexander Durham whence it came, and he heard that the Archbishop of St. Andrew's had left his palace in Edinburgh and had housed there since the preceding evening, one didn't know why: this news still further increased the king's uneasiness; the Archbishop of St. Andrew's was one of his most declared enemies.

The king, little by little abandoned by all his servants lived on the first floor of an isolated pavilion, having about him only this same Alexander Durham, whom we have mentioned already, and who was his valet. Darnley, who had quite a special friendship for him, and who besides, as we have said, feared some attack on his life at every moment, had made him move his bed into his own apartment, so that both were sleeping in the same room.

On the night of the 8th February, Darnley awoke Durham: he thought he heard footsteps in the apartment beneath him. Durham rose, took a sword in one hand, a taper in the other, and went down to the ground floor; but although Darnley was quite certain he had not been deceived, Durham came up again a moment after, saying he had seen no one.

The morning of the next day passed without bringing anything fresh. The queen was marrying one of her servants named Sebastian: he was an Auvergnat whom she had brought with her from France, and whom she liked very much. However, as the king sent word that he had not seen her for two days, she left the wedding towards six o'clock in the evening, and came to pay him a visit, accompanied by the Countess of Argyll and the Countess of Huntly. While she was there, Durham, in preparing his bed, set fire to his palliasse, which was burned as well as a part of the mattress; so that, having thrown them out of the window all in flames, for fear lest the fire should reach the rest of the furniture, he found himself without a bed, and asked permission to return to the town to sleep; but Darnley, who remembered his terror the night before, and who was surprised at

the promptness that had made Durham throw all his bedding out of the window, begged him not to go away, offering him one of his mattresses, or even to take him into his own bed. However, in spite of this offer, Durham insisted, saying that he felt unwell, and that he should like to see a doctor the same evening. So the queen interceded for Durham, and promised Darnley to send him another valet to spend the night with him: Darnley was then obliged to yield, and, making Mary repeat that she would send him someone, he gave Durham leave for that evening. At that moment Paris; of whom the queen speaks in her letters, came in: he was a young Frenchman who had been in Scotland for some years, and who, after having served with Bothwell and Seyton, was at present with the queen. Seeing him, she got up, and as Darnley still wished to keep her—

“Indeed, my lord, it is impossible,” said she, “to come and see you. I have left this poor Sebastian’s wedding, and I must return to it; for I promised to come masked to his ball.”

The king dared not insist; he only reminded her of the promise that she had made to send him a servant: Mary renewed it yet once again, and went away with her attendants. As for Durham, he had set out the moment he received permission.

It was nine o’clock in the evening. Darnley, left alone, carefully shut the doors within, and retired to rest, though in readiness to rise to let in the servant who should come to spend the night with him. Scarcely was he in bed than the same noise that he had heard the night before recommenced; this time Darnley listened with all the attention fear gives, and soon he had no longer any doubt but that several men were walking about beneath him. It was useless to call, it was dangerous to go out; to wait was the only course that remained to the king. He made sure again that the doors were well fastened, put his sword under his pillow, extinguished his lamp for fear the light might betray him, and awaited in silence for his servant’s arrival; but the hours passed away, and the servant did not come. At one o’clock in the morning, Bothwell, after having talked some while with the queen, in the presence of the captain of the guard, returned home to change his dress; after some minutes, he came out wrapped up in the large cloak of a German hussar, went through the guardhouse, and had the castle gate opened. Once outside, he took his way with all speed to Kirk of Field, which he entered by the opening in the wall: scarcely had he made a step in the garden than he met James Balfour, governor of the castle.

“Well,” he said to him, “how far have we got?”

“Everything is ready,” replied Balfour, “and we were waiting for you to set fire to the fuse”. “That is well,” Bothwell answered—“but first I want to make sure that he is in his room.”

At these words, Bothwell opened the pavilion door with a false key, and, having groped his way up the stairs; he went to listen at Darnley’s door. Darnley, hearing no further noise, had ended by going to sleep; but he slept with a jerky breathing which pointed to his agitation. Little mattered it to Bothwell what kind of sleep it was, provided that he was really in his room. He went down again in silence, then, as he had come up, and taking a lantern from one of the conspirators, he went himself into the lower room to see if everything was in order: this room was full of barrels of powder, and a fuse ready prepared wanted but a spark to set the whole on fire. Bothwell withdrew, then, to the end of the garden with Balfour, David, Chambers, and three or four others, leaving one man to ignite the fuse. In a moment this man rejoined them.

There ensued some minutes of anxiety, during which the five men looked at one another in silence and as if afraid of themselves; then, seeing that nothing exploded, Bothwell impatiently turned round to the engineer, reproaching him for having, no doubt through fear, done his work badly. He assured his master that he was certain everything was all right, and as Bothwell, impatient, wanted to return to the house himself, to make sure, he offered to go back and see how things stood. In fact, he went back to the pavilion, and, putting his head through a kind of air-hole, he saw the fuse, which was still burning. Some seconds afterwards, Bothwell saw him come running back, making a sign that all was going well; at the same moment a frightful report was heard, the pavilion was blown to pieces, the town and the firth were lit up with a clearness exceeding the brightest daylight; then everything fell back into night, and the silence was broken only by the fall of stones and joists, which came down as fast as hail in a hurricane.

Next day the body of the king was found in a garden in the neighbourhood: it had been saved from the action of the fire by the mattresses on which he was lying, and as, doubtless, in his terror he had merely thrown himself on his bed wrapped in his dressing-gown and in his slippers, and as he was found thus, without his slippers, which were flung some paces away, it was believed that he had been first strangled, then carried there; but the most probable version was that the murderers simply relied upon powder—an auxiliary sufficiently powerful in itself for them to have no fear it would fail them.

Was the queen an accomplice or not? No one has ever known save herself, Bothwell, and God; but, yes or no, her conduct, imprudent this time as always, gave the charge her enemies brought against her, if not substance, at least an appearance of truth. Scarcely had she heard the news than she gave orders that the body should be brought to her, and, having had it stretched out upon a bench, she looked at it with more curiosity than sadness; then the corpse, embalmed, was placed the same evening, without pomp, by the side of Rizzio's.

Scottish ceremonial prescribes for the widows of kings retirement for forty days in a room entirely closed to the light of day: on the twelfth day Mary had the windows opened, and on the fifteenth set out with Bothwell for Seaton, a country house situated five miles from the capital, where the French ambassador, Ducroc, went in search of her, and made her remonstrances which decided her to return to Edinburgh; but instead of the cheers which usually greeted her coming, she was received by an icy silence, and a solitary woman in the crowd called out, "God treat her as she deserves!"

The names of the murderers were no secret to the people. Bothwell having brought a splendid coat which was too large for him to a tailor, asking him to remake it to his measure, the man recognised it as having belonged to the king. "That's right," said he; "it is the custom for the executioner to inherit from the condemned". Meanwhile, the Earl of Lennox, supported by the people's murmurs, loudly demanded justice for his son's death, and came forward as the accuser of his murderers. The queen was then obliged, to appease paternal clamour and public resentment, to command the Earl of Argyll, the Lord Chief justice of the kingdom, to make investigations; the same day that this order was given, a proclamation was posted up in the streets of Edinburgh, in which the queen promised two thousand pounds sterling to whoever would make known the king's murderers. Next day, wherever this letter had been affixed, another placard was found, worded thus:

"As it has been proclaimed that those who should make known the king's murderers should have two thousand pounds sterling, I, who have made a strict search, affirm that the authors of the murder are the Earl of Bothwell, James Balfour, the priest of Flisk, David, Chambers, Blackmester, Jean Spens, and the queen herself."

This placard was torn down; but, as usually happens, it had already been read by the entire population.

The Earl of Lennox accused Bothwell, and public opinion, which also accused him, seconded the earl with such violence, that Mary was compelled to bring him to trial: only every precaution was taken to deprive the prosecutor of the power of convicting the accused. On the 28th March, the Earl of Lennox received notice that the 12th April was fixed for the trial: he was granted a fortnight to collect decisive proofs against the most powerful man in all Scotland; but the Earl of Lennox, judging that this trial was a mere mockery, did not appear. Bothwell, on the contrary, presented himself at the court, accompanied by five thousand partisans and two hundred picked fusiliers, who guarded the doors directly he had entered; so that he seemed to be rather a king who is about to violate the law than an accused who comes to submit to it. Of course there happened what was certain to happen—that is to say, the jury acquitted Bothwell of the crime of which everyone, the judges included, knew him to be guilty.

The day of the trial, Bothwell had this written challenge placarded:

“Although I am sufficiently cleared of the murder of the king, of which I have been falsely accused, yet, the better to prove my innocence, I am, ready to engage in combat with whomsoever will dare to maintain that I have killed the king.”

The day after, this reply appeared:

“I accept the challenge, provided that you select neutral ground.”

However, judgment had been barely given, when rumours of a marriage between the queen and the Earl of Bothwell were abroad. However strange and however mad this marriage, the relations of the two lovers were so well known that no one doubted but that it was true. But as everyone submitted to Bothwell, either through fear or through ambition, two men only dared to protest beforehand against this union: the one was Lord Herries, and the other James Melville.

Mary was at Stirling when Lord Herries, taking advantage of Bothwell’s momentary absence, threw himself at her feet, imploring her not to lose her honour by marrying her husband’s murderer, which could not fail to convince those who still doubted it that she was his accomplice. But the queen, instead of thanking Herries for this devotion, seemed very much surprised at his boldness, and scornfully signing to him to rise, she coldly replied that her heart was silent

as regarded the Earl of Bothwell, and that, if she should ever remarry, which was not probable, she would neither forget what she owed to her people nor what she owed to herself.

Melville did not allow himself to be discouraged by this experience, and pretended, to have received a letter that one of his friends, Thomas Bishop, had written him from England. He showed this letter to the queen; but at the first lines Mary recognised the style, and above all the friendship of her ambassador, and giving the letter to the Earl of Livingston, who was present, "There is a very singular letter," said she. "Read it. It is quite in Melvine's manner."

Livingston glanced through the letter, but had scarcely read the half of it when he took Melville by the hand, and drawing him into the embrasure of a window

"My dear Melville," said he, "you were certainly mad when you just now imparted this letter to the queen: as soon as the Earl of Bothwell gets wind of it, and that will not be long, he will have you assassinated. You have behaved like an honest man, it is true; but at court it is better to behave as a clever man. Go away, then, as quickly as possible; it is I who recommend it."

Melville did not require to be told twice, and stayed away for a week. Livingston was not mistaken: scarcely had Bothwell returned to the queen than he knew all that had passed. He burst out into curses against Melville, and sought for him everywhere; but he could not find him.

This beginning of opposition, weak as it was, none the less disquieted Bothwell, who, sure of Mary's love, resolved to make short work of things. Accordingly, as the queen was returning from Stirling to Edinburgh some days after the scenes we have just related, Bothwell suddenly appeared at the Bridge of Grammont with a thousand horsemen, and, having disarmed the Earl of Huntly, Livingston, and Melville, who had returned to his mistress, he seized the queen's horse by the bridle, and with apparent violence he forced Mary to turn back and follow him to Dunbar; which the queen did without any resistance—a strange thing for one of Mary's character.

The day following, the Earls of Huntly, Livingston, Melville, and the people in their train were set at liberty; then, ten days afterwards, Bothwell and the queen, perfectly reconciled, returned to Edinburgh together.

Two days after this return, Bothwell gave a great dinner to the nobles his

partisans in a tavern. When the meal was ended, on the very same table, amid half-drained glasses and empty bottles, Lindsay, Ruthven, Morton, Maitland, and a dozen or fifteen other noblemen signed a bond which not only set forth that upon their souls and consciences Bothwell was innocent, but which further denoted him as the most suitable husband for the queen. This bond concluded with this sufficiently strange declaration:

“After all, the queen cannot do otherwise, since the earl has carried her off and has lain with her.”

Yet two circumstances were still opposed to this marriage: the first, that Bothwell had already been married three times, and that his three wives were living; the second, that having carried off the queen, this violence might cause to be regarded as null the alliance which she should contract with him: the first of these objections was attended to, to begin with, as the one most difficult to solve.

Bothwell's two first wives were of obscure birth, consequently he scorned to disquiet himself about them; but it was not so with the third, a daughter of that Earl of Huntly who been trampled beneath the horses' feet, and a sister of Gordon, who had been decapitated. Fortunately for Bothwell, his past behaviour made his wife long for a divorce with an eagerness as great as his own. There was not much difficulty, then, in persuading her to bring a charge of adultery against her husband. Bothwell confessed that he had had criminal intercourse with a relative of his wife, and the Archbishop of St. Andrews, the same who had taken up his abode in that solitary house at Kirk of Field to be present at Darnley's death, pronounced the marriage null. The case was begun, pushed on, and decided in ten days.

As to the second obstacle, that of the violence used to the queen, Mary undertook to remove it herself; for, being brought before the court, she declared that not only did she pardon Bothwell for his conduct as regarded her, but further that, knowing him to be a good and faithful subject, she intended raising him immediately to new honours. In fact, some days afterwards she created him Duke of Orkney, and on the 15th of the same month—that is to say, scarcely four months after the death of Darnley—with levity that resembled madness, Mary, who had petitioned for a dispensation to wed a Catholic prince, her cousin in the third degree, married Bothwell, a Protestant upstart, who, his divorce notwithstanding, was still bigamous, and who thus found himself in the position of having four wives living, including the queen.

The wedding was dismal, as became a festival under such outrageous auspices. Morton, Maitland, and some base flatterers of Bothwell alone were present at it. The French ambassador, although he was a creature of the House of Guise, to which the queen belonged, refused to attend it.

Mary's delusion was short-lived: scarcely was she in Bothwell's power than she saw what a master she had given herself. Gross, unfeeling, and violent, he seemed chosen by Providence to avenge the faults of which he had been the instigator or the accomplice. Soon his fits of passion reached such a point, that one day, no longer able to endure them, Mary seized a dagger from Erskine, who was present with Melville at one of these scenes, and would have struck herself, saying that she would rather die than continue living unhappily as she did; yet, inexplicable as it seems, in spite of these miseries, renewed without ceasing, Mary, forgetting that she was wife and queen, tender and submissive as a child, was always the first to be reconciled with Bothwell.

Nevertheless, these public scenes gave a pretext to the nobles, who only sought an opportunity for an outbreak. The Earl of Mar, the young prince's tutor, Argyll, Athol, Glencairn, Lindley, Boyd, and even Morton and Maitland themselves, those eternal accomplices of Bothwell, rose, they said, to avenge the death of the king, and to draw the son from hands which had killed the father and which were keeping the mother captive. As to Murray, he had kept completely in the background during all the last events; he was in the county of Fife when the king was assassinated, and three days before the trial of Bothwell he had asked and obtained from his sister permission to take a journey on the Continent.

The insurrection took place in such a prompt and instantaneous manner, that the Confederate lords, whose plan was to surprise and seize both Mary and Bothwell, thought they would succeed at the first attempt.

The king and queen were at table with Lord Borthwick, who was entertaining them, when suddenly it was announced that a large body of armed men was surrounding the castle: Bothwell and Mary suspected that they were aimed at, and as they had no means of resistance, Bothwell dressed himself as a squire, Mary as a page, and both immediately taking horse, escaped by one door just as the Confederates were coming in by the other. The fugitives withdrew to Dunbar.

There they called together all Bothwell's friends, and made them sign a kind of treaty by which they undertook to defend the queen and her husband. In the

midst of all this, Murray arrived from France, and Bothwell offered the document to him as to the others; but Murray refused to put his signature to it, saying that it was insulting him to think he need be bound by a written agreement when it was a question of defending his sister and his queen. This refusal having led to an altercation between him and Bothwell, Murray, true to his system of neutrality, withdrew into his earldom, and let affairs follow without him the fatal decline they had taken.

In the meantime the Confederates, after having failed at Borthwick, not feeling strong enough to attack Bothwell at Dunbar, marched upon Edinburgh, where they had an understanding with a man of whom Bothwell thought himself sure. This man was James Balfour, governor of the citadel, the same who had presided over the preparation of the mine which had blown up Darnley, and whom Bothwell had, met on entering the garden at Kirk of Field. Not only did Balfour deliver Edinburgh Castle into the hands of the Confederates, but he also gave them a little silver coffer of which the cipher, an "F" crowned, showed that it had belonged to Francis II; and in fact it was a gift from her first husband, which the queen had presented to Bothwell. Balfour stated that this coffer contained precious papers, which in the present circumstances might be of great use to Mary's enemies. The Confederate lords opened it, and found inside the three genuine or spurious letters that we have quoted, the marriage contract of Mary and Bothwell, and twelve poems in the queen's handwriting. As Balfour had said, therein lay, for her enemies, a rich and precious find, which was worth more than a victory; for a victory would yield them only the queen's life, while Balfour's treachery yielded them her honour.

CHAPTER IV

Meanwhile Bothwell had levied some troops, and thought himself in a position to hold the country: accordingly, he set out with his army, without even waiting for the Hamiltons, who were assembling their vassals, and June 15th, 1567, the two opposed forces were face to face. Mary, who desired to try to avoid bloodshed, immediately sent the French ambassador to the Confederate lords to exhort them to lay aside their arms; but they replied “that the queen deceived herself in taking them for rebels; that they were marching not against her, but against Bothwell.” Then the king’s friends did what they could to break off the negotiations and give battle: it was already too late; the soldiers knew that they were defending the cause of one man, and that they were going to fight for a woman’s caprice, and not for the good of the country: they cried aloud, then, that “since Bothwell alone was aimed at, it was for Bothwell to defend his cause”. And he, vain and blustering as usual, gave out that he was ready to prove his innocence in person against whomsoever would dare to maintain that he was guilty. Immediately everyone with any claim to nobility in the rival camp accepted the challenge; and as the honour was given to the bravest, Kirkcaldy of Grange, Murray of Tullibardine, and Lord Lindsay of Byres defied him successively. But, be it that courage failed him, be it that in the moment of danger he did not himself believe in the justice of his cause, he, to escape the combat, sought such strange pretexts that the queen herself was ashamed; and his most devoted friends murmured.

Then Mary, perceiving the fatal humour of men’s minds, decided not to run the risk of a battle. She sent a herald to Kirkcaldy of Grange, who was commanding an outpost, and as he was advancing without distrust to converse with the queen, Bothwell, enraged at his own cowardice, ordered a soldier to fire upon him; but this time Mary herself interposed, forbidding him under pain of death to offer the least violence. In the meanwhile, as the imprudent order given by Bothwell spread through the army, such murmurs burst forth that he clearly saw that his cause was for ever lost.

That is what the queen thought also; for the result of her conference with Lord Kirkcaldy was that she should abandon Bothwell’s cause, and pass over into the camp of the Confederates, on condition that they would lay down their arms before her and bring her as queen to Edinburgh. Kirkcaldy left her to take these

conditions to the nobles, and promised to return next day with a satisfactory answer. But at the moment of leaving Bothwell, Mary was seized again with that fatal love for him that she was never able to surmount, and felt herself overcome with such weakness, that, weeping bitterly, and before everyone, she wanted Kirkcaldy to be told that she broke off all negotiations; however, as Bothwell had understood that he was no longer safe in camp, it was he who insisted that things should remain as they were; and, leaving Mary in tears, he mounted, and setting off at full speed, he did not stop till he reached Dunbar.

Next day, at the time appointed, the arrival of Lord Kirkcaldy of Grange was announced by the trumpeters preceding him. Mary mounted directly and went to meet him; then, as he alighted to greet her, "My lord;" said she, "I surrender to you, on the conditions that you have proposed to me on the part of the nobles, and here is my hand as a sign of entire confidence". Kirkcaldy then knelt down, kissed the queen's hand respectfully; and, rising, he took her horse by the bridle and led it towards the Confederates' camp. Everyone of any rank in the army received her with such marks of respect as entirely to satisfy her; but it was not so at all with the soldiers and common people. Hardly had the queen reached the second line, formed by them, than great murmurs arose, and several voices cried, "To the stake, the adulteress! To the stake, the parricide!" However, Mary bore these outrages stoically enough but a more terrible trial yet was in store for her. Suddenly she saw rise before her a banner, on which was depicted on one side the king dead and stretched out in the fatal garden, and on the other the young prince kneeling, his hands joined and his eyes raised to heaven, with this inscription, "O Lord! judge and revenge my cause!" Mary reined in her horse abruptly at this sight, and wanted to turn back; but she had scarcely moved a few paces when the accusing banner again blocked her passage. Wherever she went, she met this dreadful apparition. For two hours she had incessantly under her eyes the king's corpse asking vengeance, and the young prince her son praying God to punish the murderers. At last she could endure it no longer, and, crying out, she threw herself back, having completely lost consciousness, and would have fallen, if someone had not caught hold of her. In the evening she entered Edinburgh, always preceded by the cruel banner, and she already had rather the air of a prisoner than of a queen; for, not having had a moment during the day to attend to her toilet, her hair was falling in disorder about her shoulders, her face was pale and showed traces of tears; and finally, her clothes were covered with dust and mud. As she proceeded through the town, the hootings of the people and the curses of the crowd followed her. At last, half dead with fatigue, worn out with grief, bowed down with shame, she reached the house of the Lord

Provost; but scarcely had she got there when the entire population of Edinburgh crowded into the square, with cries that from time to time assumed a tone of terrifying menace. Several times, then, Mary wished to go to the window, hoping that the sight of her, of which she had so often proved the influence, would disarm this multitude; but each time she saw this banner unfurling itself like a bloody curtain between herself and the people—a terrible rendering of their feelings.

However, all this hatred was meant still more for Bothwell than for her: they were pursuing Bothwell in Darnley's widow. The curses were for Bothwell: Bothwell was the adulterer, Bothwell was the murderer, Bothwell was the coward; while Mary was the weak, fascinated woman, who, that same evening, gave afresh proof of her folly.

In fact, directly the falling night had scattered the crowd and a little quiet was regained, Mary, ceasing to be uneasy on her own account, turned immediately to Bothwell, whom she had been obliged to abandon, and who was now proscribed and fleeing; while she, as she believed, was about to reassume her title and station of queen. With that eternal confidence of the woman in her own love, by which she invariably measures the love of another, she thought that Bothwell's greatest distress was to have lost, not wealth and power, but to have lost herself. So she wrote him a long letter, in which, forgetful of herself, she promised him with the most tender expressions of love never to desert him, and to recall him to her directly the breaking up of the Confederate lords should give her power to do so; then, this letter written, she called a soldier, gave him a purse of gold, and charged him to take this letter to Dunbar, where Bothwell ought to be, and if he were already gone, to follow him until he came up with him.

Then she went to bed and slept more calmly; for, unhappy as she was, she believed she had just sweetened misfortunes still greater than hers.

Next day the queen was awakened by the step of an armed man who entered her room. Both astonished and frightened at this neglect of propriety, which could augur nothing good, Mary sat up in bed, and parting the curtains, saw standing before her Lord Lindsay of Byres: she knew he was one of her oldest friends, so she asked him in a voice which she vainly tried to make confident, what he wanted of her at such a time.

“Do you know this writing, madam?” Lord Lindsay asked in a rough voice,

presenting to the queen the letter she had written to Bothwell at night, which the soldier had carried to the Confederate lords, instead of taking to its address.

“Yes, doubtless, my lord,” the queen answered; “but am I already a prisoner, then, that my correspondence is intercepted? or is it no longer allowed to a wife to write to her husband?”

“When the husband is a traitor,” replied Lindsay, “no, madam, it is no longer allowed to a wife to write to her husband—at least, however, if this wife have a part in his treason; which seems to me, besides, quite proved by the promise you make to this wretch to recall him to you.”

“My lord,” cried Mary, interrupting Lindsay, “do you forget that you are speaking to your queen.”

“There was a time, madam,” Lindsay replied, “when I should have spoken to you in a more gentle voice, and bending the knee, although it is not in the nature of us old Scotch to model ourselves on your French courtiers; but for some time, thanks to your changing loves, you have kept us so often in the field, in harness, that our voices are hoarse from the cold night air, and our stiff knees can no longer bend in our armour: you must then take me just as I am, madam; since to-day, for the welfare of Scotland, you are no longer at liberty to choose your favourites.”

Mary grew frightfully pale at this want of respect, to which she was not yet accustomed; but quickly containing her anger, as far as possible—

“But still, my lord,” said she, “however disposed I may be to take you as you are, I must at least know by what right you come here. That letter which you are holding in your hand would lead me to think it is as a spy, if the ease with which you enter my room without being asked did not make me believe it is as a gaoler. Have the goodness, then, to inform me by which of these two names I must call you.”

“Neither by one nor the other, madam; for I am simply your fellow-traveller, chef of the escort which is to take you to Lochleven Castle, your future residence. And yet, scarcely have I arrived there than I shall be obliged to leave you to go and assist the Confederate lords choose a regent for the kingdom.”

“So,” said Mary, “it was as prisoner and not as queen that I surrendered to Lord

Kirkcaldy. It seems to me that things were agreed upon otherwise; but I am glad to see how much time Scotch noblemen need to betray their sworn undertakings”.

“Your Grace forgets that these engagements were made on one condition,” Lindsay answered.

“On which?” Mary asked.

“That you should separate for ever from your husband’s murderer; and there is the proof,” he added, showing the letter, “that you had forgotten your promise before we thought of revoking ours.”

“And at what o’clock is my departure fixed?” said Mary, whom this discussion was beginning to fatigue.

“At eleven o’clock, madam.”

“It is well, my lord; as I have no desire to make your lordship wait, you will have the goodness, in withdrawing, to send me someone to help me dress, unless I am reduced to wait upon myself.”

And, in pronouncing these words, Mary made a gesture so imperious, that whatever may have been Lindsay’s wish to reply, he bowed and went out. Behind him entered Mary Seyton.

CHAPTER V

At the time appointed the queen was ready: she had suffered so much at Edinburgh that she left it without any regret. Besides, whether to spare her the humiliations of the day before, or to conceal her departure from any partisans who might remain to her, a litter had been made ready. Mary got into it without any resistance, and after two hours' journey she reached Duddington; there a little vessel was waiting for her, which set sail directly she was on board, and next day at dawn she disembarked on the other side of the Firth of Forth in the county of Fife.

Mary halted at Rosythe Castle only just long enough to breakfast, and immediately recommenced her journey; for Lord Lindsay had declared that he wished to reach his destination that same evening. Indeed, as the sun was setting, Mary perceived gilded with his last rays the high towers of Lochleven Castle, situated on an islet in the midst of the lake of the same name.

No doubt the royal prisoner was already expected at Lochleven Castle, for, on reaching the lake side, Lord Lindsay's equerry unfurled his banner, which till then had remained in its case, and waved it from right to left, while his master blew a little hunting bugle which he wore hanging from his neck. A boat immediately put off from the island and came towards the arrivals, set in motion by four vigorous oarsmen, who had soon propelled it across the space which separated it from the bank. Mary silently got into it, and sat down at the stern, while Lord Lindsay and his equerry stood up before her; and as her guide did not seem any more inclined to speak than she was herself to respond, she had plenty of time to examine her future dwelling.

The castle, or rather the fortress of Lochleven, already somewhat gloomy in its situation and architecture, borrowed fresh mournfulness still from the hour at which it appeared to the queen's gaze. It was, so far as she could judge amid the mists rising from the lake, one of those massive structures of the twelfth century which seem, so fast shut up are they, the stone armour of a giant. As she drew near, Mary began to make out the contours of two great round towers, which flanked the corners and gave it the severe character of a state prison. A clump of ancient trees enclosed by a high wall, or rather by a rampart, rose at its north front, and seemed vegetation in stone, and completed the general effect of this

gloomy abode, while, on the contrary, the eye wandering from it and passing from islands to islands, lost itself in the west, in the north, and in the south, in the vast plain of Kinross, or stopped southwards at the jagged summits of Ben Lomond, whose farthest slopes died down on the shores of the lake.

Three persons awaited Mary at the castle door: Lady Douglas, William Douglas her son, and a child of twelve who was called Little Douglas, and who was neither a son nor a brother of the inhabitants of the castle, but merely a distant relative. As one can imagine, there were few compliments between Mary and her hosts; and the queen, conducted to her apartment, which was on the first floor, and of which the windows overlooked the lake, was soon left with Mary Seyton, the only one of the four Marys who had been allowed to accompany her.

However, rapid as the interview had been, and short and measured the words exchanged between the prisoner and her gaolers, Mary had had time, together with what she knew of them beforehand, to construct for herself a fairly accurate idea of the new personages who had just mingled in her history.

Lady Lochleven, wife of Lord William Douglas, of whom we have already said a few words at the beginning of this history, was a woman of from fifty-five to sixty years of age, who had been handsome enough in her youth to fix upon herself the glances of King James V, and who had had a son by him, who was this same Murray whom we have already seen figuring so often in Mary's history, and who, although his birth was illegitimate, had always been treated as a brother by the queen.

Lady Lochleven had had a momentary hope, so great was the king's love for her, of becoming his wife, which upon the whole was possible, the family of Mar, from which she was descended, being the equal of the most ancient and the noblest families in Scotland. But, unluckily, perhaps slanderously, certain talk which was circulating among the young noblemen of the time came to James's ears; it was said that together with her royal lover the beautiful favourite had another, whom she had chosen, no doubt from curiosity, from the very lowest class. It was added that this Porterfeld, or Porterfield, was the real father of the child who had already received the name of James Stuart, and whom the king was educating as his son at the monastery of St. Andrews. These rumours, well founded or not, had therefore stopped James V at the moment when, in gratitude to her who had given him a son, he was on the point of raising her to the rank of queen; so that, instead of marrying her himself, he had invited her to choose

among the nobles at court; and as she was very handsome, and the king's favour went with the marriage, this choice, which fell on Lord William Douglas of Lochleven, did not meet with any resistance on his part. However, in spite of this direct protection, that James V preserved for her all his life, Lady Douglas could never forget that she had fingered higher fortune; moreover, she had a hatred for the one who, according to herself, had usurped her place, and poor Mary had naturally inherited the profound animosity that Lady Douglas bore to her mother, which had already come to light in the few words that the two women had exchanged. Besides, in ageing, whether from repentance for her errors or from hypocrisy, Lady Douglas had become a prude and a puritan; so that at this time she united with the natural acrimony of her character all the stiffness of the new religion she had adopted.

William Douglas, who was the eldest son of Lord Lochleven, on his mother's side half-brother of Murray, was a man of from thirty-five to thirty-six years of age, athletic, with hard and strongly pronounced features, red-haired like all the younger branch, and who had inherited that paternal hatred that for a century the Douglasses cherished against the Stuarts, and which was shown by so many plots, rebellions, and assassinations. According as fortune had favoured or deserted Murray, William Douglas had seen the rays of the fraternal star draw near or away from him; he had then felt that he was living in another's life, and was devoted, body and soul, to him who was his cause of greatness or of abasement. Mary's fall, which must necessarily raise Murray, was thus a source of joy for him, and the Confederate lords could not have chosen better than in confiding the safe-keeping of their prisoner to the instinctive spite of Lady Douglas and to the intelligent hatred of her son.

As to Little Douglas, he was, as we have said, a child of twelve, for some months an orphan, whom the Lochlevens had taken charge of, and whom they made buy the bread they gave him by all sorts of harshness. The result was that the child, proud and spiteful as a Douglas, and knowing, although his fortune was inferior, that his birth was equal to his proud relatives, had little by little changed his early gratitude into lasting and profound hatred: for one used to say that among the Douglasses there was an age for loving, but that there was none for hating. It results that, feeling his weakness and isolation, the child was self-contained with strength beyond his years, and, humble and submissive in appearance, only awaited the moment when, a grown-up young man, he could leave Lochleven, and perhaps avenge himself for the proud protection of those who dwelt there. But the feelings that we have just expressed did not extend to

all the members of the family: as much as from the bottom of his heart the little Douglas detested William and his mother, so much he loved George, the second of Lady Lochleven's sons, of whom we have not yet spoken, because, being away from the castle when the queen arrived, we have not yet found an opportunity to present him to our readers.

George, who at this time might have been about twenty-five or twenty-six years old, was the second son of Lord Lochleven; but by a singular chance, that his mother's adventurous youth had caused Sir William to interpret amiss, this second son had none of the characteristic features of the Douglasses' full cheeks, high colour, large ears, and red hair. The result was that poor George, who, on the contrary, had been given by nature pale cheeks, dark blue eyes, and black hair, had been since coming into the world an object of indifference to his father and of dislike to his elder brother. As to his mother, whether she were indeed in good faith surprised like Lord Douglas at this difference in race, whether she knew the cause and inwardly reproached herself, George had never been, ostensibly at least, the object of a very lively maternal affection; so the young man, followed from his childhood by a fatality that he could not explain, had sprung up like a wild shrub, full of sap and strength, but uncultivated and solitary. Besides, from the time when he was fifteen, one was accustomed to his motiveless absences, which the indifference that everyone bore him made moreover perfectly explicable; from time to time, however, he was seen to reappear at the castle, like those migratory birds which always return to the same place but only stay a moment, then take their way again without one's knowing towards what spot in the world they are directing their flight.

An instinct of misfortune in common had drawn Little Douglas to George. George, seeing the child ill-treated by everyone, had conceived an affection for him, and Little Douglas, feeling himself loved amid the atmosphere of indifference around him, turned with open arms and heart to George: it resulted from this mutual liking that one day, when the child had committed I do not know what fault, and that William Douglas raised the whip he beat his dogs with to strike him, that George, who was sitting on a stone, sad and thoughtful, had immediately sprung up, snatched the whip from his brother's hands and had thrown it far from him. At this insult William had drawn his sword, and George his, so that these two brothers, who had hated one another for twenty years like two enemies, were going to cut one another's throats, when Little Douglas, who had picked up the whip, coming back and kneeling before William, offered him the ignominious weapon, saying

“Strike, cousin; I have deserved it.”

This behaviour of the child had caused some minutes' reflection to the two young men, who, terrified at the crime they were about to commit, had returned their swords to their scabbards and had each gone away in silence. Since this incident the friendship of George and Little Douglas had acquired new strength, and on the child's side it had become veneration.

We dwell upon all these details somewhat at length, perhaps, but no doubt our readers will pardon us when they see the use to be made of them.

This is the family, less George, who, as we have said, was absent at the time of her arrival, into the midst of which the queen had fallen, passing in a moment from the summit of power to the position of a prisoner; for from the day following her arrival Mary saw that it was by such a title she was an inmate of Lochleven Castle. In fact, Lady Douglas presented herself before her as soon as it was morning, and with an embarrassment and dislike ill disguised beneath an appearance of respectful indifference, invited Mary to follow her and take stock of the several parts of the fortress which had been chosen beforehand for her private use. She then made her go through three rooms, of which one was to serve as her bedroom, the second as sitting-room, and the third as antechamber; afterwards, leading the way down a spiral staircase, which looked into the great hall of the castle, its only outlet, she had crossed this hall, and had taken Mary into the garden whose trees the queen had seen topping the high walls on her arrival: it was a little square of ground, forming a flower-bed in the midst of which was an artificial fountain. It was entered by a very low door, repeated in the opposite wall; this second door looked on to the lake and, like all the castle doors, whose keys, however, never left the belt or the pillow of William Douglas, it was guarded night and day by a sentinel. This was now the whole domain of her who had possessed the palaces, the plains, and the mountains of an entire kingdom.

Mary, on returning to her room, found breakfast ready, and William Douglas standing near the table he was going to fulfil about the queen the duties of carver and taster.

In spite of their hatred for Mary, the Douglasses would have considered it an eternal blemish on their honour if any accident should have befallen the queen while she was dwelling in their castle; and it was in order that the queen herself

should not entertain any fear in this respect that William Douglas, in his quality of lord of the manor, had not only desired to carve before the queen, but even to taste first in her presence, all the dishes served to her, as well as the water and the several wines to be brought her. This precaution saddened Mary more than it reassured her; for she understood that, while she stayed in the castle, this ceremony would prevent any intimacy at table. However, it proceeded from too noble an intention for her to impute it as a crime to her hosts: she resigned herself, then, to this company, insupportable as it was to her; only, from that day forward, she so cut short her meals that all the time she was at Lochleven her longest dinners barely lasted more than a quarter of an hour.

Two days after her arrival, Mary, on sitting down to table for breakfast, found on her plate a letter addressed to her which had been put there by William Douglas. Mary recognised Murray's handwriting, and her first feeling was one of joy; for if a ray of hope remained to her, it came from her brother, to whom she had always been perfectly kind, whom from Prior of St. Andrew's she had made an earl in bestowing on him the splendid estates which formed part of the old earldom of Murray, and to whom, which was of more importance, she had since pardoned, or pretended to pardon, the part he had taken in Rizzio's assassination.

Her astonishment was great, then, when, having opened the letter, she found in it bitter reproaches for her conduct, an exhortation to do penance, and an assurance several times repeated that she should never leave her prison. He ended his letter in announcing to her that, in spite of his distaste for public affairs, he had been obliged to accept the regency, which he had done less for his country than for his sister, seeing that it was the sole means he had of standing in the way of the ignominious trial to which the nobles wished to bring her, as author, or at least as chief accomplice, of Darnley's death. This imprisonment was then clearly a great good fortune for her, and she ought to thank Heaven for it, as an alleviation of the fate awaiting her if he had not interceded for her.

This letter was a lightning stroke for Mary: only, as she did not wish to give her enemies the delight of seeing her suffer, she contained her grief, and, turning to William Douglas—

“My lord,” said she, “this letter contains news that you doubtless know already, for although we are not children by the same mother, he who writes to me is related to us in the same degree, and will not have desired to write to his sister without writing to his brother at the same time; besides, as a good son, he will

have desired to acquaint his mother with the unlooked-for greatness that has befallen him.”

“Yes, madam,” replied William, “we know since yesterday that, for the welfare of Scotland, my brother has been named regent; and as he is a son as respectful to his mother as he is devoted to his country, we hope that he will repair the evil that for five years favourites of every sort and kind have done to both.”

“It is like a good son, and at the same time like a courteous host, to go back no farther into the history of Scotland,” replied Mary Stuart,” and not to make the daughter blush for the father’s errors; for I have heard say that the evil which your lordship laments was prior to the time to which you assign it, and that King James V also had formerly favourites, both male and female. It is true that they add that the ones as ill rewarded his friendship as the others his love. In this, if you are ignorant of it, my lord, you can be instructed, if he is still living, by a certain. Porterfeld or Porterfield, I don’t know which, understanding these names of the lower classes too ill to retain and pronounce them, but about which, in my stead, your noble mother could give you information.”

With these words, Mary Stuart rose, and, leaving William Douglas crimson with rage, she returned into her bedroom, and bolted the door behind her.

All that day Mary did not come down, remaining at her window, from which she at least enjoyed a splendid view over the plains and village of Kinross; but this vast extent only contracted her heart the more, when, bringing her gaze back from the horizon to the castle, she beheld its walls surrounded on all sides by the deep waters of the lake, on whose wide surface a single boat, where Little Douglas was fishing, was rocking like a speck. For some moments Mary’s eyes mechanically rested on this child, whom she had already seen upon her arrival, when suddenly a horn sounded from the Kinross side. At the same moment Little Douglas threw away his line, and began to row towards the shore whence the signal had come with skill and strength beyond his years. Mary, who had let her gaze rest on him absently, continued to follow him with her eyes, and saw him make for a spot on the shore so distant that the boat seemed to her at length but an imperceptible speck; but soon it reappeared, growing larger as it approached, and Mary could then observe that it was bringing back to the castle a new passenger, who, having in his turn taken the oars, made the little skiff fly over the tranquil water of the lake, where it left a furrow gleaming in the last rays of the sun. Very soon, flying on with the swiftness of a bird, it was near enough for

Mary to see that the skilful and vigorous oarsman was a young man from twenty-five to twenty-six years of age, with long black hair, clad in a close coat of green cloth, and wearing a Highlander's cap, adorned with an eagle's feather; then, as with his back turned to the window he drew nearer, Little Douglas, who was leaning on his shoulder, said a few words which made him turn round towards the queen: immediately Mary, with an instinctive movement rather than with the dread of being an object of idle curiosity, drew back, but not so quickly, however, but that she had been able to see the handsome pale face of the unknown, who, when she returned to the window, had disappeared behind one of the corners of the castle.

Everything is a cause of conjecture to a prisoner: it seemed to Mary that this young man's face was not unknown to her, and that he had seen her already; but though great the care with which she questioned her memory, she could not recall any distinct remembrance, so much so that the queen ended in thinking it the play of her imagination, or that some vague and distinct resemblance had deceived her.

However, in spite of Mary, this idea had taken an important place in her mind: she incessantly saw this little boat skimming the water, and the young man and the child who were in it drawing near her, as if to bring her help. It followed that, although there had been nothing real in all these captive's dreams, she slept that night a calmer sleep than she had yet done since she had been in Lochleven Castle.

Next day, on rising, Mary ran to her window: the weather was fine, and everything seemed to smile on her, the water, the heavens and the earth. But, without being able to account for the restraining motive, she did not want to go down into the garden before breakfast. When the door opened, 'she turned quickly round: it was, as on the day before, William Douglas, who came to fulfil his duty as taster.

The breakfast was a short and silent one; then, as soon as Douglas had withdrawn, Mary descended in her turn: in crossing the courtyard she saw two horses ready saddled, which pointed to the near departure of a master and a squire. Was it the young man with the black hair already setting out again? This is what Mary did not dare or did not wish to ask. She consequently went her way, and entered the garden: at the first glance she took it in its full extent; it was deserted.

Mary walked there a moment; then, soon tiring of the promenade, she went up again to her room: in passing back through the courtyard she had noticed that the horses were no longer there. Directly she returned into her apartment, she went then to the window to see if she could discover anything upon the lake to guide her in her conjectures: a boat was in fact receding, and in this boat were the two horses and the two horsemen; one was William Douglas, the other a simple squire from the house.

Mary continued watching the boat until it had touched the shore. Arrived there, the two horsemen got out, disembarked their horses, and went away at full gallop, taking the same road by which the queen had come; so that, as the horses were prepared for a long journey, Mary thought that William Douglas was going to Edinburgh. As to the boat, scarcely had it landed its two passengers on the opposite shore than it returned towards the castle.

At that moment Mary Seyton announced to the queen that Lady Douglas was asking permission to visit her.

It was the second time, after long hatred on Lady Douglas's part and contemptuous indifference on the queen's, that the two women were face to face; therefore the queen, with that instinctive impulse of coquetry which urges women, in whatever situation they find themselves, to desire to be beautiful, above all for women, made a sign to Mary Seyton, and, going to a little mirror fastened to the wall in a heavy Gothic frame, she arranged her curls, and readjusted the lace of her collar; then, having seated herself in the pose most favourable to her, in a great armchair, the only one in her sitting-room, she said smilingly to Mary Seyton that she might admit Lady Douglas, who was immediately introduced.

Mary's expectation was not disappointed: Lady Douglas, in spite of her hatred for James V's daughter, and mistress of herself as she thought she was, could not prevent herself from showing by a movement of surprise the impression that this marvelous beauty was making on her: she thought she should find Mary crushed by her unhappiness, pallid from her fatigues, humbled by captivity, and she saw hers calm, lovely, and haughty as usual. Mary perceived the effect that she was producing, and addressing herself with an ironical smile partly to Mary Seyton, who was leaning on the back of her chair, and partly to her who was paying her this unforeseen visit

“We are fortunate to-day,” said she, “for we are going as it seems to enjoy the society of our good hostess, whom we thank besides for having kindly maintained with us the empty ceremony of announcing herself—a ceremony with which, having the keys of our apartment, she could have dispensed.”

“If my presence is inconvenient to your grace,” replied Lady Lochleven, “I am all the more sorry for it, as circumstances will oblige me to impose it twice daily, at least during the absence of my son, who is summoned to Edinburgh by the regent; this is of what I came to inform your grace, not with the empty ceremonial of the court, but with the consideration which Lady Lochleven owes to everyone who has received hospitality in her castle.”

“Our good hostess mistakes our intention,” Mary answered, with affected good-nature; “and the regent himself can bear witness to the pleasure we have always had in bringing nearer to us the persons who can recall to us, even indirectly, our well-beloved father, James V. It will be therefore unjustly that Lady Douglas will interpret in a manner disagreeable to herself our surprise at seeing her; and the hospitality that she offers us so obligingly does not promise us, in spite of her goodwill, sufficient distractions that we should deprive ourselves of those that her visits cannot fail to procure us.”

“Unfortunately, madam,” replied Lady Lochleven, whom Mary was keeping standing before her, “whatever pleasure I myself derive from these visits, I shall be obliged to deprive myself of, except at the times I have mentioned. I am now too old to bear fatigue, and I have, always been too proud to endure sarcasms.”

“Really, Seyton,” cried Mary, seeming to recollect herself, “we had not dreamed that Lady Lochleven, having won her right to a stool at the court of the king my father, would have need to preserve it in the prison of the queen his daughter. Bring forward a seat, Seyton, that we be not deprived so soon, and by a failure of memory on our part, of our gracious hostess’s company; or even,” went on Mary, rising and pointing out her own seat to Lady Lochleven, who was making a motion to withdraw, “if a stool does not suit you, my lady, take this easy-chair: you will not be the first member of your family to sit in my place.”

At this last allusion, which recalled to her Murray’s usurpation, Lady Lochleven was no doubt about to make some exceedingly bitter reply, when the young man with the dark hair appeared on the threshold, without being announced, and, advancing towards Lady Lochleven, without saluting Mary—

“Madam,” said he, bowing to the former, “the boat which took my brother has just returned, and one of the men in it is charged with a pressing charge that Lord William forgot to make to you himself.”

Then, saluting the old lady with the same respect, he immediately went out of the room, without even glancing at the queen, who, hurt by this impertinence, turned round to Mary Seyton, and, with her usual calm—

“What have they told us, Seyton, of injurious rumours which were spread about our worthy hostess apropos of a child with a pale face and dark hair? If this child, as I have every reason to believe, has become the young man who just went out of the room, I am ready to affirm to all the incredulous that he is a true Douglas, if not for courage, of which we cannot judge, then for insolence, of which he has just given us proofs. Let us return, darling,” continued the queen, leaning on Mary Seyton’s arm;” for our good hostess, out of courtesy, might think herself obliged to keep us company longer, while we know that she is impatiently awaited elsewhere.”

With these words, Mary went into her bedroom; while the old lady, still quite stunned with the shower of sarcasms that the queen had rained on her, withdrew, murmuring, “Yes, yes, he is a Douglas, and with God’s help he will prove it, I hope.”

The queen had had strength as long as she was sustained by her enemy’s presence, but scarcely was she alone than she sank into a chair, and no longer having any witness of her weakness than Mary Seyton, burst into tears. Indeed, she had just been cruelly wounded: till then no man had come near her who had not paid homage either to the majesty of her rank or to the beauty of her countenance. But precisely he, on whom she had reckoned, without knowing why, with instinctive hopes, insulted her at one and the same time in her double pride of queen and woman: thus she remained shut up till evening.

At dinnertime, just as Lady Lochleven had informed Mary, she ascended to the queen’s apartment, in her dress of honour, and preceding four servants who were carrying the several dishes composing the prisoner’s repast, and who, in their turn, were followed by the old castle steward, having, as on days of great ceremony, his gold chain round his neck and his ivory stick in his hand. The servants’ placed the dishes on the table, and waited in silence for the moment when it should please the queen to come out of her room; but at this moment the

door opened, and in place of the queen Mary Seyton appeared.

“Madam,” said she on entering, “her grace was indisposed during the day, and will take nothing this evening; it will be useless, then, for you to wait longer.”

“Permit me to hope,” replied Lady Lochleven, “that she will change her decision; in any case, see me perform my office.”

At these words, a servant handed Lady Lochleven bread and salt on a silver salver, while the old steward, who, in the absence of William Douglas, fulfilled the duties of carver, served to her on a plate of the same metal a morsel from each of the dishes that had been brought; then, this transaction ended

“So the queen will not appear to-day?” Lady Lochleven inquired.

“It is her Majesty’s resolve,” replied Mary Seyton.

“Our presence is then needless,” said the old lady; “but in any case the table is served, and if her grace should have need of anything else, she would have but to name it.”

With these words, Lady Lochleven, with the same stiffness and the same dignity with which she had come, withdrew, followed by her four servants and her steward.

As Lady Lochleven had foreseen, the queen, yielding to the entreaties of Mary Seyton, came out of her room at last, towards eight o’clock in the evening, sat down to table, and, served by the only maid of honour left her, ate a little; then, getting up, she went to the window.

It was one of those magnificent summer evenings on which the whole of nature seems making holiday: the sky was studded with stars, which were reflected in the lake, and in their midst, like a more fiery star, the flame of the chafing-dish shone, burning at the stern of a little boat: the queen, by the gleam of the light it shed, perceived George Douglas and Little Douglas, who were fishing. However great her wish to profit by this fine evening to breathe the pure night air, the sight of this young man who had so grossly insulted her this very day made such a keen impression on her that she shut her window directly, and, retiring into her room, went to bed, and made her companion in captivity read several prayers aloud; then, not being able to sleep, so greatly was she agitated, she rose, and

throwing on a mantle went again to the window the boat had disappeared.

Mary spent part of the night gazing into the immensity of the heavens, or into the depths of the lake; but in spite of the nature of the thoughts agitating her, she none the less found very great physical alleviation in contact with this pure air and in contemplation of this peaceful and silent night: thus she awoke next day calmer and more resigned. Unfortunately, the sight of Lady Lochleven, who presented herself at breakfast-time, to fulfil her duties as taster, brought back her irritability. Perhaps, however, things would have gone on smoothly if Lady Lochleven, instead of remaining standing by the sideboard, had withdrawn after having tasted the various dishes of the courses; but this insisting on remaining throughout the meal, which was at bottom a mark of respect, seemed to the queen unbearable tyranny.

“Darling,” said she, speaking to Mary Seyton, “have you already forgotten that our good hostess complained yesterday of the fatigue she felt in standing? Bring her, then, one of the two stools which compose our royal furniture, and take care that it is not the one with the leg broken”. “If the furniture of Lochleven Castle is in such bad condition, madam,” the old lady replied, “it is the fault of the kings of Scotland: the poor Douglasses for nearly a century have had such a small part of their sovereigns’ favour, that they have not been able to keep up the splendour of their ancestors to the level of that of private individuals, and because there was in Scotland a certain musician, as I am informed, who spent their income for a whole year in one month.”

“Those who know how to take so well, my lady,” the queen answered, “have no need of being given to: it seems to me the Douglasses have lost nothing by waiting, and there is not a younger son of this noble family who might not aspire to the highest alliances; it is truly vexatious that our sister the queen of England has taken a vow of virginity; as is stated.”

“Or rather,” interrupted Lady Lochleven, “that the Queen of Scotland is not a widow by her third husband. But,” continued the old lady, pretending to recollect herself, “I do not say that to reproach your grace. Catholics look upon marriage as a sacrament, and on this head receive it as often as they can.”

“This, then,” returned Mary, “is the difference between them and the Huguenots; for they, not having the same respect for it, think it is allowed them to dispense with it in certain circumstances.”

At this terrible sarcasm Lady Lochleven took a step towards Mary Stuart, holding in her hand the knife which she had just been using to cut off a piece of meat brought her to taste; but the queen rose up with so great a calm and with such majesty, that either from involuntary respect or shame of her first impulse, she let fall the weapon she was holding, and not finding anything sufficiently strong in reply to express her feelings, she signed to the servants to follow her, and went out of the apartment with all the dignity that anger permitted her to summon to her aid.

Scarcely had Lady Lochleven left the room than the queen sat down again, joyful and triumphant at the victory she had just gained, and ate with a better appetite than she had yet done since she was a prisoner, while Mary Seyton deplored in a low tone and with all possible respect this fatal gift of repartee that Mary had received, and which, with her beauty, was one of the causes of all her misfortunes; but the queen did nothing but laugh at all her observations, saying she was curious to see the figure her good hostess would cut at dinnertime.

After breakfast, the queen went down into the garden: her satisfied pride had restored some of her cheerfulness, so much so that, seeing, while crossing the hall, a mandolin lying forgotten on a chair, she told Mary Seyton to take it, to see, she said, if she could recall her old talent. In reality the queen was one of the best musicians of the time, and played admirably, says Brantome, on the lute and viol d'amour, an instrument much resembling the mandolin.

Mary Seyton obeyed.

Arrived in the garden, the queen sat down in the deepest shade, and there, having tuned her instrument, she at first drew from it lively and light tones, which soon darkened little by little, at the same time that her countenance assumed a hue of deep melancholy. Mary Seyton looked at her with uneasiness, although for a long time she had been used to these sudden changes in her mistress's humour, and she was about to ask the reason of this gloomy veil suddenly spread over her face, when, regulating her harmonies, Mary began to sing in a low voice, and as if for herself alone, the following verses:—

“Caverns, meadows, plains and mounts, Lands of tree and stone, Rivers,
rivulets and founts, By which I stray alone, Bewailing as I go, With tears that
overflow, Sing will I The miserable woe That bids me grieve and sigh.

Ay, but what is here to lend Ear to my lament? What is here can comprehend
My dull discontent? Neither grass nor reed, Nor the ripples heed, Flowing by,
While the stream with speed Hastens from my eye.

Vainly does my wounded heart Hope, alas, to heal; Seeking, to allay its smart,
Things that cannot feel. Better should my pain Bitterly complain, Crying shrill,
To thee who dost constrain My spirit to such ill.

Goddess, who shalt never die, List to what I say; Thou who makest me to lie
Weak beneath thy sway, If my life must know Ending at thy blow, Cruellest!
Own it perished so But at thy behest.

Lo! my face may all men see Slowly pine and fade, E'en as ice doth melt and
flee Near a furnace laid. Yet the burning ray Wasting me away Passion's glow,
Wakens no display Of pity for my woe.

Yet does every neighbour tree, Every rocky wall, This my sorrow know and
see; So, in brief, doth all Nature know aright This my sorry plight; Thou alone
Takest thy delight To hear me cry and moan.

But if it be thy will, To see tormented still Wretched me, Then let my woful ill
Immortal be."

This last verse died away as if the queen were exhausted, and at the same time the mandolin slipped from her hands, and would have fallen to the ground had not Mary Seyton thrown herself on her knees and prevented it. The young girl remained thus at her mistress's feet for some time, gazing at her silently, and as she saw that she was losing herself more and more in gloomy reverie—

"Have those lines brought back to your Majesty some sad remembrance?" she asked hesitatingly.

"Oh, yes," answered the queen; "they reminded me of the unfortunate being who composed them."

"And may I, without indiscretion, inquire of your grace who is their author?"

“Alas! he was a noble, brave, and handsome young man, with a faithful heart and a hot head, who would defend me to-day, if I had defended him then; but his boldness seemed to me rashness, and his fault a crime. What was to be done? I did not love him. Poor Chatelard! I was very cruel to him.”

“But you did not prosecute him, it was your brother; you did not condemn him, the judges did.”

“Yes, yes; I know that he too was Murray’s victim, and that is no doubt the reason that I am calling him to mind just now. But I was able to pardon him, Mary, and I was inflexible; I let ascend the scaffold a man whose only crime was in loving me too well; and now I am astonished and complain of being abandoned by everyone. Listen, darling, there is one thing that terrifies me: it is, that when I search within myself I find that I have not only deserved my fate, but even that God did not punish me severely enough.”

“What strange thoughts for your grace!” cried Mary; “and see where those unlucky lines which returned to your mind have led you, the very day when you were beginning to recover a little of your cheerfulness.”

“Alas!” replied the queen, shaking her head and uttering a deep sigh, “for six years very few days have passed that I have not repeated those lines to myself, although it may be for the first time to-day that I repeat them aloud. He was a Frenchman too, Mary: they have exiled from me, taken or killed all who came to me from France. Do you remember that vessel which was swallowed up before our eyes when we came out of Calais harbour? I exclaimed then that it was a sad omen: you all wanted to reassure me. Well, who was right, now, you or I?”

The queen was in one of those fits of sadness for which tears are the sole remedy; so Mary Seyton, perceiving that not only would every consolation be vain, but also unreasonable, far from continuing to react against her mistress’s melancholy, fully agreed with her: it followed that the queen, who was suffocating, began to weep, and that her tears brought her comfort; then little by little she regained self-control, and this crisis passed as usual, leaving her firmer and more resolute than ever, so that when she went up to her room again it was impossible to read the slightest alteration in her countenance.

The dinner-hour was approaching, and Mary, who in the morning was looking forward impatiently to the enjoyment of her triumph over Lady Lochleven, now

saw her advance with uneasiness: the mere idea of again facing this woman, whose pride one was always obliged to oppose with insolence, was, after the moral fatigues of the day, a fresh weariness. So she decided not to appear for dinner, as on the day before: she was all the more glad she had taken this resolution, that this time it was not Lady Lochleven who came to fulfil the duties enjoined on a member of the family to make the queen easy, but George Douglas, whom his mother in her displeasure at the morning scene sent to replace her. Thus, when Mary Seyton told the queen that she saw the young man with dark hair cross the courtyard on his way to her, Mary still further congratulated herself on her decision; for this young man's insolence had wounded her more deeply than all his mother's haughty insults. The queen was not a little astonished, then, when in a few minutes Mary Seyton returned and informed her that George Douglas, having sent away the servants, desired the honour of speaking to her on a matter of importance. At first the queen refused; but Mary Seyton told her that the young man's air and manner this time were so different from what she had seen two days before, that she thought her mistress would be wrong to refuse his request.

The queen rose then, and with the pride and majesty habitual to her, entered the adjoining room, and, having taken three steps, stopped with a disdainful air, waiting for George to address her.

Mary Seyton had spoken truly: George Douglas was now another man. To-day he seemed to be as respectful and timid as the preceding day he had seemed haughty and proud. He, in his turn, made a step towards the queen; but seeing Mary Seyton standing behind her—

“Madam,” said he, “I wished to speak with your Majesty alone: shall I not obtain this favour?”

“Mary Seyton is not a stranger to me, Sir: she is my sister, my friend; she is more than all that, she is my companion in captivity.”

“And by all these claims, madam, I have the utmost veneration for her; but what I have to tell you cannot be heard by other ears than yours. Thus, madam, as the opportunity furnished now may perhaps never present itself again, in the name of what is dearest to you, grant me what I ask.”

There was such a tone of respectful prayer in George's voice that Mary turned to

the young girl, and, making her a friendly sign with her hand—

“Go, then, darling,” said she; “but be easy, you will lose nothing by not hearing. Go.”

Mary Seyton withdrew; the queen smilingly looked after her, till the door was shut; then, turning to George—

“Now, sir,” said she, “we are alone, speak.”

But George, instead of replying, advanced to the queen, and, kneeling on one knee, drew from his breast a paper which he presented to her. Mary took it with amazement, unfolded it, glancing at Douglas, who remained in the same posture, and read as follows:

We, earls, lords, and barons, in consideration that our queen is detained at Lochleven, and that her faithful subjects cannot have access to her person; seeing, on the other hand, that our duty pledges us to provide for her safety, promise and swear to employ all reasonable means which will depend on us to set her at liberty again on conditions compatible with the honour of her Majesty, the welfare of the kingdom, and even with the safety of those who keep her in prison, provided that they consent to give her up; that if they refuse, we declare that we are prepared to make use of ourselves, our children, our friends, our servants, our vassals, our goods, our persons, and our lives, to restore her to liberty, to procure the safety of the prince, and to co-operate in punishing the late king’s murderers. If we are assailed for this intent, whether as a body or in private, we promise to defend ourselves, and to aid one another, under pain of infamy and perjury. So may God help us.

“Given with our own hands at Dumbarton,

“St. Andrews, Argyll, Huntly, Arbroath, Galloway, Ross, Fleming, Herries, Stirling, Kilwinning, Hamilton, and Saint-Clair, Knight.”

“And Seyton!” cried Mary, “among all these signatures, I do not see that of my faithful Seyton.”

Douglas, still kneeling, drew from his breast a second paper, and presented it to

the queen with the same marks of respect. It contained only these few words:

“Trust George Douglas; for your Majesty has no more devoted friend in the entire kingdom.

“SEYTON.”

Mary lowered her eyes to Douglas with an expression which was hers only; then, giving him her hand to raise him—

“Ah!” said she, with a sigh more of joy than of sadness, “now I see that God, in spite of my faults, has not yet abandoned me. But how is it, in this castle, that you, a Douglas.... oh! it is incredible!”

“Madam,” replied George, “seven years have passed since I saw you in France for the first time, and for seven years I have loved you”. Mary moved; but Douglas put forth his hand and shook his head with an air of such profound sadness, that she understood that she might hear what the young man had to say. He continued: “Reassure yourself, madam; I should never have made this confession if, while explaining my conduct to you, this confession would not have given you greater confidence in me. Yes, for seven years I have loved you, but as one loves a star that one can never reach, a madonna to whom one can only pray; for seven years I have followed you everywhere without you ever having paid attention to me, without my saying a word or making a gesture to attract your notice. I was on the knight of Mevillon’s galley when you crossed to Scotland; I was among the regent’s soldiers when you beat Huntly; I was in the escort which accompanied you when you went to see the sick king at Glasgow; I reached Edinburgh an hour after you had left it for Lochleven; and then it seemed to me that my mission was revealed to me for the first time, and that this love for which till then, I had reproached myself as a crime, was on the contrary a favour from God. I learned that the lords were assembled at Dumbarton: I flew thither. I pledged my name, I pledged my honour, I pledged my life; and I obtained from them, thanks to the facility I had for coming into this fortress, the happiness of bringing you the paper they have just signed. Now, madam, forget all I have told you, except the assurance of my devotion and respect: forget that I am near you; I am used to not being seen: only, if you have need of my life, make a sign; for seven years my life has been yours.”

“Alas!” replied Mary, “I was complaining this morning of no longer being loved, and I ought to complain, on the contrary, that I am still loved; for the love that I inspire is fatal and mortal. Look back, Douglas, and count the tombs that, young as I am, I have already left on my path—Francis II, Chatelard, Rizzio, Darnley.... Oh to attach one’s self to my fortunes more than love is needed now heroism and devotion are requisite so much the more that, as you have said, Douglas, it is love without any possible reward. Do you understand?”

“Oh, madam, madam,” answered Douglas, “is it not reward beyond my deserts to see you daily, to cherish the hope that liberty will be restored to you through me, and to have at least, if I do not give it you, the certainty of dying in your sight?”

“Poor young man!” murmured Mary, her eyes raised to heaven, as if she were reading there beforehand the fate awaiting her new defender.

“Happy Douglas, on the contrary,” cried George, seizing the queen’s hand and kissing it with perhaps still more respect than love, “happy Douglas! for in obtaining a sigh from your Majesty he has already obtained more than he hoped.”

“And upon what have you decided with my friends?” said the queen, raising Douglas, who till then had remained on his knees before her.

“Nothing yet,” George replied; “for we scarcely had time to see one another. Your escape, impossible without me, is difficult even with me; and your Majesty has seen that I was obliged publicly to fail in respect, to obtain from my mother the confidence which gives me the good fortune of seeing you to-day: if this confidence on my mother’s or my brother’s part ever extends to giving up to me the castle keys, then you are saved! Let your Majesty not be surprised at anything, then: in the presence of others, I shall ever be always a Douglas, that is an enemy; and except your life be in danger, madam, I shall not utter a word, I shall not make a gesture which might betray the faith that I have sworn you; but, on your side, let your grace know well, that present or absent, whether I am silent or speak, whether I act or remain inert, all will be in appearance only, save my devotion. Only,” continued Douglas, approaching the window and showing to the queen a little house on Kinross hill,—“only, look every evening in that direction, madam, and so long as you see a light shine there, your friends will be keeping watch for you, and you need not lose hope.”

“Thanks, Douglas, thanks,” said the queen; “it does one good to meet with a heart like yours from time to time—oh! thanks.”

“And now, madam,” replied the young man, “I must leave your Majesty; to remain longer with you would be to raise suspicions, and a single doubt of me, think of it well, madam, and that light which is your sole beacon is extinguished, and all returns into night.”

With these words, Douglas bowed more respectfully than he had yet done, and withdrew, leaving Mary full of hope, and still more full of pride; for this time the homage that she had just received was certainly for the woman and not for the queen.

As the queen had told him, Mary Seyton was informed of everything, even the love of Douglas, and, the two women impatiently awaited the evening to see if the promised star would shine on the horizon. Their hope was not in vain: at the appointed time the beacon was lit. The queen trembled with joy, for it was the confirmation of her hopes, and her companion could not tear her from the window, where she remained with her gaze fastened on the little house in Kinross. At last she yielded to Mary Seyton’s prayers, and consented to go to bed; but twice in the night she rose noiselessly to go to the window: the light was always shining, and was not extinguished till dawn, with its sisters the stars.

Next day, at breakfast, George announced to the queen the return of his brother, William Douglas: he arrived the same evening; as to himself, George, he had to leave Lochleven next morning, to confer with the nobles who had signed the declaration, and who had immediately separated to raise troops in their several counties. The queen could not attempt to good purpose any escape but at a time when she would be sure of gathering round her an army strong enough to hold the country; as to him, Douglas, one was so used to his silent disappearances and to his unexpected returns, that there was no reason to fear that his departure would inspire any suspicion.

All passed as George had said: in the evening the sound of a bugle announced the arrival of William Douglas; he had with him Lord Ruthven, the son of him who had assassinated Rizzio, and who, exiled with Morton after the murder, died in England of the sickness with which he was already attacked the day of the terrible catastrophe in which we have seen him take such a large share. He preceded by one day Lord Lindsay of Byres and Sir Robert Melville, brother of

Mary's former ambassador to Elizabeth: all three were charged with a mission from the regent to the queen.

On the following day everything fell back into the usual routine, and William Douglas reassumed his duties as carver. Breakfast passed without Mary's having learned anything of George's departure or Ruthven's arrival. On rising from the table she went to her window: scarcely was she there than she heard the sound of a horn echoing on the shores of the lake, and saw a little troop of horsemen halt, while waiting for the boat to come and take those who were going to the castle.

The distance was too great for Mary to recognise any of the visitors; but it was clear, from the signs of intelligence exchanged between the little troop and the inhabitants of the fortress, that the newcomers were her enemies. This was a reason why the queen, in her uneasiness, should not lose sight for a moment of the boat which was going to fetch them. She saw only two men get into it; and immediately it put off again for the castle.

As the boat drew nearer, Mary's presentiments changed to real fears, for in one of the men coming towards her she thought she made out Lord Lindsay of Byres, the same who, a week before, had brought her to her prison. It was indeed he himself, as usual in a steel helmet without a visor, which allowed one to see his coarse face designed to express strong passions, and his long black beard with grey hairs here and there, which covered his chest: his person was protected, as if it were in time of war, with his faithful suit of armour, formerly polished and well gilded, but which, exposed without ceasing to rain and mist, was now eaten up with rust; he had slung on his back, much as one slings a quiver, a broadsword, so heavy that it took two hands to manage it, and so long that while the hilt reached the left shoulder the point reached the right spur: in a word, he was still the same soldier, brave to rashness but brutal to insolence, recognising nothing but right and force, and always ready to use force when he believed himself in the right.

The queen was so much taken up with the sight of Lord Lindsay of Byres, that it was only just as the boat reached the shore that she glanced at his companion and recognised Robert Melville: this was some consolation, for, whatever might happen, she knew that she should find in him if not ostensible at least secret sympathy. Besides, his dress, by which one could have judged him equally with Lord Lindsay, was a perfect contrast to his companion's. It consisted of a black velvet doublet, with a cap and a feather of the same hue fastened to it with a gold

clasp; his only weapon, offensive or defensive, was a little sword, which he seemed to wear rather as a sign of his rank than for attack or defence. As to his features and his manners, they were in harmony with this peaceful appearance: his pale countenance expressed both acuteness and intelligence; his quick eye was mild, and his voice insinuating; his figure slight and a little bent by habit rather than by years, since he was but forty-five at this time, indicated an easy and conciliatory character.

However, the presence of this man of peace, who seemed entrusted with watching over the demon of war, could not reassure the queen, and as to get to the landing-place, in front of the great door of the castle, the boat had just disappeared behind the corner of a tower, she told Mary Seyton to go down that she might try to learn what cause brought Lord Lindsay to Lochleven, well knowing that with the force of character with which she was endowed, she need know this cause but a few minutes beforehand, whatever it might be, to give her countenance that calm and that majesty which she had always found to influence her enemies.

Left alone, Mary let her glance stray back to the little house in Kinross, her sole hope; but the distance was too great to distinguish anything; besides, its shutters remained closed all day, and seemed to open only in the evening, like the clouds, which, having covered the sky for a whole morning, scatter at last to reveal to the lost sailor a solitary star. She had remained no less motionless, her gaze always fixed on the same object, when she was drawn from this mute contemplation by the step of Mary Seyton.

“Well, darling?” asked the queen, turning round.

“Your Majesty is not mistaken,” replied the messenger: “it really was Sir Robert Melville and Lord Lindsay; but there came yesterday with Sir William Douglas a third ambassador, whose name, I am afraid, will be still more odious to your Majesty than either of the two I have just pronounced.”

“You deceive yourself, Mary,” the queen answered: “neither the name of Melville nor that of Lindsay is odious to me. Melville’s, on the contrary, is, in my present circumstances, one of those which I have most pleasure in hearing; as to Lord Lindsay’s, it is doubtless not agreeable to me, but it is none the less an honourable name, always borne by men rough and wild, it is true, but incapable of treachery. Tell me, then, what is this name, Mary; for you see I am calm and

prepared.”

“Alas! madam,” returned Mary, “calm and prepared as you may be, collect all your strength, not merely to hear this name uttered, but also to receive in a few minutes the man who bears it; for this name is that of Lord Ruthven.”

Mary Seyton had spoken truly, and this name had a terrible influence upon the queen; for scarcely had it escaped the young girl’s lips than Mary Stuart uttered a cry, and turning pale, as if she were about to faint, caught hold of the window-ledge.

Mary Seyton, frightened at the effect produced by this fatal name, immediately sprang to support the queen; but she, stretching one hand towards her, while she laid the other on her heart

“It is nothing,” said she; “I shall be better in a moment. Yes, Mary, yes, as you said, it is a fatal name and mingled with one of my most bloody memories. What such men are coming to ask of me must be dreadful indeed. But no matter, I shall soon be ready to receive my brother’s ambassadors, for doubtless they are sent in his name. You, darling, prevent their entering, for I must have some minutes to myself: you know me; it will not take me long.”

With these words the queen withdrew with a firm step to her bedchamber.

Mary Seyton was left alone, admiring that strength of character which made of Mary Stuart, in all other respects so completely woman-like, a man in the hour of danger. She immediately went to the door to close it with the wooden bar that one passed between two iron rings, but the bar had been taken away, so that there was no means of fastening the door from within. In a moment she heard someone coming up the stairs, and guessing from the heavy, echoing step that this must be Lord Lindsay, she looked round her once again to see if she could find something to replace the bar, and finding nothing within reach, she passed her arm through the rings, resolved to let it be broken rather than allow anyone to approach her mistress before it suited her. Indeed, hardly had those who were coming up reached the landing than someone knocked violently, and a harsh voice cried:

“Come, come, open the door; open directly.”

“And by what right,” said Mary Seyton, “am I ordered thus insolently to open

the Queen of Scotland's door?"

"By the right of the ambassador of the regent to enter everywhere in his name. I am Lord Lindsay, and I am come to speak to Lady Mary Stuart."

"To be an ambassador," answered Mary Seyton, "is not to be exempted from having oneself announced in visiting a woman, and much more a queen; and if this ambassador is, as he says, Lord Lindsay, he will await his sovereign's leisure, as every Scottish noble would do in his place."

"By St. Andrew!" cried Lord Lindsay, "open, or I will break in the door."

"Do nothing to it, my lord, I entreat you," said another voice, which Mary recognised as Meville's. "Let us rather wait for Lord Ruthven, who is not yet ready."

"Upon my soul," cried Lindsay, shaking the door, "I shall not wait a second". Then, seeing that it resisted, "Why did you tell me, then, you scamp," Lindsay went on, speaking to the steward, "that the bar had been removed?"

"It is true," replied he.

"Then," returned Lindsay, "with what is this silly wench securing the door?"

"With my arm, my lord, which I have passed through the rings, as a Douglas did for King James I, at a time when Douglasses had dark hair instead of red, and were faithful instead of being traitors."

"Since you know your history so well," replied Lindsay, in a rage, "you should remember that that weak barrier did not hinder Graham, that Catherine Douglas's arm was broken like a willow wand, and that James I was killed like a dog."

"But you, my lord," responded the courageous young girl, "ought also to know the ballad that is still sung in our time—

"Now, on Robert Gra'am, The king's destroyer, shame! To Robert Graham cling Shame, who destroyed our king."

"Mary," cried the queen, who had overheard this altercation from her bedroom,

—“Mary, I command you to open the door directly: do you hear?”

Mary obeyed, and Lord Lindsay entered, followed by Melville, who walked behind him, with slow steps and bent head. Arrived in the middle of the second room, Lord Lindsay stopped, and, looking round him—

“Well, where is she, then?” he asked; “and has she not already kept us waiting long enough outside, without making us wait again inside? Or does she imagine that, despite these walls and these bars, she is always queen

“Patience, my lord,” murmured Sir Robert: “you see that Lord Ruthven has not come yet, and since we can do nothing without him, let us wait.”

“Let wait who will,” replied Lindsay, inflamed with anger; “but it will not be I, and wherever she may be, I shall go and seek her.”

With these words, he made some steps towards Mary Stuart’s bedroom; but at the same moment the queen opened the door, without seeming moved either at the visit or at the insolence of the visitors, and so lovely and so full of majesty, that each, even Lindsay himself, was silent at her appearance, and, as if in obedience to a higher power, bowed respectfully before her.

“I fear I have kept you waiting, my lord,” said the queen, without replying to the ambassador’s salutation otherwise than by a slight inclination of the head; “but a woman does not like to receive even enemies without having spent a few minutes over her toilet. It is true that men are less tenacious of ceremony,” added she, throwing a significant glance at Lord Lindsay’s rusty armour and soiled and pierced doublet. “Good day, Melville,” she continued, without paying attention to some words of excuse stammered by Lindsay; “be welcome in my prison, as you were in my palace; for I believe you as devoted to the one as to the other”.

Then, turning to Lindsay, who was looking interrogatively at the door, impatient as he was for Ruthven to come—

“You have there, my lord,” said she, pointing to the sword he carried over his shoulder, “a faithful companion, though it is a little heavy: did you expect, in coming here, to find enemies against whom to employ it? In the contrary case, it is a strange ornament for a lady’s presence. But no matter, my lord, I, am too much of a Stuart to fear the sight of a sword, even if it were naked, I warn you.”

“It is not out of place here, madam,” replied Lindsay, bringing it forward and leaning his elbow on its cross hilt, “for it is an old acquaintance of your family.”

“Your ancestors, my lord, were brave and loyal enough for me not to refuse to believe what you tell me. Besides, such a good blade must have rendered them good service.”

“Yes, madam, yes, surely it has done so, but that kind of service that kings do not forgive. He for whom it was made was Archibald Bell-the-Cat, and he girded himself with it the day when, to justify his name, he went to seize in the very tent of King James III, your grandfather, his un worthy favourites, Cochran, Hummel, Leonard, and Torpichen, whom he hanged on Louder Bridge with the halters of his soldiers’ horses. It was also with this sword that he slew at one blow, in the lists, Spens of Kilspindie, who had insulted him in the presence of King James IV, counting on the protection his master accorded him, and which did not guard him against it any more than his shield, which it split in two. At his master’s death, which took place two years after the defeat of Flodden, on whose battlefield he left his two sons and two hundred warriors of the name of Douglas, it passed into the hands of the Earl of Angus, who drew it from the scabbard when he drove the Hamiltons out of Edinburgh, and that so quickly and completely that the affair was called the ‘sweeping of the streets.’ Finally, your father James V saw it glisten in the fight of the bridge over the Tweed, when Buccleuch, stirred up by him, wanted to snatch him from the guardianship of the Douglases, and when eighty warriors of the name of Scott remained on the battlefield.”

“But,” said the queen, “how is it that this weapon, after such exploits, has not remained as a trophy in the Douglas family? No doubt the Earl of Angus required a great occasion to decide him to renounce in your favour this modern Excalibur”. [History of Scotland, by Sir Walter Scott.—“The Abbott”: historical part.]

“Yes, no doubt, madam, it was upon a great occasion,” replied Lindsay, in spite of the imploring signs made by Melville, “and this will have at least the advantage of the others, in being sufficiently recent for you to remember. It was ten days ago, on the battlefield of Carberry Hill, madam, when the infamous Bothwell had the audacity to make a public challenge in which he defied to single combat whomsoever would dare to maintain that he was not innocent of the murder of the king your husband. I made him answer then, I the third, that he

was an assassin. And as he refused to fight with the two others under the pretext that they were only barons, I presented myself in my turn, I who am earl and lord. It was on that occasion that the noble Earl of Morton gave me this good sword to fight him to the death. So that, if he had been a little more presumptuous or a little less cowardly, dogs and vultures would be eating at this moment the pieces that, with the help of this good sword, I should have carved for them from that traitor's carcass."

At these words, Mary Seyton and Robert Melville looked at each other in terror, for the events that they recalled were so recent that they were, so to speak, still living in the queen's heart; but the queen, with incredible impassibility and a smile of contempt on her lips—

"It is easy, my lord," said she, "to vanquish an enemy who does not appear in the lists; however, believe me, if Mary had inherited the Stuarts' sword as she has inherited their sceptre, your sword, long as it is, would yet have seemed to you too short. But as you have only to relate to us now, my lord, what you intended doing, and not what you have done, think it fit that I bring you back to something of more reality; for I do not suppose you have given yourself the trouble to come here purely and simply to add a chapter to the little treatise *Des Rodomontades Espagnoles* by M. de Brantome."

"You are right, madam," replied Lindsay, reddening with anger, "and you would already know the object of our mission if Lord Ruthven did not so ridiculously keep us waiting. But," added he, "have patience; the matter will not be long now, for here he is."

Indeed, at that moment they heard steps mounting the staircase and approaching the room, and at the sound of these steps, the queen, who had borne with such firmness Lindsay's insults, grew so perceptibly paler, that Melville, who did not take his eyes off her,—put out his hand towards the armchair as if to push it towards her; but the queen made a sign that she had no need of it, and gazed at the door with apparent calm. Lord Ruthven appeared; it was the first time that she had seen the son since Rizzio had been assassinated by the father.

Lord Ruthven was both a warrior and a statesman, and at this moment his dress savoured of the two professions: it consisted of a close coat of embroidered buff

leather, elegant enough to be worn as a court undress, and on which, if need were, one could buckle a cuirass, for battle: like his father, he was pale; like his father, he was to die young, and, even more than his father, his countenance wore that ill-omened melancholy by which fortune-tellers recognise those who are to die a violent death.

Lord Ruthven united in himself the polished dignity of a courtier and the inflexible character of a minister; but quite resolved as he was to obtain from Mary Stuart, even if it were by violence, what he had come to demand in the regent's name, he none the less made her, on entering, a cold but respectful greeting, to which the queen responded with a courtesy; then the steward drew up to the empty armchair a heavy table on which had been prepared everything necessary for writing, and at a sign from the two lords he went out, leaving the queen and her companion alone with the three ambassadors. Then the queen, seeing that this table and this armchair were put ready for her, sat down; and after a moment, herself breaking this silence more gloomy than any word could have been

“My lords,” said she, “you see that I wait: can it be that this message which you have to communicate to me is so terrible that two soldiers as renowned as Lord Lindsay and Lord Ruthven hesitate at the moment of transmitting it?”

“Madam,” answered Ruthven, “I am not of a family, as you know, which ever hesitates to perform a duty, painful as it may be; besides, we hope that your captivity has prepared you to hear what we have to tell you on the part of the Secret Council.”

“The Secret Council!” said the queen. “Instituted by me, by what right does it act without me? No matter, I am waiting for this message: I suppose it is a petition to implore my mercy for the men who have dared to reach to a power that I hold only from God.”

“Madam,” replied Ruthven, who appeared to have undertaken the painful role of spokesman, while Lindsay, mute and impatient, fidgeted with the hilt of his long sword, “it is distressing to me to have to undeceive you on this point: it is not your mercy that I come to ask; it is, on the contrary, the pardon of the Secret Council that I come to offer you.”

“To me, my lord, to me!” cried Mary: “subjects offer pardon to their queen! Oh!

it is such a new and wonderful thing, that my amazement outweighs my indignation, and that I beg you to continue, instead of stopping you there, as perhaps I ought to do.”

“And I obey you so much the more willingly, madam,” went on Ruthven imperturbably, “that this pardon is only granted on certain conditions, stated in these documents, destined to reestablish the tranquillity of the State, so cruelly compromised by the errors that they are going to repair.”

“And shall I be permitted, my lord, to read these documents, or must I, allured by my confidence in those who present them to me, sign them with my eyes shut?”

“No, madam,” Ruthven returned; “the Secret Council desire, on the contrary, that you acquaint yourself with them, for you must sign them freely.”

“Read me these documents, my lord; for such a reading is, I think, included in the strange duties you have accepted.”

Lord Ruthven took one of the two papers that he had in his hand, and read with the impassiveness of his usual voice the following:

“Summoned from my tenderest youth to the government of the kingdom and to the crown of Scotland, I have carefully attended to the administration; but I have experienced so much fatigue and trouble that I no longer find my mind free enough nor my strength great enough to support the burden of affairs of State: accordingly, and as Divine favour has granted us a son whom we desire to see during our lifetime bear the crown which he has acquired by right of birth, we have resolved to abdicate, and we abdicate in his favour, by these presents, freely and voluntarily, all our rights to the crown and to the government of Scotland, desiring that he may immediately ascend the throne, as if he were called to it by our natural death, and not as the effect of our own will; and that our present abdication may have a more complete and solemn effect, and that no one should put forward the claim of ignorance, we give full powers to our trusty and faithful cousins, the lords Lindsay of Byres and William Ruthven, to appear in our name before the nobility, the clergy, and the burgesses of Scotland, of whom they will convoke an assembly at Stirling, and to there renounce, publicly and solemnly, on our part, all our claims to the crown and to the government of Scotland.

“Signed freely and as the testimony of one of our last royal wishes, in our castle

of Lochleven, the ___ June 1567". (The date was left blank.)

There was a moment's silence after this reading, then

"Did you hear, madam?" asked Ruthven.

"Yes," replied Mary Stuart,— "yes, I have heard rebellious words that I have not understood, and I thought that my ears, that one has tried to accustom for some time to a strange language, still deceived me, and that I have thought for your honour, my lord William Ruthven, and my lord Lindsay of Byres."

"Madam," answered Lindsay, out of patience at having kept silence so long, "our honour has nothing to do with the opinion of a woman who has so ill known how to watch over her own."

"My lord!" said Melville, risking a word.

"Let him speak, Robert," returned the queen. "We have in our conscience armour as well tempered as that with which Lord Lindsay is so prudently covered, although, to the shame of justice, we no longer have a sword. Continue, my lord," the queen went on, turning to Lord Ruthven: "is this all that my subjects require of me? A date and a signature? Ah! doubtless it is too little; and this second paper, which you have kept in order to proceed by degrees, probably contains some demand more difficult to grant than that of yielding to a child scarcely a year old a crown which belongs to me by birthright, and to abandon my sceptre to take a distaff."

"This other paper," replied Ruthven, without letting himself be intimidated by the tone of bitter irony adopted by the queen, "is the deed by which your Grace confirms the decision of the Secret Council which has named your beloved brother, the Earl of Murray, regent of the kingdom."

"Indeed!" said Mary. "The Secret Council thinks it needs my confirmation to an act of such slight importance? And my beloved brother, to bear it without remorse, needs that it should be I who add a fresh title to those of Earl of Mar and of Murray that I have already bestowed upon him? But one cannot desire anything more respectful and touching than all this, and I should be very wrong to complain. My lords," continued the queen, rising and changing her tone, "return to those who have sent you, and tell them that to such demands Mary Stuart has no answer to give."

“Take care, madam,” responded Ruthven; “for I have told you it is only on these conditions that your pardon can be granted you.”

“And if I refuse this generous pardon,” asked Mary, “what will happen?”

“I cannot pronounce beforehand, madam; but your Grace has enough knowledge of the laws, and above all of the history of Scotland and England, to know that murder and adultery are crimes for which more than one queen has been punished with death.”

“And upon what proofs could such a charge be founded, my lord? Pardon my persistence, which takes up your precious time; but I am sufficiently interested in the matter to be permitted such a question.”

“The proof, madam?” returned Ruthven. “There is but one, I know; but that one is unexceptionable: it is the precipitate marriage of the widow of the assassinated with the chief assassin, and the letters which have been handed over to us by James Balfour, which prove that the guilty persons had united their adulterous hearts before it was permitted them to unite their bloody hands.”

“My lord,” cried the queen, “do you forget a certain repast given in an Edinburgh tavern, by this same Bothwell, to those same noblemen who treat him to-day as an adulterer and a murderer; do you forget that at the end of that meal, and on the same table at which it had been given, a paper was signed to invite that same woman, to whom to-day you make the haste of her new wedding a crime, to leave off a widow’s mourning to reassume a marriage robe? for if you have forgotten it, my lords, which would do no more honour to your sobriety than to your memory, I undertake to show it to you, I who have preserved it; and perhaps if we search well we shall find among the signatures the names of Lindsay of Byres and William Ruthven. O noble Lord Herries,” cried Mary, “loyal James Melville, you alone were right then, when you threw yourselves at my feet, entreating me not to conclude this marriage, which, I see it clearly to-day, was only a trap set for an ignorant woman by perfidious advisers or disloyal lords.”

“Madam,” cried Ruthven, in spite of his cold impassivity beginning to lose command of himself, while Lindsay was giving still more noisy and less equivocal signs of impatience, “madam, all these discussions are beside our aim: I beg you to return to it, then, and inform us if, your life and honour guaranteed,

you consent to abdicate the crown of Scotland.”

“And what safeguard should I have that the promises you here make me will be kept?”

“Our word, madam,” proudly replied Ruthven.

“Your word, my lord, is a very feeble pledge to offer, when one so quickly forgets one’s signature: have you not some trifle to add to it, to make me a little easier than I should be with it alone?”

“Enough, Ruthven, enough,” cried Lindsay. “Do you not see that for an hour this woman answers our proposals only by insults?”

“Yes, let us go,” said Ruthven; “and thank yourself only, madam, for the day when the thread breaks which holds the sword suspended over your head.”

“My lords,” cried Melville, “my lords, in Heaven’s name, a little patience, and forgive something to her who, accustomed to command, is today forced to obey.”

“Very well,” said Lindsay, turning round, “stay with her, then, and try to obtain by your smooth words what is refused to our frank and loyal demand. In a quarter of an hour we shall return: let the answer be ready in a quarter of an hour!”

With these words, the two noblemen went out, leaving Melville with the queen; and one could count their footsteps, from the noise that Lindsay’s great sword made, in resounding on each step of the staircase.

Scarcely were they alone than Melville threw himself at the queen’s feet.

“Madam,” said he, “you remarked just now that Lord Herries and my brother had given your Majesty advice that you repented not having followed; well, madam, reflect on that I in my turn give you; for it is more important than the other, for you will regret with still more bitterness not having listened to it. Ah! you do not know what may happen, you are ignorant of what your brother is capable.”

“It seems to me, however,” returned the queen, “that he has just instructed me on

that head: what more will he do than he has done already? A public trial! Oh! it is all I ask: let me only plead my cause, and we shall see what judges will dare to condemn me.”

“But that is what they will take good care not to do, madam; for they would be mad to do it when they keep you here in this isolated castle, in the care of your enemies, having no witness but God, who avenges crime, but who does not prevent it. Recollect, madam, what Machiavelli has said, ‘A king’s tomb is never far from his prison.’ You come of a family in which one dies young, madam, and almost always of a sudden death: two of your ancestors perished by steel, and one by poison.”

“Oh, if my death were sudden and easy,” cried Mary, “yes, I should accept it as an expiation for my faults; for if I am proud when I compare myself with others, Melville, I am humble when I judge myself. I am unjustly accused of being an accomplice of Darnley’s death, but I am justly condemned for having married Bothwell.”

“Time presses, madam; time presses,” cried Melville, looking at the sand, which, placed on the table, was marking the time. “They are coming back, they will be here in a minute; and this time you must give them an answer. Listen, madam, and at least profit by your situation as much as you can. You are alone here with one woman, without friends, without protection, without power: an abdication signed at such a juncture will never appear to your people to have been freely given, but will always pass as having been torn from you by force; and if need be, madam, if the day comes when such a solemn declaration is worth something, well, then you will have two witnesses of the violence done you: the one will be Mary Seyton, and the other,” he added in a low voice and looking uneasily about him,— “the other will be Robert Melville.”

Hardly had he finished speaking when the footsteps of the two nobles were again heard on the staircase, returning even before the quarter of an hour had elapsed; a moment afterwards the door opened, and Ruthven appeared, while over his shoulder was seen Lindsay’s head.

“Madam,” said Ruthven, “we have returned. Has your Grace decided? We come for your answer.”

“Yes,” said Lindsay, pushing aside Ruthven, who stood in his way, and

advancing to the table,—” yes, an answer, clear, precise, positive, and without dissimulation.”

“You are exacting, my lord,” said the queen: “you would scarcely have the right to expect that from me if I were in full liberty on the other side of the lake and surrounded with a faithful escort; but between these walls, behind these bars, in the depths of this fortress, I shall not tell you that I sign voluntarily, lest you should not believe it. But no matter, you want my signature; well, I am going to give it to you. Melville, pass me the pen.”

“But I hope,” said Lord Ruthven, “that your Grace is not counting on using your present position one day in argument to protest against what you are going to do?”

The queen had already stooped to write, she had already set her hand to the paper, when Ruthven spoke to her. But scarcely had he done so, than she rose up proudly, and letting fall the pen, “My lord,” said she, “what you asked of me just now was but an abdication pure and simple, and I was going to sign it. But if to this abdication is joined this marginal note, then I renounce of my own accord, and as judging myself unworthy, the throne of Scotland. I would not do it for the three united crowns that I have been robbed of in turn.”

“Take care, madam,” cried Lord Lindsay, seizing the queen’s wrist with his steel gauntlet and squeezing it with all his angry strength —“take care, for our patience is at an end, and we could easily end by breaking what would not bend.”

The queen remained standing, and although a violent flush had passed like a flame over her countenance, she did not utter a word, and did not move: her eyes only were fixed with such a great expression of contempt on those of the rough baron, that he, ashamed of the passion that had carried him away, let go the hand he had seized and took a step back. Then raising her sleeve and showing the violet marks made on her arm by Lord Lindsay’s steel gauntlet,

“This is what I expected, my lords,” said she, “and nothing prevents me any longer from signing; yes, I freely abdicate the throne and crown of Scotland, and there is the proof that my will has not been forced.”

With these words, she took the pen and rapidly signed the two documents, held them out to Lord Ruthven, and bowing with great dignity, withdrew slowly into

her room, accompanied by Mary Seyton. Ruthven looked after her, and when she had disappeared, “It doesn’t matter,” he said; “she has signed, and although the means you employed, Lindsay, may be obsolete enough in diplomacy, it is not the less efficacious, it seems.”

“No joking, Ruthven,” said Lindsay; “for she is a noble creature, and if I had dared, I should have thrown myself at her feet to ask her forgiveness.”

“There is still time,” replied Ruthven, “and Mary, in her present situation, will not be severe upon you: perhaps she has resolved to appeal to the judgment of God to prove her innocence, and in that case a champion such as you might well change the face of things.”

“Do not joke, Ruthven,” Lindsay answered a second time, with more violence than the first; “for if I were as well convinced of her innocence as I am of her crime, I tell you that no one should touch a hair of her head, not even the regent.”

“The devil! my lord,” said Ruthven. “I did not know you were so sensitive to a gentle voice and a tearful eye; you know the story of Achilles’ lance, which healed with its rust the wounds it made with its edge: do likewise my lord, do likewise.”

“Enough, Ruthven, enough,” replied Lindsay; “you are like a corselet of Milan steel, which is three times as bright as the steel armour of Glasgow, but which is at the same time thrice as hard: we know one another, Ruthven, so an end to railleries or threats; enough, believe me, enough.”

And after these words, Lord Lindsay went out first, followed by Ruthven and Melville, the first with his head high and affecting an air of insolent indifference, and the second, sad, his brow bent, and not even trying to disguise the painful impression which this scene had made on him.’ [“History of Scotland, by Sir Walter Scott.—“The Abbott”: historical part.]

CHAPTER VI

The queen came out of her room only in the evening, to take her place at the window which looked over the lake: at the usual time she saw the light which was henceforth her sole hope shine in the little house in Kinross; for a whole long month she had no other consolation than seeing it, every night, fixed and faithful.

At last, at the end of this time, and as she was beginning to despair of seeing George Douglas again, one morning, on opening the window, she uttered a cry. Mary Seyton ran to her, and the queen, without having strength to speak, showed her in the middle of the lake the tiny boat at anchor, and in the boat Little Douglas and George, who were absorbed in fishing, their favourite amusement. The young man had arrived the day before, and as everyone was accustomed to his unexpected returns, the sentinel had not even blown the horn, and the queen had not known that at last a friend had come.

However, she was three days yet without seeing this friend otherwise than she had just done—that is, on the lake. It is true that from morning till evening he did not leave that spot, from which he could view the queen's windows and the queen herself, when, to gaze at a wider horizon, she leaned her face against the bars. At last, on the morning of the fourth day, the queen was awakened by a great noise of dogs and horns: she immediately ran to the window, for to a prisoner everything is an event, and she saw William Douglas, who was embarking with a pack of hounds and some huntsmen. In fact, making a truce, for a day, with his gaoler's duties, to enjoy a pleasure more in harmony with his rank and birth, he was going to hunt in the woods which cover the last ridge of Ben Lomond, and which, ever sinking, die down on the banks of the lake.

The queen trembled with delight, for she hoped that Lady Lochleven would maintain her ill-will, and that then George would replace his brother: this hope was not disappointed. At the usual time the queen heard the footsteps of those who were bringing her her breakfast; the door opened, and she saw George Douglas enter, preceded by the servants who were carrying the dishes. George barely bowed; but the queen, warned by him not to be surprised at anything, returned him his greeting with a disdainful air; then the servants performed their task and went out, as they were accustomed.

“At last,” said the queen, “you are back again, then.”

George motioned with his finger, went to the door to listen if all the servants had really gone away, and if no one had remained to spy. Then, returning more at ease, and bowing respectfully—

“Yes, madam,” returned he; “and, Heaven be thanked, I bring good news.”

“Oh, tell me quickly!” cried the queen; “for staying in this castle is hell. You knew that they came, did you not, and that they made me sign an abdication?”

“Yes, madam,” replied Douglas; “but we also knew that your signature had been obtained from you by violence alone, and our devotion to your Majesty is increased thereby, if possible.”

“But, after all, what have you done?”

“The Seytons and the Hamiltons, who are, as your Majesty knows, your most faithful servants,”—Mary turned round, smiling, and put out her hand to Mary Seyton,—“have already,” continued George, “assembled their troops, who keep themselves in readiness for the first signal; but as they alone would not be sufficiently numerous to hold the country, we shall make our way directly to Dumbarton, whose governor is ours, and which by its position and its strength can hold out long enough against all the regent’s troops to give to the faithful hearts remaining to you time to come and join us.”

“Yes, yes,” said the queen; “I see clearly what we shall do once we get out of this; but how are we to get out?”

“That is the occasion, madam,” replied Douglas, “for which your Majesty must call to your aid that courage of which you have given such great proofs.”

“If I have need only of courage and coolness,” replied the queen, “be easy; neither the one nor the other will fail me.”

“Here is a file,” said George, giving Mary Seyton that instrument which he judged unworthy to touch the queen’s hands, “and this evening I shall bring your Majesty cords to construct a ladder. You will cut through one of the bars of this window, it is only at a height of twenty feet; I shall come up to you, as much to try it as to support you; one of the garrison is in my pay, he will give us passage

by the door it is his duty to guard, and you will be free.”

“And when will that be?” cried the queen.

“We must wait for two things, madam,” replied Douglas: “the first, to collect at Kinross an escort sufficient for your Majesty’s safety; the second, that the turn for night watch of Thomas Warden should happen to be at an isolated door that we can reach without being seen.”

“And how will you know that? Do you stay at the castle, then?”

“Alas! no, madam,” replied George; “at the castle I am a useless and even a dangerous frier for you, while once beyond the lake I can serve you in an effectual manner.”

“And how will you know when Warden’s turn to mount guard has come?”

“The weathercock in the north tower, instead of turning in the wind with the others, will remain fixed against it.”

“But I, how shall I be warned?”

“Everything is already provided for on that side: the light which shines each night in the little house in Kinross incessantly tells you that your friends keep watch for you; but when you would like to know if the hour of your deliverance approaches or recedes, in your turn place a light in this window. The other will immediately disappear; then, placing your hand on your breast, count your heartbeats: if you reach the number twenty without the light reappearing, nothing is yet settled; if you only reach ten, the moment approaches; if the light does not leave you time to count beyond five, your escape is fixed for the following night; if it reappears no more, it is fixed for the same evening; then the owl’s cry, repeated thrice in the courtyard, will be the signal; let down the ladder when you hear it”.

“Oh, Douglas,” cried the queen, “you alone could foresee and calculate everything thus. Thank you, thank you a hundred times!” And she gave him her hand to kiss.

A vivid red flushed the young man’s cheeks; but almost directly mastering his emotion, he kneeled down, and, restraining the expression of that love of which

he had once spoken to the queen, while promising her never more to speak of it, he took the hand that Mary extended, and kissed it with such respect that no one could have seen in this action anything but the homage of devotion and fidelity.

Then, having bowed to the queen, he went out, that a longer stay with her should not give rise to any suspicions.

At the dinner-hour Douglas brought, as he had said, a parcel of cord. It was not enough, but when evening came Mary Seyton was to unroll it and let fall the end from the window, and George would fasten the remainder to it: the thing was done as arranged, and without any mishap, an hour after the hunters had returned.

The following day George left the castle.

The queen and Mary Seyton lost no time in setting about the rope ladder, and it was finished on the third day. The same evening, the queen in her impatience, and rather to assure herself of her partisans' vigilance than in the hope that the time of her deliverance was so near, brought her lamp to the window: immediately, and as George Douglas had told her, the light in the little house at Kinross disappeared: the queen then laid her hand on her heart and counted up to twenty-two; then the light reappeared; they were ready for everything, but nothing was yet settled. For a week the queen thus questioned the light and her heartbeats without their number changing; at last, on the eighth day, she counted only as far as ten; at the eleventh the light reappeared.

The queen believed herself mistaken: she did not dare to hope what this announced. She withdrew the lamp; then, at the end of a quarter of an hour, showed it again: her unknown correspondent understood. with his usual intelligence that a fresh trial was required of him, and the light in the little house disappeared in its turn. Mary again questioned the pulsations of her heart, and, fast as it leaped, before the twelfth beat the propitious star was shining on the horizon: there was no longer any doubt; everything was settled.

Mary could not sleep all night: this persistency of her partisans inspired her with gratitude to the point of tears. The day came, and the queen several times questioned her companion to assure herself that it was not all a dream; at every sound it seemed to her that the scheme on which her liberty hung was discovered, and when, at breakfast and at dinner time, William Douglas entered

as usual, she hardly dared look at him, for fear of reading on his face the announcement that all was lost.

In the evening the queen again questioned the light: it made the same answer; nothing had altered; the beacon was always one of hope.

For four days it thus continued to indicate that the moment of escape was at hand; on the evening of the fifth, before the queen had counted five beats, the light reappeared: the queen leaned upon Mary Seyton; she was nearly fainting, between dread and 'delight. Her escape was fixed for the next evening.

The queen tried once more, and obtained the same reply: there was no longer a doubt; everything was ready except the prisoner's courage, for it failed her for a moment, and if Mary Seyton had not drawn up a seat in time, she would have fallen prone; but, the first moment over, she collected herself as usual, and was stronger and more resolute than ever.

Till midnight the queen remained at the window, her eyes fixed on that star of good omen: at last Mary Seyton persuaded her to go to bed, offering, if she had no wish to sleep, to read her some verses by M. Ronsard, or some chapters from the Mer des Histoires; but Mary had no desire now for any profane reading, and had her Hours read, making the responses as she would have done if she had been present at a mass said by a Catholic priest: towards dawn, however, she grew drowsy, and as Mary Seyton, for her part, was dropping with fatigue, she fell asleep directly in the armchair at the head of the queen's bed.

Next day she awoke, feeling that someone was tapping her on the shoulder: it was the queen, who had already arisen.

"Come and see, darling," said she,—“come and see the fine day that God is giving us. Oh! how alive is Nature! How happy I shall be to be once more free among those plains and mountains! Decidedly, Heaven is on our side.”

"Madam," replied Mary, "I would rather see the weather less fine: it would promise us a darker night; and consider, what we need is darkness, not light."

"Listen," said the queen; "it is by this we are going to see if God is indeed for us; if the weather remains as it is, yes, you are right, He abandons us; but if it clouds over, oh! then, darling, this will be a certain proof of His protection, will it not?"

Mary Seyton smiled, nodding that she adopted her mistress's superstition; then the queen, incapable of remaining idle in her great preoccupation of mind, collected the few jewels that she had preserved, enclosed them in a casket, got ready for the evening a black dress, in order to be still better hidden in the darkness: and, these preparations made, she sat down again at the window, ceaselessly carrying her eyes from the lake to the little house in Kinross, shut up and dumb as usual.

The dinner-hour arrived: the queen was so happy that she received William Douglas with more goodwill than was her wont, and it was with difficulty she remained seated during the time the meal lasted; but she restrained herself, and William Douglas withdrew, without seeming to have noticed her agitation.

Scarcely had he gone than Mary ran to the window; she had need of air, and her gaze devoured in advance those wide horizons which she was about to cross anew; it seemed to her that once at liberty she would never shut herself up in a palace again, but would wander about the countryside continually: then, amid all these tremors of delight, from time to time she felt unexpectedly heavy at heart. She then turned round to Mary Seyton, trying to fortify her strength with hers, and the young girl kept up her hopes, but rather from duty than from conviction.

But slow as they seemed to the queen, the hours yet passed: towards the afternoon some clouds floated across the blue sky; the queen remarked upon them joyfully to her companion; Mary Seyton congratulated her upon them, not on account of the imaginary omen that the queen sought in them, but because of the real importance that the weather should be cloudy, that darkness might aid them in their flight. While the two prisoners were watching the billowy, moving vapours, the hour of dinner arrived; but it was half an hour of constraint and dissimulation, the more painful that, no doubt in return for the sort of goodwill shown him by the queen in the morning, William Douglas thought himself obliged, in his turn, to accompany his duties with fitting compliments, which compelled the queen to take a more active part in the conversation than her preoccupation allowed her; but William Douglas did not seem in any way to observe this absence of mind, and all passed as at breakfast.

Directly he had gone the queen ran to the window: the few clouds which were chasing one another in the sky an hour before had thickened and spread, and— all the blue was blotted out, to give place to a hue dull and leaden as pewter. Mary Stuart's presentiments were thus realised: as to the little house in Kinross,

which one could still make out in the dusk, it remained shut up, and seemed deserted.

Night fell: the light shone as usual; the queen signalled, it disappeared. Mary Stuart waited in vain; everything remained in darkness: the escape was for the same evening. The queen heard eight o'clock, nine o'clock, and ten o'clock strike successively. At ten o'clock the sentinels were relieved; Mary Stuart heard the patrols pass beneath her windows, the steps of the watch recede: then all returned to silence. Half an hour passed away thus; suddenly the owl's cry resounded thrice, the queen recognised George Douglas's signal: the supreme moment had come.

In these circumstances the queen found all her strength revive: she signed to Mary Seyton to take away the bar and to fix the rope ladder, while, putting out the lamp, she felt her way into the bedroom to seek the casket which contained her few remaining jewels. When she came back, George Douglas was already in the room.

"All goes well, madam," said he. "Your friends await you on the other side of the lake, Thomas Warden watches at the postern, and God has sent us a dark night."

The queen, without replying, gave him her hand. George bent his knee and carried this hand to his lips; but on touching it, he felt it cold and trembling.

"Madam," said he, "in Heaven's name summon all your courage, and do not let yourself be downcast at such a moment."

"Our Lady-of-Good-Help," murmured Seyton, "come to our aid!"

"Summon to you the spirit of the kings your ancestors," responded George, "for at this moment it is not the resignation of a Christian that you require, but the strength and resolution of a queen"

"Oh, Douglas! Douglas," cried Mary mournfully, "a fortune-teller predicted to me that I should die in prison and by a violent death: has not the hour of the prediction arrived?"

"Perhaps," George said, "but it is better to die as a queen than to live in this ancient castle calumniated and a prisoner."

“You are right, George,” the queen answered; “but for a woman the first step is everything: forgive me”. Then, after a moment’s pause, “Come,” said she; “I am ready.”

George immediately went to the window, secured the ladder again and more firmly, then getting up on to the sill and holding to the bars with one hand, he stretched out the other to the queen, who, as resolute as she had been timid a moment before, mounted on a stool, and had already set one foot on the window-ledge, when suddenly the cry, “Who goes there?” rang out at the foot of the tower. The queen sprang quickly back, partly instinctively and partly pushed by George, who, on the contrary, leaned out of the window to see whence came this cry, which, twice again renewed, remained twice unanswered, and was immediately followed by a report and the flash of a firearm: at the same moment the sentinel on duty on the tower blew his bugle, another set going the alarm bell, and the cries, “To arms, to arms!” and “Treason, treason!” resounded throughout the castle.

“Yes, yes, treason, treason!” cried George Douglas, leaping down into the room. “Yes, the infamous Warden has betrayed us!” Then, advancing to Mary, cold and motionless as a statue, “Courage, madam,” said he, “courage! Whatever happens, a friend yet remains for you in the castle; it is Little Douglas.”

Scarcely had he finished speaking when the door of the queen’s apartment opened, and William Douglas and Lady Lochleven, preceded by servants carrying torches and armed soldiers, appeared on the threshold: the room was immediately filled with people and light.

“Mother,” said William Douglas, pointing to his brother standing before Mary Stuart and protecting her with his body, “do you believe me now? Look!”

The old lady was for a moment speechless; then finding a word at last, and taking a step forward—

“Speak, George Douglas,” cried she, “speak, and clear yourself at once of the charge which weighs on your honour; say but these words, ‘A Douglas was never faithless to his trust,’ and I believe you”.

“Yes, mother,” answered William, “a Douglas!... but he—he is not a Douglas.”

“May God grant my old age the strength needed to bear on the part of one of my

sons such a misfortune, and on the part of the other such an injury!” exclaimed Lady Lochleven. “O woman born under a fatal star,” she went on, addressing the queen, “when will you cease to be, in the Devil’s hands, an instrument of perdition and death to all who approach you? O ancient house of Lochleven, cursed be the hour when this enchantress crossed thy threshold!”

“Do not say that, mother, do not say that,” cried George; “blessed be, on the contrary, the moment which proves that, if there are Douglasses who no longer remember what they owe to their sovereigns, there are others who have never forgotten it.”

“Douglas! Douglas!” murmured Mary Stuart, “did I not tell you?”

“And I, madam,” said George, “what did I reply then? That it was an honour and a duty to every faithful subject of your Majesty to die for you.”

“Well, die, then!” cried William Douglas, springing on his brother with raised sword, while he, leaping back, drew his, and with a movement quick as thought and eager as hatred defended himself. But at the same moment Mary Stuart darted between the two young people.

“Not another step, Lord Douglas,” said she. “Sheathe your sword, George, or if you use it, let be to go hence, and against everyone but your brother. I still have need of your life; take care of it.”

“My life, like my arm and my honour, is at your service, madam, and from the moment you command it I shall preserve it for you.”

With these words, rushing to the door with a violence and resolve which prevented anyone’s stopping him—

“Back!” cried he to the domestics who were barring the passage; “make way for the young master of Douglas, or woe to you!”

“Stop him!” cried William. “Seize him, dead or alive! Fire upon him! Kill him like a dog!”

Two or three soldiers, not daring to disobey William, pretended to pursue his brother. Then some gunshots were heard, and a voice crying that George Douglas had just thrown himself into the lake.

“And has he then escaped?” cried William.

Mary Stuart breathed again; the old lady raised her hands to Heaven.

“Yes, yes,” murmured William,—“yes, thank Heaven for your son’s flight; for his flight covers our entire house with shame; counting from this hour, we shall be looked upon as the accomplices of his treason.”

“Have pity on me, William!” cried Lady Lochleven, wringing her hands. “Have compassion on your old mother! See you not that I am dying?”

With these words, she fell backwards, pale and tottering; the steward and a servant supported her in their arms.

“I believe, my lord,” said Mary Seyton, coming forward, “that your mother has as much need of attention just now as the queen has need of repose: do you not consider it is time for you to withdraw?”

“Yes, yes,” said William, “to give you time to spin fresh webs, I suppose, and to seek what fresh flies you can take in them? It is well, go on with your work; but you have just seen that it is not easy to deceive William Douglas. Play your game, I shall play mine”. Then turning to the servants, “Go out, all of you,” said he; “and you, mother, come.”

The servants and the soldiers obeyed; then William Douglas went out last, supporting Lady Lochleven, and the queen heard him shut behind him and double-lock the two doors of her prison.

Scarcely was Mary alone, and certain that she was no longer seen or heard, than all her strength deserted her, and, sinking into an armchair, she burst out sobbing.

Indeed, all her courage had been needed to sustain her so far, and the sight of her enemies alone had given her this courage; but hardly had they gone than her situation appeared before her in all its fatal hardship. Dethroned, a prisoner, without another fiend in this impregnable castle than a child to whom she had scarce given attention, and who was the sole and last thread attaching her past hopes to her hopes for the future, what remained to Mary Stuart of her two thrones and her double power? Her name, that was all; her name with which, free, she had doubtless stirred Scotland, but which little by little was about to be effaced in the hearts of her adherents, and which during her lifetime oblivion

was to cover perhaps as with a shroud. Such an idea was insupportable to a soul as lofty as Mary Stuart's, and to an organisation which, like that of the flowers, has need, before everything, of air, light, and sun.

Fortunately there remained to her the best beloved of her four Marys, who, always devoted and consoling, hastened to succour and comfort her; but this time it was no easy matter, and the queen let her act and speak without answering her otherwise than with sobs and tears; when suddenly, looking through the window to which she had drawn up her mistress's armchair—

“The light!” cried she, “madam, the light!”

At the same time she raised the queen, and with arm outstretched from the window, she showed her the beacon, the eternal symbol of hope, relighted in the midst of this dark night on Kinross hill: there was no mistake possible, not a star was shining in the sky.

“Lord God, I give Thee thanks,” said the queen, falling on her knees and raising her arms to heaven with a gesture of gratitude: “Douglas has escaped, and my friends still keep watch.”

Then, after a fervent prayer, which restored to her a little strength, the queen reentered her room, and, tired out by her varied successive emotions, she slept an uneasy, agitated sleep, over which the indefatigable Mary Seyton kept watch till daybreak.

As William Douglas had said, from this time forward the queen was a prisoner indeed, and permission to go down into the garden was no longer granted but under the surveillance of two soldiers; but this annoyance seemed to her so unbearable that she preferred to give up the recreation, which, surrounded with such conditions, became a torture. So she shut herself up in her apartments, finding a certain bitter and haughty pleasure in the very excess of her misfortune.

CHAPTER VII

A week after the events we have related, as nine o'clock in the evening had just sounded from the castle bell, and the queen and Mary Seyton were sitting at a table where they were working at their tapestry, a stone thrown from the courtyard passed through the window bars, broke a pane of glass, and fell into the room. The queen's first idea was to believe it accidental or an insult; but Mary Seyton, turning round, noticed that the stone was wrapped up in a paper: she immediately picked it up. The paper was a letter from George Douglas, conceived in these terms:

"You have commanded me to live, madam: I have obeyed, and your Majesty has been able to tell, from the Kinross light, that your servants continue to watch over you. However, not to raise suspicion, the soldiers collected for that fatal night dispersed at dawn, and will not gather again till a fresh attempt makes their presence necessary. But, alas! to renew this attempt now, when your Majesty's gaolers are on their guard, would be your ruin. Let them take every precaution, then, madam; let them sleep in security, while we, we, in our devotion, shall go on watching.

"Patience and courage!"

"Brave and loyal heart!" cried Mary, "more constantly devoted to misfortune than others are to prosperity! Yes, I shall have patience and courage, and so long as that light shines I shall still believe in liberty."

This letter restored to the queen all her former courage: she had means of communication with George through Little Douglas; for no doubt it was he who had thrown that stone. She hastened, in her turn, to write a letter to George, in which she both charged him to express her gratitude to all the lords who had signed the protestation; and begged them, in the name of the fidelity they had sworn to her, not to cool in their devotion, promising them, for her part, to await the result with that patience and courage they asked of her.

The queen was not mistaken: next day, as she was at her window, Little Douglas came to play at the foot of the tower, and, without raising his head, stopped just beneath her to dig a trap to catch birds. The queen looked to see if she were observed, and assured that that part of the courtyard was deserted. she let fail the

stone wrapped in her letter: at first she feared to have made a serious error; for Little Douglas did not even turn at the noise, and it was only after a moment, during which the prisoner's heart was torn with frightful anxiety, that indifferently, and as if he were looking for something else, the child laid his hand on the stone, and without hurrying, without raising his head, without indeed giving any sign of intelligence to her who had thrown it, he put the letter in his pocket, finishing the work he had begun with the greatest calm, and showing the queen, by this coolness beyond his years, what reliance she could place in him.

>From that moment the queen regained fresh hope; but days, weeks, months passed without bringing any change in her situation: winter came; the prisoner saw snow spread over the plains and mountains, and the lake afforded her, if she had only been able to pass the door, a firm road to gain the other bank; but no letter came during all this time to bring her the consoling news that they were busy about her deliverance; the faithful light alone announced to her every evening that a friend was keeping watch.

Soon nature awoke from her death-sleep: some forward sun-rays broke through the clouds of this sombre sky of Scotland; the snow melted, the lake broke its ice-crust, the first buds opened, the green turf reappeared; everything came out of its prison at the joyous approach of spring, and it was a great grief to Mary to see that she alone was condemned to an eternal winter.

At last; one evening, she thought she observed in the motions of the light that something fresh was happening: she had so often questioned this poor flickering star, and she had so often let it count her heartbeats more than twenty times, that to spare herself the pain of disappointment, for a long time she had no longer interrogated it; however, she resolved to make one last attempt, and, almost hopeless, she put her light near the window, and immediately took it away; still, faithful to the signal, the other disappeared at the same moment, and reappeared at the eleventh heartbeat of the queen. At the same time, by a strange coincidence, a stone passing through the window fell at Mary Seyton's feet. It was, like the first, wrapped in a letter from George: the queen took it from her companion's hands, opened it, and read:

“The moment draws near; your adherents are assembled; summon all your courage.”

“Tomorrow, at eleven o'clock in the evening, drop a cord from your window,

and draw up the packet that will be fastened to it.”

There remained in the queen’s apartments the rope over and above what had served for the ladder taken away by the guards the evening of the frustrated escape: next day, at the appointed hour, the two prisoners shut up the lamp in the bedroom, so that no light should betray them, and Mary Seyton, approaching the window, let down the cord. After a minute, she felt from its movements that something was being attached to it. Mary Seyton pulled, and a rather bulky parcel appeared at the bars, which it could not pass on account of its size. Then the queen came to her companion’s aid. The parcel was untied, and its contents, separately, got through easily. The two prisoners carried them into the bedroom, and, barricaded within, commenced an inventory. There were two complete suits of men’s clothes in the Douglas livery. The queen was at a loss, when she saw a letter fastened to the collar of one of the two coats. Eager to know the meaning of this enigma, she immediately opened it, and read as follows:

“It is only by dint of audacity that her Majesty can recover her liberty: let her Majesty read this letter, then, and punctually follow, if she deign to adopt them, the instructions she will find therein.

“In the daytime the keys of the castle do not leave the belt of the old steward; when curfew is rung and he has made his rounds to make sure that all the doors are fast shut, he gives them up to William Douglas, who, if he stays up, fastens them to his sword-belt, or, if he sleeps, puts them under his pillow. For five months, Little Douglas, whom everyone is accustomed to see working at the armourer’s forge of the castle, has been employed in making some keys like enough to the others, once they are substituted for them, for William to be deceived. Yesterday Little Douglas finished the last.

“On the first favourable opportunity that her Majesty will know to be about to present itself, by carefully questioning the light each day, Little Douglas will exchange the false keys for the true, will enter the queen’s room, and will find her dressed, as well as Miss Mary Seyton, in their men’s clothing, and he will go before them to lead them, by the way which offers the best chances for their escape; a boat will be prepared and will await them.

“Till then, every evening, as much to accustom themselves to these new costumes as to give them an appearance of having been worn, her Majesty and Miss Mary Seyton will dress themselves in the suits, which they must keep on

from nine o'clock till midnight. Besides, it is possible that, without having had time to warn them, their young guide may suddenly come to seek them: it is urgent, then, that he find them ready.

“The garments ought to fit perfectly her Majesty and her companion, the measure having been taken on Miss Mary Fleming and Miss Mary Livingston, who are exactly their size.

“One cannot too strongly recommend her Majesty to summon to her aid on the supreme occasion the coolness and courage of which she has given such frequent proofs at other times.”

The two prisoners were astounded at the boldness of this plan: at first they looked at one another in consternation, for success seemed impossible. They none the less made trial of their disguise: as George had said, it fitted each of them as if they had been measured for it.

Every evening the queen questioned the light, as George had urged, and that for a whole long month, during which each evening the queen and Mary Seyton, although the light gave no fresh tidings, arrayed themselves in their men's clothes, as had been arranged, so that they both acquired such practice that they became as familiar to them as those of their own sex.

At last, the 2nd May, 1568, the queen was awakened by the blowing of a horn: uneasy as to what it announced, she slipped on a cloak and ran to the window, where Mary Seyton joined her directly. A rather numerous band of horsemen had halted on the side of the lake, displaying the Douglas pennon, and three boats were rowing together and vying with each other to fetch the new arrivals.

This event caused the queen dismay: in her situation the least change in the castle routine was to be feared, for it might upset all the concerted plans. This apprehension redoubled when, on the boats drawing near, the queen recognised in the elder Lord Douglas, the husband of Lady Lochleven, and the father of William and George. The venerable knight, who was Keeper of the Marches in the north, was coming to visit his ancient manor, in which he had not set foot for three years.

It was an event for Lochleven; and, some minutes after the arrival of the boats, Mary Stuart heard the old steward's footsteps mounting the stairs: he came to announce his master's arrival to the queen, and, as it must needs be a time of

rejoicing to all the castle inhabitants when its master returned, he came to invite the queen to the dinner in celebration of the event: whether instinctively or from distaste, the queen declined.

All day long the bell and the bugle resounded: Lord Douglas, like a true feudal lord, travelled with the retinue of a prince. One saw nothing but new soldiers and servants passing and repassing beneath the queen's windows: the footmen and horsemen were wearing, moreover, a livery similar to that which the queen and Mary Seyton had received.

Mary awaited the night with impatience. The day before, she had questioned her light, and it had informed her as usual, in reappearing at her eleventh or twelfth heartbeat, that the moment of escape was near; but she greatly feared that Lord Douglas's arrival might have upset everything, and that this evening's signal could only announce a postponement. But hardly had she seen the light shine than she placed her lamp in the window; the other disappeared directly, and Mary Stuart, with terrible anxiety, began to question it. This anxiety increased when she had counted more than fifteen beats. Then she stopped, cast down, her eyes mechanically fixed on the spot where the light had been. But her astonishment was great when, at the end of a few minutes, she did not see it reappear, and when, half an hour having elapsed, everything remained in darkness. The queen then renewed her signal, but obtained no response: the escape was for the same evening.

The queen and Mary Seyton were so little expecting this issue, that, contrary to their custom, they had not put on their men's clothes that evening. They immediately flew to the queen's bedchamber, bolted the door behind them, and began to dress.

They had hardly finished their hurried toilette when they heard a key turn in the lock: they immediately blew out the lamp. Light steps approached the door. The two women leaned one against the other; for they both were near falling. Someone tapped gently. The queen asked who was there, and Little Douglas's voice answered in the two first lines of an old ballad—

“Douglas, Douglas, Tender and true.”

Mary opened, directly: it was the watchword agreed upon with George Douglas.

The child was without a light. He stretched out his hand and encountered the

queen's: in the starlight, Mary Stuart saw him kneel down; then she felt the imprint of his lips on her fingers.

"Is your Majesty ready to follow me?" he asked in a low tone, rising.

"Yes, my child," the queen answered: "it is for this evening, then?"

"With your Majesty's permission, yes, it is for this evening."

"Is everything ready?"

"Everything."

"What are we to do?"

"Follow me everywhere."

"My God! my God!" cried Mary Stuart, "have pity on us!" Then, having breathed a short prayer in a low voice, while Mary Seyton was taking the casket in which were the queen's jewels, "I am ready," said she: "and you, darling?"

"I also," replied Mary Seyton.

"Come, then," said Little Douglas.

The two prisoners followed the child; the queen going first, and Mary Seyton after. Their youthful guide carefully shut again the door behind him, so that if a warder happened to pass he would see nothing; then he began to descend the winding stair. Half-way down, the noise of the feast reached them, a mingling of shouts of laughter, the confusion of voices, and the clinking of glasses. The queen placed her hand on her young guide's shoulder.

"Where are you leading us?" she asked him with terror.

"Out of the castle," replied the child.

"But we shall have to pass through the great hall?"

"Without a doubt; and that is exactly what George foresaw. Among the footmen, whose livery your Majesty is wearing, no one will recognise you."

“My God! my God!” the queen murmured, leaning against the wall.

“Courage, madam,” said Mary Seyton in a low voice, “or we are lost.”

“You are right,” returned the queen; “let us go”. And they started again still led by their guide.

At the foot of the stair he stopped, and giving the queen a stone pitcher full of wine

“Set this jug on your right shoulder, madam,” said he; “it will hide your face from the guests, and your Majesty will give rise to less suspicion if carrying something. You, Miss Mary, give me that casket, and put on your head this basket of bread. Now, that’s right: do you feel you have strength?”

“Yes,” said the queen.

“Yes,” said Mary Seyton.

“Then follow me.”

The child went on his way, and after a few steps the fugitives found themselves in a kind of antechamber to the great hall, from which proceeded noise and light. Several servants were occupied there with different duties; not one paid attention to them, and that a little reassured the queen. Besides, there was no longer any drawing back: Little Douglas had just entered the great hall.

The guests, seated on both sides of a long table ranged according to the rank of those assembled at it, were beginning dessert, and consequently had reached the gayest moment of the repast. Moreover, the hall was so large that the lamps and candles which lighted it, multiplied as they were, left in the most favourable half-light both sides of the apartment, in which fifteen or twenty servants were coming and going. The queen and Mary Seyton mingled with this crowd, which was too much occupied to notice them, and without stopping, without slackening, without looking back, they crossed the whole length of the hall, reached the other door, and found themselves in the vestibule corresponding to the one they had passed through on coming in. The queen set down her jug there, Mary Seyton her basket, and both, still led by the child, entered a corridor at the end of which they found themselves in the courtyard. A patrol was passing at the moment, but he took no notice of them.

The child made his way towards the garden, still followed by the two women. There, for no little while, it was necessary to try which of all the keys opened the door; it—was a time of inexpressible anxiety. At last the key turned in the lock, the door opened; the queen and Mary Seyton rushed into the garden. The child closed the door behind them.

About two-thirds of the way across, Little Douglas held out his hand as a sign to them to stop; then, putting down the casket and the keys on the ground, he placed his hands together, and blowing into them, thrice imitated the owl's cry so well that it was impossible to believe that a human voice was uttering the sounds; then, picking up the casket and the keys, he kept on his way on tiptoe and with an attentive ear. On getting near the wall, they again stopped, and after a moment's anxious waiting they heard a groan, then something like the sound of a falling body. Some seconds later the owl's cry was—answered by a tu-whit-tu-whoo.

“It is over,” Little Douglas said calmly; “come.”

“What is over?” asked the queen; “and what is that groan we heard?”

“There was a sentry at the door on to the lake,” the child answered, “but he is no longer there.”

The queen felt her heart's blood grow cold, at the same time that a chilly sweat broke out to the roots of her hair; for she perfectly understood: an unfortunate being had just lost his life on her account. Tottering, she leaned on Mary Seyton, who herself felt her strength giving way. Meanwhile Little Douglas was trying the keys: the second opened the door.

“And the queen?” said in a low voice a man who was waiting on the other side of the wall.

“She is following me,” replied the child.

George Douglas, for it was he, sprang into the garden, and, taking the queen's arm on one side and Mary Seyton's on the other, he hurried them away quickly to the lake-side. When passing through the doorway Mary Stuart could not help throwing an uneasy look about her, and it seemed to her that a shapeless object was lying at the bottom of the wall, and as she was shuddering all over

“Do not pity him,” said George in a low voice, “for it is a judgment from heaven. That man was the infamous Warden who betrayed us.”

“Alas!” said the queen, “guilty as he was, he is none the less dead on my account.”

“When it concerned your safety, madam, was one to haggle over drops of that base blood? But silence! This way, William, this way; let us keep along the wall, whose shadow hides us. The boat is within twenty steps, and we are saved.”

With these words, George hurried on the two women still more quickly, and all four, without having been detected, reached the banks of the lake. ‘As Douglas had said, a little boat was waiting; and, on seeing the fugitives approach, four rowers, couched along its bottom, rose, and one of them, springing to land, pulled the chain, so that the queen and Mary Seyton could get in. Douglas seated them at the prow, the child placed himself at the rudder, and George, with a kick, pushed off the boat, which began to glide over the lake.

“And now,” said he, “we are really saved; for they might as well pursue a sea swallow on Solway Firth as try to reach us. Row, children, row; never mind if they hear us: the main thing is to get into the open.”

“Who goes there?” cried a voice above, from the castle terrace.

“Row, row,” said Douglas, placing himself in front of the queen.

“The boat! the boat!” cried the same voice; “bring to the boat!” Then, seeing that it continued to recede, “Treason! treason!” cried the sentinel. “To arms!”

At the same moment a flash lit up the lake; the report of a firearm was heard, and a ball passed, whistling. The queen uttered a little cry, although she had run no danger, George, as we have said, having placed himself in front of her, quite protecting her with his body.

The alarm bell now rang, and all the castle lights were seen moving and glancing about, as if distracted, in the rooms.

“Courage, children!” said Douglas. “Row as if your lives depended on each stroke of the oar; for ere five minutes the skiff will be out after us.”

“That won’t be so easy for them as you think, George,” said Little Douglas; “for I shut all the doors behind me, and some time will elapse before the keys that I have left there open them. As to these,” added he, showing those he had so skilfully abstracted, “I resign them to the Kelpie, the genie of the lake, and I nominate him porter of Lochleven Castle.”

The discharge of a small piece of artillery answered William’s joke; but as the night was too dark for one to aim to such a distance as that already between the castle and the boat, the ball ricocheted at twenty paces from the fugitives, while the report died away in echo after echo. Then Douglas drew his pistol from his belt, and, warning the ladies to have no fear, he fired in the air, not to answer by idle bravado the castle cannonade, but to give notice to a troop of faithful friends, who were waiting for them on the other shore of the lake, that the queen had escaped. Immediately, in spite of the danger of being so near Kinross, cries of joy resounded on the bank, and William having turned the rudder, the boat made for land at the spot whence they had been heard. Douglas then gave his hand to the queen, who sprang lightly ashore, and who, falling on her knees, immediately began to give thanks to God for her happy deliverance.

On rising, the queen found herself surrounded by her most faithful servants—Hamilton, Herries, and Seyton, Mary’s father. Light-headed with joy, the queen extended her hands to them, thanking them with broken words, which expressed her intoxication and her gratitude better than the choicest phrases could have done, when suddenly, turning round, she perceived George Douglas, alone and melancholy. Then, going to him and taking him by the hand—

“My lords,” said she, presenting George to them, and pointing to William, “behold my two deliverers: behold those to whom, as long as I live, I shall preserve gratitude of which nothing will ever acquit me.”

“Madam,” said Douglas, “each of us has only done what he ought, and he who has risked most is the happiest. But if your Majesty will believe me, you will not lose a moment in needless words.”

“Douglas is right,” said Lord Seyton. “To horse! to horse!”

Immediately, and while four couriers set out in four different directions to announce to the queen’s friends her happy escape, they brought her a horse saddled for her, which she mounted with her usual skill; then the little troop,

which, composed of about twenty persons, was escorting the future destiny of Scotland, keeping away from the village of Kinross, to which the castle firing had doubtless given the alarm, took at a gallop the road to Seyton's castle, where was already a garrison large enough to defend the queen from a sudden attack.

The queen journeyed all night, accompanied on one side by Douglas, on the other by Lord Seyton; then, at daybreak, they stopped at the gate of the castle of West Niddrie, belonging to Lord Seyton, as we have said, and situated in West Lothian. Douglas sprang from his horse to offer his hand to Mary Stuart; but Lord Seyton claimed his privilege as master of the house. The queen consoled Douglas with a glance, and entered the fortress.

"Madam," said Lord Seyton, leading her into a room prepared for her for nine months, "your Majesty must have need of repose, after the fatigue and the emotions you have gone through since yesterday morning; you may sleep here in peace, and disquiet yourself for nothing: any noise you may hear will be made by a reinforcement of friends which we are expecting. As to our enemies, your Majesty has nothing to fear from them so long as you inhabit the castle of a Seyton."

The queen again thanked all her deliverers, gave her hand to Douglas to kiss one last time, kissed Little William on the forehead, and named him her favourite page for the future; then, profiting by the advice given her, entered her room where Mary Seyton, to the exclusion of every other woman, claimed the privilege of performing about her the duties with which she had been charged during their eleven months' captivity in Lochleven Castle.

On opening her eyes, Mary Stuart thought she had had one of those dreams so gainful to prisoners, when waking they see again the bolts on their doors and the bars on their windows. So the queen, unable to believe the evidence of her senses, ran, half dressed, to the window. The courtyard was filled with soldiers, and these soldiers all friends who had hastened at the news of her escape; she recognised the banners of her faithful friends, the Seytons, the Arbroaths, the Herries, and the Hamiltons, and scarcely had she been seen at the window than all these banners bent before her, with the shouts a hundred times repeated of "Long live Mary of Scotland! Long live our queen!" Then, without giving heed to the disarray of her toilet, lovely and chaste with her emotion and her happiness, she greeted them in her turn, her eyes full of tears; but this time they were tears of joy. However, the queen recollected that she was barely covered,

and blushing at having allowed herself to be thus carried away in her ecstasy, she abruptly drew back, quite rosy with confusion.

Then she had an instant's womanly fright: she had fled from Lochleven Castle in the Douglas livery, and without either the leisure or the opportunity for taking women's clothes with her. But she could not remain attired as a man; so she explained her uneasiness to Mary Seyton, who responded by opening the closets in the queen's room. They were furnished, not only with robes, the measure for which, like that of the suit, had been taken from Mary Fleming, but also with all the necessaries for a woman's toilet. The queen was astonished: it was like being in a fairy castle.

"Mignonne," said she, looking one after another at the robes, all the stuffs of which were chosen with exquisite taste, "I knew your father was a brave and loyal knight, but I did not think him so learned in the matter of the toilet. We shall name him groom of the wardrobe."

"Alas! madam," smilingly replied Mary Seyton, "you are not mistaken: my father has had everything in the castle furnished up to the last corselet, sharpened to the last sword, unfurled to the last banner; but my father, ready as he is to die for your Majesty, would not have dreamed for an instant of offering you anything but his roof to rest under, or his cloak to cover you. It is Douglas again who has foreseen everything, prepared everything—everything even to Rosabelle, your Majesty's favourite steed, which is impatiently awaiting in the stable the moment when, mounted on her, your Majesty will make your triumphal re-entry into Edinburgh."

"And how has he been able to get her back again?" Mary asked. "I thought that in the division of my spoils Rosabelle had fallen to the fair Alice, my brother's favourite sultana?"

"Yes, yes," said Mary Seyton, "it was so; and as her value was known, she was kept under lock and key by an army of grooms; but Douglas is the man of miracles, and, as I have told you, Rosabelle awaits your Majesty."

"Noble Douglas!" murmured the queen, with eyes full of tears; then, as if speaking to herself, "And this is precisely one of those devotions that we can never repay. The others will be happy with honours, places, money; but to Douglas what matter all these things?"

“Come, madam, come,” said Mary Seyton, “God takes on Himself the debts of kings; He will reward Douglas. As to your Majesty, reflect that they are waiting dinner for you. I hope,” added she, smiling, “that you will not affront my father as you did Lord Douglas yesterday in refusing to partake of his feast on his fortunate home-coming.”

“And luck has come to me for it, I hope,” replied Mary. “But you are right, darling: no more sad thoughts; we will consider when we have indeed become queen again what we can do for Douglas.”

The queen dressed and went down. As Mary Seyton had told her, the chief noblemen of her party, already gathered round her, were waiting for her in the great hall of the castle. Her arrival was greeted with acclamations of the liveliest enthusiasm, and she sat down to table, with Lord Seyton on her right hand, Douglas on her left, and behind her Little William, who the same day was beginning his duties as page.

Next morning the queen was awakened by the sound of trumpets and bugles: it had been decided the day before that she should set out that day for Hamilton, where reinforcements were looked for. The queen donned an elegant riding-habit, and soon, mounted on Rosabelle, appeared amid her defenders. The shouts of joy redoubled: her beauty, her grace, and her courage were admired by everyone. Mary Stuart became her own self once more, and she felt spring up in her again the power of fascination she had always exercised on those who came near her. Everyone was in good humour, and the happiest of all was perhaps Little William, who for the first time in his life had such a fine dress and such a fine horse.

Two or three thousand men were awaiting the queen at Hamilton, which she reached the same evening; and during the night following her arrival the troops increased to six thousand. The 2nd of May she was a prisoner, without another friend but a child in her prison, without other means of communication with her adherents than the flickering and uncertain light of a lamp, and three days afterwards—that is to say, between the Sunday and the Wednesday—she found herself not only free, but also at the head of a powerful confederacy, which counted at its head nine earls, eight peers, nine bishops, and a number of barons and nobles renowned among the bravest of Scotland.

The advice of the most judicious among those about the queen was to shut

herself up in the strong castle of Dumbarton, which, being impregnable, would give all her adherents time to assemble together, distant and scattered as they were: accordingly, the guidance of the troops who were to conduct the queen to that town was entrusted to the Earl of Argyll, and the 11th of May she took the road with an army of nearly ten thousand men.

Murray was at Glasgow when he heard of the queen's escape: the place was strong; he decided to hold it, and summoned to him his bravest and most devoted partisans. Kirkcaldy of Grange, Morton, Lindsay of Byres, Lord Lochleven, and William Douglas hastened to him, and six thousand of the best troops in the kingdom gathered round them, while Lord Ruthven in the counties of Berwick and Angus raised levies with which to join them.

The 13th May, Morton occupied from daybreak the village of Langside, through which the queen must pass to get to Dumbarton. The news of the occupation reached the queen as the two armies were yet seven miles apart. Mary's first instinct was to escape an engagement: she remembered her last battle at Carberry Hill, at the end of which she had been separated from Bothwell and brought to Edinburgh; so she expressed aloud this opinion, which was supported by George Douglas, who, in black armour, without other arms, had continued at the queen's side.

"Avoid an engagement!" cried Lord Seyton, not daring to answer his sovereign, and replying to George as if this opinion had originated with him. "We could do it, perhaps, if we were one to ten; but we shall certainly not do so when we are three to two. You speak a strange tongue, my young master," continued he, with some contempt; "and you forget, it seems to me, that you are a Douglas and that you speak to a Seyton."

"My lord," returned George calmly, "when we only hazard the lives of Douglasses and Seytons, you will find me, I hope, as ready to fight as you, be it one to ten, be it three to two; but we are now answerable for an existence dearer to Scotland than that of all the Seytons and all the Douglasses. My advice is then to avoid battle."

"Battle! battle!" cried all the chieftains.

"You hear, madam?" said Lord Seyton to Mary Stuart: "I believe that to wish to act against such unanimity would be dangerous. In Scotland, madam, there is an

ancient proverb which has it that ‘there is most prudence in courage.’”

“But have you not heard that the regent has taken up an advantageous position?” the queen said.

“The greyhound hunts the hare on the hillside as well as in the plain,” replied Seyton: “we will drive him out, wherever he is.”

“Let it be as you desire, then, my lords. It shall not be said that Mary Stuart returned to the scabbard the sword her defenders had drawn for her.”

Then, turning round to Douglas

“George,” she said to him, “choose a guard of twenty men for me, and take command of them: you will not quit me.”

George bent low in obedience, chose twenty from among the bravest men, placed the queen in their midst, and put himself at their head; then the troops, which had halted, received the order to continue their road. In two hours’ time the advance guard was in sight of the enemy; it halted, and the rest of the army rejoined it.

The queen’s troops then found themselves parallel with the city of Glasgow, and the heights which rose in front of them were already occupied by a force above which floated, as above that of Mary, the royal banners of Scotland, On the other side, and on the opposite slope, stretched the village of Langside, encircled with enclosures and gardens. The road which led to it, and which followed all the variations of the ground, narrowed at one place in such a way that two men could hardly pass abreast, then, farther on, lost itself in a ravine, beyond which it reappeared, then branched into two, of which one climbed to the village of Langside, while the other led to Glasgow.

On seeing the lie of the ground, the Earl of Argyll immediately comprehended the importance of occupying this village, and, turning to Lord Seyton, he ordered him to gallop off and try to arrive there before the enemy, who doubtless, having made the same observation as the commander of the royal forces, was setting in motion at that very moment a considerable body of cavalry.

Lord Seyton called up his men directly, but while he was ranging them round his banner, Lord Arbroath drew his sword, and approaching the Earl of Argyll

“My lord,” said he, “you do me a wrong in charging Lord Seyton to seize that post: as commander of the vanguard, it is to me this honour belongs. Allow me, then, to use my privilege in claiming it.”

“It is I who received the order to seize it; I will seize it!” cried Seyton.

“Perhaps,” returned Lord Arbroath, “but not before me!”

“Before you and before every Hamilton in the world!” exclaimed Seyton, putting his horse to the gallop and rushing down into the hollow road

“Saint Bennet! and forward!”

“Come, my faithful kinsmen!” cried Lord Arbroath, dashing forward on his side with the same object; “come, my men-at-arms! For God and the queen!”

The two troops precipitated themselves immediately in disorder and ran against one another in the narrow way, where, as we have said, two men could hardly pass abreast. There was a terrible collision there, and the conflict began among friends who should have been united against the enemy. Finally, the two troops, leaving behind them some corpses stifled in the press, or even killed by their companions, passed through the defile pell-mell and were lost sight of in the ravine. But during this struggle Seyton and Arbroath had lost precious time, and the detachment sent by Murray, which had taken the road by Glasgow, had reached the village beforehand; it was now necessary not to take it, but to retake it.

Argyll saw that the whole day’s struggle would be concentrated there, and, understanding more and more the importance of the village, immediately put himself at the head of the body of his army, commanding a rearguard of two thousand men to remain there and await further orders to take part in the fighting. But whether the captain who commanded them had ill understood, or whether he was eager to distinguish himself in the eyes of the queen, scarcely had Argyll vanished into the ravine, at the end of which the struggle had already commenced between Kirkcaldy of Grange and Morton on the one side, and on the other between Arbroath and Seyton, than, without regarding the cries of Mary Stuart, he set off in his turn at a gallop, leaving the queen without other guard than the little escort of twenty men which Douglas had chosen for her. Douglas sighed.

“Alas!” said the queen, hearing him, “I am not a soldier, but there it seems to me is a battle very badly begun.”

“What is to be done?” replied Douglas. “We are every one of us infatuated, from first to last, and all these men are behaving to-day like madmen or children.”

“Victory! victory!” said the queen; “the enemy is retreating, fighting. I see the banners of Seyton and Arbroath floating near the first houses in the village. Oh! my brave lords,” cried she, clapping her hands. “Victory! victory!”

But she stopped suddenly on perceiving a body of the enemy’s army advancing to charge the victors in flank.

“It is nothing, it is nothing,” said Douglas; “so long as there is only cavalry we have nothing much to fear, and besides the Earl of Argyll will fall in in time to aid them.”

“George,” said Little William.

“Well?” asked Douglas.

“Don’t you see? “the child went on, stretching out his arms towards the enemy’s force, which was coming on at a gallop.

“What?”

“Each horseman carries a footman armed with an arquebuse behind him, so that the troop is twice as numerous as it appears.”

“That’s true; upon my soul, the child has good sight. Let someone go at once full gallop and take news of this to the Earl or Argyll.”

“I! I!” cried Little William. “I saw them first; it is my right to bear the tidings.”

“Go, then, my child,” said Douglas; “and may God preserve thee!”

The child flew, quick as lightning, not hearing or feigning not to hear the queen, who was recalling him. He was seen to cross the gorge and plunge into the hollow road at the moment when Argyll was debouching at the end and coming to the aid of Seyton and Arbroath. Meanwhile, the enemy’s detachment had

dismounted its infantry, which, immediately formed up, was scattering on the sides of the ravine by paths impracticable for horses.

“William will come too late!” cried Douglas, “or even, should he arrive in time, the news is now useless to them. Oh madmen, madmen that we are! This is how we have always lost all our battles!”

“Is the battle lost, then?” demanded Mary, growing pale.

“No, madam, no,” cried Douglas; “Heaven be thanked, not yet; but through too great haste we have begun badly.”

“And William?” said Mary Stuart.

“He is now serving his apprenticeship in arms; for, if I am not mistaken, he must be at this moment at the very spot where those marksmen are making such quick firing.”

“Poor child!” cried the queen; “if ill should befall him, I shall never console myself.”

“Alas! madam,” replied Douglas, “I greatly fear that his first battle is his last, and that everything is already over for him; for, unless I mistake, there is his horse returning riderless.”

“Oh, my God! my God!” said the queen, weeping, and raising her hands to heaven, “it is then decreed that I should be fatal to all around me!”

George was not deceived: it was William’s horse coming back without his young master and covered with blood.

“Madam,” said Douglas, “we are ill placed here; let us gain that hillock on which is the Castle of Crookstone: from thence we shall survey the whole battlefield.”

“No, not there! not there!” said the queen in terror: “within that castle I came to spend the first days of my marriage with Darnley; it will bring me misfortune.”

“Well, beneath that yew-tree, then,” said George, pointing to another slight rise near the first; “but it is important for us to lose no detail of this engagement. Everything depends perhaps for your Majesty on an ill-judged manoeuvre or a

lost moment.”

“Guide me, then,” the queen said; “for, as for me, I no longer see it. Each report of that terrible cannonade echoes to the depths of my heart.”

However well placed as was this eminence for overlooking from its summit the whole battlefield, the reiterated discharge of cannon and musketry covered it with such a cloud of smoke that it was impossible to make out from it anything but masses lost amid a murderous fog. At last, when an hour had passed in this desperate conflict, through the skirts of this sea of smoke the fugitives were seen to emerge and disperse in all directions, followed by the victors. Only, at that distance, it was impossible to make out who had gained or lost the battle, and the banners, which on both sides displayed the Scottish arms, could in no way clear up this confusion.

At that moment there was seen coming down from the Glasgow hillsides all the remaining reserve of Murray’s army; it was coming at full speed to engage in the fighting; but this manoeuvre might equally well have for its object the support of defeated friends as to complete the rout of the enemy. However, soon there was no longer any doubt; for this reserve charged the fugitives, amid whom it spread fresh confusion. The queen’s army was beaten. At the same time, three or four horsemen appeared on the hither side of the ravine, advancing at a gallop. Douglas recognised them as enemies.

“Fly, madam,” cried George, “fly without loss of a second; for those who are coming upon us are followed by others. Gain the road, while I go to check them. And you,” added he, addressing the escort, “be killed to the last man rather than let them take your queen.”

“George! George!” cried the queen, motionless, and as if riveted to the spot.

But George had already dashed away with all his horse’s speed, and as he was splendidly mounted, he flew across the space with lightning rapidity, and reached the gorge before the enemy. There he stopped, put his lance in rest, and alone against five bravely awaited the encounter.

As to the queen, she had no desire to go; but, on the contrary, as if turned to stone, she remained in the same place, her eyes fastened on this combat which was taking place at scarcely five hundred paces from her. Suddenly, glancing at her enemies, she saw that one of them bore in the middle of his shield a bleeding

heart, the Douglas arms. Then she uttered a cry of pain, and drooping her head

“Douglas against Douglas; brother against brother!” she murmured: “it only wanted this last blow.”

“Madam, madam,” cried her escort, “there is not an instant to lose: the young master of Douglas cannot hold out long thus alone against five; let us fly! let us fly!” And two of them taking the queen’s horse by the bridle, put it to the gallop, at the moment when George, after having beaten down two of his enemies and wounded a third, was thrown down in his turn in the dust, thrust to the heart by a lance-head. The queen groaned on seeing him fall; then, as if he alone had detained her, and as if he being killed she had no interest in anything else, she put Rosabelle to the gallop, and as she and her troop were splendidly mounted, they had soon lost sight of the battlefield.

She fled thus for sixty miles, without taking any rest, and without ceasing to weep or to sigh: at last, having traversed the counties of Renfrew and Ayr, she reached the Abbey of Dundrennan, in Galloway, and certain of being, for the time at least, sheltered from every danger, she gave the order to stop. The prior respectfully received her at the gate of the convent.

“I bring you misfortune and ruin, father,” said the queen, alighting from her horse.

“They are welcome,” replied the prior, “since they come accompanied by duty.”

The queen gave Rosabelle to the care of one of the men-at-arms who had accompanied her, and leaning on Mary Seyton, who had not left her for a moment, and on Lord Herries, who had rejoined her on the road, she entered the convent.

Lord Herries had not concealed her position from Mary Stuart: the day had been completely lost, and with the day, at least for the present, all hope of reascending the throne of Scotland. There remained but three courses for the queen to take to withdraw into France, Spain or England. On the advice of Lord Herries, which accorded with her own feeling, she decided upon the last; and that same night she wrote this double missive in verse and in prose to Elizabeth:

“MY DEAR SISTER,—I have often enough begged you to receive my tempest-tossed vessel into your haven during the storm. If at this pass she finds a safe

harbour there, I shall cast anchor there for ever: otherwise the bark is in God's keeping, for she is ready and caulked for defence on her voyage against all storms. I have dealt openly with you, and still do so: do not take it in bad part if I write thus; it is not in defiance of you, as it appears, for in everything I rely on your friendship."

"This sonnet accompanied the letter:—

"One thought alone brings danger and delight; Bitter and sweet change places in my heart, With doubt, and then with hope, it takes its part, Till peace and rest alike are put to flight.

Therefore, dear sister, if this card pursue That keen desire by which I am oppressed, To see you, 'tis because I live distressed, Unless some swift and sweet result ensue.

Beheld I have my ship compelled by fate To seek the open sea, when close to port, And calmest days break into storm and gale; Wherefore full grieved and fearful is my state, Not for your sake, but since, in evil sort, Fortune so oft snaps strongest rope and sail."

Elizabeth trembled with joy at receiving this double letter; for the eight years that her enmity had been daily increasing to Mary Stuart, she had followed her with her eyes continually, as a wolf might a gazelle; at last the gazelle sought refuge in the wolf's den. Elizabeth had never hoped as much: she immediately despatched an order to the Sheriff of Cumberland to make known to Mary that she was ready to receive her. One morning a bugle was heard blowing on the seashore: it was Queen Elizabeth's envoy come to fetch Queen Mary Stuart.

Then arose great entreaties to the fugitive not to trust herself thus to a rival in power, glory, and beauty; but the poor dispossessed queen was full of confidence in her she called her good sister, and believed herself going, free and rid of care, to take at Elizabeth's court the place due to her rank and her misfortunes: thus she persisted, in spite of all that could be said. In our time, we have seen the same infatuation seize another royal fugitive, who like Mary Stuart confided himself to the generosity of his enemy England: like Mary Stuart, he was cruelly punished for his confidence, and found in the deadly climate of St. Helena the scaffold of Fotheringay.

Mary Stuart set out on her journey, then, with her little following. Arrived at the

shore of Solway Firth, she found there the Warden of the English Marches: he was a gentleman named Lowther, who received the queen with the greatest respect, but who gave her to understand that he could not permit more than three of her women to accompany her. Mary Seyton immediately claimed her privilege: the queen held out to her her hand.

“Alas! mignonne,” said she, “but it might well be another’s turn: you have already suffered enough for me and with me.”

But Mary, unable to reply, clung to her hand, making a sign with her head that nothing in the world should part her from her mistress. Then all who had accompanied the queen renewed their entreaties that she should not persist in this fatal resolve, and when she was already a third of the way along the plank placed for her to enter the skiff, the Prior of Dundrennan, who had offered Mary Stuart such dangerous and touching hospitality, entered the water up to his knees, to try to detain her; but all was useless: the queen had made up her mind.

At that moment Lowther approached her. “Madam,” said he, “accept anew my regrets that I cannot offer a warm welcome in England to all who would wish to follow you there; but our queen has given us positive orders, and we must carry them out. May I be permitted to remind your Majesty that the tide serves?”

“Positive orders!” cried the prior. “Do you hear, madam? Oh! you are lost if you quit this shore! Back, while there is yet time! Back; madam, in Heaven’s name! To me, sir knights, to me!” he cried, turning to Lord Herries and the other lords who had accompanied Mary Stuart; “do not allow your queen to abandon you, were it needful to struggle with her and the English at the same time. Hold her back, my lords, in Heaven’s name! withhold her!”

“What means this violence, sir priest?” said the Warden of the Marches. “I came here at your queen’s express command; she is free to return to you, and there is no need to have recourse to force for that”. Then, addressing the queen—

“Madam,” said he, “do you consent to follow me into England in full liberty of choice? Answer, I entreat you; for my honour demands that the whole world should be aware that you have followed me freely.”

“Sir,” replied Mary Stuart, “I ask your pardon, in the name of this worthy servant of God and his queen, for what he may have said of offence to you. Freely I leave Scotland and place myself in your hands, trusting that I shall be free either

to remain in England with my royal sister, or to return to France to my worthy relatives". Then, turning to the priest, "Your blessing, father, and God protect you!"

"Alas! alas!" murmured the abbot, obeying the queen, "it is not we who are in need of God's protection, but rather you, my daughter. May the blessing of a poor priest turn aside from you the misfortunes I foresee! Go, and may it be with you as the Lord has ordained in His wisdom and in His mercy!"

Then the queen gave her hand to the sheriff, who conducted her to the skiff, followed by Mary Seyton and two other women only. The sails were immediately unfurled, and the little vessel began to recede from the shores of Galloway, to make her way towards those of Cumberland. So long as it could be seen, they who had accompanied the queen lingered on the beach, waving her signs of adieu, which, standing on the deck of the shallop which was bearing her, away, she returned with her handkerchief. Finally, the boat disappeared, and all burst into lamentations or into sobbing. They were right, for the good Prior of Dundrennan's presentiments were only too true, and they had seen Mary Stuart for the last time.

CHAPTER VIII

On landing on the shores of England, the Queen of Scotland found messengers from Elizabeth empowered to express to her all the regret their mistress felt in being unable to admit her to her presence, or to give her the affectionate welcome she bore her in her heart. But it was essential, they added, that first of all the queen should clear herself of the death of Darnley, whose family, being subjects of the Queen of England, had a right to her protection and justice.

Mary Stuart was so blinded that she did not see the trap, and immediately offered to prove her innocence to the satisfaction of her sister Elizabeth; but scarcely had she in her hands Mary Stuart's letter, than from arbitress she became judge, and, naming commissioners to hear the parties, summoned Murray to appear and accuse his sister. Murray, who knew Elizabeth's secret intentions with regard to her rival, did not hesitate a moment. He came to England, bringing the casket containing the three letters we have quoted, some verses and some other papers which proved that the queen had not only been Bothwell's mistress during the lifetime of Darnley, but had also been aware of the assassination of her husband. On their side, Lord Herries and the Bishop of Ross, the queen's advocates, maintained that these letters had been forged, that the handwriting was counterfeited, and demanded, in verification, experts whom they could not obtain; so that this great controversy, remained pending for future ages, and to this hour nothing is yet affirmatively settled in this matter either by scholars or historians.

After a five months' inquiry, the Queen of England made known to the parties, that not having, in these proceedings, been able to discover anything to the dishonour of accuser or accused, everything would remain in statu quo till one or the other could bring forward fresh proofs.

As a result of this strange decision, Elizabeth should have sent back the regent to Scotland, and have left Mary Stuart free to go where she would. But, instead of that, she had her prisoner removed from Bolton Castle to Carlisle Castle, from whose terrace, to crown her with grief, poor Mary Stuart saw the blue mountains of her own Scotland.

However, among the judges named by Elizabeth to examine into Mary Stuart's

conduct was Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk. Be it that he was convinced of Mary's innocence, be it that he was urged by the ambitious project which since served as a ground for his prosecution, and which was nothing else than to wed Mary Stuart, to affiance his daughter to the young king, and to become regent of Scotland, he resolved to extricate her from her prison. Several members of the high nobility of England, among whom were the Earls of Westmoreland and Northumberland, entered into the plot and under, took to support it with all their forces. But their scheme had been communicated to the regent: he denounced it to Elizabeth, who had Norfolk arrested. Warned in time, Westmoreland and Northumberland crossed the frontiers and took refuge in the Scottish borders which were favourable to Queen Mary. The former reached Flanders, where he died in exile; the latter, given up to Murray, was sent to the castle of Lochleven, which guarded him more faithfully than it had done its royal prisoner. As to Norfolk, he was beheaded. As one sees, Mary Stuart's star had lost none of its fatal influence.

Meanwhile the regent had returned to Edinburgh, enriched with presents from Elizabeth, and having gained, in fact, his case with her, since Mary remained a prisoner. He employed himself immediately in dispersing the remainder of her adherents, and had hardly shut the gates of Lochleven Castle upon Westmoreland than, in the name of the young King James VI, he pursued those who had upheld his mother's cause, and among them more particularly the Hamiltons, who since the affair of "sweeping the streets of Edinburgh," had been the mortal enemies of the Douglasses personally; six of the chief members of this family were condemned to death, and only obtained commutation of the penalty into an eternal exile on the entreaties of John Knox, at that time so powerful in Scotland that Murray dared not refuse their pardon.

One of the amnestied was a certain Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh, a man of ancient Scottish times, wild and vindictive as the nobles in the time of James I. He had withdrawn into the highlands, where he had found an asylum, when he learned that Murray, who in virtue of the confiscation pronounced against exiles had given his lands to one of his favourites, had had the cruelty to expel his sick and bedridden wife from her own house, and that without giving her time to dress, and although it was in the winter cold. The poor woman, besides, without shelter, without clothes, and without food, had gone out of her mind, had wandered about thus for some time, an object of compassion but equally of dread; for everyone had been afraid of compromising himself by assisting her. At last, she had returned to expire of misery and cold on the threshold whence

she had been driven.

On learning this news, Bothwellhaugh, despite the violence of his character, displayed no anger: he merely responded, with a terrible smile, "It is well; I shall avenge her."

Next day, Bothwellhaugh left his highlands, and came down, disguised, into the plain, furnished with an order of admission from the Archbishop of St. Andrews to a house which this prelate—who, as one remembers, had followed the queen's fortunes to the last moment—had at Linlithgow. This house, situated in the main street, had a wooden balcony looking on to the square, and a gate which opened out into the country. Bothwellhaugh entered it at night, installed himself on the first floor, hung black cloth on the walls so that his shadow should not be seen from without, covered the floor with mattresses so that his footsteps might not be heard on the ground floor, fastened a racehorse ready saddled and bridled in the garden, hollowed out the upper part of the little gate which led to the open country so that he could pass through it at a gallop, armed himself with a loaded arquebuse, and shut himself up in the room.

All these preparations had been made, one imagines, because Murray was to spend the following day in Linlithgow. But, secret as they were, they were to be rendered useless, for the regent's friends warned him that it would not be safe for him to pass through the town, which belonged almost wholly to the Hamiltons, and advised him to go by it. However, Murray was courageous, and, accustomed not to give way before a real danger, he chid nothing but laugh at a peril which he looked upon as imaginary, and boldly followed his first plan, which was not to go out of his way. Consequently, as the street into which the Archbishop of St. Andrews' balcony looked was on his road, he entered upon it, not going rapidly and preceded by guards who would open up a passage for him, as his friends still counselled, but advancing at a foot's pace, delayed as he was by the great crowd which was blocking up the streets to see him. Arrived in front of the balcony, as if chance had been in tune with the murderer, the crush became so great that Murray was obliged to halt for a moment: this rest gave Bothwellhaugh time to adjust himself for a steady shot. He leaned his arquebuse on the balcony, and, having taken aim with the necessary leisure and coolness, fired. Bothwellhaugh had put such a charge into the arquebuse, that the ball, having passed through the regent's heart, killed the horse of a gentleman on his right. Murray fell directly, saying, "My God! I am killed."

As they had seen from which window the shot was fired, the persons in the regent's train had immediately thrown themselves against the great door of the house which looked on to the street, and had smashed it in; but they only arrived in time to see Bothwellhaugh fly through the little garden gate on the horse he had got ready: they immediately remounted the horses they had left in the street, and, passing through the house, pursued him. Bothwellhaugh had a good horse and the lead of his enemies; and yet, four of them, pistol in hand, were so well mounted that they were beginning to gain upon him. Then Bothwellhaugh; seeing that whip and spur were not enough, drew his dagger and used it to goad on his horse. His horse, under this terrible stimulus, acquired fresh vigour, and, leaping a gully eighteen feet deep, put between his master and his pursuers a barrier which they dared not cross.

The murderer sought an asylum in France, where he retired under the protection of the Guises. There, as the bold stroke he had attempted had acquired him a great reputation, some days before the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, they made him overtures to assassinate Admiral Coligny. But Bothwellhaugh indignantly repulsed these proposals, saying that he was the avenger of abuses and not an assassin, and that those who had to complain of the admiral had only to come and ask him how he had done, and to do as he.

As to Murray, he died the night following his wound, leaving the regency to the Earl of Lennox, the father of Darnley: on learning the news of his death, Elizabeth wrote that she had lost her best friend.

While these events were passing in Scotland, Mary Stuart was still a prisoner, in spite of the pressing and successive protests of Charles IX and Henry III. Taking fright at the attempt made in her favour, Elizabeth even had her removed to Sheffield Castle, round which fresh patrols were incessantly in motion.

But days, months, years passed, and poor Mary, who had borne so impatiently her eleven months' captivity in Lochleven Castle, had been already led from prison to prison for fifteen or sixteen years, in spite of her protests and those of the French and Spanish ambassadors, when she was finally taken to Tutbury Castle and placed under the care of Sir Amyas Paulet, her last gaoler: there she found for her sole lodging two low and damp rooms, where little by little what strength remained to her was so exhausted that there were days on which she could not walk, on account of the pain in all her limbs. Then it was that she who had been the queen of two kingdoms, who was born in a gilded cradle and

brought up in silk and velvet, was forced to humble herself to ask of her gaoler a softer bed and warmer coverings. This request, treated as an affair of state, gave rise to negotiations which lasted a month, after which the prisoner was at length granted what she asked. And yet the unhealthiness, cold, and privations of all kinds still did not work actively enough on that healthy and robust organisation. They tried to convey to Paulet what a service he would render the Queen of England in cutting short the existence of her who, already condemned in her rival's mind, yet delayed to die. But Sir Amyas Paulet, coarse and harsh as he was to Mary Stuart, declared that, so long as she was with him she would have nothing to fear from poison or dagger, because he would taste all the dishes served to his prisoner, and that no one should approach her but in his presence. In fact, some assassins, sent by Leicester, the very same who had aspired for a moment to the hand of the lovely Mary Stuart, were driven from the castle directly its stern keeper had learned with what intentions they had entered it. Elizabeth had to be patient, then, in contenting herself with tormenting her whom she could not kill, and still hoping that a fresh opportunity would occur for bringing her to trial. That opportunity, so long delayed, the fatal star of Mary Stuart at length brought.

A young Catholic gentleman, a last scion of that ancient chivalry which was already dying out at that time, excited by the excommunication of Pius V, which pronounced Elizabeth fallen from her kingdom on earth and her salvation in heaven, resolved to restore liberty to Mary, who thenceforth was beginning to be looked upon, no longer as a political prisoner, but as a martyr for her faith. Accordingly, braving the law which Elizabeth had had made in 1585, and which provided that, if any attempt on her person was meditated by, or for, a person who thought he had claims to the crown of England, a commission would be appointed composed of twenty-five members, which, to the exclusion of every other tribunal, would be empowered to examine into the offence, and to condemn the guilty persons, whosoever they might be. Babington, not at all discouraged by the example of his predecessors, assembled five of his friends, Catholics as zealous as himself, who engaged their life and honour in the plot of which he was the head, and which had as its aim to assassinate Elizabeth, and as a result to place Mary Stuart on the English throne. But this scheme, well planned as it was, was revealed to Walsingham, who allowed the conspirators to go as far as he thought he could without danger, and who, the day before that fixed for the assassination, had them arrested.

This imprudent and desperate attempt delighted Elizabeth, for, according to the

letter of the law, it finally gave her rival's life into her hands. Orders were immediately given to Sir Amyas Paulet to seize the prisoner's papers and to move her to Fotheringay Castle. The gaoler, then, hypocritically relaxing his usual severity, suggested to Mary Stuart that she should go riding, under the pretext that she had need of an airing. The poor prisoner, who for three years had only seen the country through her prison bars, joyfully accepted, and left Tutbury between two guards, mounted, for greater security, on a horse whose feet were hobbled. These two guards took her to Fotheringay Castle, her new habitation, where she found the apartment she was to lodge in already hung in black. Mary Stuart had entered alive into her tomb. As to Babington and his accomplices, they had been already beheaded.

Meanwhile, her two secretaries, Curle and Nau, were arrested, and all her papers were seized and sent to Elizabeth, who, on her part, ordered the forty commissioners to assemble, and proceed without intermission to the trial of the prisoner. They arrived at Fotheringay the 14th October 1586; and next day, being assembled in the great hall of the castle, they began the examination.

At first Mary refused to appear before them, declaring that she did not recognise the commissioners as judges, they not being her peers, and not acknowledging the English law, which had never afforded her protection, and which had constantly abandoned her to the rule of force. But seeing that they proceeded none the less, and that every calumny was allowed, no one being there to refute it, she resolved to appear before the commissioners. We quote the two interrogatories to which Mary Stuart submitted as they are set down in the report of M. de Bellievre to M. de Villeroy. M. de Bellievre, as we shall see later, had been specially sent by King Henry III to Elizabeth. [Intelligence for M. Villeroy of what was done in England by M. de Bellievre about the affairs of the Queen of Scotland, in the months of November and December 1586 and January 1587.]

The said lady being seated at the end of the table in the said hall, and the said commissioners about her—

The Queen of Scotland began to speak in these terms:

“I do not admit that any one of you here assembled is my peer or my judge to examine me upon any charge. Thus what I do, and now tell you, is of my own free will, taking God to witness that I am innocent and pure in conscience of the accusations and slanders of which they wish to accuse me. For I am a free

princess and born a queen, obedient to no one, save to God, to whom alone I must give an account of my actions. This is why I protest yet again that my appearance before you be not prejudicial either to me, or to the kings, princes and potentates, my allies, nor to my son, and I require that my protest be registered, and I demand the record of it.”

Then the chancellor, who was one of the commissioners, replied in his turn, and protested against the protestation; then he ordered that there should be read over to the Queen of Scotland the commission in virtue of which they were proceeding—a commission founded on the statutes and law of the kingdom.

But to this Mary Stuart made answer that she again protested; that the said statutes and laws were without force against her, because these statutes and laws are not made for persons of her condition.

To this the chancellor replied that the commission intended to proceed against her, even if she refused to answer, and declared that the trial should proceed; for she was doubly subject to indictment, the conspirators having not only plotted in her favour, but also with her consent: to which the said Queen of Scotland responded that she had never even thought of it.

Upon this, the letters it was alleged she had written to Babington and his answers were read to her.

Mary Stuart then affirmed that she had never seen Babington, that she had never had any conference with him, had never in her life received a single letter from him, and that she defied anyone in the world to maintain that she had ever done anything to the prejudice of the said Queen of England; that besides, strictly guarded as she was, away from all news, withdrawn from and deprived of those nearest her, surrounded with enemies, deprived finally of all advice, she had been unable to participate in or to consent to the practices of which she was accused; that there are, besides, many persons who wrote to her what she had no knowledge of, and that she had received a number of letters without knowing whence they came to her.

Then Babington’s confession was read to her; but she replied that she did not know what was meant; that besides, if Babington and his accomplices had said such things, they were base men, false and liars.

“Besides,” added she, “show me my handwriting and my signature, since you

say that I wrote to Babington, and not copies counterfeited like these which you have filled at your leisure with the falsehoods it has pleased you to insert.”

Then she was shown the letter that Babington, it was said, had written her. She glanced at it; then said, “I have no knowledge of this letter”. Upon this, she was shown her reply, and she said again, “I have no more knowledge of this answer. If you will show me my own letter and my own signature containing what you say, I will acquiesce in all; but up to the present, as I have already told you, you have produced nothing worthy of credence, unless it be the copies you have invented and added to with what seemed good to you.”

With these words, she rose, and with her eyes full of tears—

“If I have ever,” said she, “consented to such intrigues, having for object my sister’s death, I pray God that He have neither pity nor mercy on me. I confess that I have written to several persons, that I have implored them to deliver me from my wretched prisons, where I languished, a captive and ill-treated princess, for nineteen years and seven months; but it never occurred to me, even in thought, to write or even to desire such things against the queen. Yes, I also confess to having exerted myself for the deliverance of some persecuted Catholics, and if I had been able, and could yet, with my own blood, protect them and save them from their pains, I would have done it, and would do it for them with all my power, in order to save them from destruction.”

Then, turning to the secretary, Walsingham—

“But, my lord,” said she, “from the moment I see you here, I know whence comes this blow: you have always been my greatest enemy and my son’s, and you have moved everyone against me and to my prejudice.”

Thus accused to his face, Walsingham rose.

“Madam,” he replied, “I protest before God, who is my witness, that you deceive yourself, and that I have never done anything against you unworthy of a good man, either as an individual or as a public personage.”

This is all that was said and done that day in the proceedings, till the next day, when the queen was again obliged to appear before the commissioners.

And, being seated at the end of the table of the said hall, and the said

commissioners about her, she began to speak in a loud voice.

“You are not unaware, my lords and gentlemen, that I am a sovereign queen, anointed and consecrated in the church of God, and cannot, and ought not, for any reason whatever, be summoned to your courts, or called to your bar, to be judged by the law and statutes that you lay down; for I am a princess and free, and I do not owe to any prince more than he owes to me; and on everything of which I am accused towards my said sister, I cannot, reply if you do not permit me to be assisted by counsel. And if you go further, do what you will; but from all your procedure, in reiterating my protestations, I appeal to God, who is the only just and true judge, and to the kings and princes, my allies and confederates.”

This protestation was once more registered, as she had required of the commissioners. Then she was told that she had further written several letters to the princes of Christendom, against the queen and the kingdom of England.

“As to that,” replied Mary Stuart, “it is another matter, and I do not deny it; and if it was again to do, I should do as I have done, to gain my liberty; for there is not a man or woman in the world, of less rank than I, who would not do it, and who would not make use of the help and succour of their friends to issue from a captivity as harsh as mine was. You charge me with certain letters from Babington: well, I do not deny that he has written to me and that I have replied to him; but if you find in my answers a single word about the queen my sister, well, yes, there will be good cause to prosecute me. I replied to him who wrote to me that he would set me at liberty, that I accepted his offer, if he could do it without compromising the one or the other of us: that is all.

“As to my secretaries,” added the queen, “not they, but torture spoke by their mouths: and as to the confessions of Babington and his accomplices, there is not much to be made of them; for now that they are dead you can say all that seems good to you; and let who will believe you.”

With these words, the queen refused to answer further if she were not given counsel, and, renewing her protestation, she withdrew into her apartment; but, as the chancellor had threatened, the trial was continued despite her absence.

However, M. de Chateaufort, the French ambassador to London, saw matters too near at hand to be deceived as to their course: accordingly, at the first rumour

which came to him of bringing Mary Stuart to trial, he wrote to King Henry III, that he might intervene in the prisoner's favour. Henry III immediately despatched to Queen Elizabeth an embassy extraordinary, of which M. de Bellievre was the chief; and at the same time, having learned that James VI, Mary's son, far from interesting himself in his mother's fate, had replied to the French minister, Courcelles, who spoke to him of her, "I can do nothing; let her drink what she has spilled," he wrote him the following letter, to decide the young prince to second him in the steps he was going to take:

"21st November, 1586.

"COURCELLES, I have received your letter of the 4th October last, in which I have seen the discourse that the King of Scotland has held with you concerning what you have witnessed to him of the good affection I bear him, discourse in which he has given proof of desiring to reciprocate it entirely; but I wish that that letter had informed me also that he was better disposed towards the queen his mother, and that he had the heart and the desire to arrange everything in a way to assist her in the affliction in which she now is, reflecting that the prison where she has been unjustly detained for eighteen years and more has induced her to lend an ear to many things which have been proposed to her for gaining her liberty, a thing which is naturally greatly desired by all men, and more still by those who are born sovereigns and rulers, who bear being kept prisoners thus with less patience. He should also consider that if the Queen of England, my good sister, allows herself to be persuaded by the counsels of those who wish that she should stain herself with Queen Mary's blood, it will be a matter which will bring him to great dishonour, inasmuch as one will judge that he will have refused his mother the good offices that he should render her with the said Queen of England, and which would have perhaps been sufficient to move her, if he would have employed them, as warmly, and as soon as his natural duty commanded him. Moreover, it is to be feared for him, that, his mother dead, his own turn may come, and that one may think of doing as much for him, by some violent means, to make the English succession easier to seize for those who are likely to have it after the said Queen Elizabeth, and not only to defraud the said King of Scotland of the claim he can put forward, but to render doubtful even that which he has to his own crown. I do not know in what condition the affairs of my said sister-in-law will be when you receive this letter; but I will tell you that in every case I wish you to rouse strongly the said King of Scotland, with remonstrances, and everything else which may bear on this subject, to embrace the defence and protection of his said mother, and to express to him, on my part,

that as this will be a matter for which he will be greatly praised by all the other kings and sovereign princes, he must be assured that if he fails in it there will be great censure for him, and perhaps notable injury to himself in particular. Furthermore, as to the state of my own affairs, you know that the queen, madam and mother, is about to see very soon the King of Navarre, and to confer with him on the matter of the pacification of the troubles of this kingdom, to which, if he bear as much good affection as I do for my part, I hope that things may come to a good conclusion, and that my subjects will have some respite from the great evils and calamities that the war occasions them: supplicating the Creator, Courcelles, that He may have you in His holy keeping.

“Written at St. Germain-en-Laye, the 21st day of November 1586.(Signed)
HENRI,

“And below, BRULART.”

This letter finally decided James VI to make a kind of demonstration in his mother's favour: he sent Gray, Robert Melville, and Keith to Queen Elizabeth. But although London was nearer Edinburgh than was Paris, the French envoys reached it before the Scotch.

It is true that on reaching Calais, the 27th of November, M. de Bellievre had found a special messenger there to tell him not to lose an instant, from M. de Chateauneuf, who, to provide for every difficulty, had chartered a vessel ready in the harbour. But however great the speed these noble lords wished to make, they were obliged to await the wind's goodwill, which did not allow them to put to sea till Friday 28th at midnight; next day also, on reaching Dover at nine o'clock, they were so shaken by sea-sickness that they were forced to stay a whole day in the town to recover, so that it was not till Sunday 30th that M. de Bellievre was able to set out in the coach that M. Chateauneuf sent him by M. de Brancalion, and take the road to London, accompanied by the gentlemen of his suite, who rode on post-horses; but resting only a few hours on the way to make up for lost time, they at last arrived in London, Sunday the 1st of December at midday. M. de Bellievre immediately sent one of the gentlemen of his suite, named M. de Villiers, to the Queen of England, who was holding her court at Richmond Castle: the decree had been secretly pronounced already six days, and submitted to Parliament, which was to deliberate upon it with closed doors.

The French ambassadors could not have chosen a worse moment to approach Elizabeth; and to gain time she declined to receive M. de Villiers, returning the answer that he would himself know next day the reason for this refusal. And indeed, next day, the rumour spread in London that the French Embassy had contagion, and that two of the lords in it having died of the plague at Calais, the queen, whatever wish she might have to be agreeable to Henry III, could not endanger her precious existence by receiving his envoys. Great was the astonishment of M. de Bellievre at learning this news he protested that the queen was led into error by a false report, and insisted on being received. Nevertheless, the delays lasted another six days; but as the ambassadors threatened to depart without waiting longer, and as, upon the whole, Elizabeth, disquieted by Spain, had no desire to embroil herself with France, she had M. de Bellievre informed on the morning of the 7th of December that she was ready to receive him after dinner at Richmond Castle, together with the noblemen of his suite.

At the appointed time the French ambassadors presented themselves at the castle gates, and, having been brought to the queen, found her seated on her throne and surrounded by the greatest lords in her kingdom. Then MM. de Chateauneuf and de Bellievre, the one the ambassador in ordinary and the other the envoy extraordinary, having greeted her on the part of the King of France, began to make her the remonstrances with which they were charged. Elizabeth replied, not only in the same French tongue, but also in the most beautiful speech in use at that time, and, carried away by passion, pointed out to the envoys of her brother Henry that the Queen of Scotland had always proceeded against her, and that this was the third time that she had wished to attempt her life by an infinity of ways; which she had already borne too long and with too much patience, but that never had anything so profoundly cut her to the heart as her last conspiracy; that event, added she with sadness, having caused her to sigh more and to shed more tears than the loss of all her relations, so much the more that the Queen of Scotland was her near relative and closely connected with the King of France; and as, in their remonstrances, MM. de Chateauneuf and de Bellievre had brought forward several examples drawn from history, she assumed, in reply to them on this occasion, the pedantic style which was usual with her, and told them that she had seen and read a great many books in her life, and a thousand more than others of her sex and her rank were wont to, but that she had never found in them a single example of a deed like that attempted on her—a deed pursued by a relative, whom the king her brother could not and ought not to support in her wickedness, when it was, on the contrary, his duty to hasten the just punishment of it: then she added, addressing herself specially to M. de

Bellievre, and coming down again from the height of her pride to a gracious countenance, that she greatly regretted he was not deputed for a better occasion; that in a few days she would reply to King Henry her brother, concerning whose health she was solicitous, as well as that of the queen mother, who must experience such great fatigue from the trouble she took to restore peace to her son's kingdom; and then, not wishing to hear more, she withdrew into her room.

The envoys returned to London, where they awaited the promised reply; but while they were expecting it unavailingly, they heard quietly the sentence of death given against Queen Mary, which decided them to return to Richmond to make fresh remonstrances to Queen Elizabeth. After two or three fruitless journeys, they were at last, December 15th, admitted for the second time to the royal presence.

The queen did not deny that the sentence had been pronounced, and as it was easy to see that she did not intend in this case to use her right of pardon, M. de Bellievre, judging that there was nothing to be done, asked for a safe-conduct to return to his king: Elizabeth promised it to him within two or three days.

On the following Tuesday, the 17th of the same month of December, Parliament as well as the chief lords of the realm were convoked at the Palace of Westminster, and there, in full court and before all, sentence of death was proclaimed and pronounced against Mary Stuart: then this same sentence, with great display and great solemnity, was read in the squares and at the crossroads of London, whence it spread throughout the kingdom; and upon this proclamation the bells rang for twenty-four hours, while the strictest orders were given to each of the inhabitants to light bonfires in front of their houses, as is the custom in France on the Eve of St. John the Baptist.

Then, amid this sound of bells, by the light of these bonfires, M. de Bellievre, wishing to make a last effort, in order to have nothing with which to reproach himself, wrote the following letter to Queen Elizabeth:

“MADAM:—We quitted your Majesty yesterday, expecting, as it had pleased you to inform us, to receive in a few days your reply touching the prayer that we made you on behalf of our good master, your brother, for the Queen of Scotland, his sister in-law and confederate; but as this morning we have been informed that the judgment given against the said queen has been proclaimed in London, although we had promised ourselves another issue from your clemency and the

friendship your bear to the said lord king your good brother, nevertheless, to neglect no part of our duty, and believing in so doing to serve the intentions of the king our master, we have not wanted to fail to write to you this present letter, in which we supplicate you once again, very humbly, not to refuse his Majesty the very pressing and very affectionate prayer that he has made you, that you will be pleased to preserve the life of the said lady Queen of Scotland, which the said lord king will receive as the greatest pleasure your Majesty could do him; while, on the contrary, he could not imagine anything which would cause him more displeasure, and which would wound him more, than if he were used harshly with regard to the said lady queen, being what she is to him: and as, madam, the said king our master, your good brother, when for this object he despatched us to your Majesty, had not conceived that it was possible, in any case, to determine so promptly upon such an execution, we implore you, madam, very humbly, before permitting it to go further, to grant us some time in which we can make known to him the state of the affairs of the said Queen of Scotland, in order that before your Majesty takes a final resolution, you may know what it may please his very Christian Majesty to tell you and point out to you on the greatest affair which, in our memory, has been submitted to men's judgment. Monsieur de Saint-Cyr, who will give these presents to your Majesty, will bring us, if it pleases you, your good reply.

“London, this 16th day of December 1586.

“(Signed) DE BELLIEVRE,

“And DE L'AUBESPINE CHATEAUNEUF.”

The same day, M. de Saint-Cyr and the other French lords returned to Richmond to take this letter; but the queen would not receive them, alleging indisposition, so that they were obliged to leave the letter with Walsingham, her first Secretary of State, who promised them to send the queen's answer the following day.

In spite of this promise, the French lords waited two days more: at last, on the second day, towards evening, two English gentlemen sought out M. de Bellievre in London, and, viva voce, without any letter to confirm what they were charged to say, announced to him, on behalf of their queen, that in reply to the letter that they had written her, and to do justice to the desire they had shown to obtain for

the condemned a reprieve during which they would make known the decision to the King of France, her Majesty would grant twelve days. As this was Elizabeth's last word, and it was useless to lose time in pressing her further, M. de Genlis was immediately despatched to his Majesty the King of France, to whom, besides the long despatch of M. de Chateaufort and de Bellievre which he was charged to remit, he was to say 'viva voce' what he had seen and heard relative to the affairs of Queen Mary during the whole time he had been in England.

Henry III responded immediately with a letter containing fresh instructions for MM. de Chateaufort and de Bellievre; but in spite of all the haste M. de Genlis could make, he did not reach London till the fourteenth day—that is to say, forty-eight hours after the expiration of the delay granted; nevertheless, as the sentence had not yet been put into execution, MM. de Bellievre and de Chateaufort set out at once for Greenwich Castle, some miles from London, where the queen was keeping Christmas, to beg her to grant them an audience, in which they could transmit to her Majesty their king's reply; but they could obtain nothing for four or five days; however, as they were not disheartened, and returned unceasingly to the charge, January 6th, MM. de Bellievre and de Chateaufort were at last sent for by the queen.

As on the first occasion, they were introduced with all the ceremonial in use at that time, and found Elizabeth in an audience-chamber. The ambassadors approached her, greeted her, and M. de Bellievre began to address to her with respect, but at the same time with firmness, his master's remonstrances. Elizabeth listened to them with an impatient air, fidgeting in her seat; then at last, unable to control herself, she burst out, rising and growing red with anger—

“M. de Bellievre,” said she, “are you really charged by the king, my brother, to speak to me in such a way?”

“Yes, madam,” replied M. de Bellievre, bowing; “I am expressly commanded to do so.”

“And have you this command under his hand?” continued Elizabeth.

“Yes, madam,” returned the ambassador with the same calmness; “and the king, my master, your good brother, has expressly charged me, in letters signed by his own hand, to make to your Majesty the remonstrances which I have had the

honour to address to you.”

“Well,” cried Elizabeth, no longer containing herself, “I demand of you a copy of that letter, signed by you; and reflect that you will answer for each word that you take away or add.”

“Madam,” answered M. de Bellievre, “it is not the custom of the kings of France, or of their agents, to forge letters or documents; you will have the copies you require tomorrow morning, and I pledge their accuracy on my honour.”

“Enough, sir, enough!” said the queen, and signing to everyone in the room to go out, she remained nearly an hour with MM. de Chateauneuf and de Bellievre. No one knows what passed in that interview, except that the queen promised to send an ambassador to the King of France, who, she promised, would be in Paris, if not before, at least at the same time as M. de Bellievre, and would be the bearer of her final resolve as to the affairs of the Queen of Scotland; Elizabeth then withdrew, giving the French envoys to understand that any fresh attempt they might make to see her would be useless.

On the 13th of January the ambassadors received their passports, and at the same time notice that a vessel of the queen’s was awaiting them at Dover.

The very day of their departure a strange incident occurred. A gentleman named Stafford, a brother of Elizabeth’s ambassador to the King of France, presented himself at M. de Trappes’s, one of the officials in the French chancellery, telling him that he was acquainted with a prisoner for debt who had a matter of the utmost importance to communicate to him, and that he might pay the greater attention to it, he told him that this matter was connected with the service of the King of France, and concerned the affairs of Queen Mary of Scotland. M. de Trappes, although mistrusting this overture from the first, did not want, in case his suspicions deceived him, to have to reproach himself for any neglect on such a pressing occasion. He repaired, then, with Mr. Stafford to the prison, where he who wished to converse with him was detained. When he was with him, the prisoner told him that he was locked up for a debt of only twenty crowns, and that his desire to be at liberty was so great that if M. de Chateauneuf would pay that sum for him he would undertake to deliver the Queen of Scotland from her danger, by stabbing Elizabeth: to this proposal, M. de Trappes, who saw the pitfall laid for the French ambassador, was greatly astonished, and said that he was certain that M. de Chateauneuf would consider as very evil every enterprise

having as its aim to threaten in any way the life of Queen Elizabeth or the peace of the realm; then, not desiring to hear more, he returned to M. de Chateaufeu and related to him what had just happened. M. de Chateaufeu, who perceived the real cause of this overture, immediately said to Mr. Stafford that he thought it strange that a gentleman like himself should undertake with another gentleman such treachery, and requested him to leave the Embassy at once, and never to set foot there again. Then Stafford withdrew, and, appearing to think himself a lost man, he implored M. de Trappes to allow him to cross the Channel with him and the French envoys. M. de Trappes referred him to M. de Chateaufeu, who answered Mr. Stafford directly that he had not only forbidden him his house, but also all relations with any person from the Embassy, that he must thus very well see that his request could not be granted; he added that if he were not restrained by the consideration he desired to keep for his brother, the Earl of Stafford, his colleague, he would at once denounce his treason to Elizabeth. The same day Stafford was arrested.

After this conference, M. de Trappes set out to rejoin his travelling companions, who were some hours in advance of him, when, on reaching Dover he was arrested in his turn and brought back to prison in London. Interrogated the same day, M. de Trappes frankly related what had passed, appealing to M. de Chateaufeu as to the truth of what he said.

The day following there was a second interrogatory, and great was his amazement when, on requesting that the one of the day before should be shown him, he was merely shown, according to custom in English law, counterfeit copies, in which were avowals compromising him as well as M. de Chateaufeu: he objected and protested, refused to answer or to sign anything further, and was taken back to the Tower with redoubled precaution, the object of which was the appearance of an important accusation.

Next day, M. de Chateaufeu was summoned before the queen, and there confronted with Stafford, who impudently maintained that he had treated of a plot with M. de Trappes and a certain prisoner for debt—a plot which aimed at nothing less than endangering the Queen's life. M. de Chateaufeu defended himself with the warmth of indignation, but Elizabeth had too great an interest in being unconvinced even to attend to the evidence. She then said to M. de Chateaufeu that his character of ambassador alone prevented her having him arrested like his accomplice M. de Trappes; and immediately despatching, as she had promised, an ambassador to King Henry III, she charged him not to excuse

her for the sentence which had just been pronounced and the death which must soon follow, but to accuse M. de Chateaufort of having taken part in a plot of which the discovery alone had been able to decide her to consent to the death of the Queen of Scotland, certain as she was by experience, that so long as her enemy lived her existence would be hourly threatened.

On the same day, Elizabeth made haste to spread, not only in London, but also throughout England, the rumour of the fresh danger from which she had just escaped, so that, when, two days after the departure of the French envoys, the Scottish ambassadors, who, as one sees, had not used much speed, arrived, the queen answered them that their request came unseasonably, at a time when she had just had proof that, so long as Mary Stuart existed, her own (Elizabeth's) life was in danger. Robert Melville wished to reply to this; but Elizabeth flew into a passion, saying that it was he, Melville, who had given the King of Scotland the bad advice to intercede for his mother, and that if she had such an adviser she would have him beheaded. To which Melville answered—

“That at the risk of his life he would never spare his master good advice; and that, on the contrary, he who would counsel a son to let his mother perish, would deserve to be beheaded.”

Upon this reply, Elizabeth ordered the Scotch envoys to withdraw, telling them that she would let them have her answer.

Three or four days passed, and as they heard nothing further, they asked again for a parting audience to hear the last resolve of her to whom they were sent: the queen then decided to grant it, and all passed, as with M. de Bellievre, in recriminations and complaints. Finally, Elizabeth asked them what guarantee they would give for her life in the event of her consenting to pardon the Queen of Scotland. The envoys responded that they were authorised to make pledges in the name of the King of Scotland, their master, and all the lords of his realm, that Mary Stuart should renounce in favour of her son all her claims upon the English crown, and that she should give as security for this undertaking the King of France, and all the princes and lords, his relations and friends.

To this answer, the queen, without her usual presence of mind, cried, “What are you saying, Melville? That would be to arm my enemy with two claims, while he has only one”.

“Does your Majesty then regard the king, my master, as your enemy?” replied Melville. “He believed himself happier, madam, and thought he was your ally.”

“No, no,” Elizabeth said, blushing; “it is a way of speaking: and if you find a means of reconciling everything, gentlemen, to prove to you, on the contrary, that I regard King James VI as my good and faithful ally, I am quite ready to incline to mercy. Seek, then, on your side” added she, “while I seek on mine.”

With these words, she went out of the room, and the ambassadors retired, with the light of the hope of which she had just let them catch a glimpse.

The same evening, a gentleman at the court sought out the Master of Gray, the head of the Embassy, as if to pay him a civil visit, and while conversing said to him, “That it was very difficult to reconcile the safety of Queen Elizabeth with the life of her prisoner; that besides, if the Queen of Scotland were pardoned, and she or her son ever came to the English throne, there would be no security for the lords commissioners who had voted her death; that there was then only one way of arranging everything, that the King of Scotland should himself give up his claims to the kingdom of England; that otherwise, according to him, there was no security for Elizabeth in saving the life of the Scottish queen”. The Master of Gray then, looking at him fixedly, asked him if his sovereign had charged him to come to him with this talk. But the gentleman denied it, saying that all this was on his own account and in the way of opinion.

Elizabeth received the envoys from Scotland once more, and then told them—

“That after having well considered, she had found no way of saving the life of the Queen of Scotland while securing her own, that accordingly she could not grant it to them”. To this declaration, the Master of Gray replied: “That since it was thus, he was, in this case, ordered by his master to say that they protested in the name of King James that all that had been done against his mother was of no account, seeing that Queen Elizabeth had no authority over a queen, as she was her equal in rank and birth; that accordingly they declared that immediately after their return, and when their master should know the result of their mission, he would assemble his Parliament and send messengers to all the Christian princes, to take counsel with them as to what could be done to avenge her whom they could not save.”

Then Elizabeth again flew into a passion, saying that they had certainly not

received from their king a mission to speak to her in such a way; but they thereupon offered to give her this protest in writing under their signatures; to which Elizabeth replied that she would send an ambassador to arrange all that with her good friend and ally, the King of Scotland. But the envoys then said that their master would not listen to anyone before their return. Upon which Elizabeth begged them not to go away at once, because she had not yet come to her final decision upon this matter. On the evening following this audience, Lord Hingley having come to see the Master of Gray, and having seemed to notice some handsome pistols which came from Italy, Gray, directly he had gone, asked this nobleman's cousin to take them to him as a gift from him. Delighted with this pleasant commission, the young man wished to perform it the same evening, and went to the queen's palace, where his relative was staying, to give him the present which he had been told to take to him. But hardly had he passed through a few rooms than he was arrested, searched, and the arms he was taking were found upon him. Although these were not loaded, he was immediately arrested; only he was not taken to the Tower, but kept a prisoner in his own room.

Next day there was a rumour that the Scotch ambassadors had wanted to assassinate the queen in their turn, and that pistols, given by the Master of Gray himself, had been found on the assassin.

This bad faith could not but open the envoys' eyes. Convinced at last that they could do nothing for poor Mary Stuart, they left her to her fate, and set out next day for Scotland.

Scarcely were they gone than Elizabeth sent her secretary, Davison, to Sir Amyas Paulet. He was instructed to sound him again with regard to the prisoner; afraid, in spite of herself, of a public execution, the queen had reverted to her former ideas of poisoning or assassination; but Sir Amyas Paulet declared that he would let no one have access to Mary but the executioner, who must in addition be the bearer of a warrant perfectly in order, Davison reported this answer to Elizabeth, who, while listening to him, stamped her foot several times, and when he had finished, unable to control herself, cried, "God's death! there's a dainty fellow, always talking of his fidelity and not knowing how to prove it!"

Elizabeth was then obliged to make up her mind. She asked Davison for the warrant; he gave it to her, and, forgetting that she was the daughter of a queen who had died on the scaffold, she signed it without any trace of emotion; then, having affixed to it the great seal of England, "Go," said she, laughing, "tell

Walsingham that all is ended for Queen Mary; but tell him with precautions, for, as he is ill, I am afraid he will die of grief when he hears it.”

The jest was the more atrocious in that Walsingham was known to be the Queen of Scotland’s bitterest enemy.

Towards evening of that day, Saturday the 14th, Beale, Walsingham’s brother-in-law, was summoned to the palace! The queen gave into his hands the death warrant, and with it an order addressed to the Earls of Shrewsbury, Kent, Rutland, and other noblemen in the neighbourhood of Fotheringay, to be present at the execution. Beale took with him the London executioner, whom Elizabeth had had dressed in black velvet for this great occasion; and set out two hours after he had received his warrant.

CHAPTER IX

Queen Mary had known the decree of the commissioners these two months. The very day it had been pronounced she had learned the news through her chaplain, whom they had allowed her to see this once only. Mary Stuart had taken advantage of this visit to give him three letters she had just written—one for Pope Sixtus V, the other to Don Bernard Mendoza, the third to the Duke of Guise. Here is that last letter:—

14th December, 1586

“My Good Cousin, whom I hold dearest in the world, I bid you farewell, being prepared to be put to death by an unjust judgment, and to a death such as no one of our race, thanks to God, and never a queen, and still less one of my rank, has ever suffered. But, good cousin, praise the Lord; for I was useless to the cause of God and of His Church in this world, prisoner as I was; while, on the contrary, I hope that my death will bear witness to my constancy in the faith and to my willingness to suffer for the maintenance and the restoration of the Catholic Church in this unfortunate island. And though never has executioner dipped his hand in our blood, have no shame of it, my friend; for the judgment of heretics who have no authority over me, a free queen, is profitable in the sight of God to the children of His Church. If I adhered, moreover, to what they propose to me, I should not suffer this stroke. All of our house have been persecuted by this sect, witness your good father, through whose intercession I hope to be received with mercy by the just judge. I commend to you, then, my poor servants, the discharge of my debts, and the founding of some annual mass for my soul, not at your expense, but that you may make the arrangements, as you will be required when you learn my wishes through my poor and faithful servants, who are about to witness my last tragedy. God prosper you, your wife, children, brothers and cousins, and above all our chief, my good brother and cousin, and all his. The blessing of God and that which I shall give to my children be on yours, whom I do not commend less to God than my own son, unfortunate and ill-treated as he is. You will receive some rings from me, which will remind you to pray God for the soul of your poor cousin, deprived of all help and counsel except that of the Lord, who gives me strength and courage to alone to resist so many wolves howling after me. To God be the glory.

“Believe particularly what will be told you by a person who will give you a ruby ring from me; for I take it on my conscience that the truth will be told you of what I have charged him to tell, and especially in what concerns my poor servants and the share of any. I commend this person to you for his simple sincerity and honesty, that he may be placed in some good place. I have chosen him as the least partial and as the one who will most simply bring you my commands. Ignore, I beg you, that he told you anything in particular; for envy might injure him. I have suffered a great deal for two years and more, and have not been able to let you know, for an important reason. God be praised for all, and give you grace to persevere in the service of His Church as long as you live, and never may this honour pass from our race, while so many men and women are ready to shed their blood to maintain the fight for the faith, all other worldly considerations set aside. And as to me, I esteem myself born on both father’s and mother’s sides, that I should offer up my blood for this cause, and I have no intention of degenerating. Jesus, crucified for us, and all the holy martyrs, make us by their intercession worthy of the voluntary offering we make of our bodies to their glory!

“From Fotheringay, this Thursday, 24th November.

“They have, thinking to degrade me, pulled down my canopy of state, and since then my keeper has come to offer to write to their queen, saying this deed was not done by his order, but by the advice of some of the Council. I have shown them instead of my arms on the said canopy the cross of Our Lord. You will hear all this; they have been more gentle since.—Your affectionate cousin and perfect friend,

“MARY, Queen of Scotland, Dowager of France”

>From this day forward, when she learned the sentence delivered by the commissioners, Mary Stuart no longer preserved any hope; for as she knew Elizabeth’s pardon was required to save her, she looked upon herself thenceforward as lost, and only concerned herself with preparing to die well. Indeed, as it had happened to her sometimes, from the cold and damp in her prisons, to become crippled for some time in all her limbs, she was afraid of being so when they would come to take her, which would prevent her going resolutely to the scaffold, as she was counting on doing. So, on Saturday the 14th February, she sent for her doctor, Bourgoin, and asked him, moved by a presentiment that her death was at hand, she said, what she must do to prevent

the return of the pains which crippled her. He replied that it would be good for her to medicine herself with fresh herbs. "Go, then," said the queen," and ask Sir Amyas Paulet from me permission to seek them in the fields."

Bourgoin went to Sir Amyas, who, as he himself was troubled with sciatica, should have understood better than anyone the need of the remedies for which the queen asked. But this request, simple as it was, raised great difficulties. Sir Amyas replied that he could do nothing without referring to his companion, Drury; but that paper and ink might be brought, and that he, Master Bourgoin, could then make a list of the needful plants, which they would try to procure. Bourgoin answered that he did not know English well enough, and that the village apothecaries did not know enough Latin, for him to risk the queen's life for some error by himself or others. Finally, after a thousand hesitations, Paulet allowed Bourgoin to go out, which he did, accompanied by the apothecary Gorjon; so that the following day the queen was able to begin to doctor herself.

Mary Stuart's presentiments had not deceived her: Tuesday, February 17th, at about two o'clock in the afternoon, the Earls of Kent and Shrewsbury, and Beale sent word to the queen that they desired to speak with her. The queen answered that she was ill and in bed, but that if notwithstanding what they had to tell her was a matter of importance, and they would give her a little time, she would get up. They made answer that the communication they had to make admitted of no delay, that they begged her then to make ready; which the queen immediately did, and rising from her bed and cloaking herself, she went and seated herself at a little table, on the same spot where she was wont to be great part of the day.

Then the two earls, accompanied by Beale, Arnyas Paulet, and Drue Drury, entered. Behind them, drawn by curiosity, full of terrible anxiety, came her dearest ladies and most cherished servants. These were, of womenkind, the Misses Renee de Really, Gilles Mowbray, Jeanne Kennedy, Elspeth Curle, Mary Paget, and Susan Kercady; and of menkind, Dominique Bourgoin her doctor, Pierre Gorjon her apothecary, Jacques Gervais her surgeon, Annibal Stewart her footman, Dither Sifflart her butler, Jean Laudder her baker, and Martin Huet her carver.

Then the Earl of Shrewsbury, with head bared like all those present, who remained thus as long as they were in the queen's room, began to say in English, addressing Mary—

“Madam, the Queen of England, my august mistress, has sent me to you, with the Earl of Kent and Sir Robert Beale, here present, to make known to you that after having honourably proceeded in the inquiry into the deed of which you are accused and found guilty, an inquiry which has already been submitted to your Grace by Lord Buckhurst, and having delayed as long as it was in her power the execution of the sentence, she can no longer withstand the importunity of her subjects, who press her to carry it out, so great and loving is their fear for her. For this purpose we have come the bearers of a commission, and we beg very humbly, madam, that it may please you to hear it read.”

“Read, my lord; I am listening,” replied Mary Stuart, with the greatest calmness. Then Robert Beale unrolled the said commission, which was on parchment, sealed with the Great Seal in yellow wax, and read as follows:

“Elizabeth, by the grace of God, Queen of England, France, and Ireland, etc., to our beloved and faithful cousins, George, Earl of Shrewsbury, Grand Marshal of England; Henry, Earl of Kent; Henry, Earl of Derby; George, Earl of Cumberland; Henry, Earl of Pembroke, greeting: [The Earls of Cumberland, Derby, and Pembroke did not attend to the queen’s orders, and were present neither at the reading of the sentence nor at the execution.]

“Considering the sentence by us given, and others of our Council, nobility, and judges, against the former Queen of Scotland, bearing the name of Mary, daughter and heiress of James v, King of Scotland, commonly called Queen of Scotland and Dowager of France, which sentence all the estates of our realm in our last Parliament assembled not only concluded, but, after mature deliberation, ratified as being just and reasonable; considering also the urgent prayer and request of our subjects, begging us and pressing us to proceed to the publication thereof, and to carry it into execution against her person, according as they judge it duly merited, adding in this place that her detention was and would be daily a certain and evident danger, not only to our life, but also to themselves and their posterity, and to the public weal of this realm, as much on account of the Gospel and the true religion of Christ as of the peace and tranquillity of this State, although the said sentence has been frequently delayed, so that even until this time we abstained from issuing the commission to execute it: yet, for the complete satisfaction of the said demands made by the Estates of our Parliament, through which daily we hear that all our friends and subjects, as well as the nobility, the wisest, greatest, and most pious, nay, even those of inferior condition, with all humility and affection from the care they have of our life, and

consequently from the fear they have of the destruction of the present divine and happy state of the realm if we spare the final execution, consenting and desiring the said execution; though the general and continual demands, prayers, counsels, and advice were in such things contrary to our natural inclination; yet, being convinced of the urgent weight of their continual intercessions tending to the safety of our person, and also to the public and private state of our realm, we have at last consented and suffered that justice have its course, and for its execution, considering the singular confidence we have in your fidelity and loyalty together for the love and affection that you have toward us, particularly to the safeguarding of our person and our country of which you are very noble and chief members; we summon, and, for the discharge of it we enjoin you, that at sight of these presents you go to the castle of Fotheringay, where the former Queen of Scotland is, in the care of our friend and faithful servant and counsellor, Sir Amyas Paulet, and there take into your keeping and do that by your command execution be done on her person, in the presence of yourselves and the said Sir Amyas Paulet, and of all the other officers of justice whom you command to be there: in the meantime we have for this end and this execution given warrant in such a way and manner, and in such a time and place, and by such persons, that you five, four, three, or two, find expedient in your discretion; notwithstanding all laws, statutes, and ordinances whatsoever, contrary to these presents, sealed with our Great Seal of England, which will serve for each of you, and all those who are present, or will make by your order anything pertaining to the execution aforesaid full and sufficient discharge for ever.

“Done and given in our house at Greenwich, the first day of February (10th February New Style), in the twenty-ninth year of our reign.”

Mary listened to this reading with great calmness and great dignity; then, when it was ended, making the sign of the cross—

“Welcome,” said she, “to all news which comes in the name of God! Thanks, Lord, for that You deign to put an end to all the ills You have seen me suffer for nineteen years and more.”

“Madam,” said the Earl of Kent, “have no ill-will towards us on account of your death; it was necessary to the peace of the State and the progress of the new religion.”

“So,” cried Mary with delight, “so I shall have the happiness of dying for the

faith of my fathers; thus God deigns to grant me the glory of martyrdom. Thanks, God," added she, joining her hands with less excitement but with more piety, "thanks that You have deigned to destine for me such an end, of which I was not worthy. That, O my God, is indeed a proof of Your love, and an assurance that You will receive me in the number of Your servants; for although this sentence had been notified to me, I was afraid, from the manner in which they have dealt with me for nineteen years, of not yet being so near as I am to such a happy end, thinking that your queen would not dare to lay a hand on me, who, by the grace of God, am a queen as she is, the daughter of a queen as she is, crowned as she is, her near relative, granddaughter of King Henry VII, and who has had the honour of being Queen of France, of which I am still Dowager; and this fear was so much the greater," added she, laying her hand on a New Testament which was near her on the little table, "that, I swear on this holy book, I have never attempted, consented to, or even desired the death of my sister, the Queen of England."

"Madam," replied the Earl of Kent, taking a step towards her and pointing to the New Testament; "this book on which you have sworn is not genuine, since it is the papist version; consequently, your oath cannot be considered as any more genuine than the book on which it has been taken."

"My lord," answered the queen, "what you say may befit you, but not me, who well know that this book is the true and faithful version of the word of the Lord, a version made by a very wise divine, a very good man, and approved by the Church."

"Madam," the Earl of Kent returned, "your Grace stopped at what you were taught in your youth, without inquiry as to whether it was good or bad: it is not surprising, then, that you have remained in your error, for want of having heard anyone who could make known the truth to you; this is why, as your Grace has but a few hours longer to remain in this world, and consequently has no time to lose, with your permission we shall send for the Dean of Peterborough, the most learned man there is on the subject of religion, who, with his word, will prepare you for your salvation, which you risk to our great grief and that of our august queen, by all the papistical follies, abominations, and childish nonsense which keep Catholics away from the holy word of God and the knowledge of the truth."

"You mistake, my lord," replied the queen gently, "if you have believed that I

have grown up careless in the faith of my fathers, and without seriously occupying myself with a matter so important as religion. I have, on the contrary, spent my life with learned and wise men who taught me what one must learn on this subject, and I have sustained myself by reading their works, since the means of hearing them has been taken from me. Besides, never having doubted in my lifetime, doubt is not likely to seize me in my death-hour. And there is the Earl of Shrewsbury, here present, who will tell you that, since my arrival in England, I have, for an entire Lent, of which I repent, heard your wisest doctors, without their arguments having made any impression on my mind. It will be useless, then, my lord," she added, smiling, "to summon to one so hardened as I the Dean of Peterborough, learned as he is. The only thing I ask you in exchange, my lord, and for which I shall be grateful to you beyond expression, is that you will send me my almoner, whom you keep shut up in this house, to console me and prepare me for death, or, in his stead, another priest, be he who he may; if only a poor priest from a poor village, I being no harder to please than God, and not asking that he have knowledge, provided that he has faith."

"It is with regret, madam," replied the Earl of Kent, "that I find myself obliged to refuse your Grace's request; but it would be contrary to our religion and our conscience, and we should be culpable in doing it; this is why we again offer you the venerable Dean of Peterborough, certain that your Grace will find more consolation and content in him than in any bishop, priest, or vicar of the Catholic faith."

"Thank you, my lord," said the queen again, "but I have nothing to-do with him, and as I have a conscience free of the crime for which I am about to die, with God's help, martyrdom will take the place of confession for me. And now, I will remind you, my lord, of what you told me yourself, that I have but a few hours to live; and these few hours, to profit me, should be passed in prayer and meditation, and not in idle disputes."

With these words, she rose, and, bowing to the earls, Sir Robert Beale, Amyas, and Drury, she indicated, by a gesture full of dignity, that she wished to be alone and in peace; then, as they prepared to go out—

"Apropos, my lords," said she, "for what o'clock should I make ready to die?"

"For eight o'clock tomorrow, madam," answered the Earl of Shrewsbury, stammering.

“It is well,” said Mary; “but have you not some reply to make me, from my sister Elizabeth, relative to a letter which I wrote to her about a month ago?”

“And of what did this letter treat, if it please you, madam?” asked the Earl of Kent.

“Of my burial and my funeral ceremony, my lord: I asked to be interred in France, in the cathedral church of Rheims, near the late queen my mother.”

“That may not be, madam,” replied the Earl of Kent; “but do not trouble yourself as to all these details: the queen, my august mistress, will provide for them as is suitable. Has your grace anything else to ask us?”

“I would also like to know,” said Mary, “if my servants will be allowed to return, each to his own country, with the little that I can give him; which will hardly be enough, in any case, for the long service they have done me, and the long imprisonment they have borne on my account.”

“We have no instructions on that head, madam,” the Earl of Kent said, “but we think that an order will be given for this as for the other things, in accordance with your wishes. Is this all that your Grace has to say to us?”

“Yes, my lord,” replied the queen, bowing a second time, “and now you may withdraw.”

“One moment, my lords, in Heaven’s name, one moment!” cried the old physician, coming forward and throwing himself on his knees before the two earls.

“What do you want?” asked Lord Shrewsbury.

“To point out to you, my lords,” replied the aged Bourgoin, weeping, “that you have granted the queen but a very short time for such an important matter as this of her life. Reflect, my lords, what rank and degree she whom you have condemned has held among the princes of this earth, and consider if it is well and seemly to treat her as an ordinary condemned person of middling estate. And if not for the sake of this noble queen, my lords, do this for the sake of us her poor servants, who, having had the honour of living near her so long, cannot thus part from her so quickly and without preparation. Besides, my lords, think of it, a woman of her state and position ought to have some time in which to set in order

her last affairs. And what will become of her, and of us, if before dying, our mistress has not time to regulate her jointure and her accounts and to put in order her papers and her title-deeds? She has services to reward and offices of piety to perform. She should not neglect the one or the other. Besides, we know that she will only concern herself with us, and, through this, my lords, neglect her own salvation. Grant her, then, a few more days, my lords; and as our mistress is too proud to ask of you such a favour, I ask you in all our names, and implore you not to refuse to poor servants a request which your august queen would certainly not refuse them, if they had the good fortune to be able to lay it at her feet.”

“Is it then true, madam,” Sir Robert Beale asked, “that you have not yet made a will?”

“I have not, sir,” the queen answered.

“In that case, my lords,” said Sir Robert Beale, turning to the two earls, “perhaps it would be a good thing to put it off for a day or two.”

“Impossible, sir,” replied the Earl of Shrewsbury: “the time is fixed, and we cannot change anything, even by a minute, now.”

“Enough, Bourgoin, enough,” said the queen; “rise, I command you.”

Bourgoin obeyed, and the Earl of Shrewsbury, turning to Sir Amyas Paulet, who was behind him—

“Sir Amyas,” said he, “we entrust this lady to your keeping: you will charge yourself with her, and keep her safe till our return.”

With these words he went out, followed by the Earl of Kent, Sir Robert Beale, Amyas Paulet, and Drury, and the queen remained alone with her servants.

Then, turning to her women with as serene a countenance as if the event which had just taken place was of little importance

“Well, Jeanne,” said she, speaking to Kennedy, “have I not always told you, and was I not right, that at the bottom of their hearts they wanted to do this? and did I not see clearly through all their procedure the end they had in view, and know well enough that I was too great an obstacle to their false religion to be allowed to live? Come,” continued she, “hasten supper now, that I may put my affairs in

order". Then, seeing that instead of obeying her, her servants were weeping and lamenting, "My children," said she, with a sad smile, but without a tear in her eye, "it is no time for weeping, quite the contrary; for if you love me, you ought to rejoice that the Lord, in making me die for His cause, relieves me from the torments I have endured for nineteen years. As for me, I thank Him for allowing me to die for the glory of His faith and His Church. Let each have patience, then, and while the men prepare supper, we women will pray to God."

The men immediately went out, weeping and sobbing, and the queen and her women fell on their knees. When they had recited some prayers, Mary rose, and sending for all the money she had left, she counted it and divided it into portions, which she put into purses with the name of the destined recipient, in her handwriting, with the money.

At that moment, supper being served, she seated herself at table with her women as usual, the other servants standing or coming and going, her doctor waiting on her at table as he was accustomed since her steward had been taken from her. She ate no more nor less than usual, speaking, throughout supper, of the Earl of Kent, and of the way in which he betrayed himself with respect to religion, by his insisting on wanting to give the queen a pastor instead of a priest. "Happily," she added, laughing, "one more skilful than he was needed to change me". Meanwhile Bourgoin was weeping behind the queen, for he was thinking that he was serving her for the last time, and that she who was eating, talking, and laughing thus, next day at the same hour would be but a cold and insensible corpse.

When the meal was over, the queen sent for all her servants; then; before the table was cleared of anything, she poured out a cup of wine, rose and drank to their health, asking them if they would not drink to her salvation. Then she had a glass given to each one: all kneeled down, and all, says the account from which we borrow these details, drank, mingling their tears with the wine, and asking pardon of the queen for any wrongs they had done her. The queen granted it heartily, and asked them to do as much for her, and to forget her impatient ways, which she begged them to put down to her imprisonment. Then, having given them a long discourse, in which she explained to them their duties to God, and exhorted them to persevere in the Catholic faith, she begged them, after her death, to live together in peace and charity, forgetting all the petty quarrels and disputes which they had had among one another in the past.

This speech ended, the queen rose from table, and desired to go into her wardrobe-room, to see the clothes and jewels she wished to dispose of; but Bourgoin observed that it would be better to have all these separate objects brought into her chamber; that there would be a double advantage in this, she would be less tired for one thing, and the English would not see them for another. This last reason decided her, and while the servants were supping, she had brought into her anteroom, first of all, all her robes, and took the inventory from her wardrobe attendant, and began to write in the margin beside each item the name of the person it was to be given to. Directly, and as fast as she did it, that person to whom it was given took it and put it aside. As for the things which were too personal to her to be thus bestowed, she ordered that they should be sold, and that the purchase-money should be used for her servants' travelling expenses, when they returned to their own countries, well knowing how great the cost would be and that no one would have sufficient means. This memorandum finished, she signed it, and gave it as a discharge to her wardrobe attendant.

Then, that done, she went into her room, where had been brought her rings, her jewels, and her most valuable belongings; inspected them all, one after the other, down to the very least; and distributed them as she had done her robes, so that, present or absent, everyone had something. Then she furthermore gave, to her most faithful people, the jewels she intended for the king and queen of France, for the king her son, for the queen-mother, for Messieurs de Guise and de Lorraine, without forgetting in this distribution any prince or princess among her relatives. She desired, besides, that each should keep the things then in his care, giving her linen to the young lady who looked after it, her silk embroideries to her who took charge of them, her silver plate to her butler, and so on with the rest.

Then, as they were asking her for a discharge, "It is useless," said she; "you owe an account to me only, and tomorrow, therefore, you will no longer owe it to anyone"; but, as they pointed out that the king her son could claim from them, "You are right," said she; and she gave them what they asked.

That done, and having no hope left of being visited by her confessor, she wrote him this letter:

"I have been tormented all this day on account of my religion, and urged to receive the consolations of a heretic: you will learn, through Bourgoin and the others, that everything they could say on this matter has been useless, that I have

faithfully made protestation of the faith in which I wish to die. I requested that you should be allowed to receive my confession and to give me the sacrament, which has been cruelly refused, as well as the removal of my body, and the power to make my will freely; so that I cannot write anything except through their hands, and with the good pleasure of their mistress. For want of seeing you, then, I confess to you my sins in general, as I should have done in particular, begging you, in God's name, to watch and pray this night with me, for the remission of my sins, and to send me your absolution and forgiveness for all the wrongs I have done you. I shall try to see you in their presence, as they permitted it to my steward; and if it is allowed, before all, and on my knees, I shall ask your blessing. Send me the best prayers you know for this night and for tomorrow morning; for the time is short, and I have not the leisure to write; but be calm, I shall recommend you like the rest of my servants, and your benefices above all will be secured to you. Farewell, for I have not much more time. Send to me in writing everything you can find, best for my salvation, in prayers and exhortations, I send you my last little ring."

Directly she had written this letter the queen began to make her will, and at a stroke, with her pen running on and almost without lifting it from the paper, she wrote two large sheets, containing several paragraphs, in which no one was forgotten, present as absent, distributing the little she had with scrupulous fairness, and still more according to need than according to service. The executors she chose were: the Duke of Guise, her first cousin; the Archbishop of Glasgow, her ambassador; the Bishop of Ross, her chaplain in chief; and M. du Ruysseau, her chancellor, all four certainly very worthy of the charge, the first from his authority; the two bishops by piety and conscience, and the last by his knowledge of affairs. Her will finished, she wrote this letter to the King of France:

SIR MY BROTHER-IN-LAW,—Having, by God's permission and for my sins, I believe, thrown myself into the arms of this queen, my cousin, where I have had much to endure for more than twenty years, I am by her and by her Parliament finally condemned to death; and having asked for my papers, taken from me, to make my will, I have not been able to obtain anything to serve me, not even permission to write my last wishes freely, nor leave that after my death my body should be transported, as was my dearest desire, into your kingdom, where I had had the honour of being queen, your sister and your ally. To-day, after dinner, without more respect, my sentence has been declared to me, to be executed tomorrow, like a criminal, at eight o'clock in the morning. I have not the leisure

to give you a full account of what has occurred; but if it please you to believe my doctor and these others my distressed servants, you will hear the truth, and that, thanks to God, I despise death, which I protest I receive innocent of every crime, even if I were their subject, which I never was. But my faith in the Catholic religion and my claims to the crown of England are the real causes for my condemnation, and yet they will not allow me to say that it is for religion I die, for my religion kills theirs; and that is so true, that they have taken my chaplain from me, who, although a prisoner in the same castle, may not come either to console me, or to give me the holy sacrament of the eucharist; but, on the contrary, they have made me urgent entreaties to receive the consolations of their minister whom they have brought for this purpose. He who will bring you this letter, and the rest of my servants, who are your subjects for the most part, will bear you witness of the way in which I shall have performed my last act. Now it remains to me to implore you, as a most Christian king, as my brother-in-law, as my ancient ally, and one who has so often done me the honour to protest your friendship for me, to give proof of this friendship, in your virtue and your charity, by helping me in that of which I cannot without you discharge my conscience— that is to say, in rewarding my good distressed servants, by giving them their dues; then, in having prayers made to God for a queen who has been called most Christian, and who dies a Catholic and deprived of all her goods. As to my son, I commend him to you as much as he shall deserve, for I cannot answer for him; but as to my servants, I commend them with clasped hands. I have taken the liberty of sending you two rare stones good for the health, hoping that yours may be perfect during a long life; you will receive them as coming from your very affectionate sister-in-law, at the point of death and giving proof of her, good disposition towards you.

“I shall commend my servants to you in a memorandum, and will order you, for the good of my soul, for whose salvation it will be employed, to pay me a portion of what you owe me, if it please you, and I conjure you for the honour of Jesus, to whom I shall pray tomorrow at my death, that you leave me the wherewithal to found a mass and to perform the necessary charities.

“This Wednesday, two hours after midnight— Your affectionate and good sister,

“MARY, R....”

Of all these recommendations, the will and the letters, the queen at once had copies made which she signed, so that, if some should be seized by the English, the others might reach their destination. Bourgoïn pointed out to her that she was wrong to be in such a hurry to close them, and that perhaps in two or three hours she would remember that she had left something out. But the queen paid no attention, saying she was sure she had not forgotten anything, and that if she had, she had only time now to pray and to look to her conscience. So she shut up all the several articles in the drawers of a piece of furniture and gave the key to Bourgoïn; then sending for a foot-bath, in which she stayed for about ten minutes, she lay down in bed, where she was not seen to sleep, but constantly to repeat prayers or to remain in meditation.

Towards four o'clock in the morning, the queen, who was accustomed, after evening prayers, to have the story of some male or female saint read aloud to her, did not wish to depart from this habit, and, after having hesitated among several for this solemn occasion, she chose the greatest sinner of all, the penitent thief, saying humbly—

“If, great sinner as he was, he has yet sinned less than I, I desire to beg of him, in remembrance of the passion of Jesus Christ; to, have pity on me in the hour of my death, as Our Lord had pity on him.”

Then, when the reading was over, she had all her handkerchiefs brought, and chose the finest, which was of delicate cambric all embroidered in gold, to bandage her eyes with.

At daybreak, reflecting that she had only two hours to live, she rose and began dressing, but before she had finished, Bourgoïn came into her room, and, afraid lest the absent servants might murmur against the queen, if by chance they were discontented at the will, and might accuse those who had been present of having taken away from their share to add to their own, he begged Mary to send for them all and to read it in their presence; to which Mary agreed, and consented to do so at once.

All the servants were then summoned, and the queen read her testament, saying that it was done of her own free, full and entire will, written and signed with her own hand, and that accordingly she begged those present to give all the help in their power in seeing it carried out without change or omission; then, having read it over, and having received a promise from all, she gave it to Bourgoïn,

charging him to send it to M. de Guise, her chief executor, and at the same time to forward her letters to the king and her principal papers and memorandums: after this, she had the casket brought in which she had put the purses which we mentioned before; she opened them one after another, and seeing by the ticket within for whom each was intended, she distributed them with her own hand, none of the recipients being aware of their contents. These gifts varied from twenty to three hundred crowns; and to these sums she added seven hundred livres for the poor, namely, two hundred for the poor of England and five hundred for the poor of France; then she gave to each man in her suite two rose nobles to be distributed in alms for her sake, and finally one hundred and fifty crowns to Bourgoin to be divided among them all when they should separate; and thus twenty-six or twenty-seven people had money legacies.

The queen performed all this with great composure and calmness, with no apparent change of countenance; so that it seemed as if she were only preparing for a journey or change of dwelling; then she again bade her servants farewell, consoling them and exhorting them to live in peace, all this while finishing dressing as well and as elegantly as she could.

Her toilet ended, the queen went from her reception-room to her anteroom, where there was an altar set up and arranged, at which, before he had been taken from her, her chaplain used to say mass; and kneeling on the steps, surrounded by all her servants, she began the communion prayers, and when they were ended, drawing from a golden box a host consecrated by Pius V, which she had always scrupulously preserved for the occasion of her death, she told Bourgoin to take it, and, as he was the senior, to take the priest's place, old age being holy and sacred; and in this manner in spite of all the precautions taken to deprive her of it, the queen received the holy sacrament of the eucharist.

This pious ceremony ended, Bourgoin told the queen that in her will she had forgotten three people—Mesdemoiselles Beauregard, de Montbrun, and her chaplain. The queen was greatly astonished at this oversight, which was quite involuntary, and, taking back her will, she wrote her wishes with respect to them in the first empty margin; then she kneeled down again in prayer; but after a moment, as she suffered too much in this position, she rose, and Bourgoin having had brought her a little bread and wine, she ate and drank, and when she had finished, gave him her hand and thanked him for having been present to help her at her last meal as he was accustomed; and feeling stronger, she kneeled down and began to pray again.

Scarcely had she done so, than there was a knocking at the door: the queen understood what was required of her; but as she had not finished praying, she begged those who were come to fetch her to wait a moment, and in a few minutes' she would be ready.

The Earls of Kent and Shrewsbury, remembering the resistance she had made when she had had to go down to the commissioners and appear before the lawyers, mounted some guards in the anteroom where they were waiting themselves, so that they could take her away by force if necessary, should she refuse to come willingly, or should her servants want to defend her; but it is untrue that the two barons entered her room, as some have said. They only set foot there once, on the occasion which we have related, when they came to apprise her of her sentence.

They waited some minutes, nevertheless, as the queen had begged them; then, about eight o'clock, they knocked again, accompanied by the guards; but to their great surprise the door was opened immediately, and they found Mary on her knees in prayer. Upon this, Sir Thomas Andrew, who was at the time sheriff of the county of Nottingham, entered alone, a white wand in his hand, and as everyone stayed on their knees praying, he crossed the room with a slow step and stood behind the queen: he waited a moment there, and as Mary Stuart did not seem to see him—

“Madam,” said he, “the earls have sent me to you.”

At these words the queen turned round, and at once rising in the middle of her prayer, “Let us go,” she replied, and she made ready to follow him; then Bourgoin, taking the cross of black wood with an ivory Christ which was over the altar, said—

“Madam, would you not like to take this little cross?”

“Thank you for having reminded me,” Mary answered; “I had intended to, but I forgot”. Then, giving it to Annibal Stewart, her footman, that he might present it when she should ask for it, she began to move to the door, and on account of the great pain in her limbs, leaning on Bourgoin, who, as they drew near, suddenly let her go, saying—

“Madam, your Majesty knows if we love you, and all, such as we are, are ready to obey you, should you command us to die for you; but I, I have not the strength

to lead you farther; besides, it is not becoming that we, who should be defending you to the last drop of our blood, should seem to be betraying you in giving you thus into the hands of these infamous English.”

“You are right, Bourgoin,” said the queen; “moreover, my death would be a sad sight for you, which I ought to spare your age and your friendship. Mr. Sheriff,” added she, “call someone to support me, for you see that I cannot walk.”

The sheriff bowed, and signed to two guards whom he had kept hidden behind the door to lend him assistance in case the queen should resist, to approach and support her; which they at once did; and Mary Stuart went on her way, preceded and followed by her servants weeping and wringing their hands. But at the second door other guards stopped them, telling them they must go no farther. They all cried out against such a prohibition: they said that for the nineteen years they had been shut up with the queen they had always accompanied her wherever she went; that it was frightful to deprive their mistress of their services at the last moment, and that such an order had doubtless been given because they wanted to practise some shocking cruelty on her, of which they desired no witnesses. Bourgoin, who was at their head, seeing that he could obtain nothing by threats or entreaties, asked to speak with the earls; but this claim was not allowed either, and as the servants wanted to pass by force, the soldiers repulsed them with blows of their arquebuses; then, raising her voice—

“It is wrong of you to prevent my servants following me,” said the queen, “and I begin to think, like them, that you have some ill designs upon me beyond my death.”

The sheriff replied, “Madam, four of your servants are chosen to follow you, and no more; when you have come down, they will be fetched, and will rejoin you.”

“What!” said the queen, “the four chosen persons cannot even follow me now?”

“The order is thus given by the earls,” answered the sheriff, “and, to my great regret, madam, I can do nothing.”

Then the queen turned to them, and taking the cross from Annibal Stewart, and in her other hand her book of Hours and her handkerchief, “My children,” said she, “this is one more grief to add to our other griefs; let us bear it like Christians, and offer this fresh sacrifice to God.”

At these words sobs and cries burst forth on all sides: the unhappy servants fell on their knees, and while some rolled on the ground, tearing their hair, others kissed her hands, her knees, and the hem of her gown, begging her forgiveness for every possible fault, calling her their mother and bidding her farewell. Finding, no doubt, that this scene was lasting too long, the sheriff made a sign, and the soldiers pushed the men and women back into the room and shut the door on them; still, fast as was the door, the queen none the less heard their cries and lamentations, which seemed, in spite of the guards, as if they would accompany her to the scaffold.

At the stair-head, the queen found Andrew Melville awaiting her: he was the Master of her Household, who had been secluded from her for some time, and who was at last permitted to see her once more to say farewell. The queen, hastening her steps, approached him, and kneeling down to receive his blessing, which he gave her, weeping—

“Melville,” said she, without rising, and addressing him as “thou” for the first time, “as thou hast been an honest servant to me, be the same to my son: seek him out directly after my death, and tell him of it in every detail; tell him that I wish him well, and that I beseech God to send him His Holy Spirit.”

“Madam,” replied Melville, “this is certainly the saddest message with which a man can be charged: no matter, I shall faithfully fulfil it, I swear to you.”

“What sayest thou, Melville?” responded the queen, rising; “and what better news canst thou bear, on the contrary, than that I am delivered from all my ills? Tell him that he should rejoice, since the sufferings of Mary Stuart are at an end; tell him that I die a Catholic, constant in my religion, faithful to Scotland and France, and that I forgive those who put me to death. Tell him that I have always desired the union of England and Scotland; tell him, finally, that I have done nothing injurious to his kingdom, to his honour, or to his rights. And thus, good Melville, till we meet again in heaven.”

Then, leaning on the old man, whose face was bathed in tears, she descended the staircase, at the foot of which she found the two earls, Sir Henry Talbot, Lord Shrewsbury’s son, Amyas Paulet, Drue Drury, Robert Beale, and many gentlemen of the neighbourhood: the queen, advancing towards them without pride, but without humility, complained that her servants had been refused permission to follow her, and asked that it should be granted. The lords

conferred together; and a moment after the Earl of Kent inquired which ones she desired to have, saying she might be allowed six. So the queen chose from among the men Bourgoin, Gordon, Gervais, and Didier; and from the women Jeanne Kennedy and Elspeth Curle, the ones she preferred to all, though the latter was sister to the secretary who had betrayed her. But here arose a fresh difficulty, the earls saying that this permission did not extend to women, women not being used to be present at such sights, and when they were, usually upsetting everyone with cries and lamentations, and, as soon as the decapitation was over, rushing to the scaffold to staunch the blood with their handkerchiefs—a most unseemly proceeding.

“My lords,” then said the queen, “I answer and promise for my servants, that they will not do any of the things your honours fear. Alas! poor people! they would be very glad to bid me farewell; and I hope that your mistress, being a maiden queen, and accordingly sensitive for the honour of women, has not given you such strict orders that you are unable to grant me the little I ask; so much the more,” added she in a profoundly mournful tone, “that my rank should be taken into consideration; for indeed I am your queen’s cousin, granddaughter of Henry VII, Queen Dowager of France and crowned Queen of Scotland.”

The lords consulted together for another moment, and granted her demands. Accordingly, two guards went up immediately to fetch the chosen individuals.

The queen then moved on to the great hall, leaning on two of Sir Amyas Paulet’s gentlemen, accompanied and followed by the earls and lords, the sheriff walking before her, and Andrew Melville bearing her train. Her dress, as carefully chosen as possible, as we have said, consisted of a coif of fine cambric, trimmed with lace, with a lace veil thrown back and falling to the ground behind. She wore a cloak of black stamped satin lined with black taffetas and trimmed in front with sable, with a long train and sleeves hanging to the ground; the buttons were of jet in the shape of acorns and surrounded with pearls, her collar in the Italian style; her doublet was of figured black satin, and underneath she wore stays, laced behind, in crimson satin, edged with velvet of the same colour; a gold cross hung by a pomander chain at her neck, and two rosaries at her girdle: it was thus she entered the great hall where the scaffold was erected.

It was a platform twelve feet wide, raised about two feet from the floor, surrounded with barriers and covered with black serge, and on it were a little chair, a cushion to kneel on, and a block also covered in black. Just as, having

mounted the steps, she set foot on the fatal boards, the executioner came forward, and; asking forgiveness for the duty he was about to perform, kneeled, hiding behind him his axe. Mary saw it, however, and cried—

“Ah! I would rather have been beheaded in the French way, with a sword!...”

“It is not my fault, madam,” said the executioner, “if this last wish of your Majesty cannot be fulfilled; but, not having been instructed to bring a sword, and having found this axe here only, I am obliged to use it. Will that prevent your pardoning me, then?”

“I pardon you, my friend,” said Mary, “and in proof of it, here is my hand to kiss.”

The executioner put his lips to the queen’s hand, rose and approached the chair. Mary sat down, and the Earls of Kent and Shrewsbury standing on her left, the sheriff and his officers before her, Amyas Paulet behind, and outside the barrier the lords, knights, and gentlemen, numbering nearly two hundred and fifty, Robert Beale for the second time read the warrant for execution, and as he was beginning the servants who had been fetched came into the hall and placed themselves behind the scaffold, the men mounted upon a bench put back against the wall, and the women kneeling in front of it; and a little spaniel, of which the queen was very fond, came quietly, as if he feared to be driven away, and lay down near his mistress.

The queen listened to the reading of the warrant without seeming to pay much attention, as if it had concerned someone else, and with a countenance as calm and even as joyous as if it had been a pardon and not a sentence of death; then, when Beale had ended, and having ended, cried in a loud voice, “God save Queen Elizabeth!” to which no one made any response, Mary signed herself with the cross, and, rising without any change of expression, and, on the contrary, lovelier than ever—

“My lords,” said she, “I am a queen-born sovereign princess, and not subject to law,—a near relation of the Queen of England, and her rightful heir; for a long time I have been a prisoner in this country, I have suffered here much tribulation and many evils that no one had the right to inflict, and now, to crown all, I am about to lose my life. Well, my lords, bear witness that I die in the Catholic faith, thanking God for letting me die for His holy cause, and protesting, to-day as

every day, in public as in private, that I have never plotted, consented to, nor desired the queen's death, nor any other thing against her person; but that, on the contrary, I have always loved her, and have always offered her good and reasonable conditions to put an end to the troubles of the kingdom and deliver me from my captivity, without my having ever been honoured with a reply from her; and all this, my lords, you well know. Finally, my enemies have attained their end, which was to put me to death: I do not pardon them less for it than I pardon all those who have attempted anything against me. After my death, the authors of it will be known. But I die without accusing anyone, for fear the Lord should hear me and avenge me."

Upon this, whether he was afraid that such a speech by so great a queen should soften the assembly too much, or whether he found that all these words were making too much delay, the Dean of Peterborough placed himself before Mary, and, leaning on the barrier—

"Madam," he said, "my much honoured mistress has commanded me to come to you—" But at these words, Mary, turning and interrupting him

"Mr. Dean," she answered in a loud voice, "I have nothing to do with you; I do not wish to hear you, and beg you to withdraw."

"Madam," said the dean, persisting in spite of this resolve expressed in such firm and precise terms, "you have but a moment longer: change your opinions, abjure your errors, and put your faith in Jesus Christ alone, that you may be saved through Him."

"Everything you can say is useless," replied the queen, "and you will gain nothing by it; be silent, then, I beg you, and let me die in peace."

And as she saw that he wanted to go on, she sat down on the other side of the chair and turned her back to him; but the dean immediately walked round the scaffold till he faced her again; then, as he was going to speak, the queen turned about once more, and sat as at first. Seeing which the Earl of Shrewsbury said—

"Madam, truly I despair that you are so attached to this folly of papacy: allow us, if it please you, to pray for you."

"My lord," the queen answered, "if you desire to pray for me, I thank you, for the intention is good; but I cannot join in your prayers, for we are not of the

same religion.”

The earls then called the dean, and while the queen, seated in her little chair, was praying in a low tone, he, kneeling on the scaffold steps, prayed aloud; and the whole assembly except the queen and her servants prayed after him; then, in the midst of her orison, which she said with her Agnus Dei round her neck, a crucifix in one hand, and her book of Hours in the other, she fell from her seat on to, her knees, praying aloud in Latin, whilst the others prayed in English, and when the others were silent, she continued in English in her turn, so that they could hear her, praying for the afflicted Church of Christ, for an end to the persecution of Catholics, and for the happiness of her son’s reign; then she said, in accents full of faith and fervour, that she hoped to be saved by the merits of Jesus Christ, at the foot of whose cross she was going to shed her blood.

At these words the Earl of Kent could no longer contain himself, and without respect for the sanctity of the moment—

“Oh, madam,” said he, “put Jesus Christ in your heart, and reject all this rubbish of popish deceptions.”

But she, without listening, went on, praying the saints to intercede with God for her, and kissing the crucifix, she cried—

“Lord! Lord! receive me in Thy arms out stretched on the cross, and forgive me all my sins!”

Thereupon,—she being again seated in the chair, the Earl of Kent asked her if she had any confession to make; to which she replied that, not being guilty of anything, to confess would be to give herself, the lie.

“It is well,” the earl answered; “then, madam, prepare.”

The queen rose, and as the executioner approached to assist her disrobe—

“Allow me, my friend,” said she; I know how to do it better than you, and am not accustomed to undress before so many spectators, nor to be served by such valets.”

And then, calling her two women, she began to unpin her coiffure, and as Jeanne Kennedy and Elspeth Curle, while performing this last service for their mistress,

could not help weeping bitterly—

“Do not weep,” she said to them in French; “for I have promised and answered for you.”

With these words, she made the sign of the cross upon the forehead of each, kissed them, and recommended them to pray for her.

Then the queen began to undress, herself assisting, as she was wont to do when preparing for bed, and taking the gold cross from her neck, she wished to give it to Jeanne, saying to the executioner—

“My friend, I know that all I have upon me belongs to you; but this is not in your way: let me bestow it, if you please, on this young lady, and she will give you twice its value in money.”

But the executioner, hardly allowing her to finish, snatched it from her hands with—

“It is my right.”

The queen was not moved much by this brutality, and went on taking off her garments until she was simply in her petticoat.

Thus rid of all her garb, she again sat down, and Jeanne Kennedy approaching her, took from her pocket the handkerchief of gold-embroidered cambric which she had prepared the night before, and bound her eyes with it; which the earls, lords; and gentlemen looked upon with great surprise, it not being customary in England, and as she thought that she was to be beheaded in the French way—that is to say, seated in the chair—she held herself upright, motionless, and with her neck stiffened to make it easier for the executioner, who, for his part, not knowing how to proceed, was standing, without striking, axe in hand: at last the man laid his hand on the queen’s head, and drawing her forward, made her fall on her knees: Mary then understood what was required of her, and feeling for the block with her hands, which were still holding her book of Hours and her crucifix, she laid her neck on it, her hands joined beneath her chin, that she might pray till the last moment: the executioner’s assistant drew them away, for fear they should be cut off with her head; and as the queen was saying, “In manes teas, Domine,” the executioner raised his axe, which was simply an axe far chopping wood, and struck the first blow, which hit too high, and piercing the

skull, made the crucifix and the book fly from the condemned's hands by its violence, but which did not sever the head. However, stunned with the blow, the queen made no movement, which gave the executioner time to redouble it; but still the head did not fall, and a third stroke was necessary to detach a shred of flesh which held it to the shoulders.

At last, when the head was quite severed, the executioner held it up to show to the assembly, saying

“God save Queen Elizabeth!”

“So perish all Her Majesty's enemies!” responded the Dean of Peterborough.

“Amen,” said the Earl of Kent; but he was the only one: no other voice could respond, for all were choked with sobs.

At that moment the queen's headdress falling, disclosed her hair, cut very short, and as white as if she had been aged seventy: as to her face, it had so changed during her death-agony that no one would have recognised it had he not known it was hers. The spectators cried out aloud at this sign; for, frightful to see, the eyes were open, and the lids went on moving as if they would still pray, and this muscular movement lasted for more than a quarter of an hour after the head had been cut off.

The queen's servants had rushed upon the scaffold, picking up the book of Hours and the crucifix as relics; and Jeanne Kennedy, remembering the little dog who had come to his mistress, looked about for him on all sides, seeking him and calling him, but she sought and called in vain. He had disappeared.

At that moment, as one of the executioners was untying the queen's garters, which were of blue satin embroidered in silver, he saw the poor little animal, which had hidden in her petticoat, and which he was obliged to bring out by force; then, having escaped from his hands, it took refuge between the queen's shoulders and her head, which the executioner had laid down near the trunk. Jeanne took him then, in spite of his howls, and carried him away, covered with blood; for everyone had just been ordered to leave the hall. Bourgoin and Gervais stayed behind, entreating Sir Amyas Paulet to let them take the queen's heart, that they might carry it to France, as they had promised her; but they were harshly refused and pushed out of the hall, of which all the doors were closed, and there there remained only the executioner and the corpse.

Brantome relates that something infamous took place there!

CHAPTER X

Two hours after the execution, the body and the head were taken into the same hall in which Mary Stuart had appeared before the commissioners, set down on a table round which the judges had sat, and covered over with a black serge cloth; and there remained till three o'clock in the afternoon, when Waters the doctor from Stamford and the surgeon from Fotheringay village came to open and embalm them—an operation which they carried out under the eyes of Amyas Paulet and his soldiers, without any respect for the rank and sex of the poor corpse, which was thus exposed to the view of anyone who wanted to see it: it is true that this indignity did not fulfil its proposed aim; for a rumour spread about that the queen had swollen limbs and was dropsical, while, on the contrary, there was not one of the spectators but was obliged to confess that he had never seen the body of a young girl in the bloom of health purer and lovelier than that of Mary Stuart, dead of a violent death after nineteen years of suffering and captivity.

When the body was opened, the spleen was in its normal state, with the veins a little livid only, the lungs yellowish in places, and the brain one-sixth larger than is usual in persons of the same age and sex; thus everything promised a long life to her whose end had just been so cruelly hastened.

A report having been made of the above, the body was embalmed after a fashion, put in a leaden coffin and that in another of wood, which was left on the table till the first day of August—that is, for nearly five months—before anyone was allowed to come near it; and not only that, but the English having noticed that Mary Stuart's unhappy servants, who were still detained as prisoners, went to look at it through the keyhole, stopped that up in such a way that they could not even gaze at the coffin enclosing the body of her whom they had so greatly loved.

However, one hour after Mary Stuart's death, Henry Talbot, who had been present at it, set out at full speed for London, carrying to Elizabeth the account of her rival's death; but at the very first lines she read, Elizabeth, true to her character, cried out in grief and indignation, saying that her orders had been misunderstood, that there had been too great haste, and that all this was the fault of Davison the Secretary of State, to whom she had given the warrant to keep till

she had made up her mind, but not to send to Fotheringay. Accordingly, Davison was sent to the Tower and condemned to pay a fine of ten thousand pounds sterling, for having deceived the queen. Meanwhile, amid all this grief, an embargo was laid on all vessels in all the ports of the realm, so that the news of the death should not reach abroad, especially France, except through skilful emissaries who could place the execution in the least unfavourable light for Elizabeth. At the same time the scandalous popular festivities which had marked the announcement of the sentence again celebrated the tidings of the execution. London was illuminated, bonfires lit, and the enthusiasm was such that the French Embassy was broken into and wood taken to revive the fires when they began to die down.

Crestfallen at this event, M. de Chateaufort was still shut up at the Embassy, when, a fortnight later, he received an invitation from Elizabeth to visit her at the country house of the Archbishop of Canterbury. M. de Chateaufort went thither with the firm resolve to say no word to her on what had happened; but as soon as she saw him, Elizabeth, dressed in black, rose, went to him, and, overwhelming him with kind attentions, told him that she was ready to place all the strength of her kingdom at Henry III's disposal to help him put down the League. Chateaufort received all these offers with a cold and severe expression, without saying, as he had promised himself, a single word about the event which had put both the queen and himself into mourning. But, taking him by the hand, she drew him aside, and there, with deep sighs, said—

“Ah! sir, since I saw you the greatest misfortune which could befall me has happened: I mean the death of my good sister, the Queen of Scotland, of which I swear by God Himself, my soul and my salvation, that I am perfectly innocent. I had signed the order, it is true; but my counsellors have played me a trick for which I cannot calm myself; and I swear to God that if it were not for their long service I would have them beheaded. I have a woman's frame, sir, but in this woman's frame beats a man's heart.”

Chateaufort bowed without a response; but his letter to Henry III and Henry's answer prove that neither the one nor the other was the dupe of this female Tiberius.

Meanwhile, as we have said, the unfortunate servants were prisoners, and the poor body was in that great hall waiting for a royal interment. Things remained thus, Elizabeth said, to give her time to order a splendid funeral for her good

sister Mary, but in reality because the queen dared not place in juxtaposition the secret and infamous death and the public and royal burial; then, was not time needed for the first reports which it pleased Elizabeth to spread to be credited before the truth should be known by the mouths of the servants? For the queen hoped that once this careless world had made up its mind about the death of the Queen of Scots, it would not take any further trouble to change it. Finally, it was only when the warders were as tired as the prisoners, that Elizabeth, having received a report stating that the ill-embalmed body could no longer be kept, at last ordered the funeral to take place.

Accordingly, after the 1st of August, tailors and dressmakers arrived at Fotheringay Castle, sent by Elizabeth, with cloth and black silk stuffs, to clothe in mourning all Mary's servants. But they refused, not having waited for the Queen of England's bounty, but having made their funeral garments at their own expense, immediately after their mistress's death. The tailors and dressmakers, however, none the less set so actively to work that on the 7th everything was finished.

Next day, at eight o'clock in the evening, a large chariot, drawn by four horses in mourning trappings, and covered with black velvet like the chariot, which was, besides, adorned with little streamers on which were embroidered the arms of Scotland, those of the queen, and the arms of Aragon, those of Darnley, stopped at the gate of Fotheringay Castle. It was followed by the herald king, accompanied by twenty gentlemen on horseback, with their servants and lackeys, all dressed in mourning, who, having alighted, mounted with his whole train into the room where the body lay, and had it brought down and put into the chariot with all possible respect, each of the spectators standing with bared head and in profound silence.

This visit caused a great stir among the prisoners, who debated a while whether they ought not to implore the favour of being allowed to follow their mistress's body, which they could not and should not let go alone thus; but just as they were about to ask permission to speak to the herald king, he entered the room where they were assembled, and told them that he was charged by his mistress, the august Queen of England, to give the Queen of Scotland the most honourable funeral he could; that, not wishing to fail in such a high undertaking, he had already made most of the preparations for the ceremony, which was to take place on the 10th of August, that is to say, two days later,—but that the leaden shell in which the body was enclosed being very heavy, it was better to move it

beforehand, and that night, to where the grave was dug, than to await the day of the interment itself; that thus they might be easy, this burial of the shell being only a preparatory ceremony; but that if some of them would like to accompany the corpse, to see what was done with it, they were at liberty, and that those who stayed behind could follow the funeral pageant, Elizabeth's positive desire being that all, from first to last, should be present in the funeral procession. This assurance calmed the unfortunate prisoners, who deputed Bourgoin, Gervais, and six others to follow their mistress's body: these were Andrew Melville, Stewart, Gorjon, Howard, Lauder, and Nicholas Delamarre.

At ten o'clock at night they set out, walking behind the chariot, preceded by the herald, accompanied by men on foot, who carried torches to light the way, and followed by twenty gentlemen and their servants. In this manner, at two o'clock in the morning, they reached Peterborough, where there is a splendid cathedral built by an ancient Saxon king, and in which, on the left of the choir, was already interred good Queen Catharine of Aragon, wife of Henry VIII, and where was her tomb, still decked with a canopy bearing her arms.

On arriving, they found the cathedral all hung with black, with a dome erected in the middle of the choir, much in the way in which 'chappelles ardentes' are set up in France, except that there were no lighted candles round it. This dome was covered with black velvet, and overlaid with the arms of Scotland and Aragon, with streamers like those on the chariot yet again repeated. The state coffin was already set up under this dome: it was a bier, covered like the rest in black velvet fringed with silver, on which was a pillow of the same supporting a royal crown.

To the right of this dome, and in front of the burial-place of Queen Catharine of Aragon, Mary of Scotland's sepulchre had been dug: it was a grave of brick, arranged to be covered later with a slab or a marble tomb, and in which was to be deposited the coffin, which the Bishop of Peterborough, in his episcopal robes, but without his mitre, cross, or cope, was awaiting at the door, accompanied by his dean and several other clergy. The body was brought into the cathedral, without chant or prayer, and was let down into the tomb amid a profound silence. Directly it was placed there, the masons, who had stayed their hands, set to work again, closing the grave level with the floor, and only leaving an opening of about a foot and a half, through which could be seen what was within, and through which could be thrown on the coffin, as is customary at the obsequies of kings, the broken staves of the officers and the ensigns and banners with their arms. This nocturnal ceremony ended, Melville, Bourgoin, and the

other deputies were taken to the bishop's palace, where the persons appointed to take part in the funeral procession were to assemble, in number more than three hundred and fifty, all chosen, with the exception of the servants, from among the authorities, the nobility, and Protestant clergy.

The day following, Thursday, August the 9th, they began to hang the banqueting halls with rich and sumptuous stuffs, and that in the sight of Melville, Bourgoin, and the others, whom they had brought thither, less to be present at the interment of Queen Mary than to bear witness to the magnificence of Queen Elizabeth. But, as one may suppose, the unhappy prisoners were indifferent to this splendour, great and extraordinary as it was.

On Friday, August 10th, all the chosen persons assembled at the bishop's palace: they ranged themselves in the appointed order, and turned their steps to the cathedral, which was close by. When they arrived there, they took the places assigned them in the choir, and the choristers immediately began to chant a funeral service in English and according to Protestant rites. At the first words of this service, when he saw it was not conducted by Catholic priests, Bourgoin left the cathedral, declaring that he would not be present at such sacrilege, and he was followed by all Mary's servants, men and women, except Melville and Barbe Mowbray, who thought that whatever the tongue in which one prayed, that tongue was heard by the Lord. This exit created great scandal; but the bishop preached none the less.

The sermon ended, the herald king went to seek Bourgoin and his companions, who were walking in the cloisters, and told them that the almsgiving was about to begin, inviting them to take part in this ceremony; but they replied that being Catholics they could not make offerings at an altar of which they disapproved. So the herald king returned, much put out at the harmony of the assembly being disturbed by this dissent; but the alms-offering took place no less than the sermon. Then, as a last attempt, he sent to them again, to tell them that the service was quite over, and that accordingly they might return for the royal ceremonies, which belonged only to the religion of the dead; and this time they consented; but when they arrived, the staves were broken, and the banners thrown into the grave through the opening that the workmen had already closed.

Then, in the same order in which it had come, the procession returned to the palace, where a splendid funeral repast had been prepared. By a strange contradiction, Elizabeth, who, having punished the living woman as a criminal,

had just treated the dead woman as a queen, had also wished that the honours of the funeral banquet should be for the servants, so long forgotten by her. But, as one can imagine, these ill accommodated themselves to that intention, did not seem astonished at this luxury nor rejoiced at this good cheer, but, on the contrary, drowned their bread and wine in tears, without otherwise responding to the questions put to them or the honours granted them. And as soon as the repast was ended, the poor servants left Peterborough and took the road back to Fotheringay, where they heard that they were free at last to withdraw whither they would. They did not need to be told twice; for they lived in perpetual fear, not considering their lives safe so long as they remained in England. They therefore immediately collected all their belongings, each taking his own, and thus went out of Fotheringay Castle on foot, Monday, 13th August, 1587.

Bourgoin went last: having reached the farther side of the drawbridge, he turned, and, Christian as he was, unable to forgive Elizabeth, not for his own sufferings, but for his mistress's, he faced about to those regicide walls, and, with hands outstretched to them, said in a loud and threatening voice, those words of David: "Let vengeance for the blood of Thy servants, which has been shed, O Lord God, be acceptable in Thy sight". The old man's curse was heard, and inflexible history is burdened with Elizabeth's punishment.

We said that the executioner's axe, in striking Mary Stuart's head, had caused the crucifix and the book of Hours which she was holding to fly from her hands. We also said that the two relics had been picked up by people in her following. We are not aware of what became of the crucifix, but the book of Hours is in the royal library, where those curious about these kinds of historical souvenirs can see it: two certificates inscribed on one of the blank leaves of the volume demonstrate its authenticity. These are they:

FIRST CERTIFICATE

"We the undersigned Vicar Superior of the strict observance of the Order of Cluny, certify that this book has been entrusted to us by order of the defunct Dom Michel Nardin, a professed religious priest of our said observance, deceased in our college of Saint-Martial of Avignon, March 28th, 1723, aged about eighty years, of which he has spent about thirty among us, having lived very religiously: he was a German by birth, and had served as an officer in the army a long time.

“He entered Cluny, and made his profession there, much detached from all this world’s goods and honours; he only kept, with his superior’s permission, this book, which he knew had been in use with Mary Stuart, Queen of England and Scotland, to the end of her life.

“Before dying and being parted from his brethren, he requested that, to be safely remitted to us, it should be sent us by mail, sealed. Just as we have received it, we have begged M. L’abbe Bignon, councillor of state and king’s librarian, to accept this precious relic of the piety of a Queen of England, and of a German officer of her religion as well as of ours.

“(Signed)BROTHER GERARD PONCET, “Vicar-General Superior.”

SECOND CERTIFICATE

“We, Jean-Paul Bignon, king’s librarian, are very happy to have an opportunity of exhibiting our zeal, in placing the said manuscript in His Majesty’s library.

“8th July, 1724.”

“(Signed) JEAN-PAUL BIGNAN.”

This manuscript, on which was fixed the last gaze of the Queen of Scotland, is a duodecimo, written in the Gothic character and containing Latin prayers; it is adorned with miniatures set off with gold, representing devotional subjects, stories from sacred history, or from the lives of saints and martyrs. Every page is encircled with arabesques mingled with garlands of fruit and flowers, amid which spring up grotesque figures of men and animals.

As to the binding, worn now, or perhaps even then, to the woof, it is in black velvet, of which the flat covers are adorned in the centre with an enamelled pansy, in a silver setting surrounded by a wreath, to which are diagonally attached from one corner of the cover to the other, two twisted silver-gilt knotted cords, finished by a tuft at the two ends.

KARL-LUDWIG SAND

By Alexander Dumas, Pere

1819

On the 22nd of March, 1819, about nine o'clock in the morning, a young man, some twenty-three or twenty-four years old, wearing the dress of a German student, which consists of a short frock-coat with silk braiding, tight trousers, and high boots, paused upon a little eminence that stands upon the road between Kaiserthal and Mannheim, at about three-quarters of the distance from the former town, and commands a view of the latter. Mannheim is seen rising calm and smiling amid gardens which once were ramparts, and which now surround and embrace it like a girdle of foliage and flowers. Having reached this spot, he lifted his cap, above the peak of which were embroidered three interlaced oak leaves in silver, and uncovering his brow, stood bareheaded for a moment to feel the fresh air that rose from the valley of the Neckar. At first sight his irregular features produced a strange impression; but before long the pallor of his face, deeply marked by smallpox, the infinite gentleness of his eyes, and the elegant framework of his long and flowing black hair, which grew in an admirable curve around a broad, high forehead, attracted towards him that emotion of sad sympathy to which we yield without inquiring its reason or dreaming of resistance. Though it was still early, he seemed already to have come some distance, for his boots were covered with dust; but no doubt he was nearing his destination, for, letting his cap drop, and hooking into his belt his long pipe, that inseparable companion of the German Borsch, he drew from his pocket a little note-book, and wrote in it with a pencil: "Left Wanheim at five in the morning, came in sight of Mannheim at a quarter-past nine." Then putting his note-book back into his pocket, he stood motionless for a moment, his lips moving as though in mental prayer, picked up his hat, and walked on again with a firm step towards Mannheim.

This young Student was Karl-Ludwig Sand, who was coming from Jena, by way of Frankfort and Darmstadt, in order to assassinate Kotzebue.

Now, as we are about to set before our readers one of those terrible actions for the true appreciation of which the conscience is the sole judge, they must allow us to make them fully acquainted with him whom kings regarded as an assassin, judges as a fanatic, and the youth of Germany as a hero. Charles Louis Sand was born on the 5th of October, 1795, at Wonsiedel, in the Fichtel Wald; he was the youngest son of Godfrey Christopher Sand, first president and councillor of justice to the King of Prussia, and of Dorothea Jane Wilhelmina Schapf, his wife. Besides two elder brothers, George, who entered upon a commercial career at St. Gall, and Fritz, who was an advocate in the Berlin court of appeal, he had an elder sister named Caroline, and a younger sister called Julia.

While still in the cradle he had been attacked by smallpox of the most malignant type. The virus having spread through all his body, laid bare his ribs, and almost ate away his skull. For several months he lay between life and death; but life at last gained the upper hand. He remained weak and sickly, however, up to his seventh year, at which time a brain fever attacked him; and again put his life in danger. As a compensation, however, this fever, when it left him, seemed to carry away with it all vestiges of his former illness. From that moment his health and strength came into existence; but during these two long illnesses his education had remained very backward, and it was not until the age of eight that he could begin his elementary studies; moreover, his physical sufferings having retarded his intellectual development, he needed to work twice as hard as others to reach the same result.

Seeing the efforts that young Sand made, even while still quite a child, to conquer the defects of his organisation, Professor Salfranck, a learned and distinguished man, rector of the Hof gymnasium [college], conceived such an affection for him, that when, at a later time, he was appointed director of the gymnasium at Ratisbon, he could not part from his pupil, and took him with him. In this town, and at the age of eleven years, he gave the first proof of his courage and humanity. One day, when he was walking with some young friends, he heard cries for help, and ran in that direction: a little boy, eight or nine years old, had just fallen into a pond. Sand immediately, without regarding his best clothes, of which, however, he was very proud, sprang into the water, and, after unheard-of efforts for a child of his age, succeeded in bringing the drowning boy to land.

At the age of twelve or thirteen, Sand, who had become more active, skilful, and determined than many of his elders, often amused himself by giving battle to the lads of the town and of the neighbouring villages. The theatre of these childish

conflicts, which in their pale innocence reflected the great battles that were at that time steeping Germany in blood, was generally a plain extending from the town of Wonsiedel to the mountain of St. Catherine, which had ruins at its top, and amid the ruins a tower in excellent preservation. Sand, who was one of the most eager fighters, seeing that his side had several times been defeated on account of its numerical inferiority, resolved, in order to make up for this drawback, to fortify the tower of St. Catherine, and to retire into it at the next battle if its issue proved unfavourable to him. He communicated this plan to his companions, who received it with enthusiasm. A week was spent, accordingly, in collecting all possible weapons of defence in the tower and in repairing its doors and stairs. These preparations were made so secretly that the army of the enemy had no knowledge of them.

Sunday came: the holidays were the days of battle. Whether because the boys were ashamed of having been beaten last time, or for some other reason, the band to which Sand belonged was even weaker than usual. Sure, however, of a means of retreat, he accepted battle, notwithstanding. The struggle was not a long one; the one party was too weak in numbers to make a prolonged resistance, and began to retire in the best order that could be maintained to St. Catherine's tower, which was reached before much damage had been felt. Having arrived there, some of the combatants ascended to the ramparts, and while the others defended themselves at the foot of the wall, began to shower stones and pebbles upon the conquerors. The latter, surprised at the new method of defence which was now for the first time adopted, retreated a little; the rest of the defenders took advantage of the moment to retire into the fortress and shut the door. Great was the astonishment on the part of the besiegers: they had always seen that door broken down, and lo! all at once it was presenting to them a barrier which preserved the besieged from their blows. Three or four went off to find instruments with which to break it down and meanwhile the rest of the attacking force kept the garrison blockaded.

At the end of half an hour the messengers returned not only with levers and picks, but also with a considerable reinforcement composed of lads from the village to which they had been to fetch tools.

Then began the assault: Sand and his companions defended themselves desperately; but it was soon evident that, unless help came, the garrison would be forced to capitulate. It was proposed that they should draw lots, and that one of the besieged should be chosen, who in spite of the danger should leave the

tower, make his way as best he might through the enemy's army, and go to summon the other lads of Wonsiedel, who had faint-heartedly remained at home. The tale of the peril in which their Comrades actually were, the disgrace of a surrender, which would fall upon all of them, would no doubt overcome their indolence and induce them to make a diversion that would allow the garrison to attempt sortie. This suggestion was adopted; but instead of leaving the decision to chance, Sand proposed himself as the messenger. As everybody knew his courage, his skill, and his lightness of foot, the proposition was unanimously accepted, and the new Decius prepared to execute his act of devotion. The deed was not free from danger: there were but two means of egress, one by way of the door, which would lead to the fugitive's falling immediately into the hands of the enemy; the other by jumping from a rampart so high that the enemy had not set a guard there. Sand without a moment's hesitation went to the rampart, where, always religious, even in his childish pleasures, he made a short prayer; then, without fear, without hesitation, with a confidence that was almost superhuman, he sprang to the ground: the distance was twenty-two feet. Sand flew instantly to Wonsiedel, and reached it, although the enemy had despatched their best runners in pursuit. Then the garrison, seeing the success of their enterprise, took fresh courage, and united their efforts against the besiegers, hoping everything from Sand's eloquence, which gave him a great influence over his young companions. And, indeed, in half an hour he was seen reappearing at the head of some thirty boys of his own age, armed with slings and crossbows. The besiegers, on the point of being attacked before and behind, recognised the disadvantage of their position and retreated. The victory remained with Sand's party, and all the honours of the day were his.

We have related this anecdote in detail, that our readers may understand from the character of the child what was that of the man. Besides, we shall see him develop, always calm and superior amid small events as amid large ones.

About the same time Sand escaped almost miraculously from two dangers. One day a hod full of plaster fell from a scaffold and broke at his feet. Another day the Prince of Coburg, who during the King of Prussia's stay at the baths of Alexander, was living in the house of Sand's parents, was galloping home with four horses when he came suddenly upon young Karl in a gateway; he could not escape either on the right or the left, without running the risk of being crushed between the wall and the wheels, and the coachman could not, when going at such a pace, hold in his horses: Sand flung himself on his face, and the carriage passed over him without his receiving so much as a single scratch either from the

horses or the wheels. From that moment many people regarded him as predestined, and said that the hand of God was upon him.

Meanwhile political events were developing themselves around the boy, and their seriousness made him a man before the age of manhood. Napoleon weighed upon Germany like another Sennacherib. Staps had tried to play the part of Mutius Scaevola, and had died a martyr. Sand was at Hof at that time, and was a student of the gymnasium of which his good tutor Salfranck was the head. He learned that the man whom he regarded as the antichrist was to come and review the troops in that town; he left it at once and went home to his parents, who asked him for what reason he had left the gymnasium.

“Because I could not have been in the same town with Napoleon,” he answered, “without trying to kill him, and I do not feel my hand strong enough for that yet.”

This happened in 1809; Sand was fourteen years old. Peace, which was signed on the 15th of October, gave Germany some respite, and allowed the young fanatic to resume his studies without being distracted by political considerations; but in 1811 he was occupied by them again, when he learned that the gymnasium was to be dissolved and its place taken by a primary school. To this the rector Salfranck was appointed as a teacher, but instead of the thousand florins which his former appointment brought him, the new one was worth only five hundred. Karl could not remain in a primary school where he could not continue his education; he wrote to his mother to announce this event and to tell her with what equanimity the old German philosopher had borne it. Here is the answer of Sand’s mother; it will serve to show the character of the woman whose mighty heart never belied itself in the midst of the severest suffering; the answer bears the stamp of that German mysticism of which we have no idea in France:—

“MY DEAR KARL,—You could not have given me a more grievous piece of news than that of the event which has just fallen upon your tutor and father by adoption; nevertheless, terrible though it may be, do not doubt that he will resign himself to it, in order to give to the virtue of his pupils a great example of that submission which every subject owes to the king whom God has set over him. Furthermore, be well assured that in this world there is no other upright and well calculated policy than that which grows out of the old precept, ‘Honour God, be just and fear not.’ And reflect also that when injustice against the worthy becomes crying, the public voice makes itself heard, and uplifts those who are

cast down.

“But if, contrary to all probability, this did not happen,—if God should impose this sublime probation upon the virtue of our friend, if the world were to disown him and Providence were to become to that, degree his debtor,—yet in that case there are, believe me, supreme compensations: all the things and all the events that occur around us and that act upon us are but machines set in motion by a Higher Hand, so as to complete our education for a higher world, in which alone we shall take our true place. Apply yourself, therefore, my dear child, to watch over yourself unceasingly and always, so that you may not take great and fine isolated actions for real virtue, and may be ready every moment to do all that your duty may require of you. Fundamentally nothing is great, you see, and nothing small, when things are, looked at apart from one another, and it is only the putting of things together that produces the unity of evil or of good.

“Moreover, God only sends the trial to the heart where He has put strength, and the manner in which you tell me that your master has borne the misfortune that has befallen him is a fresh proof of this great and eternal truth. You must form yourself upon him, my dear child, and if you are obliged to leave Hof for Bamberg you must resign yourself to it courageously. Man has three educations: that which he receives from his parents, that which circumstances impose upon him, and lastly that which he gives himself; if that misfortune should occur, pray to God that you may yourself worthily complete that last education, the most important of all.

“I will give you as an example the life and conduct of my father, of whom you have not heard very much, for he died before you were born, but whose mind and likeness are reproduced in you only among all your brothers and sisters. The disastrous fire which reduced his native town to ashes destroyed his fortune and that of his relatives; grief at having lost everything—for the fire broke out in the next house to his—cost his father his life; and while his mother, who for six years had been stretched on a bed of pain, where horrible convulsions held her fast, supported her three little girls by the needlework that she did in the intervals of suffering, he went as a mere clerk into one of the leading mercantile houses of Augsburg, where his lively and yet even temper made him welcome; there he learned a calling, for which, however, he was not naturally adapted, and came back to the home of his birth with a pure and stainless heart, in order to be the support of his mother and his sisters.

“A man can do much when he wishes to do much: join your efforts to my prayers, and leave the rest in the hands of God.”

The prediction of this Puritan woman was fulfilled: a little time afterwards rector Salfranck was appointed professor at Richembourg, whither Sand followed him; it was there that the events of 1813 found him. In the month of March he wrote to his mother:—

“I can scarcely, dear mother, express to you how calm and happy I begin to feel since I am permitted to believe in the enfranchisement of my country, of which I hear on every side as being so near at hand,—of that country which, in my faith in God, I see beforehand free and mighty, that country for whose happiness I would undergo the greatest sufferings, and even death. Take strength for this crisis. If by chance it should reach our good province, lift your eyes to the Almighty, then carry them back to beautiful rich nature. The goodness of God which preserved and protected so many men during the disastrous Thirty Years’ War can do and will do now what it could and did then. As for me, I believe and hope.”

Leipzig came to justify Sand’s presentiments; then the year 1814 arrived, and he thought Germany free.

On the 10th of December in the same year he left Richembourg with this certificate from his master:—

“Karl Sand belongs to the small number of those elect young men who are distinguished at once by the gifts of the mind and the faculties of the soul; in application and work he surpasses all his fellow-students, and this fact explains his rapid progress in all the philosophical and philological sciences; in mathematics only there are still some further studies which he might pursue. The most affectionate wishes of his teacher follow him on his departure.

“J. A. KEYN, “Rector, and master of the first class. “Richembourg, Sept. 15, 1814”

But it was really the parents of Sand, and in particular his mother, who had

prepared the fertile soil in which his teachers had sowed the seeds of learning; Sand knew this well, for at the moment of setting out for the university of Tubingen, where he was about to complete the theological studies necessary for becoming a pastor, as he desired to do, he wrote to them:—

“I confess that, like all my brothers and sisters, I owe to you that beautiful and great part of my education which I have seen to be lacking to most of those around me. Heaven alone can reward you by a conviction of having so nobly and grandly fulfilled your parental duties, amid many others.”

After having paid a visit to his brother at St. Gall, Sand reached Tubingen, to which he had been principally attracted by the reputation of Eschenmayer; he spent that winter quietly, and no other incident befell than his admission into an association of Burschen, called the Teutonic; then came the year of 1815, and with it the terrible news that Napoleon had landed in the Gulf of Juan. Immediately all the youth of Germany able to bear arms gathered once more around the banners of 1813 and 1814. Sand followed the general example; but the action, which in others was an effect of enthusiasm, was in him the result of calm and deliberate resolution. He wrote to Wonsiedel on this occasion:—

“April 22, 1813

“MY DEAR PARENTS,—Until now you have found me submissive to your parental lessons and to the advice of my excellent masters; until now I have made efforts to render myself worthy of the education that God has sent me through you, and have applied myself to become capable of spreading the word of the Lord through my native land; and for this reason I can to-day declare to you sincerely the decision that I have taken, assured that as tender and affectionate parents you will calm yourselves, and as German parents and patriots you will rather praise my resolution than seek to turn me from it.

“The country calls once more for help, and this time the call is addressed to me, too, for now I have courage and strength. It cast me a great inward struggle, believe me, to abstain when in 1813 she gave her first cry, and only the conviction held me back that thousands of others were then fighting and conquering for Germany, while I had to live far from the peaceful calling to which I was destined. Now it is a question of preserving our newly reestablished liberty, which in so many places has already brought in so rich a harvest. The all-powerful and merciful Lord reserves for us this great trial, which will certainly

be the last; it is for us, therefore, to show that we are worthy of the supreme gift which He has given us, and capable of upholding it with strength and firmness.

“The danger of the country has never been so great as it is now, that is why, among the youth of Germany, the strong should support the wavering, that all may rise together. Our brave brothers in the north are already assembling from all parts under their banners; the State of Wurtemberg is, proclaiming a general levy, and volunteers are coming in from every quarter, asking to die for their country. I consider it my duty, too, to fight for my country and for all the dear ones whom I love. If I were not profoundly convinced of this truth, I should not communicate my resolution to you; but my family is one that has a really German heart, and that would consider me as a coward and an unworthy son if I did not follow this impulse. I certainly feel the greatness of the sacrifice; it costs me something, believe me, to leave my beautiful studies and go to put myself under the orders of vulgar, uneducated people, but this only increases my courage in going to secure the liberty of my brothers; moreover, when once that liberty is secured, if God deigns to allow, I will return to carry them His word.

“I take leave, therefore, for a time of you, my most worthy parents, of my brothers, my sisters, and all who are dear to me. As, after mature deliberation, it seems the most suitable thing for me to serve with the Bavarians. I shall get myself enrolled, for as long as the war may last, with a company of that nation. Farewell, then; live happily; far away from you as I shall be, I shall follow your pious exhortations. In this new track I shall still I hope, remain pure before God, and I shall always try to walk in the path that rises above the things of earth and leads to those of heaven, and perhaps in this career the bliss of saving some souls from their fall may be reserved for me.

“Your dear image will always be about me; I will always have the Lord before my eyes and in my heart, so that I may endure joyfully the pains and fatigues of this holy war. Include me in your Prayers; God will send you the hope of better times to help you in bearing the unhappy time in which we now are. We cannot see one another again soon, unless we conquer; and if we should be conquered (which God forbid!), then my last wish, which I pray you, I conjure you, to fulfil, my last and supreme wish would be that you, my dear and deserving German relatives, should leave an enslaved country for some other not yet under the yoke.

“But why should we thus sadden one another’s hearts? Is not our cause just and

holy, and is not God just and holy? How then should we not be victors? You see that sometimes I doubt, so, in your letters, which I am impatiently expecting, have pity on me and do not alarm my soul, far in any case we shall meet again in another country, and that one will always be free and happy.

“I am, until death, your dutiful and grateful son,

“KARL SAND.”

These two lines of Korner’s were written as a postscript:—

“Perchance above our foeman lying dead We may behold the star of liberty.”

With this farewell to his parents, and with Korner’s poems on his lips, Sand gave up his books, and on the 10th of May we find him in arms among the volunteer chasseurs enrolled under the command of Major Falkenhausen, who was at that time at Mannheim; here he found his second brother, who had preceded him, and they underwent all their drill together.

Though Sand was not accustomed to great bodily fatigues, he endured those of the campaign with surprising strength, refusing all the alleviations that his superiors tried to offer him; for he would allow no one to outdo him in the trouble that he took for the good of the country. On the march he invariably shared: anything that he possessed fraternally with his comrades, helping those who were weaker than himself to carry their burdens, and, at once priest and soldier, sustaining them by his words when he was powerless to do anything more.

On the 18th of June, at eight o’clock in the evening, he arrived upon the field of battle at Waterloo, On the 14th of July he entered Paris.

On the 18th of December, 1815, Karl Sand and his brother were back at Wonsiedel, to the great joy of their family. He spent the Christmas holidays and the end of the year with them, but his ardour for his new vacation did not allow him to remain longer, and on the 7th of January he reached Erlangen. Then, to make up for lost time, he resolved to subject his day to fixed and uniform rules, and to write down every evening what he had done since the morning. It is by the help of this journal that we are able to follow the young enthusiast, not only

in all the actions of his life, but also in all the thoughts of his mind and all the hesitations of his conscience. In it we find his whole self, simple to naivete, enthusiastic to madness, gentle even to weakness towards others, severe even to asceticism towards himself. One of his great griefs was the expense that his education occasioned to his parents, and every useless and costly pleasure left a remorse in his heart. Thus, on the 9th of February 1816, he wrote:—

“I meant to go and visit my parents. Accordingly I went to the ‘Commers-haus’, and there I was much amused. N. and T. began upon me with the everlasting jokes about Wonsiedel; that went on until eleven o’clock. But afterwards N. and T. began to torment me to go to the wine-shop; I refused as long as I could. But as, at last, they seemed to think that it was from contempt of them that I would not go and drink a glass of Rhine wine with them, I did not dare resist longer. Unfortunately, they did not stop at Braunberger; and while my glass was still half full, N. ordered a bottle of champagne. When the first had disappeared, T. ordered a second; then, even before this second battle was drunk, both of them ordered a third in my name and in spite of me. I returned home quite giddy, and threw myself on the sofa, where I slept for about an hour, and only went to bed afterwards.

“Thus passed this shameful day, in which I have not thought enough of my kind and worthy parents, who are leading a poor and hard life, and in which I suffered myself to be led away by the example of people who have money into spending four florins—an expenditure which was useless, and which would have kept the whole family for two days. Pardon me, my God, pardon me, I beseech Thee, and receive the vow that I make never to fall into the same fault again. In future I will live even more abstemiously than I usually do, so as to repair the fatal traces in my poor cash-box of my extravagance, and not to be obliged to ask money of my mother before the day when she thinks of sending me some herself.”

Then, at the very time when the poor young man reproaches himself as if with a crime with having spent four florins, one of his cousins, a widow, dies and leaves three orphan children. He runs immediately to carry the first consolations to the unhappy little creatures, entreats his mother to take charge of the youngest, and overjoyed at her answer, thanks her thus:—

“Far the very keen joy that you have given me by your letter, and for the very

dear tone in which your soul speaks to me, bless you, O my mother! As I might have hoped and been sure, you have taken little Julius, and that fills me afresh with the deepest gratitude towards you, the rather that, in my constant trust in your goodness, I had already in her lifetime given our good little cousin the promise that you are fulfilling for me after her death.”

About March, Sand, though he did not fall ill, had an indisposition that obliged him to go and take the waters; his mother happened at the time to be at the ironworks of Redwitz, some twelve or fifteen miles from Wonsiedel, where the mineral springs are found. Sand established himself there with his mother, and notwithstanding his desire to avoid interrupting his work, the time taken up by baths, by invitations to dinners, and even by the walks which his health required, disturbed the regularity of his usual existence and awakened his remorse. Thus we find these lines written in his journal for April 13th:

“Life, without some high aim towards which all thoughts and actions tend, is an empty desert: my day yesterday is a proof of this; I spent it with my own people, and that, of course, was a great pleasure to me; but how did I spend it? In continual eating, so that when I wanted to work I could do nothing worth doing. Full of indolence and slackness, I dragged myself into the company of two or three sets of people, and came from them in the same state of mind as I went to them.”

For these expeditions Sand made use of a little chestnut horse which belonged to his brother, and of which he was very fond. This little horse had been bought with great difficulty; for, as we have said, the whole family was poor. The following note, in relation to the animal, will give an idea of Sand’s simplicity of heart:—

“19th April “To-day I have been very happy at the ironworks, and very industrious beside my kind mother. In the evening I came home on the little chestnut. Since the day before yesterday, when he got a strain and hurt his foot, he has been very restive and very touchy, and when he got home he refused his food. I thought at first that he did not fancy his fodder, and gave him some pieces of sugar and sticks of cinnamon, which he likes very much; he tasted them, but would not eat them. The poor little beast seems to have some other internal indisposition besides his injured foot. If by ill luck he were to become foundered or ill, everybody, even my parents, would throw the blame on me, and yet I have been very careful and considerate of him. My God, my Lord, Thou who canst do

things both great and small, remove from me this misfortune, and let him recover as quickly as possible. If, however, Thou hast willed otherwise, and if this fresh trouble is to fall upon us, I will try to bear it with courage, and as the expiation of some sin. Meanwhile, O my God, I leave this matter in Thy hands, as I leave my life and my soul.”

On the 20th of April he wrote:— “The little horse is well; God has helped me.”

German manners and customs are so different from ours, and contrasts occur so frequently in the same man, on the other side of the Rhine, that anything less than all the quotations which we have given would have been insufficient to place before our readers a true idea of that character made up of artlessness and reason, childishness and strength, depression and enthusiasm, material details and poetic ideas, which renders Sand a man incomprehensible to us. We will now continue the portrait, which still wants a few finishing touches.

When he returned to Erlangen, after the completion of his “cure,” Sand read Faust for the first time. At first he was amazed at that work, which seemed to him an orgy of genius; then, when he had entirely finished it, he reconsidered his first impression, and wrote:—

“4th May

“Oh, horrible struggle of man and devil! What Mephistopheles is in me I feel for the first time in this hour, and I feel it, O God, with consternation!

“About eleven at night I finished reading the tragedy, and I felt and saw the fiend in myself, so that by midnight, amid my tears and despair, I was at last frightened at myself.”

Sand was falling by degrees into a deep melancholy, from which nothing could rouse him except his desire to purify and preach morality to the students around him. To anyone who knows university life such a task will seem superhuman. Sand, however, was not discouraged, and if he could not gain an influence over everyone, he at least succeeded in forming around him a considerable circle of the most intelligent and the best; nevertheless, in the midst of these apostolic labours strange longings for death would overcome him; he seemed to recall heaven and want to return to it; he called these temptations “homesickness for the soul’s country.”

His favourite authors were Lessing, Schiller, Herder, and Goethe; after re-reading the two last for the twentieth time, this is what he wrote:

“Good and evil touch each other; the woes of the young Werther and Weisslingen’s seduction, are almost the same story; no matter, we must not judge between what is good and what is evil in others; for that is what God will do. I have just been spending much time over this thought, and have become convinced that in no circumstances ought we to allow ourselves to seek for the devil in others, and that we have no right to judge; the only creature over whom we have received the power to judge and condemn is ourself, and that gives us enough constant care, business, and trouble.

“I have again to-day felt a profound desire to quit this world and enter a higher world; but this desire is rather dejection than strength, a lassitude than an upsoaring.”

The year 1816 was spent by Sand in these pious attempts upon his young comrades, in this ceaseless self-examination, and in the perpetual battle which he waged with the desire for death that pursued him; every day he had deeper doubts of himself; and on the 1st of January, 1817, he wrote this prayer in his diary :—

“Grant to me, O Lord, to me whom Thou hast endowed, in sending me on earth, with free will, the grace that in this year which we are now beginning I may never relax this constant attention, and not shamefully give up the examination of my conscience which I have hitherto made. Give me strength to increase the attention which I turn upon my own life, and to diminish that which I turn upon the life of others; strengthen my will that it may become powerful to command the desires of the body and the waverings of the soul; give me a pious conscience entirely devoted to Thy celestial kingdom, that I may always belong to Thee, or after failing, may be able to return to Thee.”

Sand was right in praying to God for the year 1817, and his fears were a presentiment: the skies of Germany, lightened by Leipzig and Waterloo, were once more darkened; to the colossal and universal despotism of Napoleon succeeded the individual oppression of those little princes who made up the Germanic Diet, and all that the nations had gained by overthrowing the giant was to be governed by dwarfs. This was the time when secret societies were organised throughout Germany; let us say a few words about them, for the

history that we are writing is not only that of individuals, but also that of nations, and every time that occasion presents itself we will give our little picture a wide horizon.

The secret societies of Germany, of which, without knowing them, we have all heard, seem, when we follow them up, like rivers, to originate in some sort of affiliation to those famous clubs of the 'illumines' and the freemasons which made so much stir in France at the close of the eighteenth century. At the time of the revolution of '89 these different philosophical, political, and religious sects enthusiastically accepted the republican doctrines, and the successes of our first generals have often been attributed to the secret efforts of the members. When Bonaparte, who was acquainted with these groups, and was even said to have belonged to them, exchanged his general's uniform for an emperor's cloak, all of them, considering him as a renegade and traitor, not only rose against him at home, but tried to raise enemies against him abroad; as they addressed themselves to noble and generous passions, they found a response, and princes to whom their results might be profitable seemed for a moment to encourage them. Among others, Prince Louis of Prussia was grandmaster of one of these societies.

The attempted murder by Stops, to which we have already referred, was one of the thunderclaps of the storm; but its morrow brought the peace of Vienna, and the degradation of Austria was the deathblow of the old Germanic organisation. These societies, which had received a mortal wound in 1806 and were now controlled by the French police, instead of continuing to meet in public, were forced to seek new members in the dark. In 1811 several agents of these societies were arrested in Berlin, but the Prussian authorities, following secret orders of Queen Louisa, actually protected them, so that they were easily able to deceive the French police about their intentions. About February 1815 the disasters of the French army revived the courage of these societies, for it was seen that God was helping their cause: the students in particular joined enthusiastically in the new attempts that were now begun; many colleges enrolled themselves almost entire, and chose their principals and professors as captains; the poet, Korner, killed on the 18th of October at Liegzig, was the hero of this campaign.

The triumph of this national movement, which twice carried the Prussian army—largely composed of volunteers—to Paris, was followed, when the treaties of 1815 and the new Germanic constitution were made known, by a terrible reaction in Germany. All these young men who, exiled by their princes, had risen

in the name of liberty, soon perceived that they had been used as tools to establish European despotism; they wished to claim the promises that had been made, but the policy of Talleyrand and Metternich weighed on them, and repressing them at the first words they uttered, compelled them to shelter their discontent and their hopes in the universities, which, enjoying a kind of constitution of their own, more easily escaped the investigations made by the spies of the Holy Alliance; but, repressed as they were, these societies continued nevertheless to exist, and kept up communications by means of travelling students, who, bearing verbal messages, traversed Germany under the pretence of botanising, and, passing from mountain to mountain, sowed broadcast those luminous and hopeful words of which peoples are always greedy and kings always fear.

We have seen that Sand, carried away by the general movement, had gone through the campaign of 1815 as a volunteer, although he was then only nineteen years old. On his return, he, like others, had found his golden hopes deceived, and it is from this period that we find his journal assuming the tone of mysticism and sadness which our readers must have remarked in it. He soon entered one of these associations, the Teutonia; and from that moment, regarding the great cause which he had taken up as a religious one, he attempted to make the conspirators worthy of their enterprise, and thus arose his attempts to inculcate moral doctrines, in which he succeeded with some, but failed with the majority. Sand had succeeded, however, in forming around him a certain circle of Puritans, composed of about sixty to eighty students, all belonging to the group of the 'Burschenschaft' which continued its political and religious course despite all the jeers of the opposing group—the 'Landmannschaft'. One of his friends called Dittmar and he were pretty much the chiefs, and although no election had given them their authority, they exercised so much influence upon what was decided that in any particular case their fellow-adepts were sure spontaneously to obey any impulse that they might choose to impart. The meetings of the Burschen took place upon a little hill crowned by a ruined castle, which was situated at some distance from Erlangen, and which Sand and Dittmar had called the Ruttli, in memory of the spot where Walter Furst, Melchthal, and Stauffacher had made their vow to deliver their country; there, under the pretence of students' games, while they built up a new house with the ruined fragments, they passed alternately from symbol to action and from action to symbol.

Meanwhile the association was making such advances throughout Germany that not only the princes and kings of the German confederation, but also the great

European powers, began to be uneasy. France sent agents to bring home reports, Russia paid agents on the spot, and the persecutions that touched a professor and exasperated a whole university often arose from a note sent by the Cabinet of the Tuileries or of St. Petersburg.

It was amid the events that began thus that Sand, after commending himself to the protection of God, began the year 1817, in the sad mood in which we have just seen him, and in which he was kept rather by a disgust for things as they were than by a disgust for life. On the 8th of May, preyed upon by this melancholy, which he cannot conquer, and which comes from the disappointment of all his political hopes, he writes in his diary:

“I shall find it impassible to set seriously to work, and this idle temper, this humour of hypochondria which casts its black veil over everything in life,— continues and grows in spite of the moral activity which I imposed on myself yesterday.”

In the holidays, fearing to burden his parents with any additional expense, he will not go home, and prefers to make a walking tour with his friends. No doubt this tour, in addition to its recreative side, had a political aim. Be that as it may, Sand’s diary, during the period of his journey, shows nothing but the names of the towns through which he passed. That we may have a notion of Sand’s dutifulness to his parents, it should be said that he did not set out until he had obtained his mother’s permission. On their return, Sand, Dittmar, and their friends the Burschen, found their Ruttli sacked by their enemies of the Landmannschaft; the house that they had built was demolished and its fragments dispersed. Sand took this event for an omen, and was greatly depressed by it.

“It seems to me, O my God!” he says in his journal, “that everything swims and turns around me. My soul grows darker and darker; my moral strength grows less instead of greater; I work and cannot achieve; walk towards my aim and do not reach it; exhaust myself, and do nothing great. The days of life flee one after another; cares and uneasiness increase; I see no haven anywhere for our sacred German cause. The end will be that we shall fall, for I myself waver. O Lord and Father! protect me, save me, and lead me to that land from which we are for ever driven back by the indifference of wavering spirits.”

About this time a terrible event struck Sand to the heart; his friend Dittmar was drowned. This is what he wrote in his diary on the very morning of the

occurrence:

“Oh, almighty God! What is going to become of me? For the last fortnight I have been drawn into disorder, and have not been able to compel myself to look fixedly either backward or forward in my life, so that from the 4th of June up to the present hour my journal has remained empty. Yet every day I might have had occasion to praise Thee, O my God, but my soul is in anguish. Lord, do not turn from me; the more are the obstacles the more need is there of strength.”

In the evening he added these few words to the lines that he had written in the morning:—

“Desolation, despair, and death over my friend, over my very deeply loved Dittmar.”

This letter which he wrote to his family contains the account of the tragic event:

“You know that when my best friends, A., C., and Z., were gone, I became particularly intimate with my well-beloved Dittmar of Anspach; Dittmar, that is to say a true and worthy German, an evangelical Christian, something more, in short, than a man! An angelic soul, always turned toward the good, serene, pious, and ready for action; he had come to live in a room next to mine in Professor Grunler’s house; we loved each other, upheld each other in our efforts, and, well or ill, bare our good or evil fortune in common. On this last spring evening, after having worked in his room and having strengthened ourselves anew to resist all the torments of life and to advance towards the aim that we desired to attain; we went, about seven in the evening, to the baths of Redwitz. A very black storm was rising in the sky, but only as yet appeared on the horizon. E., who was with us, proposed to go home, but Dittmar persisted, saying that the canal was but a few steps away. God permitted that it should not be I who replied with these fatal words. So he went on. The sunset was splendid: I see it still; its violet clouds all fringed with gold, for I remember the smallest details of that evening.

“Dittmar went down first; he was the only one of us who knew how to swim; so he walked before us to show us the depth. The water was about up to our chests, and he, who preceded us, was up to his shoulders, when he warned us not to go farther, because he was ceasing to feel the bottom. He immediately gave up his

footing and began to swim, but scarcely had he made ten strokes when, having reached the place where the river separates into two branches, he uttered a cry, and as he was trying to get a foothold, disappeared. We ran at once to the bank, hoping to be able to help him more easily; but we had neither poles nor ropes within reach, and, as I have told you, neither of us could swim. Then we called for help with all our might. At that moment Dittmar reappeared, and by an unheard-of effort seized the end of a willow branch that was hanging over the water; but the branch was not strong enough to resist, and our friend sank again, as though he had been struck by apoplexy. Can you imagine the state in which we were, we his friends, bending over the river, our fixed and haggard eyes trying to pierce its depth? My God, my God! how was it we did not go mad?

“A great crowd, however, had run at our cries. For two hours they sought far him with boats and drag-hooks; and at last they succeeded in drawing his body from the gulf. Yesterday we bore it solemnly to the field of rest.

“Thus with the end of this spring has begun the serious summer of my life. I greeted it in a grave and melancholy mood, and you behold me now, if not consoled, at least strengthened by religion, which, thanks to the merits of Christ, gives me the assurance of meeting my friend in heaven, from the heights of which he will inspire me with strength to support the trials of this life; and now I do not desire anything more except to know you free from all anxiety in regard to me.”

Instead of serving to unite the two groups of students in a common grief, this accident, on the contrary, did but intensify their hatred of each other. Among the first persons who ran up at the cries of Sand and his companion was a member of the Landmannschaft who could swim, but instead of going to Dittmar's assistance he exclaimed, “It seems that we shall get rid of one of these dogs of Burschen; thank God!” Notwithstanding this manifestation of hatred, which, indeed, might be that of an individual and not of the whole body, the Burschen invited their enemies to be present at Dittmar's funeral. A brutal refusal, and a threat to disturb the ceremony by insults to the corpse, formed their sole reply. The Burschen then warned the authorities, who took suitable measures, and all Dittmar's friends followed his coffin sword in hand. Beholding this calm but resolute demonstration, the Landmannschaft did not dare to carry out their threat, and contented themselves with insulting the procession by laughs and songs.

Sand wrote in his journal:

“Dittmar is a great loss to all of us, and particularly to me; he gave me the overflow of his strength and life; he stopped, as it were, with an embankment, the part of my character that is irresolute and undecided. From him it is that I have learned not to dread the approaching storm, and to know how to fight and die.”

Some days after the funeral Sand had a quarrel about Dittmar with one of his former friends, who had passed over from the Burschen to the Landmannschaft, and who had made himself conspicuous at the time of the funeral by his indecent hilarity. It was decided that they should fight the next day, and on the same day Sand wrote in his journal.

“Tomorrow I am to fight with P. G.; yet Thou knowest, O my God, what great friends we formerly were, except for a certain mistrust with which his coldness always inspired me; but on this occasion his odious conduct has caused me to descend from the tenderest pity to the profoundest hatred.

“My God, do not withdraw Thy hand either from him or from me, since we are both fighting like men! Judge only by our two causes, and give the victory to that which is the more just. If Thou shouldst call me before Thy supreme tribunal, I know very well that I should appear burdened with an eternal malediction; and indeed it is not upon myself that I reckon but upon the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

“Come what may, be praised and blessed, O my God!

“My dear parents, brothers, and friends, I commend you to the protection of God.”

Sand waited in vain for two hours next day: his adversary did not come to the meeting place.

The loss of Dittmar, however, by no means produced the result upon Sand that might have been expected, and that he himself seems to indicate in the regrets he expressed for him. Deprived of that strong soul upon which he rested, Sand understood that it was his task by redoubled energy to make the death of Dittmar less fatal to his party. And indeed he continued singly the work of drawing in recruits which they had been carrying on together, and the patriotic conspiracy

was not for a moment impeded.

The holidays came, and Sand left Erlangen to return no more. From Wonsiedel he was to proceed to Jena, in order to complete his theological studies there. After some days spent with his family, and indicated in his journal as happy, Sand went to his new place of abode, where he arrived some time before the festival of the Wartburg. This festival, established to celebrate the anniversary of the battle of Leipzig, was regarded as a solemnity throughout Germany, and although the princes well knew that it was a centre for the annual renewal of affiliation to the various societies, they dared not forbid it. Indeed, the manifesto of the Teutonic Association was exhibited at this festival and signed by more than two thousand deputies from different universities in Germany. This was a day of joy for Sand; for he found in the midst of new friends a great number of old ones.

The Government, however, which had not 'dared to attack the Association by force, resolved to undermine it by opinion. M. de Stauren published a terrible document, attacking the societies, and founded, it was said, upon information furnished by Kotzebue. This publication made a great stir, not only at Jena, but throughout all Germany. Here is the trace of this event that we find in Sand's journal:—

24th November "Today, after working with much ease and assiduity, I went out about four with E. As we crossed the marketplace we heard Kotzebue's new and venomous insult read. By what a fury that man is possessed against the Burschen and against all who love Germany!"

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On the 29th, in the evening, Sand writes again:

"Tomorrow I shall set out courageously and joyfully from this place for a pilgrimage to Wonsiedel; there I shall find my large-hearted mother and my tender sister Julia; there I shall cool my head and warm my heart. Probably I shall be present at my good Fritz's marriage with Louisa, and at the baptism of my very dear Durchmith's firstborn. God, O my Father, as Thou hast been with me during my sad course, be with me still on my happy road."

This journey did in fact greatly cheer Sand. Since Dittmar's death his attacks of hypochondria had disappeared. While Dittmar lived he might die; Dittmar being dead, it was his part to live.

On the 11th of December he left Wonsiedel, to return to Jena, and on the 31st of the same month he wrote this prayer in his journal.

"O merciful Saviour! I began this year with prayer, and in these last days I have been subject to distraction and ill-disposed. When I look backward, I find, alas! that I have not become better; but I have entered more profoundly into life, and, should occasion present, I now feel strength to act.

"It is because Thou hast always been with me, Lord, even when I was not with Thee."

If our readers have followed with some attention the different extracts from the journal that we have placed before them, they must have seen Sand's resolution gradually growing stronger and his brain becoming excited. From the beginning of the year 1818, one feels his view, which long was timid and wandering, taking in a wider horizon and fixing itself on a nobler aim. He is no longer ambitious of the pastor's simple life or of the narrow influence which he might gain in a little community, and which, in his juvenile modesty, had seemed the height of good fortune and happiness; it is now his native land, his German people, nay, all humanity, which he embraces in his gigantic plans of political regeneration.

Thus, on the flyleaf of his journal for the year 1818, he writes:

“Lord, let me strengthen myself in the idea that I have conceived of the deliverance of humanity by the holy sacrifice of Thy Son. Grant that I may be a Christ of Germany, and that, like and through Jesus, I may be strong and patient in suffering.”

But the anti-republican pamphlets of Kotzebue increased in number and gained a fatal influence upon the minds of rulers. Nearly all the persons who were attacked in these pamphlets were known and esteemed at Jena; and it may easily be comprehended what effects were produced by such insults upon these young heads and noble hearts, which carried conviction to the point of blindness and enthusiasm to that of fanaticism.

Thus, here is what Sand wrote in his diary on the 5th of May.

“Lord, what causes this melancholy anguish which has again taken possession of me? But a firm and constant will surmounts everything, and the idea of the country gives joy and courage to the saddest and the weakest. When I think of that, I am always amazed that there is none among us found courageous enough to drive a knife into the breast of Kotzebue or of any other traitor.”

Still dominated by the same thought, he continues thus on the 18th of May:—

“A man is nothing in comparison with a nation; he is a unity compared with millions, a minute compared with a century. A man, whom nothing precedes and nothing follows, is born, lives, and dies in a longer or shorter time, which, relatively to eternity, hardly equals the duration of a lightning flash. A nation, on the contrary, is immortal.”

From time to time, however, amid these thoughts that bear the impress of that political fatality which was driving him towards the deed of bloodshed, the kindly and joyous youth reappears. On the 24th of June he writes to his mother:

—

“I have received your long and beautiful letter, accompanied by the very complete and well-chosen outfit which you send me. The sight of this fine linen gave me back one of the joys of my childhood. These are fresh benefits. My prayers never remain unfulfilled, and I have continual cause to thank you and God. I receive, all at once, shirts, two pairs of fine sheets, a present of your

work, and of Julia's and Caroline's work, dainties and sweetmeats, so that I am still jumping with joy and I turned three times on my heels when I opened the little parcel. Receive the thanks of my heart, and share, as giver, in the joy of him who has received.

"Today, however, is a very serious day, the last day of spring and the anniversary of that on which I lost my noble and good Dittmar. I am a prey to a thousand different and confused feelings; but I have only two passions left in me which remain upright and like two pillars of brass support this whole chaos—the thought of God and the love of my country."

During all this time Sand's life remains apparently calm and equal; the inward storm is calmed; he rejoices in his application to work and his cheerful temper. However, from time to time, he makes great complaints to himself of his propensity to love dainty food, which he does not always find it possible to conquer. Then, in his self-contempt, he calls himself "fig-stomach" or "cake-stomach." But amid all this the religious and political exaltation and visits all the battlefields near to the road that he follows. On the 18th of October he is back at Jena, where he resumes his studies with more application than ever. It is among such university studies that the year 1818 closes for him, and we should hardly suspect the terrible resolution which he has taken, were it not that we find in his journal this last note, dated the 31st of December:

"I finish the last day of this year 1818, then, in a serious and solemn mood, and I have decided that the Christmas feast which has just gone by will be the last Christmas feast that I shall celebrate. If anything is to come of our efforts, if the cause of humanity is to assume the upper hand in our country, if in this faithless epoch any noble feelings can spring up afresh and make way, it can only happen if the wretch, the traitor, the seducer of youth, the infamous Kotzebue, falls! I am fully convinced of this, and until I have accomplished the work upon which I have resolved, I shall have no rest. Lord, Thou who knowest that I have devoted my life to this great action, I only need, now that it is fixed in my mind, to beg of Thee true firmness and courage of soul."

Here Sand's diary ends; he had begun it to strengthen himself; he had reached his aim; he needed nothing more. From this moment he was occupied by nothing but this single idea, and he continued slowly to mature the plan in his head in order to familiarise himself with its execution; but all the impressions arising from this thought remained in his own mind, and none was manifested on the

surface. To everyone else he was the same; but for some little time past, a complete and unaltered serenity, accompanied by a visible and cheerful return of inclination towards life, had been noticed in him. He had made no change in the hours or the duration of his studies; but he had begun to attend the anatomical classes very assiduously. One day he was seen to give even more than his customary attention to a lesson in which the professor was demonstrating the various functions of the heart; he examined with the greatest care the place occupied by it in the chest, asking to have some of the demonstrations repeated two or three times, and when he went out, questioning some of the young men who were following the medical courses, about the susceptibility of the organ, which cannot receive ever so slight a blow without death ensuing from that blow: all this with so perfect an indifference and calmness that no one about him conceived any suspicion.

Another day, A. S., one of his friends, came into his room. Sand, who had heard him coming up, was standing by the table, with a paper-knife in his hand, waiting for him; directly the visitor came in, Sand flung himself upon him, struck him lightly on the forehead; and then, as he put up his hands to ward off the blow, struck him rather more violently in the chest; then, satisfied with this experiment, said:—

“You see, when you want to kill a man, that is the way to do it; you threaten the face, he puts up his hands, and while he does so you thrust a dagger into his heart.”

The two young men laughed heartily over this murderous demonstration, and A. S. related it that evening at the wine-shop as one of the peculiarities of character that were common in his friend. After the event, the pantomime explained itself.

The month of March arrived. Sand became day by day calmer, more affectionate, and kinder; it might be thought that in the moment of leaving his friends for ever he wished to leave them an ineffaceable remembrance of him. At last he announced that on account of several family affairs he was about to undertake a little journey, and set about all his preparations with his usual care, but with a serenity never previously seen in him. Up to that time he had continued to work as usual, not relaxing for an instant; for there was a possibility that Kotzebue might die or be killed by somebody else before the term that Sand had fixed to himself, and in that case he did not wish to have lost time. On the 7th of March he invited all his friends to spend the evening with him, and

announced his departure for the next day but one, the 9th. All of them then proposed to him to escort him for some leagues, but Sand refused; he feared lest this demonstration, innocent though it were, might compromise them later on. He set forth alone, therefore, after having hired his lodgings for another half-year, in order to obviate any suspicion, and went by way of Erfurt and Eisenach, in order to visit the Wartburg. From that place he went to Frankfort, where he slept on the 17th, and on the morrow he continued his journey by way of Darmstadt. At last, on the 23rd, at nine in the morning, he arrived at the top of the little hill where we found him at the beginning of this narrative. Throughout the journey he had been the amiable and happy young man whom no one could see without liking.

Having reached Mannheim, he took a room at the Weinberg, and wrote his name as "Henry" in the visitors' list. He immediately inquired where Kotzebue lived. The councillor dwelt near the church of the Jesuits; his house was at the corner of a street, and though Sand's informants could not tell him exactly the letter, they assured him it was not possible to mistake the house. [At Mannheim houses are marked by letters, not by numbers.]

Sand went at once to Kotzebue's house: it was about ten o'clock; he was told that the councillor went to walk for an hour or two every morning in the park of Mannheim. Sand inquired about the path in which he generally walked, and about the clothes he wore, for never having seen him he could only recognise him by the description. Kotzebue chanced to take another path. Sand walked about the park for an hour, but seeing no one who corresponded to the description given him, went back to the house.

Kotzebue had come in, but was at breakfast and could not see him.

Sand went back to the Weinberg, and sat down to the midday table d'hote, where he dined with an appearance of such calmness, and even of such happiness, that his conversation, which was now lively, now simple, and now dignified, was remarked by everybody. At five in the afternoon he returned a third time to the house of Kotzebue, who was giving a great dinner that day; but orders had been given to admit Sand. He was shown into a little room opening out of the anteroom, and a moment after, Kotzebue came in.

Sand then performed the drama which he had rehearsed upon his friend A. S. Kotzebue, finding his face threatened, put his hands up to it, and left his breast

exposed; Sand at once stabbed him to the heart; Kotzebue gave one cry, staggered, and fell back into an armchair: he was dead.

At the cry a little girl of six years old ran in, one of those charming German children, with the faces of cherubs, blue-eyed, with long flowing hair. She flung herself upon the body of Kotzebue, calling her father with piercing cries. Sand, standing at the door, could not endure this sight, and without going farther, he thrust the dagger, still covered with Kotzebue's blood, up to the hilt into his own breast. Then, seeing to his surprise that notwithstanding the terrible wound—he had just given himself he did not feel the approach of death, and not wishing to fall alive into the hands of the servants who were running in, he rushed to the staircase. The persons who were invited were just coming in; they, seeing a young man, pale and bleeding with a knife in his breast, uttered loud cries, and stood aside, instead of stopping him. Sand therefore passed down the staircase and reached the street below; ten paces off, a patrol was passing, on the way to relieve the sentinels at the castle; Sand thought these men had been summoned by the cries that followed him; he threw himself on his knees in the middle of the street, and said, "Father, receive my soul!"

Then, drawing the knife from the wound, he gave himself a second blow below the former, and fell insensible.

Sand was carried to the hospital and guarded with the utmost strictness; the wounds were serious, but, thanks to the skill of the physicians who were called in, were not mortal; one of them even healed eventually; but as to the second, the blade having gone between the costal pleura and the pulmonary pleura, an effusion of blood occurred between the two layers, so that, instead of closing the wound, it was kept carefully open, in order that the blood extravasated during the night might be drawn off every morning by means of a pump, as is done in the operation for empyaemia.

Notwithstanding these cares, Sand was for three months between life and death.

When, on the 26th of March, the news of Kotzebue's assassination came from Mannheim to Jena, the academic senate caused Sand's room to be opened, and found two letters—one addressed to his friends of the Burschenschaft, in which he declared that he no longer belonged to their society, since he did not wish that their brotherhood should include a man about to die on the scaffold. The other letter, which bore this superscription, "To my nearest and dearest," was an exact

account of what he meant to do, and the motives which had made him determine upon this act. Though the letter is a little long, it is so solemn and so antique in spirit, that we do not hesitate to present it in its entirety to our readers:—

“To all my own “Loyal and eternally cherished souls

“Why add still further to your sadness? I asked myself, and I hesitated to write to you; but my silence would have wounded the religion of the heart; and the deeper a grief the more it needs, before it can be blotted out, to drain to the dregs its cup of bitterness. Forth from my agonised breast, then; forth, long and cruel torment of a last conversation, which alone, however, when sincere, can alleviate the pain of parting.

“This letter brings you the last farewell of your son and your brother.

“The greatest misfortune of life for any generous heart is to see the cause of God stopped short in its developments by our fault; and the most dishonouring infamy would be to suffer that the fine things acquired bravely by thousands of men, and for which thousands of men have joyfully sacrificed themselves, should be no more than a transient dream, without real and positive consequences. The resurrection of our German life was begun in these last twenty years, and particularly in the sacred year 1813, with a courage inspired by God. But now the house of our fathers is shaken from the summit to the base. Forward! let us raise it, new and fair, and such as the true temple of the true God should be.

“Small is the number of those who resist, and who wish to oppose themselves as a dyke against the torrent of the progress of higher humanity among the German people. Why should vast whole masses bow beneath the yoke of a perverse minority? And why, scarcely healed, should we fall back into a worse disease than that which we are leaving behind?

“Many of these seducers, and those are the most infamous, are playing the game of corruption with us; among them is Kotzebue, the most cunning and the worst of all, a real talking machine emitting all sorts of detestable speech and pernicious advice. His voice is skillful in removing from us all anger and bitterness against the most unjust measures, and is just such as kings require to put us to sleep again in that old hazy slumber which is the death of nations.

Every day he odiously betrays his country, and nevertheless, despite his treason, remains an idol for half Germany, which, dazzled by him, accepts unresisting the poison poured out by him in his periodic pamphlets, wrapped up and protected as he is by the seductive mantle of a great poetic reputation. Incited by him, the princes of Germany, who have forgotten their promises, will allow nothing free or good to be accomplished; or if anything of the kind is accomplished in spite of them, they will league themselves with the French to annihilate it. That the history of our time may not be covered with eternal ignominy, it is necessary that he should fall.

“I have always said that if we wish to find a great and supreme remedy for the state of abasement in which we are, none must shrink from combat nor from suffering; and the real liberty of the German people will only be assured when the good citizen sets himself or some other stake upon the game, and when every true son of the country, prepared for the struggle for justice, despises the good things of this world, and only desires those celestial good things which death holds in charge.

“Who then will strike this miserable hireling, this venal traitor?”

“I have long been waiting in fear, in prayer, and in tears—I who am not born for murder—for some other to be beforehand with me, to set me free, and suffer me to continue my way along the sweet and peaceful path that I had chosen for myself. Well, despite my prayers and my tears, he who should strike does not present himself; indeed, every man, like myself, has a right to count upon some other, and everyone thus counting, every hour’s delay, but makes our state worse; far at any moment—and how deep a shame would that be for us! Kotzebue may leave Germany, unpunished, and go to devour in Russia the treasures for which he has exchanged his honour, his conscience, and his German name. Who can preserve us from this shame, if every man, if I myself, do not feel strength to make myself the chosen instrument of God’s justice? Therefore, forward! It shall be I who will courageously rush upon him (do not be alarmed), on him, the loathsome seducer; it shall be I who will kill the traitor, so that his misguiding voice, being extinguished, shall cease to lead us astray from the lessons of history and from the Spirit of God. An irresistible and solemn duty impels me to this deed, ever since I have recognised to what high destinies the German nation may attain during this century, and ever since I have come to know the dastard and hypocrite who alone prevents it from reaching them; for me, as for every German who seeks the public good, this desire has become a

strict and binding necessity. May I, by this national vengeance, indicate to all upright and loyal consciences where the true danger lies, and save our vilified and calumniated societies from the imminent danger that threatens them! May I, in short, spread terror among the cowardly and wicked, and courage and faith among the good! Speeches and writings lead to nothing; only actions work.

“I will act, therefore; and though driven violently away from my fair dreams of the future, I am none the less full of trust in God; I even experience a celestial joy, now that, like the Hebrews when they sought the promised land, I see traced before me, through darkness and death, that road at the end of which I shall have paid my debt to my country.

“Farewell, then, faithful hearts: true, this early separation is hard; true, your hopes, like my wishes, are disappointed; but let us be consoled by the primary thought that we have done what the voice of our country called upon us to do; that, you knew, is the principle according to which I have always lived. You will doubtless say among yourselves, ‘Yes, thanks to our sacrifices, he had learned to know life and to taste the joys of earth, and he seemed: deeply to love his native country and the humble estate to which he was called’. Alas, yes, that is true! Under your protection, and amid your numberless sacrifices, my native land and life had become profoundly dear to me. Yes, thanks to you, I have penetrated into the Eden of knowledge, and have lived the free life of thought; thanks to you, I have looked into history, and have then returned to my own conscience to attach myself to the solid pillars of faith in the Eternal.

“Yes, I was to pass gently through this life as a preacher of the gospel; yes, in my constancy to my calling I was to be sheltered from the storms of this existence. But would that suffice to avert the danger that threatens Germany? And you yourselves, in your infinite love, should you not rather push me on to risk my life for the good of all? So many modern Greeks have fallen already to free their country from the yoke of the Turks, and have died almost without any result and without any hope; and yet thousands of fresh martyrs keep up their courage and are ready to fall in their turn; and should I, then, hesitate to die?

“That I do not recognise your love, or that your love is but a trifling consideration with me, you will not believe. What else should impel me to die if not my devotion to you and to Germany, and the need of proving this devotion to my family and my country?

“You, mother, will say, ‘Why have I brought up a son whom I loved and who loved me, for whom I have undergone a thousand cares and toils, who, thanks to my prayers and my example, was impressionable to good influences, and from whom, after my long and weary course, I hoped to receive attentions like those which I have given him? Why does he now abandon me?’

“Oh, my kind and tender mother! Yes, you will perhaps say that; but could not the mother of anyone else say the same, and everything go off thus in words when there is need to act for the country? And if no one would act, what would become of that mother of us all who is called Germany?

“But no; such complaints are far from you, you noble woman! I understood your appeal once before, and at this present hour, if no one came forward in the German cause, you yourself would urge me to the fight. I have two brothers and two sisters before me, all noble and loyal. They will remain to you, mother; and besides you will have for sons all the children of Germany who love their country.

“Every man has a destiny which he has to accomplish: mine is devoted to the action that I am about to undertake; if I were to live another fifty years, I could not live more happily than I have done lately. Farewell, mother: I commend you to the protection of God; may He raise you to that joy which misfortunes can no longer trouble! Take your grandchildren, to whom I should so much have liked to be a loving friend, to the top of our beautiful mountains soon. There, on that altar raised by the Lord Himself in the midst of Germany, let them devote themselves, swearing to take up the sword as soon as they have strength to lift it, and to lay it down only when our brethren are all united in liberty, when all Germans, having a liberal constitution; are great before the Lord, powerful against their neighbours, and united among themselves.

“May my country ever raise her happy gaze to Thee, Almighty Father! May Thy blessing fall abundantly upon her harvests ready to be cut and her armies ready for battle, and recognising the blessings that Thou hast showered upon us, may the German nation ever be first among nations to rise and uphold the cause of humanity, which is Thy image upon earth!

“Your eternally attached son, brother and friend, ” KARL-LUDWIG SAND. ”
JENA, the beginning of March, 1819.”

Sand, who, as we have said, had at first been taken to the hospital, was removed at the end of three months to the prison at Mannheim, where the governor, Mr. G—, had caused a room to be prepared for him. There he remained two months longer in a state of extreme weakness: his left arm was completely paralysed; his voice was very weak; every movement gave him horrible pain, and thus it was not until the 11th of August—that is to say, five months after the event that we have narrated—that he was able to write to his family the following letter:—

“MY VERY DEAR PARENTS:—The grand-duke’s commission of inquiry informed me yesterday that it might be possible I should have the intense joy of a visit from you, and that I might perhaps see you here and embrace you—you, mother, and some of my brothers and sisters.

“Without being surprised at this fresh proof of your motherly love, I have felt an ardent remembrance reawakened of the happy life that we spent gently together. Joy and grief, desire and sacrifice, agitate my heart violently, and I have had to weigh these various impulses one against the other, and with the force of reason, in order to resume mastery of myself and to take a decision in regard to my wishes.

“The balance has inclined in the direction of sacrifice.

“You know, mother, how much joy and courage a look from your eyes, daily intercourse with you, and your pious and high-minded conversation, might bring me during my very short time. But you also know my position, and you are too well acquainted with the natural course of all these painful inquiries, not to feel as I do, that such annoyance, continually recurring, would greatly trouble the pleasure of our companionship, if it did not indeed succeed in entirely destroying it. Then, mother, after the long and fatiguing journey that you would be obliged to make in order to see me, think of the terrible sorrow of the farewell when the moment came to part in this world. Let us therefore abide by the sacrifice, according to God’s will, and let us yield ourselves only to that sweet community of thought which distance cannot interrupt, in which I find my only joys, and which, in spite of men, will always be granted us by the Lord, our Father.

“As for my physical state, I knew nothing about it. You see, however, since at last I am writing to you myself, that I have come past my first uncertainties. As

for the rest, I know too little of the structure of my own body to give any opinion as to what my wounds may determine for it. Except that a little strength has returned to me, its state is still the same, and I endure it calmly and patiently; for God comes to my help, and gives me courage and firmness. He will help me, believe me, to find all the joys of the soul and to be strong in mind. Amen.

“May you live happy!—Your deeply respectful son,

“KARL-LUDWIG SAND.”

A month after this letter came tender answers from all the family. We will quote only that of Sand’s mother, because it completes the idea which the reader may have formed already of this great-hearted woman, as her son always calls her.

“DEAR, INEXPRESSIBLY DEAR KARL,—How Sweet it was to me to see the writing of your beloved hand after so long a time! No journey would have been so painful and no road so long as to prevent me from coming to you, and I would go, in deep and infinite love, to any end of the earth in the mere hope of catching sight of you.

“But, as I well know both your tender affection and your profound anxiety for me, and as you give me, so firmly and upon such manly reflection, reasons against which I can say nothing, and which I can but honour, it shall be, my well-beloved Karl, as you have wished and decided. We will continue, without speech, to communicate our thoughts; but be satisfied, nothing can separate us; I enfold you in my soul, and my material thoughts watch over you.

“May this infinite love which upholds us, strengthens us, and leads us all to a better life, preserve, dear Karl, your courage and firmness.

“Farewell, and be invariably assured that I shall never cease to love you strongly and deeply.

“Your faithful mother, who loves you to eternity.”

Sand replied:—

January 1820, from my isle of Patmos.

“MY DEAR PARENTS, BROTHERS, AND SISTERS,—

“In the middle of the month of September last year I received, through the grand-duke’s special commission of inquiry, whose humanity you have already appreciated, your dear letters of the end of August and the beginning of September, which had such magical influence that they inundated me with joy by transporting me into the inmost circle of your hearts.

“You, my tender father, you write to me on the sixty-seventh anniversary of your birth, and you bless me by the outpouring of your most tender love.

“You, my well-beloved mother, you deign to promise the continuance of your maternal affection, in which I have at all times constantly believed; and thus I have received the blessings of both of you, which, in my present position, will exercise a more beneficent influence upon me than any of the things that all the kings of the earth, united together, could grant me. Yes, you strengthen me abundantly by your blessed love, and I render thanks to you, my beloved parents, with that respectful submission that my heart will always inculcate as the first duty of a son.

“But the greater your love and the more affectionate your letters, the more do I suffer, I must acknowledge, from the voluntary sacrifice that we have imposed upon ourselves in not seeing one another; and the only reason, my dear parents, why I have delayed to reply to you, was to give myself time to recover the strength which I have lost.

“You too, dear brother-in-law and dear sister, assure me of your sincere and uninterrupted attachment. And yet, after the fright that I have spread among you all, you seem not to know exactly what to think of me; but my heart, full of gratitude for your past kindness, comforts itself; for your actions speak and tell me that, even if you wished no longer to love me as I love you, you would not be able to do otherwise. These actions mean more to me at this hour than any possible protestations, nay, than even the tenderest words.

“And you also, my kind brother, you would have consented to hurry with our beloved mother to the shores of the Rhine, to this place where the real links of the soul were welded between us, where we were doubly brothers; but tell me, are you not really here, in thought and in spirit, when I consider the rich fountain

of consolation brought me by your cordial and tender letter?

“And, you, kind sister-in-law, as you showed yourself from the first, in your delicate tenderness, a true sister, so I find you again at present. There are still the same tender relations, still the same sisterly affection; your consolations, which emanate from a deep and submissive piety, have fallen refreshingly into the depths of my heart. But, dear sister-in-law, I must tell you, as well as the others, that you are too liberal towards me in dispensing your esteem and praises, and your exaggeration has cast me back face to face with my inmost judge, who has shown me in the mirror of my conscience the image of my every weakness.

“You, kind Julia, you desire nothing else but to save me from the fate that awaits me; and you assure me in your own name and in that of you all, that you, like the others, would rejoice to endure it in my place; in that I recognise you fully, and I recognise, too, those sweet and tender relations in which we have been brought up from childhood. Oh, be comforted, dear Julia; thanks to the protection of God, I promise you: that it will be easy for me, much easier than I should have thought, to bear what falls to my lot. Receive, then, all of you, my warm and sincere thanks for having thus rejoiced my heart.

“Now that I know from these strengthening letters that, like the prodigal son, the love and goodness of my family are greater on my return than at my departure, I will, as carefully as possible, paint for you my physical and moral state, and I pray God to supplement my words by His strength, so that my letter may contain an equivalent of what yours brought to me, and may help you to reach that state of calm and serenity to which I have myself attained.

“Hardened, by having gained power over myself, against the good and ill of this earth, you knew already that of late years I have lived only for moral joys, and I must say that, touched by my efforts, doubtless, the Lord, who is the sacred fount of all that is good, has rendered me apt in seeking them and in tasting them to the full. God is ever near me, as formerly, and I find in Him the sovereign principle of the creation of all things; in Him, our holy Father, not only consolation and strength, but an unalterable Friend, full of the holiest love, who will accompany me in all places where I may need His consolations. Assuredly, if He had turned from me, or if I had turned away my eyes from Him, I should now find myself very unfortunate and wretched; but by His grace, on the contrary, lowly and weak creature as I am, He makes me strong and powerful against whatever can befall me.

“What I have hitherto revered as sacred, what I have desired as good what I have aspired to as heavenly, has in no respect changed now. And I thank God for it, for I should now be in great despair if I were compelled to recognise that my heart had adored deceptive images and enwrapped itself in fugitive chimeras. Thus my faith in these ideas and my pure love for them, guardian angels of my spirit as they are, increase moment by moment, and will go on increasing to my end, and I hope that I may pass all the more easily from this world into eternity. I pass my silent life in Christian exaltation and humility, and I sometimes have those visions from above through which I have, from my birth, adored heaven upon earth, and which give me power to raise myself to the Lord upon the eager wings of my prayers. My illness, though long, painful, and cruel, has always been sufficiently mastered by my will to let me busy myself to some result with history, positive sciences, and the finer parts of religious education, and when my suffering became more violent and for a time interrupted these occupations, I struggled successfully, nevertheless, against ennui; for the memories of the past, my resignation to the present, and my faith in the future were rich enough and strong enough in me and round me to prevent my falling from my terrestrial paradise. According to my principles, I would never, in the position in which I am and in which I have placed myself, have been willing to ask anything for my own comfort; but so much kindness and care have been lavished upon me, with so much delicacy and humanity,—which alas! I am unable to return—by every person with whom I have been brought into contact, that wishes which I should not have dared to frame in the most private recesses of my heart have been more than exceeded. I have never been so much overcome by bodily pains that I could not say within myself, while I lifted my thoughts to heaven, ‘Come what may of this ray.’ And great as these gains have been, I could not dream of comparing them with those sufferings of the soul that we feel so profoundly and poignantly in the recognition of our weaknesses and faults.

“Moreover, these pains seldom now cause me to lose consciousness; the swelling and inflammation never made great headway, and the fever has always been moderate, though for nearly ten months I have been forced to remain lying on my back, unable to raise myself, and although more than forty pints of matter have come from my chest at the place where the heart is. No, on the contrary, the wound, though still open, is in a good state; and I owe that not only to the excellent nursing around me, but also to the pure blood that I received from you, my mother. Thus I have lacked neither earthly assistance nor heavenly encouragement. Thus, on the anniversary of my birth, I had every reason—oh, not to curse the hour in which I was born, but, on the contrary, after serious

contemplation of the world, to thank God and you, my dear parents, for the life that you have given me! I celebrated it, on the 18th of October, by a peaceful and ardent submission to the holy will of God. On Christmas Day I tried to put myself into the temper of children who are devoted to the Lord; and with God's help the new year will pass like its predecessor, in bodily pain, perhaps, but certainly in spiritual joy. And with this wish, the only one that I form, I address myself to you, my dear parents, and to you and yours, my dear brothers and sisters.

“I cannot hope to see a twenty-fifth new year; so may the prayer that I have just made be granted! May this picture of my present state afford you some tranquillity, and may this letter that I write to you from the depths of my heart not only prove to you that I am not unworthy of the inexpressible love that you all display, but, on the contrary, ensure this love to me for eternity.

“Within the last few days I have also received your dear letter of the 2nd of December, my kind mother, and the grand-duke's commission has deigned to let me also read my kind brother's letter which accompanied yours. You give me the best of news in regard to the health of all of you, and send me preserved fruits from our dear home. I thank you for them from the bottom of my heart. What causes me most joy in the matter is that you have been solicitously busy about me in summer as in winter, and that you and my dear Julia gathered them and prepared them for me at home, and I abandon my whole soul to that sweet enjoyment.

“I rejoice sincerely at my little cousin's coming into the world; I joyfully congratulate the good parents and the grandparents; I transport myself, for his baptism, into that beloved parish, where I offer him my affection as his Christian brother, and call down on him all the blessings of heaven.

“We shall be obliged, I think, to give up this correspondence, so as not to inconvenience the grand-duke's commission. I finish, therefore, by assuring you, once more, but for the last time, perhaps, of my profound filial submission and of my fraternal affection.—Your most tenderly attached

“KARL-LUDWIG SAND.”

Indeed, from that moment all correspondence between Karl and his family

ceased, and he only wrote to them, when he knew his fate, one more letter, which we shall see later on.

We have seen by what attentions Sand was surrounded; their humanity never flagged for an instant. It is the truth, too, that no one saw in him an ordinary murderer, that many pitied him under their breath, and that some excused him aloud. The very commission appointed by the grand-duke prolonged the affair as much as possible; for the severity of Sand's wounds had at first given rise to the belief that there would be no need of calling in the executioner, and the commission was well pleased that God should have undertaken the execution of the judgment. But these expectations were deceived: the skill of the doctor defeated, not indeed the wound, but death: Sand did not recover, but he remained alive; and it began to be evident that it would be needful to kill him.

Indeed, the Emperor Alexander, who had appointed Kotzebue his councillor, and who was under no misapprehension as to the cause of the murder, urgently demanded that justice should take its course. The commission of inquiry was therefore obliged to set to work; but as its members were sincerely desirous of having some pretext to delay their proceedings, they ordered that a physician from Heidelberg should visit Sand and make an exact report upon his case; as Sand was kept lying down and as he could not be executed in his bed, they hoped that the physician's report, by declaring it impossible for the prisoner to rise, would come to their assistance and necessitate a further respite.

The chosen doctor came accordingly to Mannheim, and introducing himself to Sand as though attracted by the interest that he inspired, asked him whether he did not feel somewhat better, and whether it would be impossible to rise. Sand looked at him for an instant, and then said, with a smile—

“I understand, sir; they wish to know whether I am strong enough to mount a scaffold: I know nothing about it myself, but we will make the experiment together.”

With these words he rose, and accomplishing, with superhuman courage, what he had not attempted for fourteen months, walked twice round the room, came back to his bed, upon which he seated himself, and said

“You see, sir, I am strong enough; it would therefore be wasting precious time to keep my judges longer about my affair; so let them deliver their judgment, for

nothing now prevents its execution.”

The doctor made his report; there was no way of retreat; Russia was becoming more and more pressing, and on the 5th of May 1820 the high court of justice delivered the following judgment, which was confirmed on the 12th by His Royal Highness the Grand-Duke of Baden:

“In the matters under investigation and after administration of the interrogatory and hearing the defences, and considering the united opinions of the court of justice at Mannheim and the further consultations of the court of justice which declare the accused, Karl Sand of Wonsiedel, guilty of murder, even on his own confession, upon the person of the Russian imperial Councillor of State, Kotzebue; it is ordered accordingly, for his just punishment and for an example that may deter other people, that he is to be put from life to death by the sword.

“All the costs of these investigations, including those occasioned by his public execution, will be defrayed from the funds of the law department, on account of his want of means.”

We see that, though it condemned the accused to death, which indeed could hardly be avoided, the sentence was both in form and substance as mild as possible, since, though Sand was convicted, his poor family was not reduced by the expenses of a long and costly trial to complete ruin.

Five days were still allowed to elapse, and the verdict was not announced until the 17th. When Sand was informed that two councillors of justice were at the door, he guessed that they were coming to read his sentence to him; he asked a moment to rise, which he had done but once before, in the instance already narrated, during fourteen months. And indeed he was so weak that he could not stand to hear the sentence, and after having greeted the deputation that death sent to him, he asked to sit down, saying that he did so not from cowardice of soul but from weakness of body; then he added, “You are welcome, gentlemen; far I have suffered so much for fourteen months past that you come to me as angels of deliverance.”

He heard the sentence quite unaffectedly and with a gentle smile upon his lips; then, when the reading was finished, he said—

“I look for no better fate, gentlemen, and when, more than a year ago, I paused on the little hill that overlooks the town, I saw beforehand the place where my

grave would be; and so I ought to thank God and man for having prolonged my existence up to to-day.”

The councillors withdrew; Sand stood up a second time to greet them on their departure, as he had done on their entrance; then he sat down again pensively in his chair, by which Mr. G, the governor of the prison, was standing. After a moment of silence, a tear appeared at each of the condemned man’s eyelids, and ran down his cheeks; then, turning suddenly to Mr. G—, whom he liked very much, he said, “I hope that my parents would rather see me die by this violent death than of some slow and shameful disease. As for me, I am glad that I shall soon hear the hour strike in which my death will satisfy those who hate me, and those whom, according to my principles, I ought to hate.”

Then he wrote to his family.

“MANNHEIM

“17th of the month of spring, 1820

“DEAR PARENTS, BROTHERS, AND SISTERS,—You should have received my last letters through the grand-duke’s commission; in them I answered yours, and tried to console you for my position by describing the state of my soul as it is, the contempt to which I have attained for everything fragile and earthly, and by which one must necessarily be overcome when such matters are weighed against the fulfilment of an idea, or that intellectual liberty which alone can nourish the soul; in a word, I tried to console you by the assurance that the feelings, principles, and convictions of which I formerly spoke are faithfully preserved in me and have remained exactly the same; but I am sure all this was an unnecessary precaution on my part, for there was never a time when you asked anything else of me than to have God before my eyes and in my heart; and you have seen how, under your guidance, this precept so passed into my soul that it became my sole object of happiness for this world and the next; no doubt, as He was in and near me, God will be in and near you at the moment when this letter brings you the news of my sentence. I die willingly, and the Lord will give me strength to die as one ought to die.

“I write to you perfectly quiet and calm about all things, and I hope that your lives too will pass calmly and tranquilly until the moment when our souls meet again full of fresh force to love one another and to share eternal happiness

together.

“As for me, such as I have lived as long as I have known myself—that is to say, in a serenity full of celestial desires and a courageous and indefatigable love of liberty, such I am about to die.

“May God be with you and with me!—Your son, brother, and friend,

“KARL-LUDWIG SAND.”

From that moment his serenity remained untroubled; during the whole day he talked more gaily than usual, slept well, did not awake until half-past seven, said that he felt stronger, and thanked God for visiting him thus.

The nature of the verdict had been known since the day before, and it had been learned that the execution was fixed for the 20th of May—that is to say, three full days after the sentence had been read to the accused.

Henceforward, with Sand's permission, persons who wished to speak to him and whom he was not reluctant to see, were admitted: three among these paid him long and noteworthy visits.

One was Major Holzungen, of the Baden army, who was in command of the patrol that had arrested him, or rather picked him up, dying, and carried him to the hospital. He asked him whether he recognised him, and Sand's head was so clear when he stabbed himself, that although he saw the major only for a moment and had never seen him again since, he remembered the minutest details of the costume which he had been wearing fourteen months previously, and which was the full-dress uniform. When the talk fell upon the death to which Sand was to submit at so early an age, the major pitied him; but Sand answered, with a smile, “There is only one difference between you and me, major; it is that I shall die for my convictions, and you will die for someone else's convictions.”

After the major came a young student from Jena whom Sand had known at the university. He happened to be in the duchy of Baden and wished to visit him. Their recognition was touching, and the student wept much; but Sand consoled him with his usual calmness and serenity.

Then a workman asked to be admitted to see Sand, on the plea that he had been his schoolfellow at Wonsiedel, and although he did not remember his name, he ordered him to be let in: the workman reminded him that he had been one of the little army that Sand had commanded on the day of the assault of St. Catherine's tower. This indication guided Sand, who recognised him perfectly, and then spoke with tender affection of his native place and his dear mountains. He further charged him to greet his family, and to beg his mother, father, brothers, and sisters once more not to be grieved on his account, since the messenger who undertook to deliver his last words could testify in how calm and joyful a temper he was awaiting death.

To this workman succeeded one of the guests whom Sand had met on the staircase directly after Kotzebue's death. He asked him whether he acknowledged his crime and whether he felt any repentance. Sand replied, "I had thought about it during a whole year. I have been thinking of it for fourteen months, and my opinion has never varied in any respect: I did what I should have done."

After the departure of this last visitor, Sand sent for Mr. G—, the governor of the prison, and told him that he should like to talk to the executioner before the execution, since he wished to ask for instructions as to how he should hold himself so as to render the operation most certain and easy. Mr. G— made some objections, but Sand insisted with his usual gentleness, and Mr. G— at last promised that the man in question should be asked to call at the prison as soon as he arrived from Heidelberg, where he lived.

The rest of the day was spent in seeing more visitors and in philosophical and moral talks, in which Sand developed his social and religious theories with a lucidity of expression and an elevation of thought such as he had, perhaps, never before shown. The governor of the prison from whom I heard these details, told me that he should all his life regret that he did not know shorthand, so that he might have noted all these thoughts, which would have formed a pendant to the *Phaedo*.

Night came. Sand spent part of the evening writing; it is thought that he was composing a poem; but no doubt he burned it, for no trace of it was found. At eleven he went to bed, and slept until six in the morning. Next day he bore the dressing of his wound, which was always very painful, with extraordinary courage, without fainting, as he sometimes did, and without suffering a single

complaint to escape him: he had spoken the truth; in the presence of death God gave him the grace of allowing his strength to return. The operation was over; Sand was lying down as usual, and Mr. G— was sitting on the foot of his bed, when the door opened and a man came in and bowed to Sand and to Mr. G—. The governor of the prison immediately stood up, and said to Sand in a voice the emotion of which he could not conceal, “The person who is bowing to you is Mr. Widemann of Heidelberg, to whom you wished to speak.”

Then Sand’s face was lighted up by a strange joy; he sat up and said, “Sir, you are welcome.” Then, making his visitor sit down by his bed, and taking his hand, he began to thank him for being so obliging, and spoke in so intense a tone and so gentle a voice, that Mr. Widemann, deeply moved, could not answer. Sand encouraged him to speak and to give him the details for which he wished, and in order to reassure him, said, “Be firm, sir; for I, on my part, will not fail you: I will not move; and even if you should need two or three strokes to separate my head from my body, as I am told is sometimes the case, do not be troubled on that account.”

Then Sand rose, leaning on Mr. G—, to go through with the executioner the strange and terrible rehearsal of the drama in which he was to play the leading part on the morrow. Mr. Widemann made him sit in a chair and take the required position, and went into all the details of the execution with him. Then Sand, perfectly instructed, begged him not to hurry and to take his time. Then he thanked him beforehand; “for,” added he, “afterwards I shall not be able.” Then Sand returned to his bed, leaving the executioner paler and more trembling than himself. All these details have been preserved by Mr. G—; for as to the executioner, his emotion was so great that he could remember nothing.

After Mr. Widemann, three clergymen were introduced, with whom Sand conversed upon religious matters: one of them stayed six hours with him, and on leaving him told him that he was commissioned to obtain from him a promise of not speaking to the people at the place of execution. Sand gave the promise, and added, “Even if I desired to do so, my voice has become so weak that people could not hear it.”

Meanwhile the scaffold was being erected in the meadow that extends on the left of the road to Heidelberg. It was a platform five to six feet high and ten feet wide each way. As it was expected that, thanks to the interest inspired by the prisoner and to the nearness to Whitsuntide, the crowd would be immense, and as some

movement from the universities was apprehended, the prison guards had been trebled, and General Neustein had been ordered to Mannheim from Carlsruhe, with twelve hundred infantry, three hundred and fifty cavalry, and a company of artillery with guns.

On, the afternoon of the 19th there arrived, as had been foreseen, so many students, who took up their abode in the neighbouring villages, that it was decided to put forward the hour of the execution, and to let it take place at five in the morning instead of at eleven, as had been arranged. But Sand's consent was necessary for this; for he could not be executed until three full days after the reading of his sentence, and as the sentence had not been read to him till half-past ten Sand had a right to live till eleven o'clock.

Before four in the morning the officials went into the condemned man's room; he was sleeping so soundly that they were obliged to awaken him. He opened his eyes with a smile, as was his custom, and guessing why they came, asked, "Can I have slept so well that it is already eleven in the morning?" They told him that it was not, but that they had come to ask his permission to put forward the time; for, they told him, some collision between the students and the soldiers was feared, and as the military preparations were very thorough, such a collision could not be otherwise than fatal to his friends. Sand answered that he was ready that very moment, and only asked time enough to take a bath, as the ancients were accustomed to do before going into battle. But as the verbal authorisation which he had given was not sufficient, a pen and paper were given to Sand, and he wrote, with a steady hand and in his usual writing:

"I thank the authorities of Mannheim for anticipating my most eager wishes by making my execution six hours earlier.

"Sit nomen Domini benedictum.

"From the prison room, May 20th, day of my deliverance.

"KARL-LUDWIG SAND."

When Sand had given these two lines to the recorder, the physician came to him to dress his wound, as usual. Sand looked at him with a smile, and then asked, "Is it really worth the trouble?"

“You will be stronger for it,” answered the physician.

“Then do it,” said Sand.

A bath was brought. Sand lay down in it, and had his long and beautiful hair arranged with the greatest care; then his toilet being completed, he put on a frock-coat of the German shape—that is to say, short and with the shirt collar turned back over the shoulders, close white trousers, and high boots. Then Sand seated himself on his bed and prayed some time in a low voice with the clergy; then, when he had finished, he said these two lines of Korner’s:

“All that is earthly is ended, And the life of heaven begins.”

He next took leave of the physician and the priests, saying to them, “Do not attribute the emotion of my voice to weakness but to gratitude.” Then, upon these gentlemen offering to accompany him to the scaffold, he said, “There is no need; I am perfectly prepared, at peace with God and with my conscience. Besides, am I not almost a Churchman myself?” And when one of them asked whether he was not going out of life in a spirit of hatred, he returned, “Why, good heavens! have I ever felt any?”

An increasing noise was audible from the street, and Sand said again that he was at their disposal and that he was ready. At this moment the executioner came in with his two assistants; he was dressed in a long wadded black coat, beneath which he hid his sword. Sand offered him his hand affectionately; and as Mr. Widemann, embarrassed by the sword which he wished to keep Sand from seeing, did not venture to come forward, Sand said to him, “Come along and show me your sword; I have never seen one of the kind, and am curious to know what it is like.”

Mr. Widemann, pale and trembling, presented the weapon to him; Sand examined it attentively, and tried the edge with his finger.

“Come,” said he, “the blade is good; do not tremble, and all will go well.” Then, turning to Mr. G—, who was weeping, he said to him, “You will be good enough, will you not, to do me the service of leading me to the scaffold?”

Mr. G— made a sign of assent with his head, for he could not answer. Sand took his arm, and spoke for the third time, saying once more, “Well, what are you waiting for, gentlemen? I am ready.”

When they reached the courtyard, Sand saw all the prisoners weeping at their windows. Although he had never seen them, they were old friends of his; for every time they passed his door, knowing that the student who had killed Kotzebue lay within, they used to lift their chain, that he might not be disturbed by the noise.

All Mannheim was in the streets that led to the place of execution, and many patrols were passing up and down. On the day when the sentence was announced the whole town had been sought through for a chaise in which to convey Sand to the scaffold, but no one, not even the coach-builders, would either let one out or sell one; and it had been necessary, therefore, to buy one at Heidelberg without saying for what purpose.

Sand found this chaise in the courtyard, and got into it with Mr. G—. Turning to him, he whispered in his ear, “Sir, if you see me turn pale, speak my name to me, my name only, do you hear? That will be enough.”

The prison gate was opened, and Sand was seen; then every voice cried with one impulse, “Farewell, Sand, farewell!”

And at the same time flowers, some of which fell into the carriage, were thrown by the crowd that thronged the street, and from the windows. At these friendly cries and at this spectacle, Sand, who until then had shown no moment of weakness, felt tears rising in spite of himself, and while he returned the greetings made to him on all sides, he murmured in a low voice, “O my God, give me courage!”

This first outburst over, the procession set out amid deep silence; only now and again some single voice would call out, “Farewell, Sand!” and a handkerchief waved by some hand that rose out of the crowd would show from what point the last call came. On each side of the chaise walked two of the prison officials, and behind the chaise came a second conveyance with the municipal authorities.

The air was very cold: it had rained all night, and the dark and cloudy sky seemed to share in the general sadness. Sand, too weak to remain sitting up, was half lying upon the shoulder of Mr. G—, his companion; his face was gentle, calm and full of pain; his brow free and open, his features, interesting though without regular beauty, seemed to have aged by several years during the fourteen months of suffering that had just elapsed. The chaise at last reached the place of

execution, which was surrounded by a battalion of infantry; Sand lowered his eyes from heaven to earth and saw the scaffold. At this sight he smiled gently, and as he left the carriage he said, "Well, God has given me strength so far."

The governor of the prison and the chief officials lifted him that he might go up the steps. During that short ascent pain kept him bowed, but when he had reached the top he stood erect again, saying, "Here then is the place where I am to die!"

Then before he came to the chair on which he was to be seated for the execution, he turned his eyes towards Mannheim, and his gaze travelled over all the throng that surrounded him; at that moment a ray of sunshine broke through the clouds. Sand greeted it with a smile and sat down.

Then, as, according to the orders given, his sentence was to be read to him a second time, he was asked whether he felt strong enough to hear it standing. Sand answered that he would try, and that if his physical strength failed him, his moral strength would uphold him. He rose immediately from the fatal chair, begging Mr. G—to stand near enough to support him if he should chance to stagger. The precaution was unnecessary, Sand did not stagger.

After the judgment had been read, he sat down again and said in a loud voice, "I die trusting in God."

But at these words Mr. G— interrupted him.

"Sand," said he, "what did you promise?"

"True," he answered; "I had forgotten." He was silent, therefore, to the crowd; but, raising his right hand and extending it solemnly in the air, he said in a low voice, so that he might be heard only by those who were around him, "I take God to witness that I die for the freedom of Germany."

Then, with these words, he did as Conradin did with his glove; he threw his rolled-up handkerchief over the line of soldiers around him, into the midst of the people.

Then the executioner came to cut off his hair; but Sand at first objected.

"It is for your mother," said Mr. Widemann.

“On your honour, sir?” asked Sand.

“On my honour.”

“Then do it,” said Sand, offering his hair to the executioner.

Only a few curls were cut off, those only which fell at the back, the others were tied with a ribbon on the top of the head. The executioner then tied his hands on his breast, but as that position was oppressive to him and compelled him an account of his wound to bend his head, his hands were laid flat on his thighs and fixed in that position with ropes. Then, when his eyes were about to be bound, he begged Mr. Widemann to place the bandage in such a manner that he could see the light to his last moment. His wish was fulfilled.

Then a profound and mortal stillness hovered over the whole crowd and surrounded the scaffold. The executioner drew his sword, which flashed like lightning and fell. Instantly a terrible cry rose at once from twenty thousand bosoms; the head had not fallen, and though it had sunk towards the breast still held to the neck. The executioner struck a second time, and struck off at the same blow the head and a part of the hand.

In the same moment, notwithstanding the efforts of the soldiers, their line was broken through; men and women rushed upon the scaffold, the blood was wiped up to the last drop with handkerchiefs; the chair upon which Sand had sat was broken and divided into pieces, and those who could not obtain one, cut fragments of bloodstained wood from the scaffold itself.

The head and body were placed in a coffin draped with black, and carried back, with a large military escort, to the prison. At midnight the body was borne silently, without torches or lights, to the Protestant cemetery, in which Kotzebue had been buried fourteen months previously. A grave had been mysteriously dug; the coffin was lowered into it, and those who were present at the burial were sworn upon the New Testament not to reveal the spot where Sand was buried until such time as they were freed from their oath. Then the grave was covered again with the turf, that had been skilfully taken off, and that was relaid on the same spot, so that no new grave could be perceived; then the nocturnal gravediggers departed, leaving guards at the entrance.

There, twenty paces apart, Sand and Kotzebue rest: Kotzebue opposite the gate in the most conspicuous spot of the cemetery, and beneath a tomb upon which is

engraved this inscription:

“The world persecuted him without pity, Calumny was his sad portion, He found no happiness save in the arms of his wife, And no repose save in the bosom of death. Envy dogged him to cover his path with thorns, Love bade his roses blossom; May Heaven pardon him As he pardons earth!”

In contrast with this tall and showy monument, standing, as we have said, in the most conspicuous spot of the cemetery, Sand’s grave must be looked far in the corner to the extreme left of the entrance gate; and a wild plum tree, some leaves of which every passing traveller carries away, rises alone upon the grave, which is devoid of any inscription.

As far the meadow in which Sand was executed, it is still called by the people “Sand’s Himmelfartsweise,” which signifies “The manner of Sand’s ascension.”

Toward the end of September, 1838, we were at Mannheim, where I had stayed three days in order to collect all the details I could find about the life and death of Karl-Ludwig Sand. But at the end of these three days, in spite of my active investigations, these details still remained extremely incomplete, either because I applied in the wrong quarters, or because, being a foreigner, I inspired some distrust in those to whom I applied. I was leaving Mannheim, therefore, somewhat disappointed, and after having visited the little Protestant cemetery where Sand and Kotzebue are buried at twenty paces from each other, I had ordered my driver to take the road to Heidelberg, when, after going a few yards, he, who knew the object of my inquiries, stopped of himself and asked me whether I should not like to see the place where Sand was executed. At the same time he pointed to a little mound situated in the middle of a meadow and a few steps from a brook. I assented eagerly, and although the driver remained on the highroad with my travelling companions, I soon recognised the spot indicated, by means of some relics of cypress branches, immortelles, and forget-me-nots scattered upon the earth. It will readily be understood that this sight, instead of diminishing my desire for information, increased it. I was feeling, then, more than ever dissatisfied at going away, knowing so little, when I saw a man of some five-and-forty to fifty years old, who was walking a little distance from the place where I myself was, and who, guessing the cause that drew me thither, was looking at me with curiosity. I determined to make a last effort, and going up to him, I said, “Oh, sir, I am a stranger; I am travelling to collect all the rich and poetic traditions of your Germany. By the way in which you look at me, I guess

that you know which of them attracts me to this meadow. Could you give me any information about the life and death of Sand?"

"With what object, sir?" the person to whom I spoke asked me in almost unintelligible French.

"With a very German object, be assured, sir," I replied. "From the little I have learned, Sand seems to me to be one of those ghosts that appear only the greater and the more poetic for being wrapped in a shroud stained with blood. But he is not known in France; he might be put on the same level there with a Fieschi or a Meunier, and I wish, to the best of my ability, to enlighten the minds of my countrymen about him."

"It would be a great pleasure to me, sir, to assist in such an undertaking; but you see that I can scarcely speak French; you do not speak German at all; so that we shall find it difficult to understand each other."

"If that is all," I returned, "I have in my carriage yonder an interpreter, or rather an interpretress, with whom you will, I hope, be quite satisfied, who speaks German like Goethe, and to whom, when you have once begun to speak to her, I defy you not to tell everything."

"Let us go, then, sir," answered the pedestrian. "I ask no better than to be agreeable to you."

We walked toward the carriage, which was still waiting on the highroad, and I presented to my travelling companion the new recruit whom I had just gained. The usual greetings were exchanged, and the dialogue began in the purest Saxon. Though I did not understand a word that was said, it was easy for me to see, by the rapidity of the questions and the length of the answers, that the conversation was most interesting. At last, at the end of half an hour growing desirous of knowing to what point they had come, I said, "Well?"

"Well," answered my interpreter, "you are in luck's way, and you could not have asked a better person."

"The gentleman knew Sand, then?"

"The gentleman is the governor of the prison in which Sand was confined."

“Indeed?”

“For nine months—that is to say, from the day he left the hospital— this gentleman saw him every day.”

“Excellent!”

“But that is not all: this gentleman was with him in the carriage that took him to execution; this gentleman was with him on the scaffold; there’s only one portrait of Sand in all Mannheim, and this gentleman has it.”

I was devouring every word; a mental alchemist, I was opening my crucible and finding gold in it.

“Just ask,” I resumed eagerly, “whether the gentleman will allow us to take down in writing the particulars that he can give me.”

My interpreter put another question, then, turning towards me, said, “Granted.”

Mr. G— got into the carriage with us, and instead of going on to Heidelberg, we returned to Mannheim, and alighted at the prison.

Mr. G— did not once depart from the ready kindness that he had shown. In the most obliging manner, patient over the minutest trifles, and remembering most happily, he went over every circumstance, putting himself at my disposal like a professional guide. At last, when every particular about Sand had been sucked dry, I began to ask him about the manner in which executions were performed. “As to that,” said he, “I can offer you an introduction to someone at Heidelberg who can give you all the information you can wish for upon the subject.”

I accepted gratefully, and as I was taking leave of Mr. G—, after thanking him a thousand times, he handed me the offered letter. It bore this superscription: “To Herr-doctor Widemann, No. III High Street, Heidelberg.”

I turned to Mr. G— once more.

“Is he, by chance, a relation of the man who executed Sand? “I asked.

“He is his son, and was standing by when the head fell.”.

“What is his calling, then?”

“The same as that of his father, whom he succeeded.”

“But you call him ‘doctor’?”

“Certainly; with us, executioners have that title.”

“But, then, doctors of what?”

“Of surgery.”

“Really?” said I. “With us it is just the contrary; surgeons are called executioners.”

“You will find him, moreover,” added Mr. G—, “a very distinguished young man, who, although he was very young at that time, has retained a vivid recollection of that event. As for his poor father, I think he would as willingly have cut off his own right hand as have executed Sand; but if he had refused, someone else would have been found. So he had to do what he was ordered to do, and he did his best.”

I thanked Mr. G—, fully resolving to make use of his letter, and we left for Heidelberg, where we arrived at eleven in the evening.

My first visit next day was to Dr. Widernann. It was not without some emotion, which, moreover, I saw reflected upon, the faces of my travelling companions, that I rang at the door of the last judge, as the Germans call him. An old woman opened the door to us, and ushered us into a pretty little study, on the left of a passage and at the foot of a staircase, where we waited while Mr. Widemann finished dressing. This little room was full of curiosities, madrepores, shells, stuffed birds, and dried plants; a double-barrelled gun, a powder-flask, and a game-bag showed that Mr. Widemann was a hunter.

After a moment we heard his footstep, and the door opened. Mr. Widemann was a very handsome young man, of thirty or thirty-two, with black whiskers entirely surrounding his manly and expressive face; his morning dress showed a certain rural elegance. He seemed at first not only embarrassed but pained by our visit. The aimless curiosity of which he seemed to be the object was indeed odd. I hastened to give him Mr. G—’s letter and to tell him what reason brought me.

Then he gradually recovered himself, and at last showed himself no less hospitable and obliging towards us than he to whom we owed the introduction had been, the day before.

Mr. Widemann then gathered together all his remembrances; he, too, had retained a vivid recollection of Sand, and he told us among other things that his father, at the risk of bringing himself into ill odour, had asked leave to have a new scaffold made at his own expense, so that no other criminal might be executed upon the altar of the martyr's death. Permission had been given, and Mr. Widemann had used the wood of the scaffold for the doors and windows of a little country house standing in a vineyard. Then for three or four years this cottage became a shrine for pilgrims; but after a time, little by little, the crowd grew less, and at the present day, when some of those who wiped the blood from the scaffold with their handkerchiefs have become public functionaries, receiving salaries from Government, only foreigners ask, now and again, to see these strange relics.

Mr. Widemann gave me a guide; for, after hearing everything, I wanted to see everything. The house stands half a league away from Heidelberg, on the left of the road to Carlsruhe, and half-way up the mountain-side. It is perhaps the only monument of the kind that exists in the world.

Our readers will judge better from this anecdote than from anything more we could say, what sort of man he was who left such a memory in the hearts of his gaoler and his executioner.

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CELEBRATED CRIMES, VOL. 4 by Alexander Dumas, Pere

CELEBRATED CRIMES, VOLUME 4(of 8), Part 2

By Alexandre Dumas, Pere

URBAIN GRANDIER

CHAPTER I

On Sunday, the 26th of November, 1631, there was great excitement in the little town of Loudun, especially in the narrow streets which led to the church of Saint-Pierre in the marketplace, from the gate of which the town was entered by anyone coming from the direction of the abbey of Saint-Jouin-les-Marmes. This excitement was caused by the expected arrival of a personage who had been much in people's mouths latterly in Loudun, and about whom there was such difference of opinion that discussion on the subject between those who were on his side and those who were against him was carried on with true provincial acrimony. It was easy to see, by the varied expressions on the faces of those who turned the doorsteps into improvised debating clubs, how varied were the feelings with which the man would be welcomed who had himself formally announced to friends and enemies alike the exact date of his return.

About nine o'clock a kind of sympathetic vibration ran through the crowd, and with the rapidity of a flash of lightning the words, "There he is! there he is!" passed from group to group. At this cry some withdrew into their houses and shut their doors and darkened their windows, as if it were a day of public mourning, while others opened them wide, as if to let joy enter. In a few moments the uproar and confusion evoked by the news was succeeded by the deep silence of breathless curiosity.

Then, through the silence, a figure advanced, carrying a branch of laurel in one hand as a token of triumph. It was that of a young man of from thirty-two to thirty-four years of age, with a graceful and well-knit frame, an aristocratic air and faultlessly beautiful features of a somewhat haughty expression. Although he had walked three leagues to reach the town, the ecclesiastical garb which he wore was not only elegant but of dainty freshness. His eyes turned to heaven, and singing in a sweet voice praise to the Lord, he passed through the streets leading to the church in the marketplace with a slow and solemn gait, without vouchsafing a look, a word, or a gesture to anyone. The entire crowd, falling into step, marched behind him as he advanced, singing like him, the singers being the prettiest girls in Loudun, for we have forgotten to say that the crowd consisted almost entirely of women.

Meanwhile the object of all this commotion arrived at length at the porch of the

church of Saint-Pierre. Ascending the steps, he knelt at the top and prayed in a low voice, then rising he touched the church doors with his laurel branch, and they opened wide as if by magic, revealing the choir decorated and illuminated as if for one of the four great feasts of the year, and with all its scholars, choir boys, singers, beadles, and vergers in their places. Glancing around, he for whom they were waiting came up the nave, passed through the choir, knelt for a second time at the foot of the altar, upon which he laid the branch of laurel, then putting on a robe as white as snow and passing the stole around his neck, he began the celebration of the mass before a congregation composed of all those who had followed him. At the end of the mass a Te Deum was sung.

He who had just rendered thanks to God for his own victory with all the solemn ceremonial usually reserved for the triumphs of kings was the priest Urbain Grandier. Two days before, he had been acquitted, in virtue of a decision pronounced by M. d'Escoubleau de Sourdis, Archbishop of Bordeaux, of an accusation brought against him of which he had been declared guilty by a magistrate, and in punishment of which he had been condemned to fast on bread and water every Friday for three months, and forbidden to exercise his priestly functions in the diocese of Poitiers for five years and in the town of Loudun for ever.

These are the circumstances under which the sentence had been passed and the judgment reversed.

Urbain Grandier was born at Rovere, a village near Sable, a little town of Bas-Maine. Having studied the sciences with his father Pierre and his uncle Claude Grandier, who were learned astrologers and alchemists, he entered, at the age of twelve, the Jesuit college at Bordeaux, having already received the ordinary education of a young man. The professors soon found that besides his considerable attainments he had great natural gifts for languages and oratory; they therefore made of him a thorough classical scholar, and in order to develop his oratorical talent encouraged him to practise preaching. They soon grew very fond of a pupil who was likely to bring them so much credit, and as soon as he was old enough to take holy orders they gave him the cure of souls in the parish of Saint-Pierre in Loudun, which was in the gift of the college. When he had been some months installed there as a priest-in-charge, he received a prebendal stall, thanks to the same patrons, in the collegiate church of Sainte-Croix.

It is easy to understand that the bestowal of these two positions on so young a

man, who did not even belong to the province, made him seem in some sort a usurper of rights and privileges belonging to the people of the country, and drew upon him the envy of his brother-ecclesiastics. There were, in fact, many other reasons why Urbain should be an object of jealousy to these: first, as we have already said, he was very handsome, then the instruction which he had received from his father had opened the world of science to him and given him the key to a thousand things which were mysteries to the ignorant, but which he fathomed with the greatest ease. Furthermore, the comprehensive course of study which he had followed at the Jesuit college had raised him above a crowd of prejudices, which are sacred to the vulgar, but for which he made no secret of his contempt; and lastly, the eloquence of his sermons had drawn to his church the greater part of the regular congregations of the other religious communities, especially of the mendicant orders, who had till then, in what concerned preaching, borne away the palm at Loudun. As we have said, all this was more than enough to excite, first jealousy, and then hatred. And both were excited in no ordinary degree.

We all know how easily the ill-natured gossip of a small town can rouse the angry contempt of the masses for everything which is beyond or above them. In a wider sphere Urbain would have shone by his many gifts, but, cooped up as he was within the walls of a little town and deprived of air and space, all that might have conduced to his success in Paris led to his destruction at Loudun.

It was also unfortunate for Urbain that his character, far from winning pardon for his genius, augmented the hatred which the latter inspired. Urbain, who in his intercourse with his friends was cordial and agreeable, was sarcastic, cold, and haughty to his enemies. When he had once resolved on a course, he pursued it unflinchingly; he jealously exacted all the honour due to the rank at which he had arrived, defending it as though it were a conquest; he also insisted on enforcing all his legal rights, and he resented the opposition and angry words of casual opponents with a harshness which made them his lifelong enemies.

The first example which Urbain gave of this inflexibility was in 1620, when he gained a lawsuit against a priest named Meunier. He caused the sentence to be carried out with such rigour that he awoke an inextinguishable hatred in Meunier's mind, which ever after burst forth on the slightest provocation.

A second lawsuit, which he likewise gained; was one which he undertook against the chapter of Sainte-Croix with regard to a house, his claim to which the chapter, disputed. Here again he displayed the same determination to exact his

strict legal rights to the last iota, and unfortunately Mignon, the attorney of the unsuccessful chapter, was a revengeful, vindictive, and ambitious man; too commonplace ever to arrive at a high position, and yet too much above his surroundings to be content with the secondary position which he occupied. This man, who was a canon of the collegiate church of Sainte-Croix and director of the Ursuline convent, will have an important part to play in the following narrative. Being as hypocritical as Urbain was straightforward, his ambition was to gain wherever his name was known a reputation for exalted piety; he therefore affected in his life the asceticism of an anchorite and the self-denial of a saint. As he had much experience in ecclesiastical lawsuits, he looked on the chapter's loss of this one, of which he had in some sort guaranteed the success, as a personal humiliation, so that when Urbain gave himself airs of triumph and exacted the last letter of his bond, as in the case of Meunier, he turned Mignon into an enemy who was not only more relentless but more dangerous than the former.

In the meantime, and in consequence of this lawsuit, a certain Barot, an uncle of Mignon and his partner as well, got up a dispute with Urbain, but as he was a man below mediocrity, Urbain required in order to crush him only to let fall from the height of his superiority a few of those disdainful words which brand as deeply as a red-hot iron. This man, though totally wanting in parts, was very rich, and having no children was always surrounded by a horde of relatives, every one of whom was absorbed in the attempt to make himself so agreeable that his name would appear in Barot's will. This being so, the mocking words which were rained down on Barot spattered not only himself but also all those who had sided with him in the quarrel, and thus added considerably to the tale of Urbain's enemies.

About this epoch a still graver event took place. Amongst the most assiduous frequenters of the confessional in his church was a young and pretty girl, Julie by name, the daughter of the king's attorney, Trinquant—Trinquant being, as well as Barot, an uncle of Mignon. Now it happened that this young girl fell into such a state of debility that she was obliged to keep her room. One of her friends, named Marthe Pelletier, giving up society, of which she was very fond, undertook to nurse the patient, and carried her devotion so far as to shut herself up in the same room with her. When Julie Trinquant had recovered and was able again to take her place in the world, it came out that Marthe Pelletier, during her weeks of retirement, had given birth to a child, which had been baptized and then put out to nurse. Now, by one of those odd whims which so often take

possession of the public mind, everyone in Loudun persisted in asserting that the real mother of the infant was not she who had acknowledged herself as such—that, in short, Marthe Pelletier had sold her good name to her friend Julie for a sum of money; and of course it followed as a matter about which there could be no possible doubt, that Urbain was the father.

Trinquant hearing of the reports about his daughter, took upon himself as king's attorney to have Marthe Pelletier arrested and imprisoned. Being questioned about the child, she insisted that she was its mother, and would take its maintenance upon herself. To have brought a child into the world under such circumstances was a sin, but not a crime; Trinquant was therefore obliged to set Marthe at liberty, and the abuse of justice of which he was guilty served only to spread the scandal farther and to strengthen the public in the belief it had taken up.

Hitherto, whether through the intervention of the heavenly powers, or by means of his own cleverness, Urbain Grandier had come out victor in every struggle in which he had engaged, but each victor had added to the number of his enemies, and these were now so numerous that any other than he would have been alarmed, and have tried either to conciliate them or to take precautions against their malice; but Urbain, wrapped in his pride, and perhaps conscious of his innocence, paid no attention to the counsels of his most faithful followers, but went on his way unheeding.

All the opponents whom till now Urbain had encountered had been entirely unconnected with each other, and had each struggled for his own individual ends. Urbain's enemies, believing that the cause of his success was to be found in the want of cooperation among themselves, now determined to unite in order to crush him. In consequence, a conference was held at Barot's, at which, besides Barot himself, Meunier, Trinquant, and Mignon took part, and the latter had also brought with him one Menuau, a king's counsel and his own most intimate friend, who was, however, influenced by other motives than friendship in joining the conspiracy. The fact was, that Menuau was in love with a woman who had steadfastly refused to show him any favour, and he had got firmly fixed in his head that the reason for her else inexplicable indifference and disdain was that Urbain had been beforehand with him in finding an entrance to her heart. The object of the meeting was to agree as to the best means of driving the common enemy out of Loudun and its neighbourhood.

Urbain's life was so well ordered that it presented little which his enemies could use as a handle for their purpose. His only foible seemed to be a predilection for female society; while in return all the wives and daughters of the place, with the unerring instinct of their sex, seeing, that the new priest was young, handsome, and eloquent, chose him, whenever it was possible, as their spiritual director. As this preference had already offended many husbands and fathers, the decision the conspirators arrived at was that on this side alone was Grandier vulnerable, and that their only chance of success was to attack him where he was weakest. Almost at once, therefore, the vague reports which had been floating about began to attain a certain definiteness: there were allusions made, though no name was mentioned, to a young girl in Loudun; who in spite of Grandier's frequent unfaithfulness yet remained his mistress-in-chief; then it began to be whispered that the young girl, having had conscientious scruples about her love for Urbain, he had allayed them by an act of sacrilege—that is to say, he had, as priest, in the middle of the night, performed the service of marriage between himself and his mistress. The more absurd the reports, the more credence did they gain, and it was not long till everyone in Loudun believed them true, although no one was able to name the mysterious heroine of the tale who had had the courage to contract a marriage with a priest; and considering how small Loudun was, this was most extraordinary.

Resolute and full of courage as was Grandier, at length he could not conceal from himself that his path lay over quicksands: he felt that slander was secretly closing him round, and that as soon as he was well entangled in her shiny folds, she would reveal herself by raising her abhorred head, and that then a mortal combat between them would begin. But it was one of his convictions that to draw back was to acknowledge one's guilt; besides, as far as he was concerned, it was probably too late for him to retrace his steps. He therefore went on his way, as unyielding, as scornful, and as haughty as ever.

Among those who were supposed to be most active in spreading the slanders relative to Urbain was a man called Duthibaut, a person of importance in the province, who was supposed by the townspeople to hold very advanced views, and who was a "Sir Oracle" to whom the commonplace and vulgar turned for enlightenment. Some of this man's strictures on Grandier were reported to the latter, especially some calumnies to which Duthibaut had given vent at the Marquis de Bellay's; and one day, Grandier, arrayed in priestly garments, was about to enter the church of Sainte-Croix to assist in the service, he encountered Duthibaut at the entrance, and with his usual haughty disdain accused him of

slander. Duthibaut, who had got into the habit of saying and doing whatever came into his head without fear of being called to account, partly because of his wealth and partly because of the influence he had gained over the narrow-minded, who are so numerous in a small provincial town, and who regarded him as being much above them, was so furious at this public reprimand, that he raised his cane and struck Urbain.

The opportunity which this affront afforded Grandier of being revenged on all his enemies was too precious to be neglected, but, convinced, with too much reason, that he would never obtain justice from the local authorities, although the respect due to the Church had been infringed, in his person he decided to appeal to King Louis XIII, who deigned to receive him, and deciding that the insult offered to a priest robed in the sacred vestments should be expiated, sent the cause to the high court of Parliament, with instructions that the case against Duthibaut should be tried and decided there.

Hereupon Urbain's enemies saw they had no time to lose, and took advantage of his absence to make counter accusations against him. Two worthies beings, named Cherbonneau and Bugrau, agreed to become informers, and were brought before the ecclesiastical magistrate at Poitiers. They accused Grandier of having corrupted women and girls, of indulging in blasphemy and profanity, of neglecting to read his breviary daily, and of turning God's sanctuary into a place of debauchery and prostitution. The information was taken down, and Louis Chauvet, the civil lieutenant, and the archpriest of Saint-Marcel and the Loudenois, were appointed to investigate the matter, so that, while Urbain was instituting proceedings against Duthibaut in Paris, information was laid against himself in Loudun. This matter thus set going was pushed forward with all the acrimony so common in religious prosecutions; Trinquant appeared as a witness, and drew many others after him, and whatever omissions were found in the depositions were interpolated according to the needs of the prosecution. The result was that the case when fully got up appeared to be so serious that it was sent to the Bishop of Poitiers for trial. Now the bishop was not only surrounded by the friends of those who were bringing the accusations against Grandier, but had himself a grudge against him. It had happened some time before that Urbain, the case being urgent, had dispensed with the usual notice of a marriage, and the bishop, knowing this, found in the papers laid before him, superficial as they were, sufficient evidence against Urbain to justify him in issuing a warrant for his apprehension, which was drawn up in the following words:

“Henri-Louis, Chataignier de la Rochepezai, by divine mercy Bishop of Poitiers, in view of the charges and informations conveyed to us by the archpriest of Loudun against Urbain Grandier, priest-in-charge of the Church of Saint-Pierre in the MarketPlace at Loudun, in virtue of a commission appointed by us directed to the said archpriest, or in his absence to the Prior of Chassaignes, in view also of the opinion given by our attorney upon the said charges, have ordered and do hereby order that Urbain Grandier, the accused, be quietly taken to the prison in our palace in Poitiers, if it so be that he be taken and apprehended, and if not, that he be summoned to appear at his domicile within three days, by the first apparitor-priest, or tonsured clerk, and also by the first royal sergeant, upon this warrant, and we request the aid of the secular authorities, and to them, or to any one of them, we hereby give power and authority to carry out this decree notwithstanding any opposition or appeal, and the said Grandier having been heard, such a decision will be given by our attorney as the facts may seem to warrant.

“Given at Dissay the 22nd day of October 1629, and signed in the original as follows:

“HENRI-LOUIS, Bishop of Poitiers.”

Grandier was, as we have said, at Paris when these proceedings were taken against him, conducting before the Parliament his case against Duthibaut. The latter received a copy of the decision arrived at by the bishop, before Grandier knew of the charges that had been formulated against him, and having in the course of his defence drawn a terrible picture of the immorality of Grandier’s life, he produced as a proof of the truth of his assertions the damning document which had been put into his hands. The court, not knowing what to think of the turn affairs had taken, decided that before considering the accusations brought by Grandier, he must appear before his bishop to clear himself of the charges, brought against himself. Consequently he left Paris at once, and arrived at Loudun, where he only stayed long enough to learn what had happened in his absence, and then went on to Poitiers in order to draw up his defence. He had, however, no sooner set foot in the place than he was arrested by a sheriff’s officer named Chatry, and confined in the prison of the episcopal palace.

It was the middle of November, and the prison was at all times cold and damp,

yet no attention was paid to Grandier's request that he should be transferred to some other place of confinement. Convinced by this that his enemies had more influence than he had supposed, he resolved to possess his soul in patience, and remained a prisoner for two months, during which even his warmest friends believed him lost, while Duthibaut openly laughed at the proceedings instituted against himself, which he now believed would never go any farther, and Barot had already selected one of his heirs, a certain Ismael Boulieau, as successor to Urbain as priest and prebendary.

It was arranged that the costs of the lawsuit should be defrayed out of a fund raised by the prosecutors, the rich paying for the poor; for as all the witnesses lived at Loudun and the trial was to take place at Poitiers, considerable expense would be incurred by the necessity of bringing so many people such a distance; but the lust of vengeance proved stronger than the lust of gold; the subscription expected from each being estimated according to his fortune, each paid without a murmur, and at the end of two months the case was concluded.

In spite of the evident pains taken by the prosecution to strain the evidence against the defendant, the principal charge could not be sustained, which was that he had led astray many wives and daughters in Loudun. No one woman came forward to complain of her ruin by Grandier; the name of no single victim of his alleged immorality was given. The conduct of the case was the most extraordinary ever seen; it was evident that the accusations were founded on hearsay and not on fact, and yet a decision and sentence against Grandier were pronounced on January 3rd, 1630. The sentence was as follows: For three months to fast each Friday on bread and water by way of penance; to be inhibited from the performance of clerical functions in the diocese of Poitiers for five years, and in the town of Loudun for ever.

Both parties appealed from this decision: Grandier to the Archbishop of Bordeaux, and his adversaries, on the advice of the attorney to the diocese, pleading a miscarriage of justice, to the Parliament of Paris; this last appeal being made in order to overwhelm Grandier and break his spirit. But Grandier's resolution enabled him to face this attack boldly: he engaged counsel to defend his case before the Parliament, while he himself conducted his appeal to the Archbishop of Bordeaux. But as there were many necessary witnesses, and it was almost impossible to bring them all such a great distance, the archiepiscopal court sent the appeal to the presidial court of Poitiers. The public prosecutor of Poitiers began a fresh investigation, which being conducted with impartiality

was not encouraging to Grandier's accusers. There had been many conflicting statements made by the witnesses, and these were now repeated: other witnesses had declared quite openly that they had been bribed; others again stated that their depositions had been tampered with; and amongst these latter was a certain priest named Mechin, and also that Ishmael Boulieau whom Barot had been in such a hurry to select as candidate for the reversion of Grandier's preferments. Boulieau's deposition has been lost, but we can lay Mechin's before the reader, for the original has been preserved, just as it issued from his pen:

"I, Gervais Mechin, curate-in-charge of the Church of Saint-Pierre in the Market Place at Loudun, certify by these presents, signed by my hand, to relieve my conscience as to a certain report which is being spread abroad, that I had said in support of an accusation brought by Gilles Robert, archpriest, against Urbain Grandier, priest-in-charge of Saint-Pierre, that I had found the said Grandier lying with women and girls in the church of Saint Pierre, the doors being closed.

"ITEM, that on several different occasions, at unsuitable hours both day and night, I had seen women and girls disturb the said Grandier by going into his bedroom, and that some of the said women remained with him from one o'clock in the after noon till three o'clock the next morning, their maids bringing them their suppers and going away again at once.

"ITEM, that I had seen the said Grandier in the church, the doors being open, but that as soon as some women entered he closed them.

"As I earnestly desire that such reports should cease, I declare by these presents that I have never seen the said Grandier with women or girls in the church, the doors being closed; that I have never found him there alone with women or girls; that when he spoke to either someone else was always present, and the doors were open; and as to their posture, I think I made it sufficiently clear when in the witness-box that Grandier was seated and the women scattered over the church; furthermore, I have never seen either women or girls enter Grandier's bedroom either by day or night, although it is true that I have heard people in the corridor coming and going late in the evening, who they were I cannot say, but a brother of the said Grandier sleeps close by; neither have I any knowledge that either women or girls, had their suppers brought to the said room. I have also never said that he neglected the reading of his breviary, because that would be contrary to the truth, seeing that on several occasions he borrowed mine and read his hours in it. I also declare that I have never seen him close the doors of the

church, and that whenever I have seen him speaking to women I have never noticed any impropriety; I have not ever seen him touch them in any way, they have only spoken together; and if anything is found in my deposition contrary to the above, it is without my knowledge, and was never read to me, for I would not have signed it, and I say and affirm all this in homage to the truth.

“Done the last day of October 1630, “(Signed) G. MECHIN.”

In the face of such proofs of innocence none of the accusations could be considered as established and so, according to the decision of the presidial court of Poitiers, dated the 25th of May 1634, the decision of the bishop’s court was reversed, and Grandier was acquitted of the charges brought against him. However, he had still to appear before the Archbishop of Bordeaux, that his acquittal might be ratified. Grandier took advantage of a visit which the archbishop paid to his abbey at Saint-Jouin-les-Marmes, which was only three leagues from Loudun, to make this appearance; his adversaries, who were discouraged by the result of the proceedings at Poitiers, scarcely made any defence, and the archbishop, after an examination which brought clearly to light the innocence of the accused, acquitted and absolved him.

The rehabilitation of Grandier before his bishop had two important results: the first was that it clearly established his innocence, and the second that it brought into prominence his high attainments and eminent qualities. The archbishop seeing the persecutions to which he was subjected, felt a kindly interest in him, and advised him to exchange into some other diocese, leaving a town the principal inhabitants of which appeared to have vowed him a relentless hate. But such an abandonment of his rights was foreign to the character of Urbain, and he declared to his superior that, strong in His Grace’s approbation and the testimony of his own conscience, he would remain in the place to which God had called him. Monseigneur de Sourdis did not feel it his duty to urge Urbain any further, but he had enough insight into his character to perceive that if Urbain should one day fall, it would be, like Satan, through pride; for he added another sentence to his decision, recommending him to fulfil the duties of his office with discretion and modesty, according to the decrees of the Fathers and the canonical constitutions. The triumphal entry of Urbain into Loudun with which we began our narrative shows the spirit in which he took his recommendation.

CHAPTER II

Urbain Granadier was not satisfied with the arrogant demonstration by which he signalled his return, which even his friends had felt to be ill advised; instead of allowing the hate he had aroused to die away or at least to fall asleep by letting the past be past, he continued with more zeal than ever his proceedings against Duthibaut, and succeeded in obtaining a decree from the Parliament of La Tournelle, by which Duthibaut was summoned before it, and obliged to listen bareheaded to a reprimand, to offer apologies, and to pay damages and costs.

Having thus got the better of one enemy, Urbain turned on the others, and showed himself more indefatigable in the pursuit of justice than they had been in the pursuit of vengeance. The decision of the archbishop had given him a right to a sum of money for compensation, and interest thereon, as well as to the restitution of the revenues of his livings, and there being some demur made, he announced publicly that he intended to exact this reparation to the uttermost farthing, and set about collecting all the evidence which was necessary for the success of a new lawsuit for libel and forgery which he intended to begin. It was in vain that his friends assured him that the vindication of his innocence had been complete and brilliant, it was in vain that they tried to convince him of the danger of driving the vanquished to despair, Urbain replied that he was ready to endure all the persecutions which his enemies might succeed in inflicting on him, but as long as he felt that he had right upon his side he was incapable of drawing back.

Grandier's adversaries soon became conscious of the storm which was gathering above their heads, and feeling that the struggle between themselves and this man would be one of life or death, Mignon, Barot, Meunier, Duthibaut, and Menuau met Trinquant at the village of Pindadane, in a house belonging to the latter, in order to consult about the dangers which threatened them. Mignon had, however, already begun to weave the threads of a new intrigue, which he explained in full to the others; they lent a favourable ear, and his plan was adopted. We shall see it unfold itself by degrees, for it is the basis of our narrative.

We have already said that Mignon was the director of the convent of Ursulines at Loudun: Now the Ursuline order was quite modern, for the historic controversies to which the slightest mention of the martyrdom of St. Ursula and her eleven

thousand virgins gave rise, had long hindered the foundation of an order in the saint's honour. However, in 1560 Madame Angele de Bresse established such an order in Italy, with the same rules as the Augustinian order. This gained the approbation of Pope Gregory XIII in 1572. In 1614, Madeleine Lhuillier, with the approval of Pope Paul V, introduced this order into France, by founding a convent at Paris, whence it rapidly spread over the whole kingdom, so-that in 1626, only six years before the time when the events just related took place, a sisterhood was founded in the little town of Loudun.

Although this community at first consisted entirely of ladies of good family, daughters of nobles, officers, judges, and the better class of citizens, and numbered amongst its founders Jeanne de Belfield, daughter of the late Marquis of Cose, and relative of M. de Laubardemont, Mademoiselle de Fazili, cousin of the cardinal-duke, two ladies of the house of Barbenis de Nogaret, Madame de Lamothe, daughter of the Marquis Lamothe-Barace of Anjou, and Madame d'Escoubleau de Sourdis, of the same family as the Archbishop of Bordeaux, yet as these nuns had almost all entered the convent because of their want of fortune, the community found itself at the time of its establishment richer in blood than in money, and was obliged instead of building to purchase a private house. The owner of this house was a certain Moussaut du Frene, whose brother was a priest. This brother, therefore, naturally became the first director of these godly women. Less than a year after his appointment he died, and the directorship became vacant.

The Ursulines had bought the house in which they lived much below its normal value, for it was regarded as a haunted house by all the town. The landlord had rightly thought that there was no better way of getting rid of the ghosts than to confront them with a religious sisterhood, the members of which, passing their days in fasting and prayer, would be hardly likely to have their nights disturbed by bad spirits; and in truth, during the year which they had already passed in the house, no ghost had ever put in an appearance—a fact which had greatly increased the reputation of the nuns for sanctity.

When their director died, it so happened that the boarders took advantage of the occasion to indulge in some diversion at the expense of the older nuns, who were held in general detestation by the youth of the establishment on account of the rigour with which they enforced the rules of the order. Their plan was to raise once more those spirits which had been, as everyone supposed, permanently relegated to outer darkness. So noises began to be heard on the roof of the house,

which resolved themselves into cries and groans; then growing bolder, the spirits entered the attics and garrets, announcing their presence by clanking of chains; at last they became so familiar that they invaded the dormitories, where they dragged the sheets off the sisters and abstracted their clothes.

Great was the terror in the convent, and great the talk in the town, so that the mother superior called her wisest, nuns around her and asked them what, in their opinion, would be the best course to take in the delicate circumstances in which they found themselves. Without a dissentient voice, the conclusion arrived at was, that the late director should be immediately replaced by a man still holier than he, if such a man could be found, and whether because he possessed a reputation for sanctity, or for some other reason, their choice fell on Urbain Grandier. When the offer of the post was brought to him, he answered that he was already responsible for two important charges, and that he therefore had not enough time to watch over the snow-white flock which they wished to entrust to him, as a good shepherd should, and he recommended the lady superior to seek out another more worthy and less occupied than himself.

This answer, as may be supposed, wounded the self-esteem of the sisters: they next turned their eyes towards Mignon, priest and canon of the collegiate church of Sainte-Croix, and he, although he felt deeply hurt that they had not thought first of him, accepted the position eagerly; but the recollection that Grandier had been preferred before himself kept awake in him one of those bitter hatreds which time, instead of soothing, intensifies. From the foregoing narrative the reader can see to what this hate led.

As soon as the new director was appointed, the mother superior confided to him the kind of foes which he would be expected to vanquish. Instead of comforting her by the assurance that no ghosts existing, it could not be ghosts who ran riot in the house, Mignon saw that by pretending to lay these phantoms he could acquire the reputation for holiness he so much desired. So he answered that the Holy Scriptures recognised the existence of ghosts by relating how the witch of Endor had made the shade of Samuel appear to Saul. He went on to say that the ritual of the Church possessed means of driving away all evil spirits, no matter how persistent they were, provided that he who undertook the task were pure in thought and deed, and that he hoped soon, by the help of God, to rid the convent of its nocturnal visitants, whereupon as a preparation for their expulsion he ordered a three days' fast, to be followed by a general confession.

It does not require any great cleverness to understand how easily Mignon arrived at the truth by questioning the young penitents as they came before him. The boarders who had played at being ghosts confessed their folly, saying that they had been helped by a young novice of sixteen years of age, named Marie Aubin. She acknowledged that this was true; it was she who used to get up in the middle of the night, and open the dormitory door, which her more timid room-mates locked most carefully from within every night, before going to bed—a fact which greatly increased their terror when, despite their precautions, the ghosts still got in. Under pretext of not exposing them to the anger of the superior, whose suspicions would be sure to be awakened if the apparitions were to disappear immediately after the general confession, Mignon directed them to renew their nightly frolics from time to time, but at longer and longer intervals. He then sought an interview with the superior, and assured her that he had found the minds of all those under her charge so chaste and pure that he felt sure through his earnest prayers he would soon clear the convent of the spirits which now pervaded it.

Everything happened as the director had foretold, and the reputation for sanctity of the holy man, who by watching and praying had delivered the worthy Ursulines from their ghostly assailants, increased enormously in the town of Loudun.

CHAPTER III

Hardly had tranquillity been restored when Mignon, Duthibaut, Menuau, Meunier, and Barot, having lost their cause before the Archbishop of Bordeaux, and finding themselves threatened by Grandier with a prosecution for libel and forgery, met together to consult as to the best means of defending themselves before the unbending severity of this man, who would, they felt, destroy them if they did not destroy him.

The result of this consultation was that very shortly afterwards queer reports began to fly about; it was whispered that the ghosts whom the pious director had expelled had again invaded the convent, under an invisible and impalpable form, and that several of the nuns had given, by their words and acts, incontrovertible proofs of being possessed.

When these reports were mentioned to Mignon, he, instead of denying their truth, cast up his eyes to heaven and said that God was certainly a great and merciful God, but it was also certain that Satan was very clever, especially when he was barked by that false human science called magic. However, as to the reports, though they were not entirely without foundation, he would not go so far as to say that any of the sisters were really possessed by devils, that being a question which time alone could decide.

The effect of such an answer on minds already prepared to listen to the most impossible things, may easily be guessed. Mignon let the gossip go its rounds for several months without giving it any fresh food, but at length, when the time was ripe, he called on the priest of Saint-Jacques at Chinon, and told him that matters had now come to such a pass in the Ursuline convent that he felt it impossible to bear up alone under the responsibility of caring for the salvation of the afflicted nuns, and he begged him to accompany him to the convent. This priest, whose name was Pierre Barre, was exactly the man whom Mignon needed in such a crisis. He was of melancholy temperament, and dreamed dreams and saw visions; his one ambition was to gain a reputation for asceticism and holiness. Desiring to surround his visit with the solemnity befitting such an important event, he set out for Loudun at the head of all his parishioners, the whole procession going on foot, in order to arouse interest and curiosity; but this measure was quite needless it took less than that to set the town agog.

While the faithful filled the churches offering up prayers for the success of the exorcisms, Mignon and Barre entered upon their task at the convent, where they remained shut up with the nuns for six hours. At the end of this time Barre appeared and announced to his parishioners that they might go back to Chinon without him, for he had made up his mind to remain for the present at Loudun, in order to aid the venerable director of the Ursuline convent in the holy work he had undertaken; he enjoined on them to pray morning and evening, with all possible fervour, that, in spite of the serious dangers by which it was surrounded, the good cause might finally triumph. This advice, unaccompanied as it was by any explanation, redoubled the curiosity of the people, and the belief gained ground that it was not merely one or two nuns who were possessed of devils, but the whole sisterhood. It was not very long before the name of the magician who had worked this wonder began to be mentioned quite openly: Satan, it was said, had drawn Urbain Grandier into his power, through his pride. Urbain had entered into a pact with the Evil Spirit by which he had sold him his soul in return for being made the most learned man on earth. Now, as Urbain's knowledge was much greater than that of the inhabitants of Loudun, this story gained general credence in the town, although here and there was to be found a man sufficiently enlightened to shrug his shoulders at these absurdities, and to laugh at the mummeries, of which as yet he saw only the ridiculous side,

For the next ten or twelve days Mignon and Barre spent the greater part of their time at the convent; sometimes remaining there for six hours at a stretch, sometimes the entire day. At length, on Monday, the 11th of October, 1632, they wrote to the priest of Venier, to Messire Guillaume Cerisay de la Gueriniere, bailiff of the Loudenois, and to Messire Louis Chauvet, civil lieutenant, begging them to visit the Ursuline convent, in order to examine two nuns who were possessed by evil spirits, and to verify the strange and almost incredible manifestations of this possession. Being thus formally appealed to, the two magistrates could not avoid compliance with the request. It must be confessed that they were not free from curiosity, and felt far from sorry at being able to get to the bottom of the mystery of which for some time the whole town was talking. They repaired, therefore, to the convent, intending to make a thorough investigation as to the reality of the possession and as to the efficacy of the exorcisms employed. Should they judge that the nuns were really possessed, and that those who tried to deliver them were in earnest, they would authorise the continuation of the efforts at exorcism; but if they were not satisfied on these two points, they would soon put an end to the whole thing as a comedy. When they reached the door, Mignon, wearing alb and stole, came to meet them. He

told them that the feelings of the nuns had for more than two weeks been harrowed by the apparition of spectres and other bloodcurdling visions, that the mother superior and two nuns had evidently been possessed by evil spirits for over a week; that owing to the efforts of Barre and some Carmelite friars who were good enough to assist him against their common enemies, the devils had been temporarily driven out, but on the previous Sunday night, the 10th of October, the mother superior, Jeanne de Belfield, whose conventual name was Jeanne des Anges, and a lay sister called Jeanne Dumagnoux, had again been entered into by the same spirits. It had, however, been discovered by means of exorcisms that a new compact, of which the symbol and token was a bunch of roses, had been concluded, the symbol and token of the first having been three black thorns. He added that during the time of the first possession the demons had refused to give their names, but by the power of his exorcisms this reluctance had been overcome, the spirit which had resumed possession of the mother superior having at length revealed that its name was Ashtaroth, one of the greatest enemies of God, while the devil which had entered into the lay sister was of a lower order, and was called Sabulon. Unfortunately, continued Mignon, just now the two afflicted nuns were resting, and he requested the bailiff and the civil lieutenant to put off their inspection till a little later. The two magistrates were just about to go away, when a nun appeared, saying that the devils were again doing their worst with the two into whom they had entered. Consequently, they accompanied Mignon and the priest from Venier to an upper room, in which were seven narrow beds, of which two only were occupied, one by the mother superior and the other by the lay sister. The superior, who was the more thoroughly possessed of the two, was surrounded by the Carmelite monks, the sisters belonging to the convent, Mathurin Rousseau, priest and canon of Sainte-Croix, and Mannouri, a surgeon from the town.

No sooner did the two magistrates join the others than the superior was seized with violent convulsions, writhing and uttering squeals in exact imitation of a sucking pig. The two magistrates looked on in profound astonishment, which was greatly increased when they saw the patient now bury herself in her bed, now spring right out of it, the whole performance being accompanied by such diabolical gestures and grimaces that, if they were not quite convinced that the possession was genuine, they were at least filled with admiration of the manner in which it was simulated. Mignon next informed the bailiff and the civil lieutenant, that although the superior had never learned Latin she would reply in that language to all the questions addressed to her, if such were their desire. The magistrates answered that as they were there in order to examine thoroughly into

the facts of the case, they begged the exorcists to give them every possible proof that the possession was real. Upon this, Mignon approached the mother superior, and, having ordered everyone to be silent, placed two of his fingers in her mouth, and, having gone through the form of exorcism prescribed by the ritual, he asked the following questions word for word as they are given,

D. Why have you entered into the body of this young girl? R. Causa animositatis. Out of enmity. D. Per quod pactum? By what pact? R. Per flores. By flowers. D. Quales? What flowers? R. Rosas. Roses. D. Quis misit? By whom wert thou sent?

At this question the magistrates remarked that the superior hesitated to reply; twice she opened her mouth in vain, but the third time she said in a weak voice

D. Dic cognomen? What is his surname? R. Urbanus. Urbain.

Here there was again the same hesitation, but as if impelled by the will of the exorcist she answered—

R. Grandier. Grandier. D. Dic qualitatem? What is his profession? R. Sacerdos. A priest. D. Cujus ecclesiae? Of what church? R. Sancti Petri. Saint-Pierre. D. Quae persona attulit flores? Who brought the flowers? R. Diabolica. Someone sent by the devil.

As the patient pronounced the last word she recovered her senses, and having repeated a prayer, attempted to swallow a morsel of bread which was offered her; she was, however, obliged to spit it out, saying it was so dry she could not get it down.

Something more liquid was then brought, but even of that she could swallow very little, as she fell into convulsions every few minutes.

Upon this the two officials, seeing there was nothing more to be got out of the superior, withdrew to one of the window recesses and began to converse in a low tone; whereupon Mignon, who feared that they had not been sufficiently impressed, followed them, and drew their attention to the fact that there was much in what they had just seen to recall the case of Gaufredi, who had been put to death a few years before in consequence of a decree of the Parliament of Aix,

in Provence. This ill-judged remark of Mignon showed so clearly what his aim was that the magistrates made no reply. The civil lieutenant remarked that he had been surprised that Mignon had not made any attempt to find out the cause of the enmity of which the superior had spoken, and which it was so important to find out; but Mignon excused himself by saying that he had no right to put questions merely to gratify curiosity. The civil lieutenant was about to insist on the matter being investigated, when the lay sister in her turn went into a fit, thus extricating Mignon from his embarrassment. The magistrates approached the lay sister's bed at once, and directed Mignon to put the same questions to her as to the superior: he did so, but all in vain; all she would reply was, "To the other! To the other!"

Mignon explained this refusal to answer by saying that the evil spirit which was in her was of an inferior order, and referred all questioners to Ashtaroth, who was his superior. As this was the only explanation, good or bad, offered them by Mignon, the magistrates went away, and drew up a report of all they had seen and heard without comment, merely appending their signatures.

But in the town very few people showed the same discretion and reticence as the magistrates. The bigoted believed, the hypocrites pretended to believe; and the worldly-minded, who were numerous, discussed the doctrine of possession in all its phases, and made no secret of their own entire incredulity. They wondered, and not without reason it must be confessed, what had induced the devils to go out of the nuns' bodies for two days only, and then come back and resume possession, to the confusion of the exorcists; further, they wanted to know why the mother superior's devil spoke Latin, while the lay sister's was ignorant of that tongue; for a mere difference of rank in the hierarchy of hell did not seem a sufficient explanation of such a difference in education; Mignon's refusal to go on with his interrogations as to the cause of the enmity made them, they said, suspect that, knowing he had reached the end of Ashtaroth's classical knowledge, he felt it useless to try to continue the dialogue in the Ciceronian idiom. Moreover, it was well known that only a few days before all Urbain's worst enemies had met in conclave in the village of Puidardane; and besides, how stupidly Mignon had shown his hand by mentioning Gaufredi, the priest who had been executed at Aix: lastly, why had not a desire for impartiality been shown by calling in other than Carmelite monks to be present at the exorcism, that order having a private quarrel with Grandier? It must be admitted that this way of looking at the case was not wanting in shrewdness.

On the following day, October 12th, the bailiff and the civil lieutenant, having

heard that exorcisms had been again tried without their having been informed beforehand, requested a certain Canon Rousseau to accompany them, and set out with him and their clerk for the convent. On arriving, they asked for Mignon, and on his appearance they told him that this matter of exorcism was of such importance that no further steps were to be taken in it without the authorities being present, and that in future they were to be given timely notice of every attempt to get rid of the evil spirits. They added that this was all the more necessary as Mignon's position as director of the sisterhood and his well-known hate for Grandier would draw suspicions on him unworthy of his cloth, suspicions which he ought to be the first to wish to see dissipated, and that quickly; and that, therefore, the work which he had so piously begun would be completed by exorcists appointed by the court.

Mignon replied that, though he had not the slightest objection to the magistrates being present at all the exorcisms, yet he could not promise that the spirits would reply to anyone except himself and Barre. Just at that moment Barre came on the scene, paler and more gloomy than ever, and speaking with the air of a man whose word no one could help believing, he announced that before their arrival some most extraordinary things had taken place. The magistrates asked what things, and Barre replied that he had learned from the mother superior that she was possessed, not by one, but by seven devils, of whom Ashtaroth was the chief; that Grandier had entrusted his pact with the devil, under the symbol of a bunch of roses, to a certain Jean Pivart, to give to a girl who had introduced it into the convent garden by throwing it over the wall; that this took place in the night between Saturday and Sunday "*hora secunda nocturna*" (two hours after midnight); that those were the very words the superior had used, but that while she readily named Pivart, she absolutely refused to give the name of the girl; that on asking what Pivart was; she had replied, "*Pauper magus*" (a poor magician); that he then had pressed her as to the word *magus*, and that she had replied "*Magicianus et civis*" (magician and citizen); and that just as she said those words the magistrates had arrived, and he had asked no more questions.

The two officials listened to this information with the seriousness befitting men entrusted with high judicial functions, and announced to the two priests that they proposed to visit the possessed women and witness for themselves the miracles that were taking place. The clerics offered no opposition, but said they feared that the devils were fatigued and would refuse to reply; and, in fact, when the officials reached the sickroom the two patients appeared to have regained some degree of calm. Mignon took advantage of this quiet moment to say mass, to

which the two magistrates listened devoutly and tranquilly, and while the sacrifice was being offered the demons did not dare to move. It was expected that they would offer some opposition at the elevation of the Host, but everything passed off without disturbance, only the lay sister's hands and feet twitched a great deal; and this was the only fact which the magistrates thought worthy of mention in their report for that morning. Barre assured them, however, that if they would return about three o'clock the devils would probably have recovered sufficiently from their fatigue to give a second performance.

As the two gentlemen had determined to see the affair to the end, they returned to the convent at the hour named, accompanied by Messire Irenee de Sainte-Marthe, sieur Deshurneaux; and found the room in which the possessed were lying full of curious spectators; for the exorcists had been true prophets—the devils were at work again.

The superior, as always, was the more tormented of the two, as was only to be expected, she having seven devils in her all at once; she was terribly convulsed, and was writhing and foaming at the mouth as if she were mad. No one could long continue in such a condition without serious injury to health; Barre therefore asked the devil-in-chief how soon he would come out. "Cras mane" (Tomorrow morning), he replied. The exorcist then tried to hurry him, asking him why he would not come out at once; whereupon the superior murmured the word "Pactum" (A pact); and then "Sacerdos" (A priest), and finally "Finis," or "Finit," for even those nearest could not catch the word distinctly, as the devil, afraid doubtless of perpetrating a barbarism, spoke through the nun's closely clenched teeth. This being all decidedly unsatisfying, the magistrates insisted that the examination should continue, but the devils had again exhausted themselves, and refused to utter another word. The priest even tried touching the superior's head with the pyx, while prayers and litanies were recited, but it was all in vain, except that some of the spectators thought that the contortions of the patient became more violent when the intercessions of certain saints were invoked, as for instance Saints Augustine Jerome, Antony, and Mary Magdalene. Barre next directed the mother superior to dedicate her heart and soul to God, which she did without difficulty; but when he commanded her to dedicate her body also, the chief devil indicated by fresh convulsions that he was not going to allow himself to be deprived of a domicile without resistance, and made those who had heard him say that he would leave the next morning feel that he had only said so under compulsion; and their curiosity as to the result became heightened. At length, however, despite the obstinate resistance of the demon,

the superior succeeded in dedicating her body also to God, and thus victorious her features resumed their usual expression, and smiling as if nothing had happened, she turned to Barre and said that there was no vestige of Satan left in her. The civil lieutenant then asked her if she remembered the questions she had been asked and the answers she had given, but she replied that she remembered nothing; but afterwards, having taken some refreshment, she said to those around her that she recollected perfectly how the first possession, over which Mignon had triumphed, had taken place: one evening about ten o'clock, while several nuns were still in her room, although she was already in bed, it seemed to her that someone took her hand and laid something in it, closing her fingers; at that instant she felt a sharp pain as if she had been pricked by three pins, and hearing her scream, the nuns came to her bedside to ask what ailed her. She held out her hand, and they found three black thorns sticking in it, each having made a tiny wound. Just as she had told this tale, the lay sister, as if to prevent all commentary, was seized with convulsions, and Barre recommenced his prayers and exorcisms, but was soon interrupted by shrieks; for one of the persons present had seen a black cat come down the chimney and disappear. Instantly everyone concluded it must be the devil, and began to seek it out. It was not without great difficulty that it was caught; for, terrified at the sight of so many people and at the noise, the poor animal had sought refuge under a canopy; but at last it was secured and carried to the superior's bedside, where Barre began his exorcisms once more, covering the cat with signs of the cross, and adjuring the devil to take his true shape. Suddenly the 'touriere', (the woman who received the tradespeople,) came forward, declaring the supposed devil to be only her cat, and she immediately took possession of it, lest some harm should happen to it.

The gathering had been just about to separate, but Barry fearing that the incident of the cat might throw a ridiculous light upon the evil spirits, resolved to awake once more a salutary terror by announcing that he was going to burn the flowers through which the second spell had been made to work. Producing a bunch of white roses, already faded, he ordered a lighted brazier to be brought. He then threw the flowers on the glowing charcoal, and to the general astonishment they were consumed without any visible effect: the heavens still smiled, no peal of thunder was heard, and no unpleasant odour diffused itself through the room. Barre feeling that the baldness of this act of destruction had had a bad effect, predicted that the morrow would bring forth wondrous things; that the chief devil would speak more distinctly than hitherto; that he would leave the body of the superior, giving such clear signs of his passage that no one would dare to doubt any longer that it was a case of genuine possession. Thereupon the

criminal lieutenant, Henri Herve, who had been present during the exorcism, said they must seize upon the moment of his exit to ask about Pivart, who was unknown at Loudun, although everyone who lived there knew everybody else. Barre replied in Latin, "Et hoc dicet epuellam nominabit" (He will not only tell about him, but he will also name the young girl). The young girl whom the devil was to name was, it may be recollected, she who had introduced the flowers into the convent, and whose name the demon until now had absolutely refused to give. On the strength of these promises everyone went home to await the morrow with impatience.

CHAPTER IV

That evening Grandier asked the bailiff for an audience. At first he had made fun of the exorcisms, for the story had been so badly concocted, and the accusations were so glaringly improbable, that he had not felt the least anxiety. But as the case went on it assumed such an important aspect, and the hatred displayed by his enemies was so intense, that the fate of the priest Gaufredi, referred to by Mignon, occurred to Urbain's mind, and in order to be beforehand with his enemies he determined to lodge a complaint against them. This complaint was founded on the fact that Mignon had performed the rite of exorcism in the presence of the civil lieutenant, the bailiff, and many other persons, and had caused the nuns who were said to be possessed, in the hearing of all these people, to name him, Urbain, as the author of their possession. This being a falsehood and an attack upon his honour, he begged the bailiff, in whose hands the conduct of the affair had been specially placed, to order the nuns to be sequestered, apart from the rest of the sisterhood and from each other, and then to have each separately examined. Should there appear to be any evidence of possession, he hoped that the bailiff would be pleased to appoint clerics of well-known rank and upright character to perform whatever exorcisms were needful; such men having no bias against him would be more impartial than Mignon and his adherents. He also called upon the bailiff to have an exact report drawn up of everything that took place at the exorcisms, in order that, if necessary, he as petitioner might be able to lay it before anyone to whose judgment he might appeal. The bailiff gave Grandier a statement of the conclusions at which he had arrived, and told him that the exorcisms had been performed that day by Barre, armed with the authority of the Bishop of Poitiers himself. Being, as we have seen, a man of common sense and entirely unprejudiced in the matter, the bailiff advised Grandier to lay his complaint before his bishop; but unfortunately he was under the authority of the Bishop of Poitiers, who was so prejudiced against him that he had done everything in his power to induce the Archbishop of Bordeaux to refuse to ratify the decision in favour of Grandier, pronounced by the presidial court. Urbain could not hide from the magistrate that he had nothing to hope for from this quarter, and it was decided that he should wait and see what the morrow would bring forth, before taking any further step.

The impatiently expected day dawned at last, and at eight o'clock in the morning the bailiff, the king's attorney, the civil lieutenant, the criminal lieutenant, and

the provost's lieutenant, with their respective clerks, were already at the convent. They found the outer gate open, but the inner door shut. In a few moments Mignon came to them and brought them into a waiting-room. There he told them that the nuns were preparing for communion, and that he would be very much obliged to them if they would withdraw and wait in a house across the street, just opposite the convent, and that he would send them word when they could come back. The magistrates, having first informed Mignon of Urbain's petition, retired as requested.

An hour passed, and as Mignon did not summon them, in spite of his promise, they all went together to the convent chapel, where they were told the exorcisms were already over. The nuns had quitted the choir, and Mignon and Barre came to the grating and told them that they had just completed the rite, and that, thanks to their conjurations, the two afflicted ones were now quite free from evil spirits. They went on to say that they had been working together at the exorcism from seven o'clock in the morning, and that great wonders, of which they had drawn up an account, had come to pass; but they had considered it would not be proper to allow any one else to be present during the ceremony besides the exorcists and the possessed. The bailiff pointed out that their manner of proceedings was not only illegal, but that it laid them under suspicion of fraud and collusion, in the eyes of the impartial: Moreover, as the superior had accused Grandier publicly, she was bound to renew and prove her accusation also publicly, and not in secret; furthermore, it was a great piece of insolence on the part of the exorcists to invite people of their standing and character to come to the convent, and having kept them waiting an hour, to tell them that they considered them unworthy to be admitted to the ceremony which they had been requested to attend; and he wound up by saying that he would draw up a report, as he had already done on each of the preceding days, setting forth the extraordinary discrepancy between their promises and their performance. Mignon replied that he and Barre had had only one thing in view, viz. the expulsion of the demons, and that in that they had succeeded, and that their success would be of great benefit to the holy Catholic faith, for they had got the demons so thoroughly into their power that they had been able to command them to produce within a week miraculous proofs of the spells cast on the nuns by Urbain Grandier and their wonderful deliverance therefrom; so that in future no one would be able to doubt as to the reality of the possession. Thereupon the magistrates drew up a report of all that had happened, and of what Barre and Mignon had said. This was signed by all the officials present, except the criminal lieutenant, who declared that, having perfect confidence in the statements of the exorcists, he was anxious to do

nothing to increase the doubting spirit which was unhappily so prevalent among the worldly.

The same day the bailiff secretly warned Urbain of the refusal of the criminal lieutenant to join with the others in signing the report, and almost at the same moment he learned that the cause of his adversaries was strengthened by the adhesion of a certain Messire Rene Memin, seigneur de Silly, and prefect of the town. This gentleman was held in great esteem not only on account of his wealth and the many offices which he filled, but above all on account of his powerful friends, among whom was the cardinal-duke himself, to whom he had formerly been of use when the cardinal was only a prior. The character of the conspiracy had now become so alarming that Grandier felt it was time to oppose it with all his strength. Recalling his conversation with the bailiff the preceding day, during which he had advised him to lay his complaint before the Bishop of Poitiers, he set out, accompanied by a priest of Loudun, named Jean Buron, for the prelate's country house at Dissay. The bishop, anticipating his visit, had already given his orders, and Grandier was met by Dupuis, the intendant of the palace, who, in reply to Grandier's request to see the bishop, told him that his lordship was ill. Urbain next addressed himself to the bishop's chaplain, and begged him to inform the prelate that his object in coming was to lay before him the official reports which the magistrates had drawn up of the events which had taken place at the Ursuline convent, and to lodge a complaint as to the slanders and accusations of which he was the victim. Grandier spoke so urgently that the chaplain could not refuse to carry his message; he returned, however, in a few moments, and told Grandier, in the presence of Dupuis, Buron, and a certain sieur Labrasse, that the bishop advised him to take his case to the royal judges, and that he earnestly hoped he would obtain justice from them. Grandier perceived that the bishop had been warned against him, and felt that he was becoming more and more entangled in the net of conspiracy around him; but he was not a man to flinch before any danger. He therefore returned immediately to Loudun, and went once more to the bailiff, to whom he related all that had happened at Dissay; he then, a second time, made a formal complaint as to the slanders circulated with regard to him, and begged the magistrates to have recourse to the king's courts in the business. He also said that he desired to be placed under the protection of the king and his justice, as the accusations made against him were aimed at his honour and his life. The bailiff hastened to make out a certificate of Urbain's protest, which forbade at the same time the repetition of the slanders or the infliction on Urbain of any injury.

Thanks to this document, a change of parts took place: Mignon, the accuser, became the accused. Feeling that he had powerful support behind him, he had the audacity to appear before the bailiff the same day. He said that he did not acknowledge his jurisdiction, as in what concerned Grandier and himself, they being both priests, they could only be judged by their bishop; he nevertheless protested against the complaint lodged by Grandier, which characterised him as a slanderer, and declared that he was ready to give himself up as a prisoner, in order to show everyone that he did not fear the result of any inquiry. Furthermore, he had taken an oath on the sacred elements the day before, in the presence of his parishioners who had come to mass, that in all he had hitherto done he had been moved, not by hatred of Grandier, but by love of the truth, and by his desire for the triumph of the Catholic faith; and he insisted that the bailiff should give him a certificate of his declaration, and served notice of the same on Grandier that very day.

CHAPTER V

Since October 13th, the day on which the demons had been expelled, life at the convent seemed to have returned to its usual quiet; but Grandier did not let himself be lulled to sleep by the calm: he knew those with whom he was contending too well to imagine for an instant that he would hear no more of them; and when the bailiff expressed pleasure at this interval of repose, Grandier said that it would not last long, as the nuns were only conning new parts, in order to carry on the drama in a more effective manner than ever. And in fact, on November 22nd, Rene Mannouri, surgeon to the convent, was sent to one of his colleagues, named Gaspard Joubert, to beg him to come, bringing some of the physicians of the town with him, to visit the two sisters, who were again tormented by evil spirits. Mannouri, however, had gone to the wrong man, for Joubert had a frank and loyal character, and hated everything that was underhand. Being determined to take no part in the business, except in a public and judicial manner, he applied at once to the bailiff to know if it was by his orders that he was called in. The bailiff said it was not, and summoned Mannouri before him to ask him by whose authority he had sent for Joubert. Mannouri declared that the 'touriere' had run in a fright to his house, saying that the nuns had never been worse possessed than now, and that the director, Mignon, begged him to come at once to the convent, bringing with him all the doctors he could find.

The bailiff, seeing that fresh plots against Grandier were being formed, sent for him and warned him that Barre had come over from Chinon the day before, and had resumed his exorcisms at the convent, adding that it was currently reported in the town that the mother superior and Sister Claire were again tormented by devils. The news neither astonished nor discouraged Grandier, who replied, with his usual smile of disdain, that it was evident his enemies were hatching new plots against him, and that as he had instituted proceedings against them for the former ones, he would take the same course with regard to these. At the same time, knowing how impartial the bailiff was, he begged him to accompany the doctors and officials to the convent, and to be present at the exorcisms, and should any sign of real possession manifest itself, to sequester the afflicted nuns at once, and cause them to be examined by other persons than Mignon and Barre, whom he had such good cause to distrust.

The bailiff wrote to the king's attorney, who, notwithstanding his bias against Grandier, was forced to see that the conclusions arrived at were correct, and having certified this in writing, he at once sent his clerk to the convent to inquire if the superior were still possessed. In case of an affirmative reply being given, the clerk had instructions to warn Mignon and Barre that they were not to undertake exorcisms unless in presence of the bailiff and of such officials and doctors as he might choose to bring with him, and that they would disobey at their peril; he was also to tell them that Grandier's demands to have the nuns sequestered and other exorcists called in were granted.

Mignon and Barre listened while the clerk read his instructions, and then said they refused to recognise the jurisdiction of the bailiff in this case; that they had been summoned by the mother superior and Sister Claire when their strange illness returned, an illness which they were convinced was nothing else than possession by evil spirits; that they had hitherto carried out their exorcisms under the authority of a commission given them by the Bishop of Poitiers; and as the time for which they had permission had not yet expired; they would continue to exorcise as often as might be necessary. They had, however, given notice to the worthy prelate of what was going on, in order that he might either come himself or send other exorcists as best suited him, so that a valid opinion as to the reality, of the possession might be procured, for up to the present the worldly and unbelieving had taken upon themselves to declare in an off-hand manner that the whole affair was a mixture of fraud and delusion, in contempt of the glory of God and the Catholic religion. As to the rest of the message, they would not, in any way prevent the bailiff and the other officials, with as many medical men as they chose to bring, from seeing the nuns, at least until they heard from the bishop, from whom they expected a letter next day. But it was for the nuns themselves to say whether it was convenient for them to receive visitors; as far as concerned themselves, they desired to renew their protest, and declared they could not accept the bailiff as their judge, and did not think that it could be legal for them to refuse to obey a command from their ecclesiastical superiors, whether with relation to exorcism or any other thing of which the ecclesiastical courts properly took cognisance. The clerk brought this answer to the bailiff, and he, thinking it was better to wait for the arrival of the bishop or of fresh orders from him, put off his visit to the convent until the next day. But the next day came without anything being heard of the prelate himself or of a messenger from him.

Early in the morning the bailiff went to the convent, but was not admitted; he

then waited patiently until noon, and seeing that no news had arrived from Dissay, and that the convent gates were still closed against him, he granted a second petition of Grandier's, to the effect that Byre and Mignon should be prohibited from questioning the superior and the other nuns in a manner tending to blacken the character of the petitioner or any other person. Notice of this prohibition was served the same day on Barre and on one nun chosen to represent the community. Barre did not pay the slightest attention to this notice, but kept on asserting that the bailiff had no right to prevent his obeying the commands of his bishop, and declaring that henceforward he would perform all exorcisms solely under ecclesiastical sanction, without any reference to lay persons, whose unbelief and impatience impaired the solemnity with which such rites should be conducted.

The best part of the day having gone over without any sign of either bishop or messenger, Grandier presented a new petition to the bailiff. The bailiff at once summoned all the officers of the bailiwick and the attorneys of the king, in order to lay it before them; but the king's attorneys refused to consider the matter, declaring upon their honour that although they did not accuse Grandier of being the cause, yet they believed that the nuns were veritably possessed, being convinced by the testimony of the devout ecclesiastics in whose presence the evil spirits had come out. This was only the ostensible reason for their refusal, the real one being that the advocate was a relation of Mignon's, and the attorney a son-in-law of Trinquant's, to whose office he had succeeded. Thus Grandier, against whom were all the ecclesiastical judges, began to feel as if he were condemned beforehand by the judges of the royal courts, for he knew how very short was the interval between the recognition of the possession as a fact and the recognition of himself as its author.

Nevertheless, in spite of the formal declarations of the king's advocate and attorney, the bailiff ordered the superior and the lay sister to be removed to houses in town, each to be accompanied by a nun as companion. During their absence from the convent they were to be looked after by exorcists, by women of high character and position, as well as by physicians and attendants, all of whom he himself would appoint, all others being forbidden access to the nuns without his permission.

The clerk was again sent to the convent with a copy of this decision, but the superior having listened to the reading of the document, answered that in her own name and that of the sisterhood she refused to recognise the jurisdiction of

the bailiff; that she had already received directions from the Bishop of Poitiers, dated 18th November, explaining the measures which were to be taken in the matter, and she would gladly send a copy of these directions to the bailiff, to prevent his pleading ignorance of them; furthermore, she demurred to the order for her removal, having vowed to live always secluded in a convent, and that no one could dispense her from this vow but the bishop. This protest having been made in the presence of Madame de Charnisay, aunt of two of the nuns, and Surgeon Mannouri, who was related to another, they both united in drawing up a protest against violence, in case the bailiff should insist on having his orders carried out, declaring that, should he make the attempt, they would resist him, as if he were a mere private individual. This document being duly signed and witnessed was immediately sent to the bailiff by the hand of his own clerk, whereupon the bailiff ordered that preparations should be made with regard to the sequestration, and announced that the next day, the 24th November, he would repair to the convent and be present at the exorcisms.

The next day accordingly, at the appointed hour, the bailiff summoned Daniel Roger, Vincent de Faux, Gaspard Joubert, and Matthieu Fanson, all four physicians, to his presence, and acquainting them with his reasons for having called them, asked them to accompany him to the convent to examine, with the most scrupulous impartiality, two nuns whom he would point out, in order to discover if their illness were feigned, or arose from natural or supernatural causes. Having thus instructed them as to his wishes, they all set out for the convent.

They were shown into the chapel and placed close to the altar, being separated by a grating from the choir, in which the nuns who sang usually sat. In a few moments the superior was carried in on a small bed, which was laid down before the grating. Barre then said mass, during which the superior went into violent convulsions. She threw her arms about, her fingers were clenched, her cheeks enormously inflated, and her eyes turned up so that only the whites could be seen.

The mass finished, Barre approached her to administer the holy communion and to commence the exorcism. Holding the holy wafer in his hand, he said—

“Adora Deum tuum, creatorem tuum” (Adore God, thy Creator).

The superior hesitated, as if she found great difficulty in making this act of love,

but at length she said—

“Adoro te” (I adore Thee).

“Quem adoras?” (Whom dost thou adore?)

“Jesus Christus” (Jesus Christ), answered the nun, quite unconscious that the verb adorn governs accusative.

This mistake, which no sixth-form boy would make, gave rise to bursts of laughter in the church; and Daniel Douin, the provost’s assessor, was constrained to say aloud—

“There’s a devil for you, who does not know much about transitive verbs.”

Barre perceiving the bad impression that the superior’s nominative had made, hastened to ask her—

“Quis est iste quem adoras?” (Who is it whom thou dost adore?)

His hope was that she would again reply “Jesus Christus,” but he was disappointed.

“Jesu Christe,” was her answer.

Renewed shouts of laughter greeted this infraction of one of the most elementary rules of syntax, and several of those present exclaimed:

“Oh, your reverence, what very poor Latin!”

Barre pretended not to hear, and next asked what was the name of the demon who had taken possession of her. The poor superior, who was greatly confused by the unexpected effect of her last two answers, could not speak for a long time; but at length with great trouble she brought out the name Asmodee, without daring to latinise it. The exorcist then inquired how many devils the superior had in her body, and to this question she replied quite fluently

“Sex” (Six).

The bailiff upon this requested Barre to ask the chief devil how many evil spirits

he had with him. But the need for this answer had been foreseen, and the nun unhesitatingly returned

“Quinque” (Five).

This answer raised Asmodee somewhat in the opinion of those present; but when the bailiff adjured the superior to repeat in Greek what she had just said in Latin she made no reply, and on the adjuration being renewed she immediately recovered her senses.

The examination of the superior being thus cut short, a little nun who appeared for the first time in public was brought forward. She began by twice pronouncing the name of Grandier with a loud laugh; then turning to the bystanders, called out—

“For all your number, you can do nothing worth while.”

As it was easy to see that nothing of importance was to be expected from this new patient, she was soon suppressed, and her place taken by the lay sister Claire who had already made her debut in the mother superior’s room

Hardly had she entered the choir than she uttered a groan, but as soon as they placed her on the little bed on which the other nuns had lain, she gave way to uncontrollable laughter, and cried out between the paroxysms

“Grandier, Grandier, you must buy some at the market.”

Barre at once declared that these wild and whirling words were a proof of possession, and approached to exorcise the demon; but Sister Claire resisted, and pretending to spit in the face of the exorcist, put out her tongue at him, making indecent gestures, using a word in harmony with her actions. This word being in the vernacular was understood by everyone and required no interpretation.

The exorcist then conjured her to give the name of the demon who was in her, and she replied

“Grandier.”

But Barre by repeating his question gave her to understand that she had made a mistake, whereupon she corrected herself and said

“Elimi.”

Nothing in the world could induce her to reveal the number of evil spirits by whom Elimi was accompanied, so that Barre, seeing that it was useless to press her on this point, passed on to the next question.

“Quo pacto ingressus est daemon”(By what pact did the demon get in?).

“Duplex” (Double), returned Sister Claire.

This horror of the ablative, when the ablative was absolutely necessary, aroused once more the hilarity of the audience, and proved that Sister Claire’s devil was just as poor a Latin scholar as the superior’s, and Barre, fearing some new linguistic eccentricity on the part of the evil spirit, adjourned the meeting to another day.

The paucity of learning shown in the answers of the nuns being sufficient to convince any fairminded person that the whole affair was a ridiculous comedy, the bailiff felt encouraged to persevere until he had unravelled the whole plot. Consequently, at three o’clock in the afternoon, he returned to the convent, accompanied by his clerk, by several magistrates, and by a considerable number of the best known people of Loudun, and asked to see the superior. Being admitted, he announced to Barre that he had come to insist on the superior being separated from Sister Claire, so that each could be exorcised apart. Barre dared not refuse before such a great number of witnesses, therefore the superior was isolated and the exorcisms begun all over again. Instantly the convulsions returned, just as in the morning, only that now she twisted her feet into the form of hooks, which was a new accomplishment.

Having adjured her several times, the exorcist succeeded in making her repeat some prayers, and then sounded her as to the name and number of the demons in possession, whereupon she said three times that there was one called Achaos. The bailiff then directed Barre to ask if she were possessed ‘ex pacto magi, aut ex Aura voluntate Dei’ (by a pact with a sorcerer or by the pure will of God), to which the superior answered

“Non est voluutas Dei” (Not by the will of God).

Upon this, Barre dreading more questions from the bystanders, hastily resumed his own catechism by asking who was the sorcerer.

“Urbanus,” answered the superior.

“Est-ne Urbanus papa” (Is it Pope Urban?), asked the exorcist.

“Grandier,” replied the superior.

“Quare ingressus es in corpus hujus puellae” (Why did you enter the body of this maiden?), said Barre.

“Propter praesentiam tuam” (Because of your presence), answered the superior.

At this point the bailiff, seeing no reason why the dialogue between Barre and the superior should ever come to an end, interposed and demanded that questions suggested by him and the other officials present should be put to the superior, promising that if she answered three of four such questions correctly, he, and those with him, would believe in the reality of the possession, and would certify to that effect. Barre accepted the challenge, but unluckily just at that moment the superior regained consciousness, and as it was already late, everyone retired.

CHAPTER VI

The next day, November 25th, the bailiff and the majority of the officers of the two jurisdictions came to the convent once more, and were all conducted to the choir. In a few moments the curtains behind the grating were drawn back, and the superior, lying on her bed, came to view. Barre began, as usual, by the celebration of mass, during which the superior was seized with convulsions, and exclaimed two or three times, "Grandier! Grandier! false priest!" When the mass was over, the celebrant went behind the grating, carrying the pyx; then, placing it on his head and holding it there, he protested that in all he was doing he was actuated by the purest motives and the highest integrity; that he had no desire to harm anyone on earth; and he adjured God to strike him dead if he had been guilty of any bad action or collusion, or had instigated the nuns to any deceit during the investigation.

The prior of the Carmelites next advanced and made the same declaration, taking the oath in the same manner, holding the pyx over his head; and further calling down on himself and his brethren the curse of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram if they had sinned during this inquiry. These protestations did not, however, produce the salutary effect intended, some of those present saying aloud that such oaths smacked of sacrilege.

Barre hearing the murmurs, hastened to begin the exorcisms, first advancing to the superior to offer her the holy sacrament: but as soon as she caught sight of him she became terribly convulsed, and attempted to drag the pyx from his hands. Barre, however, by pronouncing the sacred words, overcame the repulsion of the superior, and succeeded in placing the wafer in her mouth; she, however, pushed it out again with her tongue, as if it made her sick; Barge caught it in his fingers and gave it to her again, at the same time forbidding the demon to make her vomit, and this time she succeeded in partly swallowing the sacred morsel, but complained that it stuck in her throat. At last, in order to get it down, Barge three times gave her water to drink; and then, as always during his exorcisms, he began by interrogating the demon.

"Per quod pactum ingressus es in corpus hujus puellae?" (By what pact didst thou enter the body of this maiden?)

“Aqua” (By water), said the superior.

One of those who had accompanied the bailiff was a Scotchman called Stracan, the head of the Reformed College of Loudun. Hearing this answer, he called on the demon to translate aqua into Gaelic, saying if he gave this proof of having those linguistic attainments which all bad spirits possess, he and those with him would be convinced that the possession was genuine and no deception. Barre, without being in the least taken aback, replied that he would make the demon say it if God permitted, and ordered the spirit to answer in Gaelic. But though he repeated his command twice, it was not obeyed; on the third repetition the superior said—

“Nimia curiositas” (Too much curiosity), and on being asked again, said—

“Deus non volo.”

This time the poor devil went astray in his conjugation, and confusing the first with the third person, said, “God, I do not wish,” which in the context had no meaning. “God does not wish,” being the appointed answer.

The Scotchman laughed heartily at this nonsense, and proposed to Barre to let his devil enter into competition with the boys of his seventh form; but Barre, instead of frankly accepting the challenge in the devil’s name, hemmed and hawed, and opined that the devil was justified in not satisfying idle curiosity.

“But, sir, you must be aware,” said the civil lieutenant, “and if you are not, the manual you hold in your hand will teach you, that the gift of tongues is one of the unfailing symptoms of true possession, and the power to tell what is happening at a distance another.”

“Sir,” returned Barre, “the devil knows the language very well, but, does not wish to speak it; he also knows all your sins, in proof of which, if you so desire, I shall order him to give the list.”

“I shall be delighted to hear it,” said the civil lieutenant; “be so good as to try the experiment.”

Barre was about to approach the superior, when he was held back by the bailiff, who remonstrated with him on the impropriety of his conduct, whereupon Barre assured the magistrate that he had never really intended to do as he threatened.

However, in spite of all Barre's attempts to distract the attention of the bystanders from the subject, they still persisted in desiring to discover the extent of the devil's knowledge of foreign languages, and at their suggestion the bailiff proposed to Barre to try him in Hebrew instead of Gaelic. Hebrew being, according to Scripture, the most ancient language of all, ought to be familiar to the demon, unless indeed he had forgotten it. This idea met with such general applause that Barre was forced to command the possessed nun to say aqua in Hebrew. The poor woman, who found it difficult enough to repeat correctly the few Latin words she had learned by rote, made an impatient movement, and said —

“I can't help it; I retract” (Je renie).

These words being heard and repeated by those near her produced such an unfavourable impression that one of the Carmelite monks tried to explain them away by declaring that the superior had not said “Je renie,” but “Zaquay,” a Hebrew word corresponding to the two Latin words, “Effudi aquam” (I threw water about). But the words “Je renie” had been heard so distinctly that the monk's assertion was greeted with jeers, and the sub-prior reprimanded him publicly as a liar. Upon this, the superior had a fresh attack of convulsions, and as all present knew that these attacks usually indicated that the performance was about to end, they withdrew, making very merry over a devil who knew neither Hebrew nor Gaelic, and whose smattering of Latin was so incorrect.

However, as the bailiff and civil lieutenant were determined to clear up every doubt so far as they still felt any, they went once again to the convent at three o'clock the same afternoon. Barre came out to meet them, and took them for a stroll in the convent grounds. During their walk he said to the civil lieutenant that he felt very much surprised that he, who had on a former occasion, by order of the Bishop of Poitiers, laid information against Grandier should be now on his side. The civil lieutenant replied that he would be ready to inform against him again if there were any justification, but at present his object was to arrive at the truth, and in this he felt sure he should be successful. Such an answer was very unsatisfactory to Barre; so, drawing the bailiff aside, he remarked to him that a man among whose ancestors were many persons of condition, several of whom had held positions of much dignity in the Church, and who himself held such an important judicial position, ought to show less incredulity in regard to the possibility of a devil entering into a human body, since if it were proved it would redound to the glory of God and the good of the Church and of religion. The

bailiff received this remonstrance with marked coldness, and replied that he hoped always to take justice for his guide, as his duty commanded. Upon this, Barre pursued the subject no farther, but led the way to the superior's apartment.

Just as they entered the room, where a large number of people were already gathered, the superior, catching sight of the pyx which Barre had brought with him, fell once more into convulsions. Barre went towards her, and having asked the demon as usual by what pact he had entered the maiden's body, and received the information that it was by water, continued his examination as follows:

“Quis finis pacti” (What is the object of this pact?)

“Impuritas” (Unchastity).

At these words the bailiff interrupted the exorcist and ordered him to make the demon say in Greek the three words, ‘finis, pacti, impuritas’. But the superior, who had once already got out of her difficulties by an evasive answer, had again recourse to the same convenient phrase, “Nimia curiositas,” with which Barre agreed, saying that they were indeed too much given to curiosity. So the bailiff had to desist from his attempt to make the demon speak Greek, as he had before been obliged to give up trying to make him speak Hebrew and Gaelic. Barre then continued his examination.

“Quis attulit pactum?” (Who brought the pact?)

“Magus” (The sorcerer).

“Quale nomen magi?” (What is the sorcerer's name?)

“Urbanus” (Urban).

“Quis Urbanus? Est-ne Urbanus papa?”

(What Urban? Pope Urban?)

“Grandier.”

“Cujus qualitatis?” (What is his profession?)

“Curcatus.”

The enriching of the Latin language by this new and unknown word produced a great effect on the audience; however, Barre did not pause long enough to allow it to be received with all the consideration it deserved, but went on at once.

“Quis attulit aquam pacti?” (Who brought the water of the pact?)

“Magus” (The magician).

“Qua hora?” (At what o’clock?)

“Septima” (At seven o’clock).

“An matutina?” (In the morning?)

“Sego” (In the evening).

“Quomodo intravit?” (How did he enter?)

“Janua” (By the door).

“Quis vidit?” (Who saw him?)

“Tres” (Three persons).

Here Barre stopped, in order to confirm the testimony of the devil, assuring his hearers that the Sunday after the superior’s deliverance from the second possession he along with Mignon and one of the sisters was sitting with her at supper, it being about seven o’clock in the evening, when she showed them drops of water on her arm, and no one could tell where they came from. He had instantly washed her arm in holy water and repeated some prayers, and while he was saying them the breviary of the superior was twice dragged from her hands and thrown at his feet, and when he stooped to pick it up for the second time he got a box on the ear without being able to see the hand that administered it. Then Mignon came up and confirmed what Barre had said in a long discourse, which he wound up by calling down upon his head the most terrible penalties if every word he said were not the exact truth. He then dismissed the assembly, promising to drive out the evil spirit the next day, and exhorting those present to prepare themselves, by penitence and receiving the holy communion, for the

contemplation of the wonders which awaited them.

CHAPTER VII

The last two exorcisms had been so much talked about in the town, that Grandier, although he had not been present, knew everything that had happened, down to the smallest detail, so he once more laid a complaint before the bailiff, in which he represented that the nuns maliciously continued to name him during the exorcisms as the author of their pretended possession, being evidently influenced thereto by his enemies, whereas in fact not only had he had no communication with them, but had never set eyes on them; that in order to prove that they acted under influence it was absolutely necessary that they should be sequestered, it being most unjust that Mignon and Barre, his mortal enemies, should have constant access to them and be able to stay with them night and day, their doing so making the collusion evident and undeniable; that the honour of God was involved, and also that of the petitioner, who had some right to be respected, seeing that he was first in rank among the ecclesiastics of the town.

Taking all this into consideration, he consequently prayed the bailiff to be pleased to order that the nuns suffering from the so-called possession should at once be separated from each other and from their present associates, and placed under the control of clerics assisted by physicians in whose impartiality the petitioner could have confidence; and he further prayed that all this should be performed in spite of any opposition or appeal whatsoever (but without prejudice to the right of appeal), because of the importance of the matter. And in case the bailiff were not pleased to order the sequestration, the petitioner would enter a protest and complaint against his refusal as a withholding of justice.

The bailiff wrote at the bottom of the petition that it would be at once complied with.

After Urbain Grandier had departed, the physicians who had been present at the exorcisms presented themselves before the bailiff, bringing their report with them. In this report they said that they had recognised convulsive movements of the mother superior's body, but that one visit was not sufficient to enable them to make a thorough diagnosis, as the movements above mentioned might arise as well from a natural as from supernatural causes; they therefore desired to be afforded opportunity for a thorough examination before being called on to pronounce an opinion. To this end they required permission to spend several

days and nights uninterruptedly in the same room with the patients, and to treat them in the presence of other nuns and some of the magistrates. Further, they required that all the food and medicine should pass through the doctors' hands, and that no one, should touch the patients except quite openly, or speak to them except in an audible voice. Under these conditions they would undertake to find out the true cause of the convulsions and to make a report of the same.

It being now nine o'clock in the morning, the hour when the exorcisms began, the bailiff went over at once to the convent, and found Barre half way through the mass, and the superior in convulsions. The magistrate entered the church at the moment of the elevation of the Host, and noticed among the kneeling Catholics a young man called Dessentier standing up with his hat on. He ordered him either to uncover or to go away. At this the convulsive movements of the superior became more violent, and she cried out that there were Huguenots in the church, which gave the demon great power over her. Barre asked her how many there were present, and she replied, "Two," thus proving that the devil was no stronger in arithmetic than in Latin; for besides Dessentier, Councillor Abraham Gauthier, one of his brothers, four of his sisters, Rene Fourneau, a deputy, and an attorney called Angevin, all of the Reformed faith, were present.

As Barre saw that those present were greatly struck, by this numerical inaccuracy, he tried to turn their thoughts in another direction by asking the superior if it were true that she knew no Latin. On her replying that she did not know a single word, he held the pyx before her and ordered her to swear by the holy sacrament. She resisted at first, saying loud enough for those around her to hear—

"My father, you make me take such solemn oaths that I fear God will punish me."

To this Barre replied—

"My daughter, you must swear for the glory of God."

And she took the oath.

Just then one of the bystanders remarked that the mother superior was in the habit of interpreting the Catechism to her scholars. This she denied, but acknowledged that she used to translate the Paternoster and the Creed for them. As the superior felt herself becoming somewhat confused at this long series of

embarrassing questions, she decided on going into convulsions again, but with only moderate success, for the bailiff insisted that the exorcists should ask her where Grandier was at that very moment. Now, as the ritual teaches that one of the proofs of possession is the faculty of telling, when asked, where people are, without seeing them, and as the question was propounded in the prescribed terms, she was bound to answer, so she said that Grandier was in the great hall of the castle.

“That is not correct,” said the bailiff, “for before coming here I pointed out a house to Grandier and asked him to stay in it till I came back. If anybody will go there, they will be sure to find him, for he wished to help me to discover the truth without my being obliged to resort to sequestration, which is a difficult measure to take with regard to nuns.”

Barre was now ordered to send some of the monks present to the castle, accompanied by a magistrate and a clerk. Barre chose the Carmelite prior, and the bailiff Charles Chauvet, assessor of the bailiwick, Ismael Boulieau a priest, and Pierre Thibaut, an articled clerk, who all set out at once to execute their commission, while the rest of those present were to await their return.

Meanwhile the superior, who had not spoken a word since the bailiff's declaration, remained, in spite of repeated exorcisms, dumb, so Barre sent for Sister Claire, saying that one devil would encourage the other. The bailiff entered a formal protest against this step, insisting that the only result of a double exorcism would be to cause confusion, during which suggestions might be conveyed to the superior, and that the proper thing to do was, before beginning new conjurations, to await the return of the messengers. Although the bailiff's suggestion was most reasonable, Barre knew better than to adopt it, for he felt that no matter what it cost he must either get rid of the bailiff and all the other officials who shared his doubts, or find means with the help of Sister Claire to delude them into belief. The lay sister was therefore brought in, in spite of the opposition of the bailiff and the other magistrates, and as they did not wish to seem to countenance a fraud, they all withdrew, declaring that they could no longer look on at such a disgusting comedy. In the courtyard they met their messengers returning, who told them they had gone first to the castle and had searched the great hall and all the other rooms without seeing anything of Grandier; they had then gone to the house mentioned by the bailiff, where they found him for whom they were looking, in the company of Pere Veret, the confessor of the nuns, Mathurin Rousseau, and Nicolas Benoit, canons, and

Conte, a doctor, from whom they learned that Grandier had not been an instant out of their sight for the last two hours. This being all the magistrates wanted to know, they went home, while their envoys went upstairs and told their story, which produced the effect which might be expected. Thereupon a Carmelite brother wishing to weaken the impression, and thinking that the devil might be more lucky in his, second guess than the first, asked the superior where Grandier was just then. She answered without the slightest hesitation that he was walking with the bailiff in the church of Sainte-Croix. A new deputation was at once sent off, which finding the church empty, went on to the palace, and saw the bailiff presiding at a court. He had gone direct from the convent to the palace, and had not yet seen Grandier. The same day the nuns sent word that they would not consent to any more exorcisms being performed in the presence of the bailiff and the officials who usually accompanied him, and that for the future they were determined to answer no questions before such witnesses.

Grandier learning of this piece of insolence, which prevented the only man on whose impartiality he could reckon from being henceforward present at the exorcisms, once more handed in a petition to the bailiff, begging for the sequestration of the two nuns, no matter at what risk. The bailiff, however, in the interests of the petitioner himself, did not dare to grant this request, for he was afraid that the ecclesiastical authorities would nullify his procedure, on the ground that the convent was not under his jurisdiction.

He, however, summoned a meeting of the principal inhabitants of the town, in order to consult with them as to the best course to take for the public good. The conclusion they arrived at was to write to the attorney-general and to the Bishop of Poitiers, enclosing copies of the reports which had been drawn up, and imploring them to use their authority to put an end to these pernicious intrigues. This was done, but the attorney-general replied that the matter being entirely ecclesiastical the Parliament was not competent to take cognisance of it. As for the bishop, he sent no answer at all.

He was not, however, so silent towards Grandier's enemies; for the ill-success of the exorcisms of November 26th having made increased precautions necessary, they considered it would be well to apply to the bishop for a new commission, wherein he should appoint certain ecclesiastics to represent him during the exorcisms to come. Barre himself went to Poitiers to make this request. It was immediately granted, and the bishop appointed Bazile, senior-canon of Champigny, and Demorans, senior canon of Thouars, both of whom were related

to some of Grandier's adversaries. The following is a copy of the new commission:

"Henri-Louis le Chataignier de la Rochepezai, by the divine will Bishop of Poitiers, to the senior canons of the Chatelet de Saint-Pierre de Thouars et de Champigny-sur-Vese, greeting:

"We by these presents command you to repair to the town of Loudun, to the convent of the nuns of Sainte-Ursule, to be present at the exorcisms which will be undertaken by Sieur Barre upon some nuns of the said convent who are tormented by evil spirits, we having thereto authorised the said Barre. You are also to draw up a report of all that takes place, and for this purpose are to take any clerk you may choose with you.

" Given and done at Poitiers, November 28th, 1632.

"(Signed) HENRI LOUIS, Bishop of Poitiers. "(Countersigned) By order of the said Lord Bishop, "MICHELET"

These two commissioners having been notified beforehand, went to Loudun, where Marescot, one of the queen's chaplains, arrived at the same time; for the pious queen, Anne of Austria, had heard so many conflicting accounts of the possession of the Ursuline nuns, that she desired, for her own edification, to get to the bottom of the affair. We can judge what importance the case was beginning to assume by its being already discussed at court.

In spite of the notice which had been sent them that the nuns would not receive them, the bailiff and the civil lieutenant fearing that the royal envoy would allow himself to be imposed on, and would draw up an account which would cast doubt on the facts contained in their reports, betook themselves to the convent on December 1st, the day on which the exorcisms were to recommence, in the presence of the new commissioners. They were accompanied by their assessor, by the provost's lieutenant, and a clerk. They had to knock repeatedly before anyone seemed to hear them, but at length a nun opened the door and told them they could not enter, being suspected of bad faith, as they had publicly declared that the possession was a fraud and an imposture. The bailiff, without wasting his time arguing with the sister, asked to see Barre, who soon appeared arrayed in his priestly vestments, and surrounded by several persons, among whom was the queen's chaplain. The bailiff complained that admittance had been refused to

him and those with him, although he had been authorised to visit the convent by the Bishop of Poitiers. Barre' replied that he would not hinder their coming in, as far as it concerned him.

"We are here with the intention of entering," said the bailiff, "and also for the purpose of requesting you to put one or two questions to the demon which we have drawn up in terms which are in accordance with what is prescribed in the ritual. I am sure you will not refuse," he added, turning with a bow to Marescot, "to make this experiment in the presence of the queen's chaplain, since by that means all those suspicions of imposture can be removed which are unfortunately so rife concerning this business."

"In that respect I shall do as I please, and not as you order me," was the insolent reply of the exorcist.

"It is, however, your duty to follow legal methods in your procedure," returned the bailiff, "if you sincerely desire the truth; for it would be an affront to God to perform a spurious miracle in His honour, and a wrong to the Catholic faith, whose power is in its truth, to attempt to give adventitious lustre to its doctrines by the aid of fraud and deception."

"Sir," said Barre, "I am a man of honour, I know my duty and I shall discharge it; but as to yourself, I must recall to your recollection that the last time you were here you left the chapel in anger and excitement, which is an attitude of mind most unbecoming in one whose duty it is to administer justice."

Seeing that these recriminations would have no practical result, the magistrates cut them short by reiterating their demand for admittance; and on this being refused, they reminded the exorcists that they were expressly prohibited from asking any questions tending to cast a slur on the character of any person or persons whatever, under pain of being treated as disturbers of the public peace. At this warning Barre, saying that he did not acknowledge the bailiff's jurisdiction, shut the door in the faces of the two magistrates.

As there was no time to lose if the machinations of his enemies were to be brought to nought, the bailiff and the civil lieutenant advised Grandier to write to the Archbishop of Bordeaux, who had once already extricated him from imminent danger, setting forth at length his present predicament; this letter; accompanied by the reports drawn up by the bailiff and the civil lieutenant, were

sent off at once by a trusty messenger to His Grace of Escoubleau de Sourdis. As soon as he received the despatches, the worthy prelate seeing how grave was the crisis, and that the slightest delay might be fatal to Grandier, set out at once for his abbey of Saint-Jouinles-Marmes, the place in which he had already vindicated in so striking a manner the upright character of the poor persecuted priest by a fearless act of justice.

It is not difficult to realise what a blow his arrival was to those who held a brief for the evil spirits in possession; hardly had he reached Saint-Jouin than he sent his own physician to the convent with orders to see the afflicted nuns and to test their condition, in order to judge if the convulsions were real or simulated. The physician arrived, armed with a letter from the archbishop, ordering Mignon to permit the bearer to make a thorough examination into the position of affairs. Mignon received the physician with all the respect due to him who sent him, but expressed great regret that he had not come a little sooner, as, thanks to his (Mignon's) exertions and those of Barre, the devils had been exorcised the preceding day. He nevertheless introduced the archbishop's envoy to the presence of the superior and Sister Claire, whose demeanour was as calm as if they had never been disturbed by any agitating' experiences. Mignon's statement being thus confirmed, the doctor returned to Saint-Jouin, the only thing to which he could bear testimony being the tranquillity which reigned at the moment in the convent.

The imposture being now laid so completely bare, the archbishop was convinced that the infamous persecutions to which it had led would cease at once and for ever; but Grandier, better acquainted with the character of his adversaries, arrived on the 27th of December at the abbey and laid a petition at the archbishop's feet. In this document he set forth that his enemies having formerly brought false and slanderous accusations, against him of which, through the justice of the archbishop, he had been able to clear himself, had employed themselves during the last three months in inventing and publishing as a fact that the petitioner had sent evil spirits into the bodies of nuns in the Ursuline convent of Loudun, although he had never spoken to any of the sisterhood there; that the guardianship of the sisters who, it was alleged, were possessed, and the task of exorcism, had been entrusted to Jean Mignon and Pierre Barre, who had in the most unmistakable manner shown themselves to be the mortal enemies of the petitioner; that in the reports drawn up by the said Jean Mignon and Pierre Barre, which differed so widely from those made by the bailiff and the civil lieutenant, it was boastfully alleged that three or four times devils had been driven out, but

that they had succeeded in returning and taking possession of their victims again and again, in virtue of successive pacts entered into between the prince of darkness and the petitioner; that the aim of these reports and allegations was to destroy the reputation of the petitioner and excite public opinion against him; that although the demons had been put to flight by the arrival of His Grace, yet it was too probable that as soon as he was gone they would return to the charge; that if, such being the case, the powerful support of the archbishop were not available, the innocence of the petitioner, no matter how strongly established, would by the cunning tactics of his inveterate foes be obscured and denied: he, the petitioner, therefore prayed that, should the foregoing reasons prove on examination to be cogent, the archbishop would be pleased to prohibit Barre, Mignon, and their partisans, whether among the secular or the regular clergy, from taking part in any future exorcisms, should such be necessary, or in the control of any persons alleged to be possessed; furthermore, petitioner prayed that His Grace would be pleased to appoint as a precautionary measure such other clerics and lay persons as seemed to him suitable, to superintend the administration of food and medicine and the rite of exorcism to those alleged to be possessed, and that all the treatment should be carried out in the presence of magistrates.

The archbishop accepted the petition, and wrote below it:

“The present petition having been seen by us and the opinion of our attorney having been taken in the matter, we have sent the petitioner in advance of our said attorney back to Poitiers, that justice may be done him, and in the meantime we have appointed Sieur Barre, Pere l’Escaye, a Jesuit residing in Poitiers, Pere Gaut of the Oratory, residing at Tours, to conduct the exorcisms, should such be necessary, and have given them an order to this effect.

“It is forbidden to all others to meddle with the said exorcisms, on pain of being punished according to law.”

It will be seen from the above that His Grace the Archbishop of Bordeaux, in his enlightened and generous exercise of justice, had foreseen and provided for every possible contingency; so that as soon as his orders were made known to the exorcists the possession ceased at once and completely, and was no longer even talked of. Barre withdrew to Chinon, the senior canons rejoined their chapters, and the nuns, happily rescued for the time, resumed their life of retirement and tranquillity. The archbishop nevertheless urged on Grandier the

prudence of effecting an exchange of benefices, but he replied that he would not at that moment change his simple living of Loudun for a bishopric.

CHAPTER VIII

The exposure of the plot was most prejudicial to the prosperity of the Ursuline community: spurious possession, far from bringing to their convent an increase of subscriptions and enhancing their reputation, as Mignon had promised, had ended for them in open shame, while in private they suffered from straitened circumstances, for the parents of their boarders hastened to withdraw their daughters from the convent, and the nuns in losing their pupils lost their sole source of income. Their fall in the estimation of the public filled them with despair, and it leaked out that they had had several altercations with their director, during which they reproached him for having, by making them commit such a great sin, overwhelmed them with infamy and reduced them to misery, instead of securing for them the great spiritual and temporal advantages he had promised them. Mignon, although devoured by hate, was obliged to remain quiet, but he was none the less as determined as ever to have revenge, and as he was one of those men who never give up while a gleam of hope remains, and whom no waiting can tire, he bided his time, avoiding notice, apparently resigned to circumstances, but keeping his eyes fixed on Grandier, ready to seize on the first chance of recovering possession of the prey that had escaped his hands. And unluckily the chance soon presented itself.

It was now 1633: Richelieu was at the height of his power, carrying out his work of destruction, making castles fall before him where he could not make heads fall, in the spirit of John Knox's words, "Destroy the nests and the crows will disappear." Now one of these nests was the crenellated castle of Loudun, and Richelieu had therefore ordered its demolition.

The person appointed to carry out this order was a man such as those whom Louis XI. had employed fifty years earlier to destroy the feudal system, and Robespierre one hundred and fifty years later to destroy the aristocracy. Every woodman needs an axe, every reaper a sickle, and Richelieu found the instrument he required in de Laubardemont, Councillor of State.

But he was an instrument full of intelligence, detecting by the manner in which he was wielded the moving passion of the wielder, and adapting his whole nature with marvellous dexterity to gratify that passion according to the character of him whom it possessed; now by a rough and ready impetuosity, now by a

deliberate and hidden advance; equally willing to strike with the sword or to poison by calumny, as the man who moved him lusted for the blood or sought to accomplish the dishonour of his victim.

M. de Laubardemont arrived at Loudun during the month of August 1633, and in order to carry out his mission addressed himself to Sieur Memin de Silly, prefect of the town, that old friend of the cardinal's whom Mignon and Barre, as we have said, had impressed so favourably. Memin saw in the arrival of Laubardemont a special intimation that it was the will of Heaven that the seemingly lost cause of those in whom he took such a warm interest should ultimately triumph. He presented Mignon and all his friends to M. Laubardemont, who received them with much cordiality. They talked of the mother superior, who was a relation, as we have seen, of M. de Laubardemont, and exaggerated the insult offered her by the decree of the archbishop, saying it was an affront to the whole family; and before long the one thing alone which occupied the thoughts of the conspirators and the councillor was how best to draw down upon Grandier the anger of the cardinal-duke. A way soon opened.

The Queen mother, Marie de Medici, had among her attendants a woman called Hammon, to whom, having once had occasion to speak, she had taken a fancy, and given a post near her person. In consequence of this whim, Hammon came to be regarded as a person of some importance in the queen's household. Hammon was a native of Loudun, and had passed the greater part of her youth there with her own people, who belonged to the lower classes. Grandier had been her confessor, and she attended his church, and as she was lively and clever he enjoyed talking to her, so that at length an intimacy sprang up between them. It so happened at a time when he and the other ministers were in momentary disgrace, that a satire full of biting wit and raillery appeared, directed especially against the cardinal, and this satire had been attributed to Hammon, who was known to share, as was natural, her mistress's hatred of Richelieu. Protected as she was by the queen's favour, the cardinal had found it impossible to punish Hammon, but he still cherished a deep resentment against her.

It now occurred to the conspirators to accuse Grandier of being the real author of the satire; and it was asserted that he had learned from Hammon all the details of the cardinal's private life, the knowledge of which gave so much point to the attack on him; if they could once succeed in making Richelieu believe this, Grandier was lost.

This plan being decided on, M. de Laubardemont was asked to visit the convent, and the devils knowing what an important personage he was, flocked thither to give him a worthy welcome. Accordingly, the nuns had attacks of the most indescribably violent convulsions, and M. de Laubardemont returned to Paris convinced as to the reality of their possession.

The first word the councillor of state said to the cardinal about Urbain Grandier showed him that he had taken useless trouble in inventing the story about the satire, for by the bare mention of his name he was able to arouse the cardinal's anger to any height he wished. The fact was, that when Richelieu had been Prior of Coussay he and Grandier had had a quarrel on a question of etiquette, the latter as priest of Loudun having claimed precedence over the prior, and carried his point. The cardinal had noted the affront in his bloodstained tablets, and at the first hint de Laubardemont found him as eager to bring about Grandier's ruin as was the councillor himself.

De Laubardemont was at once granted the following commission:

“Sieur de Laubardemont, Councillor of State and Privy Councillor, will betake himself to Loudun, and to whatever other places may be necessary, to institute proceedings against Grandier on all the charges formerly preferred against him, and on other facts which have since come to light, touching the possession by evil spirits of the Ursuline nuns of Loudun, and of other persons, who are said like wise to be tormented of devils through the evil practices of the said Grandier; he will diligently investigate everything from the beginning that has any bearing either on the said possession or on the exorcisms, and will forward to us his report thereon, and the reports and other documents sent in by former commissioners and delegates, and will be present at all future exorcisms, and take proper steps to obtain evidence of the said facts, that they may be clearly established; and, above all, will direct, institute, and carry through the said proceedings against Grandier and all others who have been involved with him in the said case, until definitive sentence be passed; and in spite of any appeal or countercharge this cause will not be delayed (but without prejudice to the right of appeal in other causes), on account of the nature of the crimes, and no regard will be paid to any request for postponement made by the said Grandier. His majesty commands all governors, provincial lieutenant-generals, bailiffs, seneschals, and other municipal authorities, and all subjects whom it may concern, to give every assistance in arresting and imprisoning all persons whom it may be necessary to put under constraint, if they shall be required so to do.”

Furnished with this order, which was equivalent to a condemnation, de Laubardemont arrived at Laudun, the 5th of December, 1633, at nine o'clock in the evening; and to avoid being seen he alighted in a suburb at the house of one maitre Paul Aubin, king's usher, and son-in-law of Memin de Silly. His arrival was kept so secret that neither Grandier nor his friends knew of it, but Memin, Herve Menuau, and Mignon were notified, and immediately called on him. De Laubardemont received them, commission in hand, but broad as it was, it did not seem to them sufficient, for it contained no order for Grandier's arrest, and Grandier might fly. De Laubardemont, smiling at the idea that he could be so much in fault, drew from his pocket an order in duplicate, in case one copy should be lost, dated like the commission, November 30th, signed LOUIS, and countersigned PHILIPPEAUX. It was conceived in the following terms:

LOUIS, *etc. etc.* "We have entrusted these presents to Sieur de Laubardemont, Privy Councillor, to empower the said Sieur de Laubardemont to arrest Grandier and his accomplices and imprison them in a secure place, with orders to all provosts, marshals, and other officers, and to all our subjects in general, to lend whatever assistance is necessary to carry out above order; and they are commanded by these presents to obey all orders given by the said Sieur; and all governors and lieutenants-general are also hereby commanded to furnish the said Sieur with whatever aid he may require at their hands."

This document being the completion of the other, it was immediately resolved, in order to show that they had the royal authority at their back, and as a preventive measure, to arrest Grandier at once, without any preliminary investigation. They hoped by this step to intimidate any official who might still be inclined to take Grandier's part, and any witness who might be disposed to testify in his favour. Accordingly, they immediately sent for Guillaume Aubin, Sieur de Lagrange and provost's lieutenant. De Laubardemont communicated to him the commission of the cardinal and the order of the king, and requested him to arrest Grandier early next morning. M. de Lagrange could not deny the two signatures, and answered that he would obey; but as he foresaw from their manner of going to work that the proceedings about to be instituted would be an assassination and not a fair trial, he sent, in spite of being a distant connection of Memin, whose daughter was married to his (Lagrange's) brother, to warn Grandier of the orders he had received. But Grandier with his usual intrepidity, while thanking Lagrange for his generous message, sent back word that, secure in his innocence and relying on the justice of God, he was determined to stand his ground.

So Grandier remained, and his brother, who slept beside him, declared that his sleep that night was as quiet as usual. The next morning he rose, as was his habit, at six o'clock, took his breviary in his hand, and went out with the intention of attending matins at the church of Sainte-Croix. He had hardly put his foot over the threshold before Lagrange, in the presence of Memin, Mignon, and the other conspirators, who had come out to gloat over the sight, arrested him in the name of the king. He was at once placed in the custody of Jean Pouguet, an archer in His Majesty's guards, and of the archers of the provosts of Loudun and Chinon, to be taken to the castle at Angers. Meanwhile a search was instituted, and the royal seal affixed to the doors of his apartments, to his presses, his other articles of furniture-in fact, to every thing and place in the house; but nothing was found that tended to compromise him, except an essay against the celibacy of priests, and two sheets of paper whereon were written in another hand than his, some love-poems in the taste of that time.

CHAPTER IX

For four months Grandier languished in prison, and, according to the report of Michelon, commandant of Angers, and of Pierre Bacher, his confessor, he was, during the whole period, a model of patience and firmness, passing his days in reading good books or in writing prayers and meditations, which were afterwards produced at his trial. Meanwhile, in spite of the urgent appeals of Jeanne Esteye, mother of the accused, who, although seventy years of age, seemed to recover her youthful strength and activity in the desire to save her son, Laubardemont continued the examination, which was finished on April 4th. Urbain was then brought back from Angers to Loudun.

An extraordinary cell had been prepared for him in a house belonging to Mignon, and which had formerly been occupied by a sergeant named Bontems, once clerk to Trinquant, who had been a witness for the prosecution in the first trial. It was on the topmost story; the windows had been walled up, leaving only one small slit open, and even this opening was secured by enormous iron bars; and by an exaggeration of caution the mouth of the fireplace was furnished with a grating, lest the devils should arrive through the chimney to free the sorcerer from his chains. Furthermore, two holes in the corners of the room, so formed that they were unnoticeable from within, allowed a constant watch to be kept over Grandier's movements by Bontem's wife, a precaution by which they hoped to learn something that would help them in the coming exorcisms. In this room, lying on a little straw, and almost without light, Grandier wrote the following letter to his mother:

“MY MOTHER,—I received your letter and everything you sent me except the woollen stockings. I endure any affliction with patience, and feel more pity for you than for myself. I am very much inconvenienced for want of a bed; try and have mine brought to me, for my mind will give way if my body has no rest: if you can, send me a breviary, a Bible, and a St. Thomas for my consolation; and above all, do not grieve for me. I trust that, God will bring my innocence to light. Commend me to my brother and sister, and all our good friends.—I am, mother, your dutiful son and servant,

“GRANDIER”

While Grandier had been in prison at Angers the cases of possession at the convent had miraculously multiplied, for it was no longer only the superior and Sister Claire who had fallen a prey to the evil spirits, but also several other sisters, who were divided into three groups as follows, and separated:—

The superior, with Sisters Louise des Anges and Anne de Sainte-Agnes, were sent to the house of Sieur Delaville, advocate, legal adviser to the sisterhood; Sisters Claire and Catherine de la Presentation were placed in the house of Canon Maurat; Sisters Elisabeth de la Croix, Monique de Sainte-Marthe, Jeanne du Sainte-Esprit, and Seraphique Archer were in a third house.

A general supervision was undertaken by Memin's sister, the wife of Moussant, who was thus closely connected with two of the greatest enemies of the accused, and to her Bontems' wife told all that the superior needed to know about Grandier. Such was the manner of the sequestration!

The choice of physicians was no less extraordinary. Instead of calling in the most skilled practitioners of Angers, Tours, Poitiers, or Saumur, all of them, except Daniel Roger of Loudun, came from the surrounding villages, and were men of no education: one of them, indeed, had failed to obtain either degree or licence, and had been obliged to leave Saumur in consequence; another had been employed in a small shop to take goods home, a position he had exchanged for the more lucrative one of quack.

There was just as little sense of fairness and propriety shown in the choice of the apothecary and surgeon. The apothecary, whose name was Adam, was Mignon's first cousin, and had been one of the witnesses for the prosecution at Grandier's first trial; and as on that occasion—he had libelled a young girl of Loudun, he had been sentenced by a decree of Parliament to make a public apology. And yet, though his hatred of Grandier in consequence of this humiliation was so well known,—perhaps for that very reason, it was to him the duty of dispensing and administering the prescriptions was entrusted, no one supervising the work even so far as to see that the proper doses were given, or taking note whether for sedatives he did not sometimes substitute stimulating and exciting drugs, capable of producing real convulsions. The surgeon Mannouri was still more unsuitable, for he was a nephew of Memin de Silly, and brother of the nun who had offered the most determined opposition to Grandier's demand for sequestration of the

possessed sisters, during the second series of exorcisms. In vain did the mother and brother of the accused present petitions setting forth the incapacity of the doctors and the hatred of Grandier professed by the apothecary; they could not, even at their own expense, obtain certified copies of any of these petitions, although they had witnesses ready to prove that Adam had once in his ignorance dispensed *crocus metallorum* for *crocus mantis*—a mistake which had caused the death of the patient for whom the prescription was made up. In short, so determined were the conspirators that this time Grandier should be done to death, that they had not even the decency to conceal the infamous methods by which they had arranged to attain this result.

The examination was carried on with vigour. As one of the first formalities would be the identification of the accused, Grandier published a memorial in which he recalled the case of Saint-Anastasius at the Council of Tyre, who had been accused of immorality by a fallen woman whom he had never seen before. When this woman entered the hall of justice in order to swear to her deposition, a priest named Timothy went up to her and began to talk to her as if he were Anastasius; falling into the trap, she answered as if she recognised him, and thus the innocence of the saint was shown forth. Grandier therefore demanded that two or three persons of his own height and complexion should be dressed exactly like himself, and with him should be allowed to confront the nuns. As he had never seen any of them, and was almost certain they had never seen him, they would not be able, he felt sure, to point him out with certainty, in spite of the allegations of undue intimacy with themselves they brought against him. This demand showed such conscious innocence that it was embarrassing to answer, so no notice was taken of it.

Meanwhile the Bishop of Poitiers, who felt much elated at getting the better of the Archbishop of Bordeaux, who of course was powerless against an order issued by the cardinal-duke, took exception to Pere l'Escaye and Pere Gaut, the exorcists appointed by his superior, and named instead his own chaplain, who had been judge at Grandier's first trial, and had passed sentence on him, and Pere Lactance, a Franciscan monk. These two, making no secret of the side with which they sympathised, put up on their arrival at Nicolas Moussant's, one of Grandier's most bitter enemies; on the following day they went to the superior's apartments and began their exorcisms. The first time the superior opened her lips to reply, Pere Lactance perceived that she knew almost no Latin, and consequently would not shine during the exorcism, so he ordered her to answer in French, although he still continued to exorcise her in Latin; and when

someone was bold enough to object, saying that the devil, according to the ritual, knew all languages living and dead, and ought to reply in the same language in which he was addressed, the father declared that the incongruity was caused by the pact, and that moreover some devils were more ignorant than peasants.

Following these exorcists, and two Carmelite monks, named Pierre de Saint-Thomas and Pierre de Saint-Mathurin, who had, from the very beginning, pushed their way in when anything was going on, came four Capuchins sent by Pere Joseph, head of the Franciscans, “His grey Eminence,” as he was called, and whose names were Peres Luc, Tranquille, Potais, and Elisee; so that a much more rapid advance could be made than hitherto by carrying on the exorcisms in four different places at once—viz., in the convent, and in the churches of Sainte-Croix, Saint-Pierre du Martroy, and Notre-Dame du Chateau. Very little of importance took place, however, on the first two occasions, the 15th and 16th of April; for the declarations of the doctors were most vague and indefinite, merely saying that the things they had seen were supernatural, surpassing their knowledge and the rules of medicine.

The ceremony of the 23rd April presented, however, some points of interest. The superior, in reply to the interrogations of Pere Lactance, stated that the demon had entered her body under the forms of a cat, a dog, a stag, and a buck-goat.

“Quoties?” (How often?), inquired the exorcist.

“I didn’t notice the day,” replied the superior, mistaking the word quoties for quando (when).

It was probably to revenge herself for this error that the superior declared the same day that Grandier had on his body five marks made by the devil, and that though his body was else insensible to pain, he was vulnerable at those spots. Mannouri, the surgeon, was therefore ordered to verify this assertion, and the day appointed for the verification was the 26th.

In virtue of this mandate Mannouri presented himself early on that day at Grandier’s prison, caused him to be stripped naked and cleanly shaven, then ordered him to be laid on a table and his eyes bandaged. But the devil was wrong again: Grandier had only two marks, instead of five—one on the shoulder-blade, and the other on the thigh.

Then took place one of the most abominable performances that can be imagined.

Mannouri held in his hand a probe, with a hollow handle, into which the needle slipped when a spring was touched: when Mannouri applied the probe to those parts of Grandier's body which, according to the superior, were insensible, he touched the spring, and the needle, while seeming to bury itself in the flesh, really retreated into the handle, thus causing no pain; but when he touched one of the marks said to be vulnerable, he left the needle fixed, and drove it in to the depth of several inches. The first time he did this it drew from poor Grandier, who was taken unprepared, such a piercing cry that it was heard in the street by the crowd which had gathered round the door. From the mark on the shoulder-blade with which he had commenced, Mannouri passed to that on the thigh, but though he plunged the needle in to its full depth Grandier uttered neither cry nor groan, but went on quietly repeating a prayer, and notwithstanding that Mannouri stabbed him twice more through each of the two marks, he could draw nothing from his victim but prayers for his tormentors.

M. de Laubardemont was present at this scene.

The next day the devil was addressed in such forcible terms that an acknowledgment was wrung from him that Grandier's body bore, not five, but two marks only; and also, to the vast admiration of the spectators, he was able this time to indicate their precise situation.

Unfortunately for the demon, a joke in which he indulged on this occasion detracted from the effect of the above proof of cleverness. Having been asked why he had refused to speak on the preceding Saturday, he said he had not been at Loudun on that day, as the whole morning he had been occupied in accompanying the soul of a certain Le Proust, attorney to the Parliament of Paris, to hell. This answer awoke such doubts in the breasts of some of the laymen present that they took the trouble to examine the register of deaths, and found that no one of the name of Le Proust, belonging to any profession whatever, had died on that date. This discovery rendered the devil less terrible, and perhaps less amusing.

Meantime the progress of the other exorcisms met with like interruptions. Pere Pierre de Saint Thomas, who conducted the operations in the Carmelite church, asked one of the possessed sisters where Grandier's books of magic were; she replied that they were kept at the house of a certain young girl, whose name she gave, and who was the same to whom Adam had been forced to apologise. De Laubardemont, Moussant, Herve, and Meunau hastened at once to the house

indicated, searched the rooms and the presses, opened the chests and the wardrobes and all the secret places in the house, but in vain. On their return to the church, they reproached the devil for having deceived them, but he explained that a niece of the young woman had removed the books. Upon this, they hurried to the niece's dwelling, but unluckily she was not at home, having spent the whole day at a certain church making her devotions, and when they went thither, the priests and attendants averred that she had not gone out all day; so notwithstanding the desire of the exorcists to oblige Adam they were forced to let the matter drop.

These two false statements increased the number of unbelievers; but it was announced that a most interesting performance would take place on May 4th; indeed, the programme when issued was varied enough to arouse general curiosity. Asmodeus was to raise the superior two feet from the ground, and the fiends Eazas and Cerberus, in emulation of their leader, would do as much for two other nuns; while a fourth devil, named Beherit, would go farther still, and, greatly daring, would attack M. de Laubardemont himself, and, having spirited his councillor's cap from his head, would hold it suspended in the air for the space of a Misereye. Furthermore, the exorcists announced that six of the strongest men in the town would try to prevent the contortions of the, weakest of the convulsed nuns, and would fail.

It need hardly be said that the prospect of such an entertainment filled the church on the appointed day to overflowing. Pere Lactance began by calling on Asmodeus to fulfil his promise of raising the superior from the ground. She began, hereupon, to perform various evolutions on her mattress, and at one moment it seemed as if she were really suspended in the air; but one of the spectators lifted her dress and showed that she was only standing on tiptoe, which, though it might be clever, was not miraculous. Shouts of laughter rent the air, which had such an intimidating effect on Eazas and Cerberus that not all the adjurations of the exorcists could extract the slightest response. Beherit was their last hope, and he replied that he was prepared to lift up M. de Laubardemont's cap, and would do so before the expiration of a quarter of an hour.

We must here remark that this time the exorcisms took place in the evening, instead of in the morning as hitherto; and it was now growing dark, and darkness is favourable to illusions. Several of the unbelieving ones present, therefore, began to call attention to the fact that the quarter of an hour's delay would necessitate the employment of artificial light during the next scene. They also

noticed that M. de Laubardemont had seated himself apart and immediately beneath one of the arches in the vaulted roof, through which a hole had been drilled for the passage of the bell-rope. They therefore slipped out of the church, and up into the belfry, where they hid. In a few moments a man appeared who began to work at something. They sprang on him and seized his wrists, and found in one of his hands a thin line of horsehair, to one end of which a hook was attached. The holder being frightened, dropped the line and fled, and although M. de Laubardemont, the exorcists, and the spectators waited, expecting every moment that the cap would rise into the air, it remained quite firm on the owner's head, to the no small confusion of Pere Lactance, who, all unwitting of the fiasco, continued to adjure Beherit to keep his word—of course without the least effect.

Altogether, this performance of May 4th, went anything but smoothly. Till now no trick had succeeded; never before had the demons been such bunglers. But the exorcists were sure that the last trick would go off without a hitch. This was, that a nun, held by six men chosen for their strength, would succeed in extricating herself from their grasp, despite their utmost efforts. Two Carmelites and two Capuchins went through the audience and selected six giants from among the porters and messengers of the town.

This time the devil answered expectations by showing that if he was not clever he was strong, for although the six men tried to hold her down upon her mattress, the superior was seized with such terrible convulsions that she escaped from their hands, throwing down one of those who tried to detain her. This experiment, thrice renewed, succeeded thrice, and belief seemed about to return to the assembly, when a physician of Saumur named Duncan, suspecting trickery, entered the choir, and, ordering the six men to retire, said he was going to try and hold the superior down unaided, and if she escaped from his hands he would make a public apology for his unbelief. M. de Laubardemont tried to prevent this test, by objecting to Duncan as an atheist, but as Duncan was greatly respected on account of his skill and probity, there was such an outcry at this interference from the entire audience that the commissioner was forced to let him have his way. The six porters were therefore dismissed, but instead of resuming their places among the spectators they left the church by the sacristy, while Duncan approaching the bed on which the superior had again lain down, seized her by the wrist, and making certain that he had a firm hold, he told the exorcists to begin.

Never up to that time had it been so clearly shown that the conflict going on was between public opinion and the private aims of a few. A hush fell on the church; everyone stood motionless in silent expectancy.

The moment Pere Lactance uttered the sacred words the convulsions of the superior recommenced; but it seemed as if Duncan had more strength than his six predecessors together, for twist and writhe and struggle as she would, the superior's wrist remained none the less firmly clasped in Duncan's hand. At length she fell back on her bed exhausted, exclaiming!"

"It's no use, it's no use! He's holding me!"

Release her arm! "shouted Pere Lactance in a rage. "How can the convulsions take place if you hold her that way?"

"If she is really possessed by a demon," answered Duncan aloud, "he should be stronger than I; for it is stated in the ritual that among the symptoms of possession is strength beyond one's years, beyond one's condition, and beyond what is natural."

"That is badly argued," said Lactance sharply: "a demon outside the body is indeed stronger than you, but when enclosed in a weak frame such as this it cannot show such strength, for its efforts are proportioned to the strength of the body it possesses."

"Enough!" said M. de Laubardemont; "we did not come here to argue with philosophers, but to build up the faith of Christians."

With that he rose up from his chair amidst a terrible uproar, and the assembly dispersed in the utmost disorder, as if they were leaving a theatre rather than a church.

The ill success of this exhibition caused a cessation of events of interest for some days. The result was that a great number of noblemen and other people of quality who had come to Loudun expecting to see wonders and had been shown only commonplace transparent tricks, began to think it was not worth while remaining any longer, and went their several ways—a defection much bewailed by Pere Tranquille in a little work which he published on this affair.

"Many," he says, "came to see miracles at Loudun, but finding the devils did not

give them the signs they expected, they went away dissatisfied, and swelled the numbers of the unbelieving.”

It was determined, therefore, in order to keep the town full, to predict some great event which would revive curiosity and increase faith. Pere Lactance therefore announced that on the 20th of May three of the seven devils dwelling in the superior would come out, leaving three wounds in her left side, with corresponding holes in her chemise, bodice, and dress. The three parting devils were Asmodeus, Gresil des Trones, and Aman des Puissances. He added that the superior’s hands would be bound behind her back at the time the wounds were given.

On the appointed day the church of Sainte-Croix was filled to overflowing with sightseers curious to know if the devils would keep their promises better this time than the last. Physicians were invited to examine the superior’s side and her clothes; and amongst those who came forward was Duncan, whose presence guaranteed the public against deception; but none of the exorcists ventured to exclude him, despite the hatred in which they held him—a hatred which they would have made him feel if he had not been under the special protection of Marshal Breze. The physicians having completed their examination, gave the following certificate:—

“We have found no wound in the patient’s side, no rent in her vestments, and our search revealed no sharp instrument hidden in the folds of her dress.”

These preliminaries having been got through, Pere Lactance questioned her in French for nearly two hours, her answers being in the same language. Then he passed from questions to adjurations: on this, Duncan came forward, and said a promise had been given that the superior’s hands should be tied behind her back, in order that there might be no room for suspicion of fraud, and that the moment had now arrived to keep that promise. Pere Lactance admitted the justice of the demand, but said as there were many present who had never seen the superior in convulsions such as afflicted the possessed, it would be only fair that she should be exorcised for their satisfaction before binding her. Accordingly he began to repeat the form of exorcism, and the superior was immediately attacked by frightful convulsions, which in a few minutes produced complete exhaustion, so that she fell on her face to the ground, and turning on her left arm and side, remained motionless some instants, after which she uttered a low cry, followed by a groan. The physicians approached her, and Duncan seeing her take away

her hand from her left side, seized her arm, and found that the tips of her fingers were stained with blood. They then examined her clothing and body, and found her dress, bodice, and chemise cut through in three places, the cuts being less than an inch long. There were also three scratches beneath the left breast, so slight as to be scarcely more than skin deep, the middle one being a barleycorn in length; still, from all three a sufficient quantity of blood had oozed to stain the chemise above them.

This time the fraud was so glaring that even de Laubardemont exhibited some signs of confusion because of the number and quality of the spectators. He would not, however, allow the doctors to include in their report their opinion as to the manner in which the wounds were inflicted; but Grandier protested against this in a Statement of Facts, which he drew up during the night, and which was distributed next day.

It was as follows:

“That if the superior had not groaned the physicians would not have removed her clothes, and would have suffered her to be bound, without having the least idea that the wounds were already made; that then the exorcists would have commanded the devils to come forth, leaving the traces they had promised; that the superior would then have gone through the most extraordinary contortions of which she was capable, and have had a long fit of, convulsions, at the end of which she would have been delivered from the three demons, and the wounds would have been found in her body; that her groans, which had betrayed her, had by God’s will thwarted the best-laid plans of men and devils. Why do you suppose,” he went on to ask, “that clean incised wounds, such as a sharp blade would make, ‘were chosen for a token, seeing that the wounds left by devils resemble burns? Was it not because it was easier for the superior to conceal a lancet with which to wound herself slightly, than to conceal any instrument sufficiently heated to burn her? Why do you think the left side was chosen rather than the forehead and nose, if not because she could not give herself a wound in either of those places without being seen by all the spectators? Why was the left side rather than the right chosen, if it were not that it was easier for the superior to wound herself with her right hand, which she habitually used, in the left side than in the right? Why did she turn on her left side and arm and remain so long in that position, if it were not to hide from the bystanders the instrument with which she wounded herself? What do you think caused her to groan, in spite of all her resolution, if it were not the pain of the wound she gave herself? for the

most courageous cannot repress a shudder when the surgeon opens a vein. Why were her finger-tips stained with blood, if it were not that the secreted blade was so small that the fingers which held it could not escape being reddened by the blood it caused to flow? How came it that the wounds were so superficial that they barely went deeper than the cuticle, while devils are known to rend and tear demoniacs when leaving them, if it were not that the superior did not hate herself enough to inflict deep and dangerous wounds?"

Despite this logical protest from Grandier and the barefaced knavery of the exorcist, M. de Laubardemont prepared a report of the expulsion of the three devils, Asmodeus, Gresil, and Aman, from the body of sister Jeanne des Anges, through three wounds below the region of the heart; a report which was afterwards shamelessly used against Grandier, and of which the memorandum still exists, a monument, not so much of credulity and superstition, as of hatred and revenge. Pere Lactance, in order to allay the suspicions which the pretended miracle had aroused among the eye-witnesses, asked Balaam, one of the four demons who still remained in the superior's body, the following day, why Asmodeus and his two companions had gone out against their promise, while the superior's face and hands were hidden from the people.

"To lengthen the incredulity of certain people," answered Balaam.

As for Pere Tranquille, he published a little volume describing the whole affair, in which, with the irresponsible frivolity of a true Capuchin, he poked fun at those who could not swallow the miracles wholesale.

"They had every reason to feel vexed," he said, "at the small courtesy or civility shown by the demons to persons of their merit and station; but if they had examined their consciences, perhaps they would have found the real reason of their discontent, and, turning their anger against themselves, would have done penance for having come to the exorcisms led by a depraved moral sense and a prying spirit."

Nothing remarkable happened from the 20th May till the 13th June, a day which became noteworthy by reason of the superior's vomiting a quill a finger long. It was doubtless this last miracle which brought the Bishop of Poitiers to Loudun, "not," as he said to those who came to pay their respects to him, "to examine into the genuineness of the possession, but to force those to believe who still doubted, and to discover the classes which Urbain had founded to teach the

black art to pupils of both sexes.”

Thereupon the opinion began to prevail among the people that it would be prudent to believe in the possession, since the king, the cardinal-duke, and the bishop believed in it, and that continued doubt would lay them open to the charges of disloyalty to their king and their Church, and of complicity in the crimes of Grandier, and thus draw down upon them the ruthless punishment of Laubardemont.

“The reason we feel so certain that our work is pleasing to God is that it is also pleasing to the king,” wrote Pere Lactance.

The arrival of the bishop was followed by a new exorcism; and of this an eye-witness, who was a good Catholic and a firm believer in possession, has left us a written description, more interesting than any we could give. We shall present it to our readers, word for word, as it stands:—

“On Friday, 23rd June 1634, on the Eve of Saint John, about 3 p.m., the Lord Bishop of Poitiers and M. de Laubardemont being present in the church of Sainte-Croix of Loudun, to continue the exorcisms of the Ursuline nuns, by order of M. de Laubardemont, commissioner, Urbain Grandier, priest-in-charge, accused and denounced as a magician by the said possessed nuns, was brought from his prison to the said church.

“There were produced by the said commissioner to the said Urbain Grandier four pacts mentioned several times by the said possessed nuns at the preceding exorcisms, which the devils who possessed the nuns declared they had made with the said Grandier on several occasions: there was one in especial which Leviathan gave up on Saturday the 17th inst., composed of an infant’s heart procured at a witches’ sabbath, held in Orleans in 1631; the ashes of a consecrated wafer, blood, etc., of the said Grandier, whereby Leviathan asserted he had entered the body of the sister, Jeanne des Anges, the superior of the said nuns, and took possession of her with his coadjutors Beherit, Eazas, and Balaam, on December 8th, 1632. Another such pact was composed of the pips of Grenada oranges, and was given up by Asmodeus and a number of other devils. It had been made to hinder Beherit from keeping his promise to lift the commissioner’s hat two inches from his head and to hold it there the length of a Miseyere, as a sign that he had come out of the nun. On all these pacts being shown to the said Grandier, he said, without astonishment, but with much firmness and resolution,

that he had no knowledge of them whatever, that he had never made them, and had not the skill by which to make them, that he had held no communication with devils, and knew nothing of what they were talking about. A report of all this being made and shown to him, he signed it.

“This done, they brought all the possessed nuns, to the number of eleven or twelve, including three lay sisters, also possessed, into the choir of the said church, accompanied by a great many monks, Carmelites, Capuchins, and Franciscans; and by three physicians and a surgeon. The sisters on entering made some wanton remarks, calling Grandier their master, and exhibiting great delight at seeing him.

“Thereupon Pere Lactance and Gabriel, a Franciscan brother, and one of the exorcists, exhorted all present with great fervour to lift up their hearts to God and to make an act of contrition for the offences committed against His divine majesty, and to pray that the number of their sins might not be an obstacle to the fulfilment of the plans which He in His providence had formed for the promotion of His glory on that occasion, and to give outward proof of their heartfelt grief by repeating the Confiteor as a preparation for the blessing of the Lord Bishop of Poitiers. This having been done, he went on to say that the matter in question was of such moment and so important in its relation to the great truths of the Roman Catholic Church, that this consideration alone ought to be sufficient to excite their devotion; and furthermore, that the affliction of these poor sisters was so peculiar and had lasted so long, that charity impelled all those who had the right to work for their deliverance and the expulsion of the devils, to employ the power entrusted to them with their office in accomplishing so worthy a task by the forms of exorcism prescribed by the Church to its ministers; then addressing Grandier, he said that he having been anointed as a priest belonged to this number, and that he ought to help with all his power and with all his energy, if the bishop were pleased to allow him to do so, and to remit his suspension from authority. The bishop having granted permission, the Franciscan friar offered a stole to Grandier, who, turning towards the prelate, asked him if he might take it. On receiving a reply in the affirmative, he passed it round his neck, and on being offered a copy of the ritual, he asked permission to accept it as before, and received the bishop’s blessing, prostrating himself at his feet to kiss them; whereupon the Veni Creator Spiritus having been sung, he rose, and addressing the bishop, asked—

“My lord, whom am I to exorcise?”

The said bishop having replied—

“‘These maidens.’

” Grandier again asked—

“‘What maidens?’

“‘The possessed maidens,’ was the answer.

“‘That is to say, my lord,’ said he; “that I am obliged to believe in the fact of possession. The Church believes in it, therefore I too believe; but I cannot believe that a sorcerer can cause a Christian to be possessed unless the Christian consent.’

“Upon this, some of those present exclaimed that it was heretical to profess such a belief; that the contrary was indubitable, believed by the whole Church and approved by the Sorbonne. To which he replied that his mind on that point was not yet irrevocably made up, that what he had said was simply his own idea, and that in any case he submitted to the opinion of the whole body of which he was only a member; that nobody was declared a heretic for having doubts, but only for persisting in them, and that what he had advanced was only for the purpose of drawing an assurance from the bishop that in doing what he was about to do he would not be abusing the authority of the Church. Sister Catherine having been brought to him by the Franciscan as the most ignorant of all the nuns, and the least open to the suspicion of being acquainted with Latin, he began the exorcism in the form prescribed by the ritual. But as soon as he began to question her he was interrupted, for all the other nuns were attacked by devils, and uttered strange and terrible noises. Amongst the rest, Sister Claire came near, and reproached him for his blindness and obstinacy, so that he was forced to leave the nun with whom he had begun, and address his words to the said Sister Claire, who during the entire duration of the exorcism continued to talk at random, without paying any heed to Grandier’s words, which were also interrupted by the mother superior, to whom he of last gave attention, leaving Sister Claire. But it is to be noted that before beginning to exorcise the superior, he said, speaking in Latin as heretofore, that knowing she understood Latin, he would question her in Greek. To which the devil replied by the mouth of the possessed

“‘Ah! how clever you are! You know it was one of the first conditions of our

pact that I was not to answer in Greek.’

“Upon this, he cried, ‘O pulchra illusio, egregica evasio!’ (O superb fraud, outrageous evasion!)

“He was then told that he was permitted to exorcise in Greek, provided he first wrote down what he wished to say, and the superior hereupon said that he should be answered in what language he pleased; but it was impossible, for as soon as he opened his mouth all the nuns recommenced their shrieks and paroxysms, showing unexampled despair, and giving way to convulsions, which in each patient assumed a new form, and persisting in accusing Grandier of using magic and the black art to torment them; offering to wring his neck if they were allowed, and trying to outrage his feelings in every possible way. But this being against the prohibitions of the Church, the priests and monks present worked with the utmost zeal to calm the frenzy which had seized on the nuns. Grandier meanwhile remained calm and unmoved, gazing fixedly at the maniacs, protesting his innocence, and praying to God for protection. Then addressing himself to the bishop and M. de Laubardemont, he implored them by the ecclesiastical and royal authority of which they were the ministers to command these demons to wring his neck, or at least to put a mark in his forehead, if he were guilty of the crime of which they accused him, that the glory of God might be shown forth, the authority of the Church vindicated, and himself brought to confusion, provided that the nuns did not touch him with their hands. But to this the bishop and the commissioner would not consent, because they did not want to be responsible for what might happen to him, neither would they expose the authority of the Church to the wiles of the devils, who might have made some pact on that point with Grandier. Then the exorcists, to the number of eight, having commanded the devils to be silent and to cease their tumult, ordered a brazier to be brought, and into this they threw the pacts one by one, whereupon the convulsions returned with such awful violence and confused cries, rising into frenzied shrieks, and accompanied by such horrible contortions, that the scene might have been taken for an orgy of witches, were it not for the sanctity of the place and the character of those present, of whom Grandier, in outward seeming at least, was the least amazed of any, although he had the most reason. The devils continued their accusations, citing the places, the days, and the hours of their intercourse with him; the first spell he cast on them, his scandalous behaviour, his insensibility, his abjurations of God and the faith. To all this he calmly returned that these accusations were calumnies, and all the more unjust considering his profession; that he renounced Satan and all his fiends, having

neither knowledge nor comprehension of them; that in spite of all he was a Christian, and what was more, an anointed priest; that though he knew himself to be a sinful man, yet his trust was in God and in His Christ; that he had never indulged in such abominations, and that it would be impossible to furnish any pertinent and convincing proof of his guilt.

“At this point no words could express what the senses perceived; eyes and ears received an impression of being surrounded by furies such as had never been gathered together before; and unless accustomed to such ghastly scenes as those who sacrifice to demons, no one could keep his mind free from astonishment and horror in the midst of such a spectacle. Grandier alone remained unchanged through it all, seemingly insensible to the monstrous exhibitions, singing hymns to the Lord with the rest of the people, as confident as if he were guarded by legions of angels. One of the demons cried out that Beelzebub was standing between him and Pere Tranquille the Capuchin, upon which Grandier said to the demon—

“‘Obmutescas!’ (Hold thy peace).

“Upon this the demon began to curse, and said that was their watchword; but they could not hold their peace, because God was infinitely powerful, and the powers of hell could not prevail against Him. Thereupon they all struggled to get at Grandier, threatening to tear him limb from limb, to point out his marks, to strangle him although he was their master; whereupon he seized a chance to say he was neither their master nor their servant, and that it was incredible that they should in the same breath acknowledge him for their master and express a desire to strangle him: on hearing this, the frenzy of the nuns reached its height, and they kicked their slippers into his face.

“‘Just look!’ said he; ‘the shoes drop from the hoofs of their own accord.’

“At length, had it not been for the help and interposition of people in the choir, the nuns in their frenzy would have taken the life of the chief personage in this spectacle; so there was no choice but to take him away from the church and the furies who threatened his life. He was therefore brought back to prison about six o’clock in the evening, and the rest of the day the exorcists were employed in calming the poor sisters—a task of no small difficulty.”

Everyone did not regard the possessed sisters with the indulgent eye of the

author of the above narrative, and many saw in this terrible exhibition of hysteria and convulsions an infamous and sacrilegious orgy, at which revenge ran riot. There was such difference of opinion about it that it was considered necessary to publish the following proclamation by means of placards on July 2nd:

“All persons, of whatever rank or profession, are hereby expressly forbidden to traduce, or in any way malign, the nuns and other persons at Loudun possessed by evil spirits; or their exorcists; or those who accompany them either to the places appointed for exorcism or elsewhere; in any form or manner whatever, on pain of a fine of ten thousand livres, or a larger sum and corporal punishment should the case so require; and in order that no one may plead ignorance hereof, this proclamation will be read and published to-day from the pulpits of all the churches, and copies affixed to the church doors and in other suitable public places.

” Done at Loudun, July 2nd, 1634.”

This order had great influence with worldly folk, and from that moment, whether their belief was strengthened or not, they no longer dared to express any incredulity. But in spite of that, the judges were put to shame, for the nuns themselves began to repent; and on the day following the impious scene above described, just as Pere Lactance began to exorcise Sister Claire in the castle chapel, she rose, and turning towards the congregation, while tears ran down her cheeks, said in a voice that could be heard by all present, that she was going to speak the truth at last in the sight of Heaven. Thereupon she confessed that all that she had said during the last fortnight against Grandier was calumnious and false, and that all her actions had been done at the instigation of the Franciscan Pere Lactance, the director, Mignon, and the Carmelite brothers. Pere Lactance, not in the least taken aback, declared that her confession was a fresh wile of the devil to save her master Grandier. She then made an urgent appeal to the bishop and to M. de Laubardemont, asking to be sequestered and placed in charge of other priests than those who had destroyed her soul, by making her bear false witness against an innocent man; but they only laughed at the pranks the devil was playing, and ordered her to be at once taken back to the house in which she was then living. When she heard this order, she darted out of the choir, trying to escape through the church door, imploring those present to come to her assistance and save her from everlasting damnation. But such terrible fruit had the proclamation borne that noon dared respond, so she was recaptured and taken back to the house in which she was sequestered, never to leave it again.

CHAPTER X

The next day a still more extraordinary scene took place. While M. de Laubardemont was questioning one of the nuns, the superior came down into the court, barefooted; in her chemise, and a cord round her neck; and there she remained for two hours, in the midst of a fearful storm, not shrinking before lightning, thunder, or rain, but waiting till M. de Laubardemont and the other exorcists should come out. At length the door opened and the royal commissioner appeared, whereupon Sister Jeanne des Anges, throwing herself at his feet, declared she had not sufficient strength to play the horrible part they had made her learn any longer, and that before God and man she declared Urbain Grandier innocent, saying that all the hatred which she and her companions had felt against him arose from the baffled desires which his comeliness awoke—desires which the seclusion of conventional life made still more ardent. M. de Laubardemont threatened her with the full weight of his displeasure, but she answered, weeping bitterly, that all she now dreaded was her sin, for though the mercy of the Saviour was great, she felt that the crime she had committed could never be pardoned. M. de Laubardemont exclaimed that it was the demon who dwelt in her who was speaking, but she replied that the only demon by whom she had even been possessed was the spirit of vengeance, and that it was indulgence in her own evil thoughts, and not a pact with the devil, which had admitted him into her heart.

With these words she withdrew slowly, still weeping, and going into the garden, attached one end of the cord round her neck to the branch of a tree, and hanged herself. But some of the sisters who had followed her cut her down before life was extinct.

The same day an order for her strict seclusion was issued for her as for Sister Claire, and the circumstances that she was a relation of M. de Laubardemont did not avail to lessen her punishment in view of the gravity of her fault.

It was impossible to continue the exorcisms other nuns might be tempted to follow the example, of the superior and Sister Claire, and in that case all would be lost. And besides, was not Urbain Grandier well and duly convicted? It was announced, therefore, that the examination had proceeded far enough, and that the judges would consider the evidence and deliver judgment.

This long succession of violent and irregular breaches of law procedure, the repeated denials of his claim to justice, the refusal to let his witnesses appear, or to listen to his defence, all combined to convince Grandier that his ruin was determined on; for the case had gone so far and had attained such publicity that it was necessary either to punish him as a sorcerer and magician or to render a royal commissioner, a bishop, an entire community of nuns, several monks of various orders, many judges of high reputation, and laymen of birth and standing, liable to the penalties incurred by calumniators. But although, as this conviction grew, he confronted it with resignation, his courage did not fail,—and holding it to be his duty as a man and a Christian to defend his life and honour to the end, he drew up and published another memorandum, headed Reasons for Acquittal, and had copies laid before his judges. It was a weighty and, impartial summing up of the whole case, such as a stranger might have written, and began, with these words.

“I entreat you in all humility to consider deliberately and with attention what the Psalmist says in Psalm 82, where he exhorts judges to fulfil their charge with absolute rectitude; they being themselves mere mortals who will one day have to appear before God, the sovereign judge of the universe, to give an account of their administration. The Lord’s Anointed speaks to you to-day who are sitting in judgment, and says—

“God standeth in the congregation of the mighty: He judgeth among the gods.

“How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?

“Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.

“Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.

“I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High.

“But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.”

But this appeal, although convincing and dignified, had no influence upon the commission; and on the 18th of August the following verdict and sentence was pronounced:—

“We have declared, and do hereby declare, Urbain Grandier duly accused and convicted of the crimes of magic and witchcraft, and of causing the persons of

certain Ursuline nuns of this town and of other females to become possessed of evil spirits, wherefrom other crimes and offences have resulted. By way of reparation therefor, we have sentenced, and do hereby sentence, the said Grandier to make public apology, bareheaded, with a cord around his neck, holding a lighted torch of two pounds weight in his hand, before the west door of the church of Saint-Pierre in the Market Place and before—that of Sainte-Ursule, both of this town, and there on bended knee to ask pardon of God and the king and the law, and this done, to be taken to the public square of Sainte-Croix and there to be attached to a stake, set in the midst of a pile of wood, both of which to be prepared there for this purpose, and to be burnt alive, along with the pacts and spells which remain in the hands of the clerk and the manuscript of the book written by the said Grandier against a celibate priesthood, and his ashes, to be scattered to the four winds of heaven. And we have declared, and do hereby declare, all and every part of his property confiscate to the king, the sum of one hundred and fifty livres being first taken therefrom to be employed in the purchase of a copper plate whereon the substance of the present decree shall be engraved, the same to be exposed in a conspicuous place in the said church of Sainte-Ursule, there to remain in perpetuity; and before this sentence is carried out, we order the said Grandier to be put to the question ordinary and extraordinary, so that his accomplices may become known.

“Pronounced at Loudun against the said Grandier this 18th day of August 1634.”

On the morning of the day on which this sentence was passed, M. de Laubardemont ordered the surgeon Francois Fourneau to be arrested at his own house and taken to Grandier’s cell, although he was ready to go there of his own free will. In passing through the adjoining room he heard the voice of the accused saying:—

“What do you want with me, wretched executioner? Have you come to kill me? You know how cruelly you have already tortured my body. Well I am ready to die.”

On entering the room, Fourneau saw that these words had been addressed to the surgeon Mannouri.

One of the officers of the ‘grand pivot de l’hotel’, to whom M. de

Laubardemont lent for the occasion the title of officer of the king's guard, ordered the new arrival to shave Grandier, and not leave a single hair on his whole body. This was a formality employed in cases of witchcraft, so that the devil should have no place to hide in; for it was the common belief that if a single hair were left, the devil could render the accused insensible to the pains of torture. From this Urbain understood that the verdict had gone against him and that he was condemned to death.

Fourneau having saluted Grandier, proceeded to carry out his orders, whereupon a judge said it was not sufficient to shave the body of the prisoner, but that his nails must also be torn out, lest the devil should hide beneath them. Grandier looked at the speaker with an expression of unutterable pity, and held out his hands to Fourneau; but Fourneau put them gently aside, and said he would do nothing of the kind, even were the order given by the cardinal-duke himself, and at the same time begged Grandier's pardon for shaving him. At these words Grandier, who had for so long met with nothing but barbarous treatment from those with whom he came in contact, turned towards the surgeon with tears in his eyes, saying—

“So you are the only one who has any pity for me.”

“Ah, sir,” replied Fourneau, “you don't see everybody.”

Grandier was then shaved, but only two marks found on him, one as we have said on the shoulder blade, and the other on the thigh. Both marks were very sensitive, the wounds which Mannouri had made not having yet healed. This point having been certified by Fourneau, Grandier was handed, not his own clothes, but some wretched garments which had probably belonged to some other condemned man.

Then, although his sentence had been pronounced at the Carmelite convent, he was taken by the grand provost's officer, with two of his archers, accompanied by the provosts of Loudun and Chinon, to the town hall, where several ladies of quality, among them Madame de Laubardemont, led by curiosity, were sitting beside the judges, waiting to hear the sentence read. M. de Laubardemont was in the seat usually occupied by the clerk, and the clerk was standing before him. All the approaches were lined with soldiers.

Before the accused was brought in, Pere Lactance and another Franciscan who

had come with him exorcised him to oblige the devils to leave him; then entering the judgment hall, they exorcised the earth, the air, “and the other elements.” Not till that was done was Grandier led in.

At first he was kept at the far end of the hall, to allow time for the exorcisms to have their full effect, then he was brought forward to the bar and ordered to kneel down. Grandier obeyed, but could remove neither his hat nor his skull-cap, as his hands were bound behind his back, whereupon the clerk seized on the one and the provost’s officer on the other, and flung them at de Laubardemont’s feet. Seeing that the accused fixed his eyes on the commissioner as if waiting to see what he was about to do, the clerk said

“Turn your head, unhappy man, and adore the crucifix above the bench.”

Grandier obeyed without a murmur and with great humility, and remained sunk in silent prayer for about ten minutes; he then resumed his former attitude.

The clerk then began to read the sentence in a trembling voice, while Grandier listened with unshaken firmness and wonderful tranquillity, although it was the most terrible sentence that could be passed, condemning the accused to be burnt alive the same day, after the infliction of ordinary and extraordinary torture. When the clerk had ended, Grandier said, with a voice unmoved from its usual calm

“Messeigneurs, I aver in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and the Blessed Virgin, my only hope, that I have never been a magician, that I have never committed sacrilege, that I know no other magic than that of the Holy Scriptures, which I have always preached, and that I have never held any other belief than that of our Holy Mother the Catholic Apostolic Church of Rome; I renounce the devil and all his works; I confess my Redeemer, and I pray to be saved through the blood of the Cross; and I beseech you, messeigneurs, to mitigate the rigour of my sentence, and not to drive my soul to despair.”

The concluding words led de Laubardemont to believe that he could obtain some admission from Grandier through fear of suffering, so he ordered the court to be cleared, and, being left alone with Maitre Houmain, criminal lieutenant of Orleans, and the Franciscans, he addressed Grandier in a stern voice, saying there was only one way to obtain any mitigation of his sentence, and that was to confess the names of his accomplices and to sign the confession. Grandier

replied that having committed no crime he could have no accomplices, whereupon Laubardemont ordered the prisoner to be taken to the torture chamber, which adjoined the judgment hall—an order which was instantly obeyed.

CHAPTER XI

The mode of torture employed at Loudun was a variety of the boot, and one of the most painful of all. Each of the victim's legs below the knee was placed between two boards, the two pairs were then laid one above the other and bound together firmly at the ends; wedges were then driven in with a mallet between the two middle boards; four such wedges constituted ordinary and eight extraordinary torture; and this latter was seldom inflicted, except on those condemned to death, as almost no one ever survived it, the sufferer's legs being crushed to a pulp before he left the torturer's bands. In this case M. de Laubardemont on his own initiative, for it had never been done before, added two wedges to those of the extraordinary torture, so that instead of eight, ten were to be driven in.

Nor was this all: the commissioner royal and the two Franciscans undertook to inflict the torture themselves.

Laubardemont ordered Grandier to be bound in the usual manner, I and then saw his legs placed between the boards. He then dismissed the executioner and his assistants, and directed the keeper of the instruments to bring the wedges, which he complained of as being too small. Unluckily, there were no larger ones in stock, and in spite of threats the keeper persisted in saying he did not know where to procure others. M. de Laubardemont then asked how long it would take to make some, and was told two hours; finding that too long to wait, he was obliged to put up with those he had.

Thereupon the torture began. Pere Lactance having exorcised the instruments, drove in the first wedge, but could not draw a murmur from Grandier, who was reciting a prayer in a low voice; a second was driven home, and this time the victim, despite his resolution, could not avoid interrupting his devotions by two groans, at each of which Pere Lactance struck harder, crying, "Dicas! dicas!" (Confess, confess!), a word which he repeated so often and so furiously, till all was over, that he was ever after popularly called "Pere Dicas."

When the second wedge was in, de Laubardemont showed Grandier his manuscript against the celibacy of the priests, and asked if he acknowledged it to be in his own handwriting. Grandier answered in the affirmative. Asked what

motive he had in writing it, he said it was an attempt to restore peace of mind to a poor girl whom he had loved, as was proved by the two lines written at the end—

“Si ton gentil esprit prend bien cette science, Tu mettras en repos ta bonne conscience.”

[If thy sensitive mind imbibe this teaching, It will give ease to thy tender conscience]

Upon this, M. de Laubardemont demanded the girl's name; but Grandier assured him it should never pass his lips, none knowing it but himself and God. Thereupon M. de Laubardemont ordered Pere Lactance to insert the third wedge. While it was being driven in by the monk's lusty arm, each blow being accompanied by the word “Dicas'!” Grandier exclaimed—

“My God! they are killing me, and yet I am neither a sorcerer nor sacrilegious!”

At the fourth wedge Grandier fainted, muttering—

“Oh, Pere Lactance, is this charity?”

Although his victim was unconscious, Pere Lactance continued to strike; so that, having lost consciousness through pain, pain soon brought him back to life.

De Laubardemont took advantage of this revival to take his turn at demanding a confession of his crimes; but Grandier said—

“I have committed no crimes, sir, only errors. Being a man, I have often gone astray; but I have confessed and done penance, and believe that my prayers for pardon have been heard; but if not, I trust that God will grant me pardon now, for the sake of my sufferings.”

At the fifth wedge Grandier fainted once more, but they restored him to consciousness by dashing cold water in his face, whereupon he moaned, turning to M. de Laubardemont

“In pity, sir, put me to death at once! I am only a man, and I cannot answer for myself that if you continue to torture me so I shall not give way to despair.”

“Then sign this, and the torture shall cease,” answered the commissioner royal, offering him a paper.

“My father,” said Urbain, turning towards the Franciscan, “can you assure me on your conscience that it is permissible for a man, in order to escape suffering, to confess a crime he has never committed?”

“No,” replied the monk; “for if he die with a lie on his lips he dies in mortal sin.”

“Go on, then,” said Grandier; “for having suffered so much in my body, I desire to save my soul.”

As Pere Lactance drove in the sixth wedge Grandier fainted anew.

When he had been revived, Laubardemont called upon him to confess that a certain Elisabeth Blanchard had been his mistress, as well as the girl for whom he had written the treatise against celibacy; but Grandier replied that not only had no improper relations ever existed between them, but that the day he had been confronted with her at his trial was the first time he had ever seen her.

At the seventh wedge Grandier’s legs burst open, and the blood spurted into Pere Lactance’s face; but he wiped it away with the sleeve of his gown.

“O Lord my God, have mercy on me! I die!” cried Grandier, and fainted for the fourth time. Pere Lactance seized the opportunity to take a short rest, and sat down.

When Grandier had once more come to himself, he began slowly to utter a prayer, so beautiful and so moving that the provost’s lieutenant wrote it down; but de Laubardemont noticing this, forbade him ever to show it to anyone.

At the eighth wedge the bones gave way, and the marrow oozed out of the wounds, and it became useless to drive in any more wedges, the legs being now as flat as the boards that compressed them, and moreover Pere Lactance was quite worn out.

Grandier was unbound and laid upon the flagged floor, and while his eyes shone with fever and agony he prayed again a second prayer—a veritable martyr’s prayer, overflowing with faith and enthusiasm; but as he ended his strength failed, and he again became unconscious. The provost’s lieutenant forced a little

wine between his lips, which brought him to; then he made an act of contrition, renounced Satan and all his works once again, and commended his soul to God.

Four men entered, his legs were freed from the boards, and the crushed parts were found to be a mere inert mass, only attached to the knees by the sinews. He was then carried to the council chamber, and laid on a little straw before the fire.

In a corner of the fireplace an Augustinian monk was seated. Urbain asked leave to confess to him, which de Laubardemont refused, holding out the paper he desired to have signed once more, at which Grandier said—

“If I would not sign to spare myself before, am I likely to give way now that only death remains?”

“True,” replied Laubardemont; “but the mode of your death is in our hands: it rests with us to make it slow or quick, painless or agonising; so take this paper and sign?”

Grandier pushed the paper gently away, shaking his head in sign of refusal, whereupon de Laubardemont left the room in a fury, and ordered Peres Tranquille and Claude to be admitted, they being the confessors he had chosen for Urbain. When they came near to fulfil their office, Urbain recognised in them two of his torturers, so he said that, as it was only four days since he had confessed to Pere Grillau, and he did not believe he had committed any mortal sin since then, he would not trouble them, upon which they cried out at him as a heretic and infidel, but without any effect.

At four o’clock the executioner’s assistants came to fetch him; he was placed lying on a bier and carried out in that position. On the way he met the criminal lieutenant of Orleans, who once more exhorted him to confess his crimes openly; but Grandier replied—

“Alas, sir, I have avowed them all; I have kept nothing back.”

“Do you desire me to have masses said for you?” continued the lieutenant.

“I not only desire it, but I beg for it as a great favour,” said Urbain.

A lighted torch was then placed in his hand: as the procession started he pressed the torch to his lips; he looked on all whom he met with modest confidence, and

begged those whom he knew to intercede with God for him. On the threshold of the door his sentence was read to him, and he was then placed in a small cart and driven to the church of St. Pierre in the marketplace. There he was awaited by M. de Laubardemont, who ordered him to alight. As he could not stand on his mangled limbs, he was pushed out, and fell first on his knees and then on his face. In this position he remained patiently waiting to be lifted. He was carried to the top of the steps and laid down, while his sentence was read to him once more, and just as it was finished, his confessor, who had not been allowed to see him for four days, forced a way through the crowd and threw himself into Grandier's arms. At first tears choked Pere Grillau's voice, but at last he said, "Remember, sir, that our Saviour Jesus Christ ascended to His Father through the agony of the Cross: you are a wise man, do not give way now and lose everything. I bring you your mother's blessing; she and I never cease to pray that God may have mercy on you and receive you into Paradise."

These words seemed to inspire Grandier with new strength; he lifted his head, which pain had bowed, and raising his eyes to heaven, murmured a short prayer. Then turning towards the worthy, friar, he said—

"Be a son to my mother; pray to God for me constantly; ask all our good friars to pray for my soul; my one consolation is that I die innocent. I trust that God in His mercy may receive me into Paradise."

"Is there nothing else I can do for you?" asked Pere Grillau.

"Alas, my father!" replied Grandier, "I am condemned to die a most cruel death; ask the executioner if there is no way of shortening what I must undergo."

"I go at once," said the friar; and giving him absolution in 'articulo mortis', he went down the steps, and while Grandier was making his confession aloud the good monk drew the executioner aside and asked if there were no possibility of alleviating the death-agony by means of a shirt dipped in brimstone. The executioner answered that as the sentence expressly stated that Grandier was to be burnt alive, he could not employ an expedient so sure to be discovered as that; but that if the friar would give him thirty crowns he would undertake to strangle Grandier while he was kindling the pile. Pere Grillau gave him the money, and the executioner provided himself with a rope. The Franciscan then placed himself where he could speak to his penitent as he passed, and as he embraced him for the last time, whispered to him what he had arranged with the

executioner, whereupon Grandier turned towards the latter and said in a tone of deep gratitude—

“Thanks, my brother.”

At that moment, the archers having driven away Pere Grillau, by order of M. de Laubardemont, by beating him with their halberts, the procession resumed its march, to go through the same ceremony at the Ursuline church, and from there to proceed to the square of Sainte-Croix. On the way Urbain met and recognised Moussant, who was accompanied by his wife, and turning towards him, said—

“I die your debtor, and if I have ever said a word that could offend you I ask you to forgive me.”

When the place of execution was reached, the provost’s lieutenant approached Grandier and asked his forgiveness.

“You have not offended me,” was the reply; “you have only done what your duty obliged you to do.”

The executioner then came forward and removed the back board of the cart, and ordered his assistants to carry Grandier to where the pile was prepared. As he was unable to stand, he was attached to the stake by an iron hoop passed round his body. At that moment a flock of pigeons seemed to fall from the sky, and, fearless of the crowd, which was so great that the archers could not succeed even by blows of their weapons in clearing a way for the magistrates, began to fly around Grandier, while one, as white as the driven snow, alighted on the summit of the stake, just above his head. Those who believed in possession exclaimed that they were only a band of devils come to seek their master, but there were many who muttered that devils were not wont to assume such a form, and who persisted in believing that the doves had come in default of men to bear witness to Grandier’s innocence.

In trying next day to combat this impression, a monk asserted that he had seen a huge fly buzzing round Grandier’s head, and as Beelzebub meant in Hebrew, as he said, the god of flies, it was quite evident that it was that demon himself who, taking upon him the form of one of his subjects, had come to carry off the magician’s soul.

When everything was prepared, the executioner passed the rope by which he

meant to strangle him round Grandier's neck; then the priests exorcised the earth, air, and wood, and again demanded of their victim if he would not publicly confess his crimes. Urbain replied that he had nothing to say, but that he hoped through the martyr's death he was about to die to be that day with Christ in Paradise.

The clerk then read his sentence to him for the fourth time, and asked if he persisted in what he said under torture.

"Most certainly I do," said Urbain; "for it was the exact truth."

Upon this, the clerk withdrew, first informing Grandier that if he had anything to say to the people he was at liberty to speak.

But this was just what the exorcists did not want: they knew Grandier's eloquence and courage, and a firm, unshaken denial at the moment of death would be most prejudicial to their interests. As soon, therefore, as Grandier opened his lips to speak, they dashed such a quantity of holy water in his face that it took away his breath. It was but for a moment, however, and he recovered himself, and again endeavoured to speak, a monk stooped down and stifled the words by kissing him on the lips. Grandier, guessing his intention, said loud enough for those next the pile to hear, "That was the kiss of Judas!"

At these words the monks become so enraged that one of them struck Grandier three times in the face with a crucifix, while he appeared to be giving it him to kiss; but by the blood that flowed from his nose and lips at the third blow those standing near perceived the truth: all Grandier could do was to call out that he asked for a Salve Regina and an Ave Maria, which many began at once to repeat, whilst he with clasped hands and eyes raised to heaven commended himself to God and the Virgin. The exorcists then made one more effort to get him to confess publicly, but he exclaimed—

"My fathers, I have said all I had to say; I hope in God and in His mercy."

At this refusal the anger of the exorcists surpassed all bounds, and Pere Lactance, taking a twist of straw, dipped it in a bucket of pitch which was standing beside the pile, and lighting it at a torch, thrust it into his face, crying—

"Miserable wretch! will nothing force you to confess your crimes and renounce the devil?"

“I do not belong to the devil,” said Grandier, pushing away the straw with his hands; “I have renounced the devil, I now renounce him and all his works again, and I pray that God may have mercy on me.”

At this, without waiting for the signal from the provost’s lieutenant, Pere Lactance poured the bucket of pitch on one corner of the pile of wood and set fire to it, upon which Grandier called the executioner to his aid, who, hastening up, tried in vain to strangle him, while the flames spread apace.

“Ah! my brother,” said the sufferer, “is this the way you keep your promise?”

“It’s not my fault,” answered the executioner; “the monks have knotted the cord, so that the noose cannot slip.”

“Oh, Father Lactance! Father Lactance! have you no charity?” cried Grandier.

The executioner by this time was forced by the increasing heat to jump down from the pile, being indeed almost overcome; and seeing this, Grandier stretched forth a hand into the flames, and said—

“Pere Lactance, God in heaven will judge between thee and me; I summon thee to appear before Him in thirty days.”

Grandier was then seen to make attempts to strangle himself, but either because it was impossible, or because he felt it would be wrong to end his life by his own hands, he desisted, and clasping his hands, prayed aloud—

“Deus meus, ad te vigilo, miserere me.”

A Capuchin fearing that he would have time to say more, approached the pile from the side which had not yet caught fire, and dashed the remainder of the holy water in his face. This caused such smoke that Grandier was hidden for a moment from the eyes of the spectators; when it cleared away, it was seen that his clothes were now alight; his voice could still be heard from the midst of the flames raised in prayer; then three times, each time in a weaker voice, he pronounced the name of Jesus, and giving one cry, his head fell forward on his breast.

At that moment the pigeons which had till then never ceased to circle round the stake, flew away, and were lost in the clouds.

Urbain Grandier had given up the ghost.

CHAPTER XII

This time it was not the man who was executed who was guilty, but the executioners; consequently we feel sure that our readers will be anxious to learn something of their fate.

Pere Lactance died in the most terrible agony on September 18th, 1634, exactly a month from the date of Grandier's death. His brother-monks considered that this was due to the vengeance of Satan; but others were not wanting who said, remembering the summons uttered by Grandier, that it was rather due to the justice of God. Several attendant circumstances seemed to favour the latter opinion. The author of the History of the Devils of Loudzin gives an account of one of these circumstances, for the authenticity of which he vouches, and from which we extract the following:

“Some days after the execution of Grandier, Pere Lactance fell ill of the disease of which he died. Feeling that it was of supernatural origin, he determined to take a pilgrimage to Notre Dame des Andilliers de Saumur, where many miracles were wrought, and which was held in high estimation in the neighbourhood. A place in the carriage of the Sieur de Canaye was offered him for the journey; for this gentleman, accompanied by a large party on pleasure bent, was just then setting out for his estate of Grand Fonds, which lay in the same direction. The reason for the offer was that Canaye and his friends, having heard that the last words of Grandier had affected Pere Lactance's mind, expected to find a great deal of amusement in exciting the terrors of their travelling-companion. And in truth, for a day or two, the boon companions sharpened their wits at the expense of the worthy monk, when all at once, on a good road and without apparent cause, the carriage overturned. Though no one was hurt, the accident appeared so strange to the pleasure-seekers that it put an end to the jokes of even the boldest among them. Pere Lactance himself appeared melancholy and preoccupied, and that evening at supper refused to eat, repeating over and over again—

“It was wrong of me to deny Grandier the confessor he asked for; God is punishing me, God is punishing me!”

“On the following morning the journey was resumed, but the evident distress of

mind under which Pere Lactance laboured had so damped the spirits of the party that all their gaiety had disappeared. Suddenly, just outside Fenet, where the road was in excellent condition and no obstacle to their progress apparent, the carriage upset for the second time. Although again no one was hurt, the travellers felt that there was among them someone against whom God's anger was turned, and their suspicions pointing to Pere Lactance, they went on their way, leaving him behind, and feeling very uncomfortable at the thought that they had spent two or three days in his society.

“Pere Lactance at last reached Notre-Dame des Andilliers; but however numerous were the miracles there performed, the remission of the doom pronounced by the martyr on Pere Lactance was not added to their number; and at a quarter-past six on September 18th, exactly a month to the very minute after Grandier's death, Pere Lactance expired in excruciating agony.”

Pere Tranquille's turn came four years later. The malady which attacked him was so extraordinary that the physicians were quite at a loss, and forced to declare their ignorance of any remedy. His shrieks and blasphemies were so distinctly heard in the streets, that his brother Franciscans, fearing the effect they would have on his after-reputation, especially in the minds of those who had seen Grandier die with words of prayer on his lips, spread abroad the report that the devils whom he had expelled from the bodies of the nuns had entered into the body of the exorcist. He died shrieking—

“My God! how I suffer! Not all the devils and all the damned together endure what I endure!” His panegyrist, in whose book we find all the horrible details of his death employed to much purpose to illustrate the advantages of belonging to the true faith, remarks—

“Truly big generous heart must have been a hot hell for those fiends who entered his body to torment it.”

The following epitaph which was placed over his grave was interpreted, according to the prepossessions of those who read it, either as a testimony to his sanctity or as a proof of his punishment:—

“Here lies Pere Tranquille, of Saint-Remi; a humble Capuchin preacher. The demons no longer able to endure his fearlessly exercised power as an exorcist, and encouraged by sorcerers, tortured him to death, on May 31st, 1638.”

But a death about which there could be no doubt as to the cause was that of the surgeon Mannouri, the same who had, as the reader may recollect, been the first to torture Grandier. One evening about ten o'clock he was returning from a visit to a patient who lived on the outskirts of the town, accompanied by a colleague and preceded by his surgery attendant carrying a lantern. When they reached the centre of the town in the rue Grand-Pave, which passes between the walls of the castle grounds and the gardens of the Franciscan monastery, Mannouri suddenly stopped, and, staring fixedly at some object which was invisible to his companions, exclaimed with a start—

“Oh! there is Grandier!

“Where? where?” cried the others.

He pointed in the direction towards which his eyes were turned, and beginning to tremble violently, asked—

“What do you want with me, Grandier? What do you want?”

A moment later he added

“Yes-yes, I am coming.”

Immediately it seemed as if the vision vanished from before his eyes, but the effect remained. His brother-surgeon and the servant brought him home, but neither candles nor the light of day could allay his fears; his disordered brain showed him Grandier ever standing at the foot of his bed. A whole week he continued, as was known all over the town, in this condition of abject terror; then the spectre seemed to move from its place and gradually to draw nearer, for he kept on repeating, “He is coming! he is coming!” and at length, towards evening, at about the same hour at which Grandier expired, Surgeon Mannouri drew his last breath.

We have still to tell of M. de Laubardemont. All we know is thus related in the letters of M. de Patin:—

“On the 9th inst., at nine o'clock in the evening, a carriage was attacked by robbers; on hearing the noise the townspeople ran to the spot, drawn thither as much by curiosity as by humanity. A few shots were exchanged and the robbers put to flight, with the exception of one man belonging to their band who was

taken prisoner, and another who lay wounded on the paving-stones. This latter died next day without having spoken, and left no clue behind as to who he was. His identity was, however, at length made clear. He was the son of a high dignitary named de Laubardemont, who in 1634, as royal commissioner, condemned Urbain Grandier, a poor, priest of Loudun, to be burnt alive, under the pretence that he had caused several nuns of Loudun to be possessed by devils. These nuns he had so tutored as to their behaviour that many people foolishly believed them to be demoniacs. May we not regard the fate of his son as a chastisement inflicted by Heaven on this unjust judge—an expiation exacted for the pitilessly cruel death inflicted on his victim, whose blood still cries unto the Lord from the ground?”

Naturally the persecution of Urbain Grandier attracted the attention not only of journalists but of poets. Among the many poems which were inspired by it, the following is one of the best. Urbain speaks:—

“From hell came the tidings that by horrible sanctions I had made a pact with the devil to have power over women: Though not one could be found to accuse me. In the trial which delivered me to torture and the stake, The demon who accused me invented and suggested the crime,

And his testimony was the only proof against me.

The English in their rage burnt the Maid alive; Like her, I too fell a victim to revenge; We were both accused falsely of the same crime; In Paris she is adored, in London abhorred; In Loudun some hold me guilty of witchcraft, Some believe me innocent; some halt between two minds.

Like Hercules, I loved passionately; Like him, I was consumed by fire; But he by death became a god. The injustice of my death was so well concealed That no one can judge whether the flames saved or destroyed me; Whether they blackened me for hell, or purified me for heaven.

In vain did I suffer torments with unshaken resolution; They said that I felt no pain, being a sorcerer died unrepentant; That the prayers I uttered were impious words; That in kissing the image on the cross I spat in its face; That casting my eyes to heaven I mocked the saints; That when I seemed to call on God, I invoked the devil

Others, more charitable, say, in spite of their hatred of my crime, That my death

may be admired although my life was not blameless; That my resignation showed that I died in hope and faith; That to forgive, to suffer without complaint or murmur, Is perfect love; and that the soul is purified From the sins of life by a death like mine.”

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NISIDA

1825

If our readers, tempted by the Italian proverb about seeing Naples and then dying, were to ask us what is the most favourable moment for visiting the enchanted city, we should advise them to land at the mole, or at Mergellina, on a fine summer day and at the hour when some solemn procession is moving out of the cathedral. Nothing can give an idea of the profound and simple-hearted emotion of this populace, which has enough poetry in its soul to believe in its own happiness. The whole town adorns herself and attires herself like a bride for her wedding; the dark facades of marble and granite disappear beneath hangings of silk and festoons of flowers; the wealthy display their dazzling luxury, the poor drape themselves proudly in their rags. Everything is light, harmony, and perfume; the sound is like the hum of an immense hive, interrupted by a thousandfold outcry of joy impossible to describe. The bells repeat their sonorous sequences in every key; the arcades echo afar with the triumphal marches of military bands; the sellers of sherbet and water-melons sing out their deafening flourish from throats of copper. People form into groups; they meet,

question, gesticulate; there are gleaming looks, eloquent gestures, picturesque attitudes; there is a general animation, an unknown charm, an indefinable intoxication. Earth is very near to heaven, and it is easy to understand that, if God were to banish death from this delightful spot, the Neapolitans would desire no other paradise.

The story that we are about to tell opens with one of these magical pictures. It was the Day of the Assumption in the year 1825; the sun had been up some four or five hours, and the long Via da Forcella, lighted from end to end by its slanting rays, cut the town in two, like a ribbon of watered silk. The lava pavement, carefully cleaned, shone like any mosaic, and the royal troops, with their proudly waving plumes, made a double living hedge on each side of the street. The balconies, windows, and terraces, the stands with their unsubstantial balustrades, and the wooden galleries set up during the night, were loaded with spectators, and looked not unlike the boxes of a theatre. An immense crowd, forming a medley of the brightest colours, invaded the reserved space and broke through the military barriers, here and there, like an overflowing torrent. These intrepid sightseers, nailed to their places, would have waited half their lives without giving the least sign of impatience.

At last, about noon, a cannon-shot was heard, and a cry of general satisfaction followed it. It was the signal that the procession had crossed the threshold of the church. In the same moment a charge of carabineers swept off the people who were obstructing the middle of the street, the regiments of the line opened floodgates for the overflowing crowd, and soon nothing remained on the causeway but some scared dog, shouted at by the people, hunted off by the soldiers, and fleeing at full speed. The procession came out through the Via di Vescovato. First came the guilds of merchants and craftsmen, the hatters, weavers, bakers, butchers, cutlers, and goldsmiths. They wore the prescribed dress: black coats, knee breeches, low shoes and silver buckles. As the countenances of these gentlemen offered nothing very interesting to the multitude, whisperings arose, little by little, among the spectators, then some bold spirits ventured a jest or two upon the fattest or the baldest of the townsmen, and at last the boldest of the lazzaroni slipped between the soldiers' legs to collect the wax that was running down from the lighted tapers.

After the craftsmen, the religious orders marched past, from the Dominicans to the Carthusians, from the Carmelites to the Capuchins. They advanced slowly, their eyes cast down, their step austere, their hands on their hearts; some faces

were rubicund and shining, with large cheek-bones and rounded chins, herculean heads upon bullnecks; some, thin and livid, with cheeks hollowed by suffering and penitence, and with the look of living ghosts; in short, here were the two sides of monastic life.

At this moment, Nunziata and Gelsomina, two charming damsels, taking advantage of an old corporal's politeness, pushed forward their pretty heads into the first rank. The break in the line was conspicuous; but the sly warrior seemed just a little lax in the matter of discipline.

"Oh, there is Father Bruno!" said Gelsomina suddenly. "Good-day, Father Bruno."

"Hush, cousin! People do not talk to the procession."

"How absurd! He is my confessor. May I not say good-morning to my confessor?"

"Silence, chatterboxes!"

"Who was that spoke?"

"Oh, my dear, it was Brother Cucuzza, the begging friar."

"Where is he? Where is he?"

"There he is, along there, laughing into his beard. How bold he is!"

"Ah, God in heaven! If we were to dream of him—"

While the two cousins were pouring out endless comments upon the Capuchins and their beards, the capes of the canons and the surplices of the seminarists, the 'feroci' came running across from the other side to reestablish order with the help of their gun-stocks.

"By the blood of my patron saint," cried a stentorian voice, "if I catch you between my finger and thumb, I will straighten your back for the rest of your days."

"Who are you falling out with, Gennaro?"

“With this accursed hunchback, who has been worrying my back for the last hour, as though he could see through it.”

“It is a shame,” returned the hunchback in a tone of lamentation; “I have been here since last night, I slept out of doors to keep my place, and here is this abominable giant comes to stick himself in front of me like an obelisk.”

The hunchback was lying like a Jew, but the crowd rose unanimously against the obelisk. He was, in one way, their superior, and majorities are always made up of pigmies.

“Hi! Come down from your stand!”

“Hi! get off your pedestal!”

“Off with your hat!”

“Down with your head!”

“Sit down!”

“Lie down!”

This revival of curiosity expressing itself in invectives evidently betokened the crisis of the show. And indeed the chapters of canons, the clergy and bishops, the pages and chamberlains, the representatives of the city, and the gentlemen of the king’s chamber now appeared, and finally the king himself, who, bareheaded and carrying a taper, followed the magnificent statue of the Virgin. The contrast was striking: after the grey-headed monks and pale novices came brilliant young captains, affronting heaven with the points of their moustaches, riddling the latticed windows with killing glances, following the procession in an absent-minded way, and interrupting the holy hymns with scraps of most unorthodox conversation.

“Did you notice, my dear Doria, how like a monkey the old Marchesa d’Acquasparta takes her raspberry ice?”

“Her nose takes the colour of the ice. What fine bird is showing off to her?”

“It is the Cyrenian.”

“I beg your pardon! I have not seen that name in the Golden Book.”

“He helps the poor marquis to bear his cross.”

The officer's profane allusion was lost in the prolonged murmur of admiration that suddenly rose from the crowd, and every gaze was turned upon one of the young girls who was strewing flowers before the holy Madonna. She was an exquisite creature. Her head glowing in the sun shine, her feet hidden amid roses and broom-blossom, she rose, tall and fair, from a pale cloud of incense, like some seraphic apparition. Her hair, of velvet blackness, fell in curls half-way down her shoulders; her brow, white as alabaster and polished as a mirror, reflected the rays of the sun; her beautiful and finely arched black eyebrows melted into the opal of her temples; her eyelids were fast down, and the curled black fringe of lashes veiled a glowing and liquid glance of divine emotion; the nose, straight, slender, and cut by two easy nostrils, gave to her profile that character of antique beauty which is vanishing day by day from the earth. A calm and serene smile, one of those smiles that have already left the soul and not yet reached the lips, lifted the corners of her mouth with a pure expression of infinite beatitude and gentleness. Nothing could be more perfect than the chin that completed the faultless oval of this radiant countenance; her neck of a dead white, joined her bosom in a delicious curve, and supported her head gracefully like the stalk of a flower moved by a gentle breeze. A bodice of crimson velvet spotted with gold outlined her delicate and finely curved figure, and held in by means of a handsome gold lace the countless folds of a full and flowing skirt, that fell to her feet like those severe robes in which the Byzantine painters preferred to drape their angels. She was indeed a marvel, and so rare and modest of beauty had not been seen within the memory of man.

Among those who had gazed most persistently at her was observed the young Prince of Brancalone, one of the foremost nobles of the kingdom. Handsome, rich, and brave, he had, at five-and-twenty, outdone the lists of all known Don Juans. Fashionable young women spoke very ill of him and adored him in secret; the most virtuous made it their rule to fly from him, so impossible did resistance appear. All the young madcaps had chosen him for their model; for his triumphs robbed many a Miltiades of sleep, and with better cause. In short, to get an idea of this lucky individual, it will be enough to know that as a seducer he was the most perfect thing that the devil had succeeded in inventing in this progressive century. The prince was dressed out for the occasion in a sufficiently grotesque costume, which he wore with ironic gravity and cavalier ease. A black satin

doublet, knee breeches, embroidered stockings, and shoes with gold buckles, formed the main portions of his dress, over which trailed a long brocaded open-sleeved robe lined with ermine, and a magnificent diamond-hilted sword. On account of his rank he enjoyed the rare distinction of carrying one of the six gilded staves that supported the plumed and embroidered canopy.

As soon as the procession moved on again, Eligi of Brancaleone gave a side glance to a little man as red as a lobster, who was walking almost at his side, and carrying in his right hand, with all the solemnity that he could muster, his excellency's hat. He was a footman in gold-laced livery, and we beg leave to give a brief sketch of his history. Trespolo was the child of poor but thieving parents, and on that account was early left an orphan. Being at leisure, he studied life from an eminently social aspect. If we are to believe a certain ancient sage, we are all in the world to solve a problem: as to Trespolo, he desired to live without doing anything; that was his problem. He was, in turn, a sacristan, a juggler, an apothecary's assistant, and a cicerone, and he got tired of all these callings. Begging was, to his mind, too hard work, and it was more trouble to be a thief than to be an honest man. Finally he decided in favour of contemplative philosophy. He had a passionate preference for the horizontal position, and found the greatest pleasure in the world in watching the shooting of stars.

Unfortunately, in the course of his meditations this deserving man came near to dying of hunger; which would have been a great pity, for he was beginning to accustom himself not to eat anything. But as he was predestined by nature to play a small part in our story, God showed him grace for that time, and sent to his assistance—not one of His angels, the rogue was not worthy of that, but—one of Brancaleone's hunting dogs. The noble animal sniffed round the philosopher, and uttered a little charitable growl that would have done credit to one of the brethren of Mount St. Bernard. The prince, who was returning in triumph from hunting, and who, by good luck, had that day killed a bear and ruined a countess, had an odd inclination to do a good deed. He approached the plebeian who was about to pass into the condition of a corpse, stirred the thing with his foot, and seeing that there was still a little hope, bade his people bring him along.

From that day onward, Trespolo saw the dream of his life nearly realised. Something rather above a footman and rather below a house steward, he became the confidant of his master, who found his talents most useful; for this Trespolo was as sharp as a demon and almost as artful as a woman. The prince, who, like an intelligent man as he was, had divined that genius is naturally indolent, asked

nothing of him but advice; when tiresome people wanted thrashing, he saw to that matter himself, and, indeed, he was the equal of any two at such work. As nothing in this lower world, however, is complete, Trespolo had strange moments amid this life of delights; from time to time his happiness was disturbed by panics that greatly diverted his master; he would mutter incoherent words, stifle violent sighs, and lose his appetite. The root of the matter was that the poor fellow was afraid of going to hell. The matter was very simple: he was afraid of everything; and, besides, it had often been preached to him that the Devil never allowed a moment's rest to those who were ill-advised enough to fall into his clutches. Trespolo was in one of his good moods of repentance, when the prince, after gazing on the young girl with the fierce eagerness of a vulture about to swoop upon its prey, turned to speak to his intimate adviser. The poor servant understood his master's abominable design, and not wishing to share the guilt of a sacrilegious conversation, opened his eyes very wide and turned them up to heaven in ecstatic contemplation. The prince coughed, stamped his foot, moved his sword so as to hit Trespolo's legs, but could not get from him any sign of attention, so absorbed did he appear in celestial thoughts. Brancaleone would have liked to wring his neck, but both his hands were occupied by the staff of the canopy; and besides, the king was present.

At last they were drawing nearer to the church of St. Clara, where the Neapolitan kings were buried, and where several princesses of the blood, exchanging the crown for the veil, have gone to bury themselves alive. The nuns, novices, and abbess, hidden behind shutters, were throwing flowers upon the procession. A bunch fell at the feet of the Prince of Brancaleone.

"Trespolo, pick up that nosegay," said the prince, so audibly that his servant had no further excuse. "It is from Sister Theresa," he added, in a low voice; "constancy is only to be found, nowadays, in a convent."

Trespolo picked up the nosegay and came towards his master, looking like a man who was being strangled.

"Who is that girl?" the latter asked him shortly.

"Which one?" stammered the servant.

"Forsooth! The one walking in front of us."

"I don't know her, my lord."

“You must find out something about her before this evening.”

“I shall have to go rather far afield.”

“Then you do know her, you intolerable rascal! I have half a mind to have you hanged like a dog.”

“For pity’s sake, my lord, think of the salvation of your soul, of your eternal life.”

“I advise you to think of your temporal life. What is her name?”

“She is called Nisida, and is the prettiest girl in the island that she is named after. She is innocence itself. Her father is only a poor fisherman, but I can assure your excellency that in his island he is respected like a king.”

“Indeed!” replied the prince, with an ironical smile. “I must own, to my great shame, that I have never visited the little island of Nisida. You will have a boat ready for me tomorrow, and then we will see.”

He interrupted himself suddenly, for the king was looking at him; and calling up the most sonorous bass notes that he could find in the depths of his throat, he continued with an inspired air, “*Genitori genitoque laus et jubilatio.*”

“Amen,” replied the serving-man in a ringing voice.

Nisida, the beloved daughter of Solomon, the fisherman, was, as we have said, the loveliest flower of the island from which she derived her name. That island is the most charming spot, the most delicious nook with which we are acquainted; it is a basket of greenery set delicately amid the pure and transparent waters of the gulf, a hill wooded with orange trees and oleanders, and crowned at the summit by a marble castle. All around extends the fairy-like prospect of that immense amphitheatre, one of the mightiest wonders of creation. There lies Naples, the voluptuous syren, reclining carelessly on the seashore; there, Portici, Castellamare, and Sorrento, the very names of which awaken in the imagination a thousand thoughts of poetry and love; there are Pausilippo, Baiae, Puozzoli, and those vast plains, where the ancients fancied their Elysium, sacred solitudes which one might suppose peopled by the men of former days, where the earth echoes under foot like an empty grave, and the air has unknown sounds and strange melodies.

Solomon's hut stood in that part of the island which, turning its back to the capital, beholds afar the blue crests of Capri. Nothing could be simpler or brighter. The brick walls were hung with ivy greener than emeralds, and enamelled with white bell-flowers; on the ground floor was a fairly spacious apartment, in which the men slept and the family took their meals; on the floor above was Nisida's little maidenly room, full of coolness, shadows, and mystery, and lighted by a single casement that looked over the gulf; above this room was a terrace of the Italian kind, the four pillars of which were wreathed with vine branches, while its vine-clad arbour and wide parapet were overgrown with moss and wild flowers. A little hedge of hawthorn, which had been respected for ages, made a kind of rampart around the fisherman's premises, and defended his house better than deep moats and castellated walls could have done. The boldest roisterers of the place would have preferred to fight before the parsonage and in the precincts of the church rather than in front of Solomon's little enclosure. Otherwise, this was the meeting place of the whole island. Every evening, precisely at the same hour, the good women of the neighbourhood came to knit their woollen caps and tell the news. Groups of little children, naked, brown, and as mischievous as little imps, sported about, rolling on the grass and throwing handfuls of sand into the other's eyes, heedless of the risk of blinding, while their mothers were engrossed in that grave gossip which marks the dwellers in villages. These gatherings occurred daily before the fisherman's house; they formed a tacit and almost involuntary homage, consecrated by custom, and of which no one had ever taken special account; the envy that rules in small communities would soon have suppressed them. The influence which old Solomon had over his equals had grown so simply and naturally, that no one found any fault with it, and it had only attracted notice when everyone was benefiting by it, like those fine trees whose growth is only observed when we profit by their shade. If any dispute arose in the island, the two opponents preferred to abide by the judgment of the fisherman instead of going before the court; he was fortunate enough or clever enough to send away both parties satisfied. He knew what remedies to prescribe better than any physician, for it seldom happened that he or his had not felt the same ailments, and his knowledge, founded on personal experience, produced the most excellent results. Moreover, he had no interest, as ordinary doctors have, in prolonging illnesses. For many years past the only formality recognised as a guarantee for the inviolability of a contract had been the intervention of the fisherman. Each party shook hands with Solomon, and the thing was done. They would rather have thrown themselves into Vesuvius at the moment of its most violent eruption than have broken so solemn an agreement. At the period when our story opens, it was

impossible to find any person in the island who had not felt the effects of the fisherman's generosity, and that without needing to confess to him any necessities. As it was the custom for the little populace of Nisida to spend its leisure hours before Solomon's cottage, the old man, while he walked slowly among the different groups, humming his favourite song, discovered moral and physical weaknesses as he passed; and the same evening he or his daughter would certainly be seen coming mysteriously to bestow a benefit upon every sufferer, to lay a balm upon every wound. In short, he united in his person all those occupations whose business is to help mankind. Lawyers, doctors, and the notary, all the vultures of civilisation, had beaten a retreat before the patriarchal benevolence of the fisherman. Even the priest had capitulated.

On the morrow of the Feast of the Assumption, Solomon was sitting, as his habit was, on a stone bench in front of his house, his legs crossed and his arms carelessly stretched out. At the first glance you would have taken him for sixty at the outside, though he was really over eighty. He had all his teeth, which were as white as pearls, and showed them proudly. His brow, calm and restful beneath its crown of abundant white hair, was as firm and polished as marble; not a wrinkle ruffled the corner of his eye, and the gem-like lustre of his blue orbs revealed a freshness of soul and an eternal youth such as fable grants to the sea-gods. He displayed his bare arms and muscular neck with an old man's vanity. Never had a gloomy idea, an evil prepossession, or a keen remorse, arisen to disturb his long and peaceful life. He had never seen a tear flow near him without hurrying to wipe it; poor though he was, he had succeeded in pouring out benefits that all the kings of the earth could not have bought with their gold; ignorant though he was, he had spoken to his fellows the only language that they could understand, the language of the heart. One single drop of bitterness had mingled with his inexhaustible stream of happiness; one grief only had clouded his sunny life—the death of his wife—and moreover he had forgotten that.

All the affections of his soul were turned upon Nisida, whose birth had caused her mother's death; he loved her with that immoderate love that old people have for the youngest of their children. At the present moment he was gazing upon her with an air of profound rapture, and watching her come and go, as she now joined the groups of children and scolded them for games too dangerous or too noisy; now seated herself on the grass beside their mothers and took part with grave and thoughtful interest in their talk. Nisida was more beautiful thus than she had been the day before; with the vaporous cloud of perfume that had folded her round from head to foot had disappeared all that mystic poetry which put a

sort of constraint upon her admirers and obliged them to lower their glances. She had become a daughter of Eve again without losing anything of her charm. Simply dressed, as she usually was on work-days, she was distinguishable among her companions only by her amazing beauty and by the dazzling whiteness of her skin. Her beautiful black hair was twisted in plaits around the little dagger of chased silver, that has lately been imported into Paris by that right of conquest which the pretty women of Paris have over the fashions of all countries, like the English over the sea.

Nisida was adored by her young friends, all the mothers had adopted her with pride; she was the glory of the island. The opinion of her superiority was shared by everyone to such a degree, that if some bold young man, forgetting the distance which divided him from the maiden, dared speak a little too loudly of his pretensions, he became the laughing-stock of his companions. Even the past masters of tarentella dancing were out of countenance before the daughter of Solomon, and did not dare to seek her as a partner. Only a few singers from Amalfi or Sorrento, attracted by the rare beauty of this angelic creature, ventured to sigh out their passion, carefully veiled beneath the most delicate allusions. But they seldom reached the last verse of their song; at every sound they stopped short, threw down their triangles and their mandolines, and took flight like scared nightingales.

One only had courage enough or passion enough to brave the mockery; this was Bastiano, the most formidable diver of that coast. He also sang, but with a deep and hollow voice; his chant was mournful and his melodies full of sadness. He never accompanied himself upon any instrument, and never retired without concluding his song. That day he was gloomier than usual; he was standing upright, as though by enchantment, upon a bare and slippery rock, and he cast scornful glances upon the women who were looking at him and laughing. The sun, which was plunging into the sea like a globe of fire, shed its light full upon his stern features, and the evening breeze, as it lightly rippled the billows, set the fluttering reeds waving at his feet. Absorbed by dark thoughts, he sang, in the musical language of his country, these sad words:—

“O window, that wert used to shine in the night like an open eye, how dark thou art! Alas, alas! my poor sister is ill.

“Her mother, all in tears, stoops towards me and says, ‘Thy poor sister is dead and buried.’

“Jesus! Jesus! Have pity on me! You stab me to the heart.

“Tell me, good neighbours, how it happened; repeat to me her last words.

“She had a burning thirst, and refused to drink because thou wast not there to give her water from thy hand.

“Oh, my sister! Oh, my sister!

“She refused her mother’s kiss, because thou wast not there to embrace her.

“Oh, my sister! Oh, my sister!

“She wept until her last breath, because thou wast not there to dry her tears.

“Oh, my sister! Oh, my sister!

“We placed on her brow her wreath of orangeflowers, we covered her with a veil as white as snow; we laid her gently in her coffin.

“Thanks, good neighbours. I will go and be with her.

“Two angels came down from heaven and bore her away on their wings. Mary Magdalene came to meet her at the gate of heaven.

“Thanks, good neighbours. I will go and be with her.

“There, she was seated in a place of glory, a chaplet of rubies was given to her, and she is singing her rosary with the Virgin.

“Thanks, good neighbours. I will go and be with her.”

As he finished the last words of his melancholy refrain, he flung himself from the top of his rock into the sea, as though he really desired to engulf himself. Nisida and the other women gave a cry of terror, for during some minutes the diver failed to reappear upon the surface.

“Are you out of your senses?” cried a young man who had suddenly appeared, unobserved among the women. “Why, what are you afraid of? You know very

well that Bastiano is always doing things of this sort. But do not be alarmed: all the fishes in the Mediterranean will be drowned before any harm comes to him. Water is his natural element. Good-day, sister; good-day, father.”

The young fisherman kissed Nisida on the forehead, drew near to his father, and, bowing his handsome head before him, took off his red cap and respectfully kissed the old man’s hand. He came thus to ask his blessing every evening before putting out to sea, where he often spent the night fishing from his boat.

“May God bless thee, my Gabriel!” said the old man in a tone of emotion, as he slowly passed his hand over his son’s black curls, and a tear came into his eye. Then, rising solemnly and addressing the groups around him, he added in a voice full of dignity and of gentleness. “Come, my children, it is time to separate. The young to work, the old to rest. There is the angelus ringing.”

Everybody knelt, and after a short prayer each went on his way. Nisida, after having given her father the last daily attentions, went up to her room, replenished the oil in the lamp that burned day and night before the Virgin, and, leaning her elbow on the window ledge, divided the branches of jasmine which hung like perfumed curtains, began to gaze out at the sea, and seemed lost in a deep, sweet reverie.

At this very time, a little boat, rowed silently by two oarsmen, touched shore on the other side of the island. It had become quite dark. A little man first landed cautiously, and respectfully offered his hand to another individual, who, scorning that feeble support, leapt easily ashore.

“Well, knave,” he cried, “are my looks to your taste?”

“Your lordship is perfect.”

“I flatter myself I am. It is true that, in order to make the transformation complete, I chose the very oldest coat that displayed its rags in a Jew’s shop.”

“Your lordship looks like a heathen god engaged in a love affair. Jupiter has sheathed his thunderbolts and Apollo has pocketed his rays.”

“A truce to your mythology. And, to begin with, I forbid you to call me ‘your lordship.’”

“Yes, your lordship.”

“If my information that I have procured during the day is correct, the house must be on the other side of the island, in a most remote and lonely spot. Walk at a certain distance, and do not trouble yourself about me, for I know my part by heart.”

The young Prince of Brancaleone, whom, in spite of the darkness of the night, our readers will already have recognised, advanced towards the fisherman’s house, with as little noise as possible, walked up and down several times upon the shore, and, after having briefly reconnoitred the place that he wished to attack, waited quietly for the moon to rise and light up the scene that he had prepared. He was not obliged to exercise his patience very long, for the darkness gradually disappeared, and Solomon’s little house was bathed in silvery light. Then he approached with timid steps, lifted towards the casement a look of entreaty, and began to sigh with all the power of his lungs. The young girl, called suddenly from her meditations by the appearance of this strange person, raised herself sharply and prepared to close the shutters.

“Stay, charming Nisida!” cried the prince, in the manner of a man overcome by irresistible passion.

“What do you want with me, signor?” answered the maiden, amazed to hear herself called by name.

“To adore you as a Madonna is adored, and to make you aware of my sighs.”

Nisida looked at him steadily, and, after a moment or two of reflection, asked suddenly, as though in response to some secret thought, “Do you belong to this country, or are you a foreigner?”

“I arrived in this island,” replied the prince without hesitation, “at the moment when the sun was writing his farewell to the earth and dipping the rays that serves as his pen into the shadow that serves as his inkstand.”

“And who are you?” returned the young girl, not at all understanding these strange words.

“Alas! I am but a poor student, but I may become a great poet like Tasso, whose verses you often hear sung by a departing fisherman who sends his thrilling

music as a last farewell that returns to die on the beach.”

“I do not know whether I am doing wrong to speak to you, but at least I will be frank with you,” said Nisida, blushing; “I have the misfortune to be the richest girl on the island.”

“Your father will not be inexorable,” returned the prince ardently; “one word from you, light of my eyes, goddess of my heart, and I will work night and day, never pausing nor slackening, and will render myself worthy to possess the treasure that God has revealed to my dazzled eyes, and, from being poor and obscure as you see me, I will become rich and powerful.”

“I have stayed too long listening to talk that a maiden should not hear; permit me, signor, to withdraw.”

“Have pity on me, my cruel enemy! What have I done to you that you should thus leave me with death in my soul? You do not know that, for months past, I have been following you everywhere like a shadow, that I prowl round your home at night, stifling my sighs lest they should disturb your peaceful slumber. You are afraid, perhaps, to let yourself be touched, at a first meeting, by a poor wretch who adores you. Alas! Juliet was young and beautiful like you, and she did not need many entreaties to take pity on Romeo.”

Nisida suffered a sad and thoughtful look to fall upon this handsome young man who spoke to her in so gentle a voice, and withdrew without further reply, that she might not humiliate his poverty.

The prince made great efforts to suppress a strong inclination towards laughter, and, very well satisfied with this opening, turned his steps towards the spot where he had left his servant. Trespolo, after having emptied a bottle of lacryma with which he had provided himself for any emergency, had looked long around him to choose a spot where the grass was especially high and thick, and had laid himself down to a sound sleep, murmuring as he did so, this sublime observation, “O laziness, but for the sin of Adam you would be a virtue!”

The young girl could not close her eyes during the whole night after the conversation that she had held with the stranger. His sudden appearance, his strange dress and odd speech, had awakened in her an uncertain feeling that had been lying asleep in the bottom of her heart. She was at this time in all the vigour of her youth and of her resplendent beauty. Nisida was not one of the weak and

timid natures that are broken by suffering or domineered over by tyranny. Far otherwise: everything around her had contributed towards shaping for her a calm and serene destiny; her simple, tender soul had unfolded in an atmosphere of peace and happiness. If she had not hitherto loved, it was the fault, not of her coldness but of the extreme timidity shown by the inhabitants of her island. The blind depth of respect that surrounded the old fisherman had drawn around his daughter a barrier of esteem and submission that no one dared to cross. By means of thrift and labour Solomon had succeeded in creating for himself a prosperity that put the poverty of the other fishermen to the blush. No one had asked for Nisida because no one thought he deserved her. The only admirer who had dared to show his passion openly was Bastiano, the most devoted and dearest friend of Gabriel; but Bastiano did not please her. So, trusting in her beauty, upheld by the mysterious hope that never deserts youth, she had resigned herself to wait, like some princess who knows that her betrothed will come from a far country.

On the day of the Assumption she had left her island for the first time in her life, chance having chosen her among the maidens of the kingdom vowed by their mothers to the special protection of the Virgin. But, overwhelmed by the weight of a position so new to her, blushing and confused under the eyes of an immense crowd, she had scarcely dared to raise her wondering looks, and the splendours of the town had passed before her like a dream, leaving but a vague remembrance.

When she perceived the presence of this handsome young man, so slenderly and elegantly built, whose noble and calm demeanour contrasted with the timidity and awkwardness of her other admirers, she felt herself inwardly disturbed, and no doubt she would have believed that her prince had come, if she had been unpleasantly struck by the poverty of his dress. She had, nevertheless, allowed herself to listen to him longer than she ought to have done, and she drew back with her bosom heavy, her cheek on fire, and her heart rent by an ache that was both dull and sharp.

“If my father does not wish me to marry him,” she said to herself, tormented by the first remorseful feeling of her life. “I shall have done wrong to speak to him. And yet he is so handsome!”

Then she knelt before the Virgin, who was her only confidante, the poor child having never known her mother, and tried to tell her the torments of her soul; but

she could not achieve her prayer. The thoughts became entangled within her brain, and she surprised herself uttering strange words. But, assuredly, the Holy Virgin must have taken pity upon her lovely devotee, for she rose with the impression of a consoling thought, resolved to confide everything to her father.

“I cannot have a moment’s doubt,” she said to herself, as she unlaced her bodice, “of my father’s affection. Well, then, if he forbids me to speak to him, it will be for my good. And indeed, I have seen him but this once,” she added, as she threw herself upon the bed, “and now I think of it, I consider him very bold to dare to speak to me. I am almost inclined to laugh at him. How confidently he brought out his nonsense, how absurdly he rolled his eyes! They are really very fine, those eyes of his, and so is his mouth, and his forehead and his hair. He does not suspect that I noticed his hands, which are really very white, when he raised them to heaven, like a madman, as he walked up and down by the sea. Come, come, is he going to prevent my sleeping? I will not see him again!” she cried, drawing the sheet over her head like an angry child. Then she began to laugh to herself over her lover’s dress, and meditated long upon what her companions would say to it. Suddenly her brow contracted painfully, a frightful thought had stolen into her mind, she shuddered from head to foot. “Suppose he were to think someone else prettier than me? Men are so foolish! Certainly, it is too hot, and I shall not sleep tonight.”

Then she sat up in her bed, and continued her monologue—which we will spare the reader—till the morning. Scarcely had the first rays of light filtered through the interlacing branches of jasmine and wavered into the room, when Nisida dressed herself hurriedly, and went as usual to present her forehead to her father’s kiss. The old man at once observed the depression and weariness left by a sleepless night upon his daughter’s face, and parting with an eager and anxious hand the beautiful black hair that fell over her cheeks, he asked her, “What is the matter, my child? Thou hast not slept well?”

“I have not slept at all,” answered Nisida, smiling, to reassure her father; “I am perfectly well, but I have something to confess to you.”

“Speak quickly, child; I am dying with impatience.”

“Perhaps I have done wrong; but I want you to promise beforehand not to scold me.”

“You know very well that I spoil you,” said the old man, with a caress; “I shall not begin to be stern to-day.”

“A young man who does not belong to this island, and whose name I do not know, spoke to me yesterday evening when I was taking the air at my window.”

“And what was he so eager to say to you, my dear Nisida?”

“He begged me to speak to you in his favour.”

“I am listening. What can I do for him?”

“Order me to marry him.”

“And should you obey willingly?”

“I think so, father,” the girl candidly replied. “As to other things, you yourself must judge in your wisdom; for I wanted to speak to you before coming to know him, so as not to go on with a conversation that you might not approve. But there is a hindrance.”

“You know that I do not recognise any when it is a question of making my daughter happy.”

“He is poor, father.”

“Well, all the more reason for me to like him. There is work here for everybody, and my table can spare a place for another son. He is young, he has arms; no doubt he has some calling.”

“He is a poet.”

“No matter; tell him to come and speak to me, and if he is an honest lad, I promise you, my child, that I will do anything in the world to promote your happiness.”

Nisida embraced her father effusively, and was beside herself with joy all day, waiting impatiently for the evening in order to give the young man such splendid news. Eligi Brancaleone was but moderately flattered, as you will easily believe, by the fisherman’s magnanimous intentions towards him; but like the finished

seducer that he was, he appeared enchanted at them. Recollecting his character as a fantastical student and an out-at-elbows poet, he fell upon his knees and shouted a thanksgiving to the planet Venus; then, addressing the young girl, he added, in a calmer voice, that he was going to write immediately to his own father, who in a week's time would come to make his formal proposal; until then, he begged, as a favour, that he might not present himself to Solomon nor to any person at all in the island, and assigned as a pretext a certain degree of shame which he felt on account of his old clothes, assuring his beloved that his father would bring him a complete outfit for the wedding-day.

While the ill-starred girl was thus walking in terrifying security at the edge of the precipice, Trespolo, following his master's wishes, had established himself in the island as a pilgrim from Jerusalem. Playing his part and sprinkling his conversation with biblical phrases, which came to him readily, in his character of ex-sacristan, he distributed abundance of charms, wood of the true Cross and milk of the Blessed Virgin, and all those other inexhaustible treasures on which the eager devotion of worthy people daily feeds. His relics were the more evidently authentic in that he did not sell any of them, and, bearing his poverty in a holy manner, thanked the faithful and declined their alms. Only, out of regard for the established virtue of Solomon, he had consented to break bread with the fisherman, and went to take meals with him with the regularity of a cenobite. His abstinence aroused universal surprise: a crust dipped in water, a few nuts or figs sufficed to keep this holy man alive—to prevent him, that is to say, from dying. Furthermore, he entertained Nisida by his tales of his travels and by his mysterious predictions. Unfortunately, he only appeared towards evening; for he spent the rest of the day in austerities and in prayers—in other words, in drinking like a Turk and snoring like a buffalo.

On the morning of the seventh day, after the promise given by the prince to the fisherman's daughter, Brancaleone came into his servant's room, and, shaking him roughly, cried in his ear, "Up, odious marmot!"

Trespolo, awakened suddenly, rubbed his eyes in alarm. The dead, sleeping peacefully at the bottom of their coffins, will be less annoyed at the last day when the trump of Judgment comes to drag them from their slumbers. Fear having, however, immediately dispersed the dark clouds that overspread his countenance, he sat up, and asked with an appearance of bewilderment—

"What is the matter, your excellency?"

“The matter is that I will have you flayed alive a little if you do not leave off that execrable habit of sleeping twenty hours in the day.”

“I was not asleep, prince!” cried the servant boldly, as he sprang out of bed; “I was reflecting—”

“Listen to me,” said the prince in a severe tone; “you were once employed, I believe, in a chemist’s shop?”

“Yes, my lord, and I left because my employer had the scandalous barbarity to make me pound drugs, which tired my arms horribly.”

“Here is a phial containing a solution of opium.”

“Mercy!” cried Trespolo, falling on his knees.

“Get up, idiot, and pay great attention to what I am going to say to you. This little fool of a Nisida persists in wanting me to speak to her father. I made her believe that I was going away this evening to fetch my papers. There is no time to lose. They know you very well at the fisherman’s. You will pour this liquid into their wine; your life will answer for your not giving them a larger dose than enough to produce a deep sleep. You will take care to prepare me a good ladder for tonight; after which you will go and wait for me in my boat, where you will find Numa and Bonaroux. They have my orders. I shall not want you in scaling the fortress; I have my Campo Basso dagger.”

“But, my lord—” stammered Trespolo, astounded.

“No difficulties!” cried the prince, stamping his foot furiously, “or, by my father’s death, I will cure you, once for all, of your scruples.” And he turned on his heel with the air of a man who is certain that people will be very careful not to disobey his orders.

The unhappy Trespolo fulfilled his master’s injunctions punctually. With him fear was the guiding principle. That evening the fisherman’s supper table was hopelessly dull, and the sham pilgrim tried in vain to enliven it by factitious cheerfulness. Nisida was preoccupied by her lover’s departure, and Solomon, sharing unconsciously in his daughter’s grief, swallowed but a drop or two of wine, to avoid resisting the repeated urgency of his guest. Gabriel had set out in the morning for Sorrento and was not to return for two or three days; his absence

tended to increase the old man's melancholy. As soon as Trespolo had retired, the fisherman yielded to his fatigue. Nisida, with her arms hanging by her sides, her head heavy and her heart oppressed by a sad presentiment, had scarcely strength to go up to her room, and after having mechanically trimmed the lamp, sank on her bed as pale and stiff as a corpse.

The storm was breaking out with violence; one of those terrible storms seen only in the South, when the congregated clouds, parting suddenly, shed torrents of rain and of hail, and threaten another deluge. The roar of the thunder drew nearer and was like the noise of a cannonade. The gulf, lately so calm and smooth that the island was reflected as in a mirror, had suddenly darkened; the furiously leaping waves flung themselves together like wild horses; the island quaked, shaken by terrible shocks. Even the boldest fishermen had drawn their boats ashore, and, shut within their cabins, encouraged as best they could their frightened wives and children.

Amid the deep darkness that overspread the sea Nisida's lamp could be seen gleaming clear and limpid, as it burned before the Madonna. Two boats, without rudders, sails, or oars, tossed by the waves, beaten by the winds, were whirling above the abyss; two men were in these two boats, their muscles tense, their breasts bare, their hair flying. They gazed haughtily on the sea, and braved the tempest.

"Once more, I beg you," cried one of these men, "fear not for me, Gabriel; I promise you that with my two broken oars and a little perseverance I shall get to Torre before daybreak."

"You are mad, Bastiano; we have not been able ever since the morning to get near Vico, and have been obliged to keep tacking about; your skill and strength have been able to do nothing against this frightful hurricane which has driven us back to this point."

"It is the first time you have ever refused to go with me," remarked the young man.

"Well, yes, my dear Bastiano, I do not know how it is, but tonight I feel drawn to the island by an irresistible power. The winds have been unchained to bring me back to it in spite of myself, and I will own to you, even though it should make me seem like a madman in your eyes, that this simple and ordinary event appears

to me like an order from heaven. Do you see that lamp shining over there?"

"I know it," answered Bastiano, suppressing a sigh.

"It was lighted before the Virgin one the day when my sister was born, and for eighteen year it has never ceased to burn, night and day. It was my mother's vow. You do not know, my dear Bastiano, you cannot know how many torturing thoughts that vow recalls to me. My poor mother called me to her deathbed and told me a frightful tale, a horrible secret, which weighs on my soul like a cloak of lead, and of which I can only relieve myself by confiding it to a friend. When her painful story was ended she asked to see and to embrace my sister, who was just born; then with her trembling hand, already chilled by the approach of death, she desired to light the lamp herself. 'Remember,' these were her last words, 'remember, Gabriel, that your sister is vowed to the Madonna. As long as this light shines before the blessed image of the Virgin, your sister will be in no danger.' You can understand now why, at night, when we are crossing the gulf, my eyes are always fixed on that lamp. I have a belief that nothing could shake, which is that on the day that light goes out my sister's soul will have taken flight to heaven."

"Well," cried Bastiano in an abrupt tone that betrayed the emotion of his heart, "if you prefer to stay, I will go alone."

"Farewell," said Gabriel, without turning aside his eyes from the window towards which he felt himself drawn by a fascination for which he could not account. Bastiano disappeared, and Nisida's brother, assisted by the waves, was drawing nearer and nearer to the shore, when, at all once, he uttered a terrible cry which sounded above the noise of the tempest.

The star had just been extinguished; the lamp had been blown out.

"My sister is dead!" cried Gabriel and, leaping into the sea, he cleft the waves with the rapidity of lightning.

The storm had redoubled its intensity; long lines of lightning, rending the sides of the clouds, bathed everything in their tawny and intermittent light. The fisherman perceived a ladder leaning against the front of his home, seized it with a convulsive hand, and in three bounds flung himself into the room. The prince felt himself strangely moved on making his way into this pure and silent retreat. The calm and gentle gaze of the Virgin who seemed to be protecting the rest of

the sleeping girl, that perfume of innocence shed around the maidenly couch, that lamp, open-eyed amid the shadows, like a soul in prayer, had inspired the seducer with an unknown distress. Irritated by what he called an absurd cowardice, he had extinguished the obtrusive light, and was advancing towards the bed, and addressing unspoken reproaches to himself, when Gabriel swooped upon him with a wounded tiger's fierce gnashing of the teeth.

Brancaleone, by a bold and rapid movement that showed no common degree of skill and bravery, while struggling in the grasp of his powerful adversary, drew forth in his right hand a long dagger with a fine barbed blade. Gabriel smiled scornfully, snatched the weapon from him, and even as he stooped to break it across his knee, gave the prince a furious blow with his head that made him stagger and sent him rolling on the floor, three paces away; then, leaning over his poor sister and gazing on her with hungry eyes, by the passing gleam of a flash, "Dead!" he repeated, wringing his arms in despair, —"dead!"

In the fearful paroxysm that compressed his throat he could find no other words to assuage his rage or to pour forth his woe. His hair, which the storm had flattened, rose on his head, the marrow of his bones was chilled, and he felt his tears rush back upon his heart. It was a terrible moment; he forgot that the murderer still lived.

The prince, however, whose admirable composure did not for a moment desert him, had risen, bruised and bleeding. Pale and trembling with rage, he sought everywhere for a weapon with which to avenge himself. Gabriel returned towards him gloomier and more ominous than ever, and grasping his neck with an iron hand, dragged him into the room where the old man was sleeping.

"Father! father! father!" he cried in a piercing voice, "here is the Bastard who Has just murdered Nisida!"

The old man, who had drunk but a few drops of the narcotic potion, was awakened by this cry which echoed through his soul; he arose as though moved by a spring, flung off his coverings, and with that promptitude of action that God has bestowed upon mothers in moments of danger, event up to his daughter's room, found a light, knelt on the edge of the bed, and began to test his child's pulse and watch her breathing with mortal anxiety.

All! this had passed in less time than we have taken in telling it. Brancaleone by

an unheard-of effort had freed himself from the hands of the young fisherman, and suddenly resuming his princely pride, said in a loud voice, "You shall not kill me without listening to me."

Gabriel would have overwhelmed him with Bitter reproaches, but, unable to utter a single word, he burst into tears.

"Your sifter is not dead," said the prince, with cold dignity; "she is merely asleep. You can assure yourself of it, and meanwhile I undertake, upon my Honour, not to move a single step away."

These words were pronounced with such an accent of truth that the fisherman was struck by them. An unexpected gleam of hope suddenly dawned in his thoughts; he cast upon the stranger a glance of hate and distrust, and muttered in a muffled voice, "Do not flatter yourself, in any case, that you will be able to escape me."

Then he went up to his sister's room, and approaching the old man, asked tremblingly, "Well, father?"

Solomon thrust him gently aside with the solicitude of a mother removing some buzzing insect from her child's cradle, and, making a sign to enjoin silence, added in a low voice, "She is neither dead nor poisoned. Some philtre has been given to her for a bad purpose. Her breathing is even, and she cannot fail to recover from her lethargy."

Gabriel, reassured about Nisida's life, returned silently to the ground floor where he had left the seducer. His manner was grave and gloomy; he was coming now not to rend the murderer of his sister with his hands, but to elucidate a treacherous and infamous mystery, and to avenge his honour which had been basely attacked. He opened wide the double entrance door that admitted daylight to the apartment in which, on the few nights that he spent at home, he was accustomed to sleep with his father. The rain had just stopped, a ray of moonlight pierced the clouds, and all at once made its way into the room. The fisherman adjusted his dripping garments, walked towards the stranger, who awaited him without stirring, and after having gazed upon him haughtily, said, "Now you are going to explain your presence in our house."

"I confess," said the prince, in an easy tone and with the most insolent assurance, "that appearances are against me. It is the fate of lovers to be treated as thieves."

But although I have not the advantage of being known to you, I am betrothed to the fair Nisida— with your father’s approval, of course. Now, as I have the misfortune to possess very hardhearted parents, they have had the cruelty to refuse me their consent. Love led me astray, and I was about to be guilty of a fault for which a young man like you ought to have some indulgence. Furthermore, it was nothing but a mere attempt at an abduction, with the best intentions in the world, I swear, and I am ready to atone for everything if you will agree to give me your hand and call me your brother.”

“I will agree to call you a coward and a betrayer!” replied Gabriel, whose face had begun to glow, as he heard his sister spoken of with such impudent levity. “If it is thus that insults are avenged in towns, we fishers have a different plan. Ah! so you flattered yourself with the thought of bringing desolation and disgrace into our home, and of paying infamous assassins to come and share an old man’s bread so as to poison his daughter, of stealing by night, like a brigand, armed with a dagger, into my sister’s room, and of being let off by marrying the most beautiful woman in the kingdom!”

The prince made a movement.

“Listen,” continued Gabriel: “I could break you as I broke your dagger just now; but I have pity on you. I see that you can do nothing with your hands, neither defend yourself nor work. Go, I begin to understand; you are a braggart, my fine sir; your poverty is usurped; you have decked yourself in these poor clothes, but you are unworthy of them.”

He suffered a glance of crushing contempt to fall upon the prince, then going to a cupboard hidden in the wall, he drew out a rifle and an axe.

“Here,” said he, “are all the weapons in the house; choose.”

A flash of joy illuminated the countenance of the prince, who had hitherto suppressed his rage. He seized the rifle eagerly, drew three steps backward, and drawing himself up to his full height, said, “You would have done better to lend me this weapon at the beginning; for then I would have been spared from witnessing your silly vapourings and frantic convulsions. Thanks, young-man; one of my servants will bring you back your gun. Farewell.”

And he threw him his purse, which fell heavily at the fisherman’s feet.

“I lent you that rifle to fight with me,” cried Gabriel, whom surprise had rooted to the spot.

“Move aside, my lad; you are out of your senses,” said the prince, taking a step towards the door.

“So you refuse to defend yourself?” asked Gabriel in a determined voice.

“I have told you already that I cannot fight with you.”

“Why not?”

“Because such is the will of God; because you were born to crawl and I to trample you under my feet; because all the blood that I could shed in this island would not purchase one drop of my blood; because a thousand lives of wretches like you are not equal to one hour of mine; because you will kneel at my name that I, am now going to utter; because, in short, you are but a poor fisherman and my name is Prince of Brancaleone.”

At this dreaded name, which the young nobleman flung, like a thunderbolt, at his head, the fisherman bounded like a lion. He drew a deep breath, as though he had lifted a weight that had long rested on his heart.

“Ah!” he cried, “you have given yourself into my hands, my lord! Between the poor fisherman and the all-powerful prince there is a debt of blood. You shall pay for yourself and for your father. We are going to settle our accounts, your excellency,” he added, rising his axe over the head of the prince, who was aiming at him. “Oh! you were in too great haste to choose: the rifle is not loaded.” The prince turned pale.

“Between our two families,” Gabriel continued, “there exists a horrible secret which my mother confided to me on the brink of the grave, of which my father himself is unaware, and that no man in the world must learn. You are different, you are going to die.”

He dragged him into the space outside the house.

“Do you know why my sister, whom you wished to dishonour, was vowed to the Madonna? Because your father, like you, wished to dishonour my mother. In your accursed house there is a tradition of infamy. You do not know what slow

and terrible torments my poor mother endured-torments that broke her strength and caused her to die in early youth, and that her angelic soul dared confide to none but her son in that supreme hour and in order to bid me watch over my sister.”

The fisherman wiped away a burning tear. “One day, before we were born, a fine lady, richly dressed, landed in our island from a splendid boat; she asked to see my mother, who was as young and beautiful as my Nisida is to-day. She could not cease from admiring her; she blamed the blindness of fate which had buried this lovely jewel in the bosom of an obscure island; she showered praises, caresses, and gifts upon my mother, and after many indirect speeches, finally asked her parents for her, that she might make her her lady-in-waiting. The poor people, foreseeing in the protection of so great a lady a brilliant future for their daughter, were weak enough to yield. That lady was your mother; and do you know why she came thus to seek that poor innocent maiden? Because your mother had a lover, and because she wished to make sure, in this infamous manner, of the prince’s indulgence.”

“Silence, wretch!”

“Oh, your excellency will hear me out. At the beginning, my poor mother found herself surrounded by the tenderest care: the princess could not be parted from her for a moment; the most flattering words, the finest clothes, the richest ornaments were hers; the servants paid her as much respect as though she were a daughter of the house. When her parents went to see her and to inquire whether she did not at all regret having left them, they found her so lovely and so happy, that they blessed the princess as a good angel sent them from God. Then the prince conceived a remarkable affection for my mother; little by little his manners became more familiar and affectionate. At last the princess went away for a few days, regretting that she could not take with her her dear child, as she called her. Then the prince’s brutality knew no further barriers; he no longer concealed his shameful plans of seduction; he spread before the poor girl’s eyes pearl necklaces and caskets of diamonds; he passed from the most glowing passion to the blackest fury, from the humblest prayers to the most horrible threats. The poor child was shut up in a cellar where there was hardly a gleam of daylight, and every morning a frightful gaoler came and threw her a bit of black bread, repeating with oaths that it only depended upon herself to alter all this by becoming the prince’s mistress. This cruelty continued for two years. The princess had gone on a long journey, and my mother’s poor parents believed that

their daughter was still happy with her protectress. On her return, having; no doubt fresh sins for which she needed forgiveness, she took my mother from her dungeon, assumed the liveliest indignation at this horrible treatment, about which she appeared to have known nothing, wiped her tears, and by an abominable refinement of perfidy received the thanks of the victim whom she was about to sacrifice.

“One evening—I have just finished, my lord—the princess chose to sup alone with her lady-in-waiting: the rarest fruits, the most exquisite dishes, and the most delicate wines were served to my poor mother, whose prolonged privations had injured her health and weakened her reason; she gave way to a morbid gaiety. Diabolical philtres were poured into her cup; that is another tradition in your family. My mother felt uplifted, her eyes shone with feverish brilliance, her cheeks were on fire. Then the prince came in—oh! your excellency will see that God protects the poor. My darling mother, like a frightened dove, sheltered herself in the bosom of the princess, who pushed her away, laughing. The poor distraught girl, trembling, weeping, knelt down in the midst of that infamous room. It was St. Anne’s Day; all at once the house shook, the walls cracked, cries of distress rang out in the streets. My mother was saved. It was the earthquake that destroyed half Naples. You know all about it, my lord, since your old palace is no longer habitable.”

“What are you driving at?” cried Brancaloneo in terrible agitation.

“Oh, I merely wish to persuade you that you must fight with me,” answered the fisherman coldly, as he offered him a cartridge. “And now,” he added, in an excited tone, “say your prayers, my lord; for I warn you, you will die by my hand; justice must be done.”

The prince carefully examined the powder and shot, made sure that his rifle was in good condition; loaded it, and, eager to make an end, took aim at the fisherman; but, either because he had been so much disturbed by his opponent’s terrible tale, or, because the grass was wet from the storm, at the moment when he put forward his left foot to steady his shot, he slipped, lost his balance and fell on one knee. He fired into the air.

“That does not count, my lord,” cried Gabriel instantly, and handed him a second charge.

At the noise of the report Solomon had appeared at the window, and, understanding what was going on, had lifted his hands to heaven, in order to address to God a dumb and fervent prayer. Eligi uttered a frightful imprecation, and hastily reloaded his rifle; but, struck by the calm confidence of the young man, who stood motionless before him, and by the old man, who, impassive and undisturbed, seemed to be conjuring God in the name of a father's authority, disconcerted by his fall, his knees shaking and his arm jarred, he felt the chills of death running in his veins. Attempting, nevertheless, to master his emotion, he took aim a second time; the bullet whistled by the fisherman's ear and buried itself in the stem of a poplar.

The prince, with the energy of despair, seized the barrel of his weapon in both hands; but Gabriel was coming forward with his axe, a terrible foe, and his first stroke carried away the butt of the rifle. He was still hesitating, however, to kill a defenceless man, when two armed servants appeared at the end of the pathway. Gabriel did not see them coming; but at the moment when they would have seized him by the shoulders, Solomon uttered a cry and rushed to his son's assistance.

"Help, Numa! help, Bonaroux! Death to the ruffians! They want to murder me."

"You lie, Prince of Brancalone!" cried Gabriel, and with one blow of the axe he cleft his skull.

The two braves who were coming to their master's assistance, when they saw him fall, took flight; Solomon and his son went up to Nisida's room. The young girl had just shaken off her heavy slumber; a slight perspiration moistened her brow, and she opened her eyes slowly to the dawning day.

"Why are you looking at me in that way, father?" she said, her mind still wandering a little and she passed her hand over her forehead.

The old man embraced her tenderly.

"You have just passed through a great danger, my poor Nisida," said he; "arise, and let us give thanks to the Madonna."

Then all three, kneeling before the sacred image of the Virgin, began to recite litanies. But at that very instant a noise of arms sounded in the enclosure, the house was surrounded by soldiers, and a lieutenant of gendarmes, seizing

Gabriel, said in a loud voice, "In the name of the law, I arrest you for the murder that you have just committed upon the person of his excellency and illustrious lordship, the Prince of Brancaleone."

Nisida, struck by these words, remained pale and motionless like a marble statue kneeling on a tomb; Gabriel was already preparing to make an unreasoning resistance, when a gesture from his father stopped him.

"Signor tenente," said the old man, addressing himself to the officer, "my son killed the prince in lawful defence, for the latter had scaled our house and made his way in at night and with arms in his hand. The proofs are before your eyes. Here is a ladder set up against the window; and here," he proceeded, picking up the two pieces of the broken blade, "is a dagger with the Brancaleone arms. However, we do not refuse to follow you."

The last words of the fisherman were drowned by cries of "Down with the sbirri! down with the gendarmes!" which were repeated in every direction. The whole island was up in arms, and the fisher-folk would have suffered themselves to be cut up to the last man before allowing a single hair of Solomon or of his son to be touched; but the old man appeared upon his threshold, and, stretching out his arm with a calm and grave movement that quieted the anger of the crowd, he said, "Thanks, my children; the law must be respected. I shall be able, alone, to defend the innocence of my son before the judges."

Hardly three months have elapsed since the day upon which we first beheld the old fisherman of Nisida sitting before the door of his dwelling, irradiated by all the happiness that he had succeeded in creating around him, reigning like a king, on his throne of rock, and blessing his two children, the most beautiful creatures in the island. Now the whole existence of this man, who was once so happy and so much envied, is changed. The smiling cottage, that hung over the gulf like a swan over a transparent lake, is sad and desolate; the little enclosure, with its hedges of lilac and hawthorn, where joyous groups used to come and sit at the close of day, is silent and deserted. No human sound dares to trouble the mourning of this saddened solitude. Only towards evening the waves of the sea, compassionating such great misfortunes, come to murmur plaintive notes upon the beach.

Gabriel has been condemned. The news of the high-born Prince of Brancaleone's death, so young, so handsome, and so universally adored, not only fluttered the

aristocracy of Naples, but excited profound indignation in all classes of people. He was mourned by everybody, and a unanimous cry for vengeance was raised against the murderer.

The authorities opened the inquiry with alarming promptness. The magistrates whom their office called to judge this deplorable affair displayed, however, the most irreproachable integrity. No consideration outside their duty, no deference due to so noble and powerful a family, could shake the convictions of their conscience. History has kept a record of this memorable trial; and has, no reproach to make to men which does not apply equally to the imperfection of human laws. The appearance of things, that fatal contradiction which the genius of evil so often here on earth gives to truth, overwhelmed the poor fisherman with the most evident proofs.

Trespolo, in whom fear had destroyed all scruples, being first examined, as having been the young prince's confidant, declared with cool impudence that, his master having shown a wish to escape for a few days from the importunities of a young married lady whose passion was beginning to tire him, had followed him to the island with three or four of his most faithful servants, and that he himself had adopted the disguise of a pilgrim, not wishing to betray his excellency's incognito to the fisher-people, who would certainly have tormented so powerful a person by all sorts of petitions. Two local watch men, who had happened to be on the hillside at the moment of the crime, gave evidence that confirmed the valet's lengthy statement; hidden by some under wood, they had seen Gabriel rush upon the prince, and had distinctly heard the last words of the dying man; calling "Murder!" All the witnesses, even those summoned at the request of the prisoner, made his case worse by their statements, which they tried to make favourable. Thus the court, with its usual perspicacity and its infallible certainty, succeeded in establishing the fact that Prince Eligi of Brancaleone, having taken a temporary dislike to town life, had retired to the little island of Nisida, there to give himself up peaceably to the pleasure of fishing, for which he had at all times had a particular predilection (a proof appeared among the documents of the case that the prince had regularly been present every other year at the tunny-fishing on his property at Palermo); that when once he was thus hidden in the island, Gabriel might have recognised him, having gone with his sister to the procession, a few days before, and had, no doubt, planned to murder him. On the day before the night of the crime, the absence of Gabriel and the discomposure of his father and sister had been remarked. Towards evening the prince had dismissed his servant, and gone out alone, as his custom was, to walk by the

seashore. Surprised by the storm and not knowing the byways of the island, he had wandered round the fisherman's house, seeking a shelter; then Gabriel, encouraged by the darkness and by the noise of the tempest, which seemed likely to cover the cries of his victim, had, after prolonged hesitation, resolved to commit his crime, and having fired two shots at the unfortunate young man without succeeding in wounding him, had put an end to him by blows of the axe; lastly, at the moment when, with Solomon's assistance, he was about to throw the body into the sea, the prince's servants having appeared, they had gone up to the girl's room, and, inventing their absurd tale, had cast themselves on their knees before the Virgin, in order to mislead the authorities. All the circumstances that poor Solomon cited in his son's favour turned against him: the ladder at Nisida's window belonged to the fisherman; the dagger which young Brancalone always carried upon him to defend himself had evidently been taken from him after his death, and Gabriel had hastened to break it, so as to destroy, to the best of his power, the traces of his crime. Bastiano's evidence did not receive a minute's consideration: he, to destroy the idea of premeditation, declared that the young fisherman had left him only at the moment when the storm broke over the island; but, in the first place, the young diver was known to be Gabriel's most devoted friend and his sister's warmest admirer, and, in the second, he had been seen to land at Torre during the same hour in which he had affirmed that he was near to Nisida. As for the prince's passion for the poor peasant girl, the magistrates simply shrugged their shoulders at the ridiculous assertion of that, and especially at the young girl's alleged resistance and the extreme measures to which the prince was supposed to have resorted to conquer the virtue of Nisida. Eligi of Brancalone was so young, so handsome, so seductive, and at the same time so cool amid his successes, that he had never been suspected of violence, except in getting rid of his mistresses. Finally, an overwhelming and unanswerable proof overthrew all the arguments for the defence: under the fisherman's bed had been found a purse with the Brancalone arms, full of gold, the purse which, if our readers remember, the prince had flung as a last insult at Gabriel's feet.

The old man did not lose heart at this fabric of lies; after the pleadings of the advocates whose ruinous eloquence he had bought with heavy gold, he defended his son himself, and put so much truth, so much passion, and so many tears into his speech, that the whole audience was moved, and three of the judges voted for an acquittal; but the majority was against it, and the fatal verdict was pronounced.

The news at once spread throughout the little island, and caused the deepest dejection there. The fishers who, at the first irruption of force, had risen as one man to defend their comrade's cause, bowed their heads without a murmur before the unquestioned authority of a legal judgment. Solomon received unflinchingly the stab that pierced his heart. No sigh escaped his breast; no tear came to his eyes; his wound did not bleed. Since his son's arrest he had sold all he possessed in the world, even the little silver cross left by his wife at her death, even the pearl necklace that flattered his fatherly pride by losing its whiteness against his dear Nisida's throat; the pieces of gold gained by the sale of these things he had sewn into his coarse woollen cap, and had established himself in the city. He ate nothing but the bread thrown to him by the pity of passers-by, and slept on the steps of churches or at the magistrates' door.

To estimate at its full value the heroic courage of this unhappy father, one must take a general view of the whole extent of his misfortune. Overwhelmed by age and grief, he looked forward with solemn calmness to the terrible moment which would bear his son, a few days before him, to the grave. His sharpest agony was the thought of the shame that would envelop his family. The first scaffold erected in that gently mannered island would arise for Gabriel, and that ignominious punishment tarnish the whole population and imprint upon it the first brand of disgrace. By a sad transition, which yet comes so easily in the destiny of man, the poor father grew to long for those moments of danger at which he had formerly trembled, those moments in which his son might have died nobly. And now all was lost: a long life of work, of abnegation, and of good deeds, a pure and stainless reputation that had extended beyond the gulf into distant countries, and the traditional admiration, rising almost to worship, of several generations; all these things only served to deepen the pit into which the fisherman had fallen, at one blow, from his kingly height. Good fame, that divine halo without which nothing here on earth is sacred, had disappeared. Men no longer dared to defend the poor wretch, they pitied him. His name would soon carry horror with it, and Nisida, poor orphan, would be nothing to anyone but the sister of a man who had been condemned to death. Even Bastiano turned away his face and wept. Thus, when every respite was over, when poor Solomon's every attempt had failed, people in the town who saw him smile strangely, as though under the obsession of some fixed idea, said to one another that the old man had lost his reason.

Gabriel saw his last day dawn, serenely and calmly. His sleep had been deep; he awoke full of unknown joy; a cheerful ray of sunlight, falling through the

loophole, wavered over the fine golden straw in his cell; an autumn breeze playing around him, brought an agreeable coolness to his brow, and stirred in his long hair. The gaoler, who while he had had him in his charge had always behaved humanely, struck by his happy looks, hesitated to announce the priest's visit, in fear of calling the poor prisoner from his dream. Gabriel received the news with pleasure; he conversed for two hours with the good priest, and shed sweet tears on receiving the last absolution. The priest left the prison with tears in his eyes, declaring aloud that he had never in his life met with a more beautiful, pure, resigned, and courageous spirit.

The fisherman was still under the influence of this consoling emotion when his sister entered. Since the day when she had been carried, fainting, from the room where her brother had just been arrested, the poor girl, sheltered under the roof of an aunt, and accusing herself of all the evil that had befallen, had done nothing but weep at the feet of her holy protectress. Bowed by grief like a young lily before the storm, she would spend whole hours, pale, motionless, detached from earthly things, her tears flowing silently upon her beautiful clasped hands. When the moment came to go and embrace her brother for the last time, Nisida arose with the courage of a saint. She wiped away the traces of her tears, smoothed her beautiful black hair, and put on her best white dress. Poor child, she tried to hide her grief by an angelic deception. She had the strength to smile! At the sight of her alarming pallor Gabriel felt his heart wrung, a cloud passed over his eyes; he would have run to meet her, but, held back by the chain which fettered him to a pillar of his prison, stepped back sharply and stumbled. Nisida flew to her brother and upheld him in her arms. The young girl had understood him; she assured him that she was well. Fearing to remind him of his terrible position, she spoke volubly of all manner of things—her aunt, the weather, the Madonna. Then she stopped suddenly, frightened at her own words, frightened at her own silence; she fixed her burning gaze upon her brother's brow as though to fascinate him. Little by little animation returned to her; a faint colour tinted her hollowed cheeks, and Gabriel, deceived by the maiden's super human efforts, thought her still beautiful, and thanked God in his heart for having spared this tender creature. Nisida, as though she had followed her brother's secret thoughts, came close to him, pressed his hand with an air of understanding, and murmured low in his ear, "Fortunately our father has been away for two days; he sent me word that he would be detained in town. For us, it is different; we are young, we have courage!"

The poor young girl was trembling like a leaf.

“What will become of you, my poor Nisida?”

“Bah! I will pray to the Madonna. Does she not watch over us?” The girl stopped, struck by the sound of her own words, which the circumstances so cruelly contradicted. But looking at her brother, she went on in a low tone: “Assuredly she does watch over us. She appeared to me last night in a dream. She held her child Jesus on her arm, and looked at me with a mother’s tenderness. She wishes to make saints of us, for she loves us; and to be a saint, you see, Gabriel, one must suffer.”

“Well, go and pray for me, my kind sister; go away from the view of this sad place, which will eventually shake your firmness, and perhaps mine. Go; we shall see each other again in heaven above, where our mother is waiting for us—our mother whom you have not known, and to whom I shall often speak of you. Farewell, my sister, until we meet again!”

And he kissed her on the forehead.

The young girl called up all her strength into her heart for this supreme moment; she walked with a firm step; having reached the threshold, she turned round and waved him a farewell, preventing herself by a nervous contraction from bursting into tears, but as soon as she was in the corridor, a sob broke from her bosom, and Gabriel, who heard it echo from the vaulted roof, thought that his heart would break.

Then he threw himself on his knees, and, lifting his hands to heaven, cried, “I have finished suffering; I have nothing more that holds me to life. I thank Thee, my God! Thou hast kept my father away, and hast been willing to spare the poor old man a grief that would have been beyond his strength.”

It was at the hour of noon, after having exhausted every possible means, poured out his gold to the last piece, and embraced the knees of the lowest serving man, that Solomon the fisherman took his way to his son’s prison. His brow was so woebegone that the guards drew back, seized with pity, and the gaoler wept as he closed the door of the cell upon him. The old man remained some moments without advancing a step, absorbed in contemplation of his son. By the tawny gleam of his eye might be divined that the soul of the man was moved at that instant by some dark project. He seemed nevertheless struck by the-beauty of Gabriel’s face. Three months in prison had restored to his skin the whiteness that

the sun had turned brown; his fine dark hair fell in curls around his neck, his eyes rested on his father with a liquid and brilliant gaze. Never had this head been so beautiful as now, when it was to fall.

“Alas, my poor son!” said the old man, “there is no hope left; you must die.”

“I know it,” answered Gabriel in a tone of tender reproach, “and it is not that which most afflicts me at this moment. But you, too, why do you wish to give me pain, at your age? Why did you not stay in the town?”

“In the town,” the old man returned, “they have no pity; I cast myself at the king’s feet, at everybody’s feet; there is no pardon, no mercy for us.”

“Well, in God’s name, what is death to me? I meet it daily on the sea. My greatest, my only torment is the pain that they are causing you.”

“And I, do you think, my Gabriel, that I only suffer in seeing you die? Oh, it is but a parting for a few days; I shall soon go to join you. But a darker sorrow weighs upon me. I am strong, I am a man”. He stopped, fearing that he had said too much; then drawing near to his son, he said in a tearful voice, “Forgive me, my Gabriel; I am the cause of your death. I ought to have killed the prince with my own hand. In our country, children and old men are not condemned to death. I am over eighty years old; I should have been pardoned; they told me that when, with tears, I asked pardon for you; once more, forgive me, Gabriel; I thought my daughter was dead; I thought of nothing else; and besides, I did not know the law.”

“Father, father!” cried Gabriel, touched, “what are you saying? I would have given my life a thousand times over to purchase one day of yours. Since you are strong enough to be present at my last hour, fear not; you will not see me turn pale; your son will be worthy of you.”

“And he is to die, to die!” cried Solomon, striking his forehead in despair, and casting on the walls of the dungeon a look of fire that would fain have pierced them.

“I am resigned, father,” said Gabriel gently; “did not Christ ascend the cross?”

“Yes,” murmured the old man in a muffled voice, “but He did not leave behind a sister dishonoured by His death.”

These words, which escaped the old fisherman in spite of himself, threw a sudden and terrible light into the soul of Gabriel. For the first time he perceived all the infamous manner of his death: the shameless populace crowding round the scaffold, the hateful hand of the executioner taking him by the Hair, and the drops of his blood besprinkling the white raiment of his sister and covering her with shame.

“Oh, if I could get a weapon!” cried Gabriel, his haggard eyes roaming around.

“It is not the weapon that is lacking,” answered Solomon, carrying his hand to the hilt of a dagger that he had hidden in his breast.

“Then kill me, father,” said Gabriel in a low tone, but with an irresistible accent of persuasion and entreaty; “oh yes, I confess it now, the executioner’s hand frightens me. My Nisida, my poor Nisida, I have seen her; she was here just now, as beautiful and as pale as the Madonna Dolorosa; she smiled to hide from me her sufferings. She was happy, poor girl, because she believed you away. Oh, how sweet it will be to me to die by your hand! You gave me life; take it back, father, since God will have it so. And Nisida will be saved. Oh, do not hesitate! It would be a cowardice on the part of both of us; she is my sister, she is your daughter.”

And seeing that his powerful will had subjugated the old man, he said, “Help! help, father!” and offered his breast to the blow. The poor father lifted his hand to strike; but a mortal convulsion ran through all his limbs; he fell into his son’s arms, and both burst into tears.

“Poor father!” said Gabriel. “I ought to have foreseen that. Give me that dagger and turn away; I am young and my arm will not tremble.”

“Oh no !” returned Solomon solemnly, “no, my son, for then you would be a suicide! Let your soul ascend to heaven pure! God will give me His strength. Moreover, we have time yet.”

And a last ray of hope shone in the eyes of the fisherman.

Then there passed in that dungeon one of those scenes that words can never reproduce. The poor father sat down on the straw at his son’s side and laid his head gently upon his knees. He smiled to him through his tears, as one smiles to a sick child; he passed his hand slowly through the silky curls of his hair, and

asked him countless questions, intermingled with caresses. In order to give him a distaste for this world he kept on talking to him of the other. Then, with a sudden change, he questioned him minutely about all sorts of past matters. Sometimes he stopped in alarm, and counted the beatings of his heart, which were hurriedly marking the passage of time.

“Tell me everything, my child; have you any desire, any wish that could be satisfied before you die? Are you leaving any woman whom you loved secretly? Everything we have left shall be hers.”

“I regret nothing on earth but you and my sister. You are the only persons whom I have loved since my mother’s death.”

“Well, be comforted. Your sister will be saved.”

“Oh, yes! I shall die happy.”

“Do you forgive our enemies?”

“With all the strength of my heart. I pray God to have mercy on the witnesses who accused me. May He forgive me my sins!”

“How old is it that you will soon be?” the old man asked suddenly, for his reason was beginning to totter, and his memory had failed him.

“I was twenty-five on All Hallows’ Day.”

“True; it was a sad day, this year; you were in prison.”

“Do you remember how, five years ago, on that same day I got the prize in the regatta at Venice?”

“Tell me about that, my child.”

And he listened, his neck stretched forward, his mouth half open, his hands in his son’s. A sound of steps came in from the corridor, and a dull knock was struck upon the door. It was the fatal hour. The poor father had forgotten it.

The priests had already begun to sing the death hymn; the executioner was ready, the procession had set out, when Solomon the fisherman appeared suddenly on

the threshold of the prison, his eyes aflame and his brow radiant with the halo of the patriarchs. The old man drew himself up to his full height, and raising in one hand the reddened knife, said in a sublime voice, "The sacrifice is fulfilled. God did not send His angel to stay the hand of Abraham."

The crowd carried him in triumph!

[The details of this case are recorded in the archives of the Criminal Court at Naples. We have changed nothing in the age or position of the persons who appear in this narrative. One of the most celebrated advocates at the Neapolitan bar secured the acquittal of the old man.]

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CELEBRATED CRIMES VOLUME 5 (of 8), Part 1

By Alexandre Dumas, Pere

DERUES

One September afternoon in 1751, towards half-past five, about a score of small boys, chattering, pushing, and tumbling over one another like a covey of partridges, issued from one of the religious schools of Chartres. The joy of the little troop just escaped from a long and wearisome captivity was doubly great: a slight accident to one of the teachers had caused the class to be dismissed half an hour earlier than usual, and in consequence of the extra work thrown on the teaching staff the brother whose duty it was to see all the scholars safe home was compelled to omit that part of his daily task. Therefore not only thirty or forty minutes were stolen from work, but there was also unexpected, uncontrolled liberty, free from the surveillance of that black-cassocked overseer who kept order in their ranks. Thirty minutes! at that age it is a century, of laughter and

prospective games! Each had promised solemnly, under pain of severe punishment, to return straight to his paternal nest without delay, but the air was so fresh and pure, the country smiled all around! The school, or preferably the cage, which had just opened, lay at the extreme edge of one of the suburbs, and it only required a few steps to slip under a cluster of trees by a sparkling brook beyond which rose undulating ground, breaking the monotony of a vast and fertile plain. Was it possible to be obedient, to refrain from the desire to spread one's wings? The scent of the meadows mounted to the heads of the steadiest among them, and intoxicated even the most timid. It was resolved to betray the confidence of the reverend fathers, even at the risk of disgrace and punishment next morning, supposing the escapade were discovered.

A flock of sparrows suddenly released from a cage could not have flown more wildly into the little wood. They were all about the same age, the eldest might be nine. They flung off coats and waistcoats, and the grass became strewn with baskets, copy-books, dictionaries, and catechisms. While the crowd of fair-haired heads, of fresh and smiling faces, noisily consulted as to which game should be chosen, a boy who had taken no part in the general gaiety, and who had been carried away by the rush without being able to escape sooner, glided slyly away among the trees, and, thinking himself unseen, was beating a hasty retreat, when one of his comrades cried out—

“Antoine is running away!”

Two of the best runners immediately started in pursuit, and the fugitive, notwithstanding his start, was speedily overtaken, seized by his collar, and brought back as a deserter.

“Where were you going?” the others demanded.

“Home to my cousins,” replied the boy; “there is no harm in that.”

“You canting sneak!” said another boy, putting his fist under the captive's chin; “you were going to the master to tell of us.”

“Pierre,” responded Antoine, “you know quite well I never tell lies.”

“Indeed!—only this morning you pretended I had taken a book you had lost, and you did it because I kicked you yesterday, and you didn't dare to kick me back again.”

Antoine lifted his eyes to heaven, and folding his arms on his breast

Dear Buttet," he said, "you are mistaken; I have always been taught to forgive injuries."

"Listen, listen! he might be saying his prayers!" cried the other boys; and a volley of offensive epithets, enforced by cuffs, was hurled at the culprit.

Pierre Buttet, whose influence was great, put a stop to this onslaught.

"Look here, Antoine, you are a bad lot, that we all know; you are a sneak and a hypocrite. It's time we put a stop to it. Take off your coat and fight it out. If you like, we will fight every morning and evening till the end of the month."

The proposition was loudly applauded, and Pierre, turning up his sleeves as far as his elbows, prepared to suit actions to words.

The challenger assuredly did not realise the full meaning, of his words; had he done so, this chivalrous defiance would simply have been an act of cowardice on his part, for there could be no doubt as to the victor in such a conflict. The one was a boy of alert and gallant bearing, strong upon his legs, supple and muscular, a vigorous man in embryo; while the other, not quite so old, small, thin, of a sickly leaden complexion, seemed as if he might be blown away by a strong puff of wind. His skinny arms and legs hung on to his body like the claws of a spider, his fair hair inclined to red, his white skin appeared nearly bloodless, and the consciousness of weakness made him timid, and gave a shifty, uneasy look to his eyes. His whole expression was uncertain, and looking only at his face it was difficult at first sight to decide to which sex he belonged. This confusion of two natures, this indefinable mixture of feminine weakness without grace, and of abortive boyhood, seemed to stamp him as something exceptional, unclassable, and once observed, it was difficult to take one's eyes from him. Had he been endowed with physical strength he would have been a terror to his comrades, exercising by fear the ascendancy which Pierre owed to his joyous temper and unwearied gaiety, for this mean exterior concealed extraordinary powers of will and dissimulation. Guided by instinct, the other children hung about Pierre and willingly accepted his leadership; by instinct also they avoided Antoine, repelled by a feeling of chill, as if from the neighbourhood of a reptile, and shunning him unless to profit in some way by their superior strength. Never would he join their games without compulsion; his thin, colourless lips seldom parted for a laugh,

and even at that tender age his smile had an unpleasantly sinister expression.

“Will you fight?” again demanded Pierre.

Antoine glanced hastily round; there was no chance of escape, a double ring enclosed him. To accept or refuse seemed about equally risky; he ran a good chance of a thrashing whichever way he decided. Although his heart beat loudly, no trace of emotion appeared on his pallid cheek; an unforeseen danger would have made him shriek, but he had had time to collect himself, time to shelter behind hypocrisy. As soon as he could lie and cheat he recovered courage, and the instinct of cunning, once roused, prevailed over everything else. Instead of answering this second challenge, he knelt down and said to Pierre—

“You are much stronger than I am.”

This submission disarmed his antagonist. “Get up,” he replied; “I won’t touch you, if you can’t defend yourself.

“Pierre,” continued Antoine, still on his knees, “I assure you, by God and the Holy Virgin, I was not going to tell. I was going home to my cousins to learn my lessons for tomorrow; you know how slow I am. If you think I have done you any harm, I ask your forgiveness.”

Pierre held out his hand and made him get up.

“Will you be a good fellow, Antoine, and play with us?”

“Yes, I will.”

“All right, then; let us forget all about it.”

“What are we to play at?” asked Antoine, taking off his coat.

“Thieves and archers,” cried one of the boys....

“Splendid!” said Pierre; and using his acknowledged authority, he divided them into two sides—ten highwaymen, whom he was to command, and ten archers of the guard, who were to pursue them; Antoine was among the latter.

The highwaymen, armed with swords and guns obtained from the willows which

grew along the brook, moved off first, and gained the valleys between the little hills beyond the wood. The fight was to be serious, and any prisoner on either side was to be tried immediately. The robbers divided into twos and threes, and hid themselves in the ravines.

A few minutes later the archers started in pursuit. There were encounters, surprises, skirmishes; but whenever it came to close quarters, Pierre's men, skilfully distributed, united on hearing his whistle, and the Army of justice had to retreat. But there came a time when this magic signal was no longer heard, and the robbers became uneasy, and remained crouching in their hiding-places. Pierre, over-daring, had undertaken to defend alone the entrance of a dangerous passage and to stop the whole hostile troop there. Whilst he kept them engaged, half of his men, concealed on the left, were to come round the foot of the hill and make a rush on hearing his whistle; the other half, also stationed at some, little distance, were to execute the same manoeuvre from above. The archers would be caught in a trap, and attacked both in front and rear, would be obliged to surrender at discretion. Chance, which not unfrequently decides the fate of a battle, defeated this excellent stratagem. Watching intently; Pierre failed to perceive that while his whole attention was given to the ground in front, the archers had taken an entirely different road from the one they ought to have followed if his combination were to succeed. They suddenly fell upon him from behind, and before he could blow his whistle, they gagged him with a handkerchief and tied his hands. Six remained to keep the field of battle and disperse the hostile band, now deprived of its chief; the remaining four conveyed Pierre to the little wood, while the robbers, hearing no signal, did not venture to stir. According to agreement, Pierre Buttet was tried by the archers, who promptly transformed themselves into a court of justice, and as he had been taken red-handed, and did not condescend to defend himself, the trial was not a long affair. He was unanimously sentenced to be hung, and the execution was then and there carried out, at the request of the criminal himself, who wanted the game to be properly played to the end, and who actually selected a suitable tree for his own execution.

“But, Pierre,” said one of the judges, “how can you be held up there?”

“How stupid you are!” returned the captive. “I shall only pretend to be hung, of course. See here!” and he fastened together several pieces strong string which had tied some of the other boys' books, piled the latter together, and standing on tiptoe on this very insecure basis, fastened one end of the cord to a horizontal

bough, and put his neck into a running knot at the other end, endeavouring to imitate the contortions of an actual sufferer. Shouts of laughter greeted him, and the victim laughed loudest of all. Three archers went to call the rest to behold this amusing spectacle; one, tired out, remained with the prisoner.

“Ah, Hangman,” said Pierre, putting out his tongue at him, “are the books firm? I thought I felt them give way.”

“No,” replied Antoine; it was he who remained. “Don’t be afraid, Pierre.”

“It is a good thing; for if they fell I don’t think the cord is long enough.”

“Don’t you really think so?”

A horrible thought showed itself like a flash on the child’s face. He resembled a young hyena scenting blood for the first time. He glanced at the pile of books Pierre was standing on, and compared it with the length of the cord between the branch and his neck. It was already nearly dark, the shadows were deepening in the wood, gleams of pale light penetrated between the trees, the leaves had become black and rustled in the wind. Antoine stood silent and motionless, listening if any sound could be heard near them.

It would be a curious study for the moralist to observe how the first thought of crime develops itself in the recesses of the human heart, and how this poisoned germ grows and stifles all other sentiments; an impressive lesson might be gathered from this struggle of two opposing principles, however weak it may be, in perverted natures. In cases where judgment can discern, where there is power to choose between good and evil, the guilty person has only himself to blame, and the most heinous crime is only the action of its perpetrator. It is a human action, the result of passions which might have been controlled, and one’s mind is not uncertain, nor one’s conscience doubtful, as to the guilt. But how can one conceive this taste for murder in a young child, how imagine it, without being tempted to exchange the idea of eternal sovereign justice for that of blind - fatality? How can one judge without hesitation between the moral sense which has given way and the instinct which displays itself? how not exclaim that the designs of a Creator who retains the one and impels the other are sometimes mysterious and inexplicable, and that one must submit without understanding?

“Do you hear them coming?” asked Pierre.

“I hear nothing,” replied Antoine, and a nervous shiver ran through all his members.

“So much the worse. I am tired of being dead; I shall come to life and run after them. Hold the books, and I will undo the noose.”

“If you move, the books will separate; wait, I will hold them.”

And he knelt down, and collecting all his strength, gave the pile a violent push.

Pierre endeavoured to raise his hands to his throat. “What are you doing?” he cried in a suffocating voice.

“I am paying you out;” replied Antoine, folding his arms.

Pierre’s feet were only a few inches from the ground, and the weight of his body at first bent the bough for a moment; but it rose again, and the unfortunate boy exhausted himself in useless efforts. At every movement the knot grew tighter, his legs struggled, his arms sought vainly something to lay hold of; then his movements slackened, his limbs stiffened, and his hands sank down. Of so much life and vigour nothing remained but the movement of an inert mass turning round and round upon itself.

Not till then did Antoine cry for help, and when the other boys hastened up they found him crying and tearing his hair. So violent indeed were his sobs and his despair that he could hardly be understood as he tried to explain how the books had given way under Pierre, and how he had vainly endeavoured to support him in his arms.

This boy, left an orphan at three years old, had been brought up at first by a relation who turned him out for theft; afterwards by two sisters, his cousins, who were already beginning to take alarm at his abnormal perversity. This pale and fragile being, an incorrigible thief, a consummate hypocrite, and a cold-blooded assassin, was predestined to an immortality of crime, and was to find a place among the most execrable monsters for whom humanity has ever had to blush; his name was Antoine-Francois Derues.

Twenty years had gone by since this horrible and mysterious event, which no one sought to unravel at the time it occurred. One June evening, 1771, four persons were sitting in one of the rooms of a modestly furnished, dwelling on the

third floor of a house in the rue Saint-Victor. The party consisted of three women and an ecclesiastic, who boarded, for meals only, with the woman who tenanted the dwelling; the other two were near neighbours. They were all friends, and often met thus in the evening to play cards. They were sitting round the card-table, but although it was nearly ten o'clock the cards had not yet been touched. They spoke in low tones, and a half-interrupted confidence had, this evening, put a check on the usual gaiety.

Someone knocked gently at the door, although no sound of steps on the creaking wooden staircase had been heard, and a wheedling voice asked for admittance. The occupier of the room, Madame Legrand, rose, and admitted a man of about six-and-twenty, at whose appearance the four friends exchanged glances, at once observed by the newcomer, who affected, however, not to see them. He bowed successively to the three women, and several times with the utmost respect to the abbe, making signs of apology for the interruption caused by his appearance; then, coughing several times, he turned to Madame Legrand, and said in a feeble voice, which seemed to betoken much suffering—

“My kind mistress, will you and these other ladies excuse my presenting myself at such an hour and in such a costume? I am ill, and I was obliged to get up.”

His costume was certainly singular enough: he was wrapped in a large dressing-gown of flowered chintz; his head was adorned by a nightcap drawn up at the top and surmounted by a muslin frill. His appearance did not contradict his complaint of illness; he was barely four feet six in height, his limbs were bony, his face sharp, thin, and pale. Thus attired, coughing incessantly, dragging his feet as if he had no strength to lift them, holding a lighted candle in one hand and an egg in the other, he suggested a caricature—some imaginary invalid just escaped from M. Purgon. Nevertheless, no one ventured to smile, notwithstanding his valetudinarian appearance and his air of affected humility. The perpetual blinking of the yellow eyelids which fell over the round and hollow eyes, shining with a sombre fire which he could never entirely suppress, reminded one of a bird of prey unable to face the light, and the lines of his face, the hooked nose, and the thin, constantly quivering, drawn-in lips suggested a mixture of boldness and baseness, of cunning and sincerity. But there is no book which can instruct one to read the human countenance correctly; and some special circumstance must have roused the suspicions of these four persons so much as to cause them to make these observations, and they were not as usual deceived by the humbug of this skilled actor, a past master in the art of

deception.

He continued after a moment's silence, as if he did not wish to interrupt their mute observation—

“Will you oblige me by a neighbourly kindness?”

“What is it, Derues?” asked Madame Legrand. A violent cough, which appeared to rend his chest, prevented him from answering immediately. When it ceased, he looked at the abbe, and said, with a melancholy smile—

“What I ought to ask in my present state of health is your blessing, my father, and your intercession for the pardon of my sins. But everyone clings to the life which God has given him. We do not easily abandon hope; moreover, I have always considered it wrong to neglect such means of preserving our lives as are in our power, since life is for us only a time of trial, and the longer and harder the trial the greater our recompense in a better world. Whatever befalls us, our answer should be that of the Virgin Mary to the angel who announced the mystery of the Incarnation: ‘Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word.’”

“You are right,” said the abbe, with a severe and inquisitorial look, under which Derues remained quite untroubled; “it is an attribute of God to reward and to punish, and the Almighty is not deceived by him who deceives men. The Psalmist has said, ‘Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are Thy judgments.’”

“He has said also, ‘The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether,’” Derues promptly replied. This exchange of quotations from Scripture might have lasted for hours without his being at a loss, had the abbe thought fit to continue in this strain; but such a style of conversation, garnished with grave and solemn words, seemed almost sacrilegious in the mouth of a man of such ridiculous appearance—a profanation at once sad and grotesque. Derues seemed to comprehend the impression it produced, and tuning again to Madame Legrand, he said—

“We have got a long way from what I came to ask you, my kind friend. I was so ill that I went early to bed, but I cannot sleep, and I have no fire. Would you have the kindness to have this egg mulled for me?”

“Cannot your servant do that for you?” asked Madame Legrand.

“I gave her leave to go out this evening, and though it is late she has not yet returned. If I had a fire, I would not give you so much trouble, but I do not care to light one at this hour. You know I am always afraid of accidents, and they so easily happen!”

“Very well, then,” replied Madame Legrand; “go back to your room, and my servant will bring it to you.”

“Thank you,” said Derues, bowing,—“many thanks.”

As he turned to depart, Madame Legrand spoke again.

“This day week, Derues, you have to pay me half the twelve hundred livres due for the purchase of my business.”

“So soon as that?”

“Certainly, and I want the money. Have you forgotten the date, then?”

“Oh dear, I have never looked at the agreement since it was drawn up. I did not think the time was so near, it is the fault of my bad memory; but I will contrive to pay you, although trade is very bad, and in three days I shall have to pay more than fifteen thousand livres to different people.”

He bowed again and departed, apparently exhausted by the effort of sustaining so long a conversation.

As soon as they were alone, the abbe exclaimed—

“That man is assuredly an utter rascal! May God forgive him his hypocrisy! How is it possible we could allow him to deceive us for so long?”

“But, my father,” interposed one of the visitors, “are you really sure of what you have just said?”

“I am not now speaking of the seventy-nine Louis d’or which have been stolen from me, although I never mentioned to anyone but you, and he was then present, that I possessed such a sum, and although that very day he made a false

excuse for coming to my rooms when I was out. Theft is indeed infamous, but slander is not less so, and he has slandered you disgracefully. Yes, he has spread a report that you, Madame Legrand, you, his former mistress and benefactress, have put temptation in his way, and desired to commit carnal sin with him. This is now whispered the neighbourhood all round us, it will soon be said aloud, and we have been so completely his dupes, we have helped him so much to acquire a reputation for uprightness, that it would now be impossible to destroy our own work; if I were to accuse him of theft, and you charged him with lying, probably neither of us would be believed. Beware, these odious tales have not been spread without a reason. Now that your eyes are open, beware of him.”

“Yes,” replied Madame Legrand, “my brother-in-law warned me three years ago. One day Derues said to my sister-in-law,—I remember the words. perfectly,—‘I should like to be a druggist, because one would always be able to punish an enemy; and if one has a quarrel with anyone it would be easy to get rid of him by means of a poisoned draught.’ I neglected these warnings. I surmounted the feeling of repugnance I first felt at the sight of him; I have responded to his advances, and I greatly fear I may have cause to repent it. But you know him as well as I do, who would not have thought his piety sincere?—who would not still think so? And notwithstanding all you have said, I still hesitate to feel serious alarm; I am unwilling to believe in such utter depravity.”

The conversation continued in this strain for some time, and then, as it was getting late, the party separated.

Next morning early, a large and noisy crowd was assembled in the rue Saint-Victor before Derues’ shop of drugs and groceries. There was a confusion of cross questions, of inquiries which obtained no answer, of answers not addressed to the inquiry, a medley of sound, a pell-mell of unconnected words, of affirmations, contradictions, and interrupted narrations. Here, a group listened to an orator who held forth in his shirt sleeves, a little farther there were disputes, quarrels, exclamations of “Poor man!” “Such a good fellow!” “My poor gossip Derues!” “Good heavens! what will he do now?” “Alas! he is quite done for; it is to be hoped his creditors will give him time! “Above all this uproar was heard a voice, sharp and piercing like a cat’s, lamenting, and relating with sobs the terrible misfortune of last night. At about three in the morning the inhabitants of the rue St. Victor had been startled out of their sleep by the cry of “Fire, fire!” A conflagration had burst forth in Derues’ cellar, and though its progress had been arrested and the house saved from destruction, all the goods stored therein had

perished. It apparently meant a considerable loss in barrels of oil, casks of brandy, boxes of soap, etc., which Derues estimated at not less than nine thousand livres.

By what unlucky chance the fire had been caused he had no idea. He recounted his visit to Madame Legrand, and pale, trembling, hardly able to sustain himself, he cried—

“I shall die of grief! A poor man as ill as I am! I am lost! I am ruined!”

A harsh voice interrupted his lamentations, and drew the attention of the crowd to a woman carrying printed broadsides, and who forced a passage through the crowd up to the shop door. She unfolded one of her sheets, and cried as loudly and distinctly as her husky voice permitted—

“Sentence pronounced by the Parliament of Paris against John Robert Cassel, accused and convicted of Fraudulent Bankruptcy!”

Derues looked up and saw a street-hawker who used to come to his shop for a drink, and with whom he had had a violent quarrel about a month previously, she having detected him in a piece of knavery, and abused him roundly in her own style, which was not lacking in energy. He had not seen her since. The crowd generally, and all the gossips of the quarter, who held Derues in great veneration, thought that the woman’s cry was intended as an indirect insult, and threatened to punish her for this irreverence. But, placing one hand on her hip, and with the other warning off the most pressing by a significant gesture—

“Are you still befooled by his tricks, fools that you are? Yes, no doubt there was a fire in the cellar last night, no doubt his creditors will be geese enough to let him off paying his debts! But what you don’t know is, that he didn’t really lose by it at all!”

“He lost all his goods!” the crowd cried on all sides. “More than nine thousand livres! Oil and brandy, do you think those won’t burn? The old witch, she drinks enough to know! If one put a candle near her she would take fire, fast enough!”

“Perhaps,” replied the woman, with renewed gesticulations, “perhaps; but I don’t advise any of you to try. Anyhow, this fellow here is a rogue; he has been emptying his cellar for the last three nights; there were only old empty casks in it and empty packing-cases! Oh yes! I have swallowed his daily lies like

everybody else, but I know the truth by now. He got his liquor taken away by Michael Lambourne's son, the cobbler in the rue de la Parcheminerie. How do I know? Why, because the young man came and told me!"

"I turned that woman out of my shop a month ago, for stealing," said Derues.

Notwithstanding this retaliatory accusation, the woman's bold assertion might have changed the attitude of the crowd and chilled the enthusiasm, but at that moment a stout man pressed forward, and seizing the hawker by the arm, said—

"Go, and hold your tongue, backbiting woman!"

To this man, the honour of Derues was an article of faith; he had not yet ceased to wonder at the probity of this sainted person, and to doubt it in the least was as good as suspecting his own.

"My dear friend," he said, "we all know what to think of you. I know you well. Send to me tomorrow, and you shall have what goods you want, on credit, for as long as is necessary. Now, evil tongue, what do you say to that?"

"I say that you are as great a fool as the rest. Adieu, friend Derues; go on as you have begun, and I shall be selling your 'sentence' some day"; and dispersing the crowd with a few twirls of her right arm, she passed on, crying—

"Sentence pronounced by the Parliament of Paris against John Robert Cassel, accused and convicted of Fraudulent Bankruptcy!"

This accusation emanated from too insignificant a quarter to have any effect on Derues' reputation. However resentful he may have been at the time, he got over it in consequence of the reiterated marks of interest shown by his neighbours and all the quarter on account of his supposed ruin, and the hawker's attack passed out of his mind, or probably she might have paid for her boldness with her life.

But this drunken woman had none the less uttered a prophetic word; it was the grain of sand on which, later, he was to be shipwrecked.

"All passions," says La Bruyere,—“all passions are deceitful; they disguise themselves as much as possible from the public eye; they hide from themselves. There is no vice which has not a counterfeit resemblance to some virtue, and which does not profit by it.”

The whole life of Derues bears testimony to the truth of this observation. An avaricious poisoner, he attracted his victims by the pretence of fervent and devoted piety, and drew them into the snare where he silently destroyed them. His terrible celebrity only began in 1777, caused by the double murder of Madame de Lamotte and her son, and his name, unlike those of some other great criminals, does not at first recall a long series of crimes, but when one examines this low, crooked, and obscure life, one finds a fresh stain at every step, and perhaps no one has ever surpassed him in dissimulation, in profound hypocrisy, in indefatigable depravity. Derues was executed at thirty-two, and his whole life was steeped in vice; though happily so short, it is full of horror, and is only a tissue of criminal thoughts and deeds, a very essence of evil. He had no hesitation, no remorse, no repose, no relaxation; he seemed compelled to lie, to steal, to poison! Occasionally suspicion is aroused, the public has its doubts, and vague rumours hover round him; but he burrows under new impostures, and punishment passes by. When he falls into the hands of human justice his reputation protects him, and for a few days more the legal sword is turned aside. Hypocrisy is so completely a part of his nature, that even when there is no longer any hope, when he is irrevocably sentenced, and he knows that he can no longer deceive anyone, neither mankind nor Him whose name he profanes by this last sacrilege, he yet exclaims, "O Christ! I shall suffer even as Thou." It is only by the light of his funeral pyre that the dark places of his life can be examined, that this bloody plot is unravelled, and that other victims, forgotten and lost in the shadows, arise like spectres at the foot of the scaffold, and escort the assassin to his doom.

Let us trace rapidly the history of Derues' early years, effaced and forgotten in the notoriety of his death. These few pages are not written for the glorification of crime, and if in our own days, as a result of the corruption of our manners, and of a deplorable confusion of all notions of right and wrong, it has been sought to make him an object; of public interest, we, on our part, only wish to bring him into notice, and place him momentarily on a pedestal, in order to cast him still lower, that his fall may be yet greater. What has been permitted by God may be related by man. Decaying and satiated communities need not be treated as children; they require neither diplomatic handling nor precaution, and it may be good that they should see and touch the putrescent sores which canker them. Why fear to mention that which everyone knows? Why dread to sound the abyss which can be measured by everyone? Why fear to bring into the light of day unmasked wickedness, even though it confronts the public gaze unblushingly? Extreme turpitude and extreme excellence are both in the schemes of

Providence; and the poet has summed up eternal morality for all ages and nations in this sublime exclamation—

“Abstulit hunc tandem Rufini poem tumultum.”

Besides, and we cannot insist too earnestly that our intention must not be mistaken, if we had wished to inspire any other sentiment than that of horror, we should have chosen a more imposing personage from the annals of crime. There have been deeds which required audacity, a sort of grandeur, a false heroism; there have been criminals who held in check all the regular and legitimate forces of society, and whom one regarded with a mixture of terror and pity. There is nothing of that in Derues, not even a trace of courage; nothing but a shameless cupidity, exercising itself at first in the theft of a few pence filched from the poor; nothing but the illicit gains and rascalities of a cheating shopkeeper and vile money-lender, a depraved cowardice which dared not strike openly, but slew in the dark. It is the story of an unclean reptile which drags itself underground, leaving everywhere the trail of its poisonous saliva.

Such was the man whose life we have undertaken to narrate, a man who represents a complete type of wickedness, and who corresponds to the most hideous sketch ever devised by poet or romance-writer: Facts without importance of their own, which would be childish if recorded of anyone else, obtain a sombre reflection from other facts which precede them, and thenceforth cannot be passed over in silence. The historian is obliged to collect and note them, as showing the logical development of this degraded being: he unites them in sequence, and counts the successive steps of the ladder mounted by the criminal.

We have seen the early exploit of this assassin by instinct; we find him, twenty years later, an incendiary and a fraudulent bankrupt. What had happened in the interval? With how much treachery and crime had he filled this space of twenty years? Let us return to his infancy.

His unconquerable taste for theft caused him to be expelled by the relations who had taken charge of him. An anecdote is told which shows his impudence and incurable perversity. One day he was caught taking some money, and was soundly whipped by his cousins. When this was over, the child, instead of showing any sorrow or asking forgiveness, ran away with a sneer, and seeing they were out of breath, exclaimed—

“You are tired, are you? Well, I am not!”

Despairing of any control over this evil disposition, the relations refused to keep him, and sent him to Chartres, where two other cousins agreed to have him, out of charity. They were simpleminded women, of great and sincere piety, who imagined that good example and religious teaching might have a happy influence on their young relation. The result was contrary to their expectation: the sole fruit of their teaching was that Derues learnt to be a cheat and a hypocrite, and to assume the mask of respectability.

Here also repeated thefts insured him sound corrections. Knowing his cousins' extreme economy, not to say avarice, he mocked them when they broke a lath over his shoulders: “There now, I am so glad; that will cost you two farthings!”

His benefactresses' patience becoming exhausted, he left their house, and was apprenticed to a tinman at Chartres. His master died, and an ironmonger of the same town took him as shop-boy, and from this he passed on to a druggist and grocer. Until now, although fifteen years old, he had shown no preference for one trade more than another, but it was now necessary he should choose some profession, and his share in the family property amounted to the modest sum of three thousand five hundred livres. His residence with this last master revealed a decided taste, but it was only another evil instinct developing itself: the poisoner had scented poison, being always surrounded with drugs which were health-giving or hurtful, according to the use made of them. Derues would probably have settled at Chartres, but repeated thefts obliged him to leave the town. The profession of druggist and grocer being one which presented most chances of fortune, and being, moreover, adapted to his tastes, his family apprenticed him to a grocer in the rue Comtesse d'Artois, paying a specified premium for him.

Derues arrived in Paris in 1760. It was a new horizon, where he was unknown; no suspicion attached to him, and he felt much at his ease. Lost in the noise and the crowd of this immense receptacle for every vice, he had time to found on hypocrisy his reputation as an honest man. When his apprenticeship expired, his master proposed to place him with his sister-in-law, who kept a similar establishment in the rue St. Victor, and who had been a widow for several years. He recommended Derues as a young man whose zeal and intelligence might be useful in her business, being ignorant of various embezzlements committed by his late apprentice, who was always clever enough to cast suspicion on others. But the negotiation nearly fell through, because, one day, Derues so far forgot

his usual prudence and dissimulation as to allow himself to make the observation recorded above to his mistress. She, horrified, ordered him to be silent, and threatened to ask her husband to dismiss him. It required a double amount of hypocrisy to remove this unfavourable impression; but he spared no pains to obtain the confidence of the sister-in-law, who was much influenced in his favour. Every day he inquired what could be done for her, every evening he took a basket-load of the goods she required from the rue Comtesse d'Artois; and it excited the pity of all beholders to see this weakly young man, panting and sweating under his heavy burden, refusing any reward, and labouring merely for the pleasure of obliging, and from natural kindness of heart! The poor widow, whose spoils he was already coveting, was completely duped. She rejected the advice of her brother-in-law, and only listened to the concert of praises sung by neighbours much edified by Derues' conduct, and touched by the interest he appeared to show her. Often he found occasion to speak of her, always with the liveliest expressions of boundless devotion. These remarks were repeated to the good woman, and seemed all the more sincere to her as they appeared to have been made quite casually, and she never suspected they were carefully calculated and thought out long before.

Derues carried dishonesty as far as possible, but he knew how to stop when suspicion was likely to be aroused, and though always planning either to deceive or to hurt, he was never taken by surprise. Like the spider which spreads the threads of her web all round her, he concealed himself in a net of falsehood which one had to traverse before arriving at his real nature. The evil destiny of this poor woman, mother of four children, caused her to engage him as her shopman in the year 1767, thereby signing the warrant for her own ruin.

Derues began life under his new mistress with a master-stroke. His exemplary piety was the talk of the whole quarter, and his first care had been to request Madame Legrand to recommend him a confessor. She sent him to the director of her late husband, Pere Cartault, of the Carmelite order, who, astonished at the devotion of his penitent, never failed, if he passed the shop, to enter and congratulate Madame Legrand on the excellent acquisition she had made in securing this young man, who would certainly bring her a blessing along with him. Derues affected the greatest modesty, and blushed at these praises, and often, when he saw the good father approaching, appeared not to see him, and found something to do elsewhere; whereby the field was left clear for his too credulous panegyrist.

But Pere Cartault appeared too indulgent, and Derues feared that his sins were too easily pardoned; and he dared not find peace in an absolution which was never refused. Therefore, before the year was out, he chose a second confessor, Pere Denys, a Franciscan, consulting both alternately, and confiding his conscientious scruples to them. Every penance appeared too easy, and he added to those enjoined by his directors continual mortifications of his own devising, so that even Tartufe himself would have owned his superiority.

He wore about him two shrouds, to which were fastened relics of Madame de Chantal, also a medal of St. Francois de Saps, and occasionally scourged himself. His mistress related that he had begged her to take a sitting at the church of St. Nicholas, in order that he might more easily attend service when he had a day out, and had brought her a small sum which he had saved, to pay half the expense.

Moreover, he had slept upon straw during the whole of Lent, and took care that Madame Legrand heard of this through the servant, pretending at first to hide it as if it were something wrong. He tried to prevent the maid from going into his room, and when she found out the straw he forbade her to mention it—which naturally made her more anxious to relate her discovery. Such a piece of piety, combined with such meritorious humility, such dread of publicity, could only increase the excellent opinion which everyone already had of him.

Every day was marked by some fresh hypocrisy. One of his sisters, a novice in the convent of the Ladies of the Visitation of the Virgin, was to take the veil at Easter. Derues obtained permission to be present at the ceremony, and was to start on foot on Good Friday. When he departed, the shop happened to be full of people, and the gossips of the neighbourhood inquired where he was going. Madame Legrand desired him to have a glass of liqueur (wine he never touched) and something to eat before starting.

“Oh, madame!” he exclaimed, “do you think I could eat on a day like this, the day on which Christ was crucified! I will take a piece of bread with me, but I shall only eat it at the inn where I intend to sleep: I mean to fast the whole way.”

But this kind of thing was not sufficient. He wanted an opportunity to establish a reputation for honesty on a firm basis. Chance provided one, and he seized it immediately, although at the expense of a member of his own family.

One of his brothers, who kept a public-house at Chartres, came to see him. Derues, under pretence of showing him the sights of Paris, which he did not know, asked his mistress to allow him to take in the brother for a few days, which she granted. The last evening of his stay, Derues went up to his room, broke open the box which contained his clothes, turned over everything it contained, examined the clothes, and discovering two new cotton nightcaps, raised a cry which brought up the household. His brother just then returned, and Derues called him an infamous thief, declaring that he had stolen the money for these new articles out of the shop the evening before. His brother defended himself, protesting his innocence, and, indignant at such incomprehensible treachery, endeavoured to turn the tables by relating some of Antoine's early misdeeds. The latter, however, stopped him, by declaring on his honour that he had seen his brother the evening before go to the till, slip his hand in, and take out some money. The brother was confounded and silenced by so audacious a lie; he hesitated, stammered, and was turned out of the house. Derues worthily crowned this piece of iniquity by obliging his mistress to accept the restitution of the stolen money. It cost him three livres, twelve sons, but the interest it brought him was the power of stealing unsuspected. That evening he spent in prayer for the pardon of his brother's supposed guilt.

All these schemes had succeeded, and brought him nearer to the desired goal, for not a soul in the quarter ventured to doubt the word of this saintly individual. His fawning manners and insinuating language varied according to the people addressed. He adapted himself to all, contradicting no one, and, while austere himself, he flattered the tastes of others. In the various houses where he visited his conversation was serious, grave, and sententious; and, as we have seen, he could quote Scripture with the readiness of a theologian. In the shop, when he had to deal with the lower classes, he showed himself acquainted with their modes of expression, and spoke the Billingsgate of the market-women, which he had acquired in the rue Comtesse d'Artois, treating them familiarly, and they generally addressed him as "gossip Denies." By his own account he easily judged the characters of the various people with whom he came in contact.

However, Pere Cartault's prophecy was not fulfilled: the blessing of Heaven did not descend on the Legrand establishment. There seemed to be a succession of misfortunes which all Derues' zeal and care as shopman could neither prevent nor repair. He by no means contented himself with parading an idle and fruitless hypocrisy, and his most abominable deceptions were not those displayed in the light of day. He watched by night: his singular organisation, outside the ordinary

laws of nature, appeared able to dispense with sleep. Gliding about on tiptoe, opening doors noiselessly, with all the skill of an accomplished thief, he pillaged shop and cellar, and sold his plunder in remote parts of the town under assumed names. It is difficult to understand how his strength supported the fatigue of this double existence; he had barely arrived at puberty, and art had been obliged to assist the retarded development of nature. But he lived only for evil, and the Spirit of Evil supplied the physical vigour which was wanting. An insane love of money (the only passion he knew) brought him by degrees back to his starting-point of crime; he concealed it in hiding-places wrought in the thick walls, in holes dug out by his nails. As soon as he got any, he brought it exactly as a wild beast brings a piece of bleeding flesh to his lair; and often, by the glimmer of a dark lantern, kneeling in adoration before this shameful idol, his eyes sparkling with ferocious joy, with a smile which suggested a hyena's delight over its prey, he would contemplate his money, counting and kissing it.

These continual thefts brought trouble into the Legrand affairs, cancelled all profits, and slowly brought on ruin. The widow had no suspicion of Derues' disgraceful dealings, and he carefully referred the damage to other causes, quite worthy of himself. Sometimes it was a bottle of oil, or of brandy, or some other commodity, which was found spilt, broken, or damaged, which accidents he attributed to the enormous quantity of rats which infested the cellar and the house. At length, unable to meet her engagements, Madame Legrand made the business over to him in February, 1770. He was then twenty-five years and six months old, and was accepted as a merchant grocer in August the same year. By an agreement drawn up between them, Derues undertook to pay twelve hundred livres for the goodwill, and to lodge her rent free during the remainder of her lease, which had still nine years to run. Being thus obliged to give up business to escape bankruptcy, Madame Legrand surrendered to her creditors any goods remaining in her warehouse; and Derues easily made arrangements to take them over very cheaply. The first step thus made, he was now able to enrich himself safely and to defraud with impunity under the cover of his stolen reputation.

One of his uncles, a flour merchant at Chartres, came habitually twice a year to Paris to settle accounts with his correspondents. A sum of twelve hundred francs, locked up in a drawer, was stolen from him, and, accompanied by his nephew, he went to inform the police. On investigation being made, it was found that the chest of drawers had been broken at the top. As at the time of the theft of the seventy-nine Louis from the abbe, Derues was the only person known to have entered his uncle's room. The innkeeper swore to this, but the uncle took pains to

justify his nephew, and showed his confidence shortly after by becoming surety for him to the extent of five thousand livres. Derues failed to pay when the time expired, and the holder of the note was obliged to sue the surety for it.

He made use of any means, even the most impudent, which enabled him to appropriate other people's property. A provincial grocer on one occasion sent him a thousand-weight of honey in barrels to be sold on commission. Two or three months passed, and he asked for an account of the sale. Derues replied that he had not yet been able to dispose of it advantageously, and there ensued a fresh delay, followed by the same question and the same reply. At length, when more than a year had passed, the grocer came to Paris, examined his barrels, and found that five hundred pounds were missing. He claimed damages from Derues, who declared he had never received any more, and as the honey had been sent in confidence, and there was no contract and no receipt to show, the provincial tradesman could not obtain compensation.

As though having risen by the ruin of Madame Legrand and her four children was not enough, Derues grudged even the morsel of bread he had been obliged to leave her. A few days after the fire in the cellar, which enabled him to go through a second bankruptcy, Madame Legrand, now undeceived and not believing his lamentations, demanded the money due to her, according to their agreement. Derues pretended to look for his copy of the contract, and could not find it. "Give me yours, madame," said he; "we will write the receipt upon it. Here is the money."

The widow opened her purse and took out her copy; Derues snatched it, and tore it up. "Now," he exclaimed, "you are paid; I owe you nothing now. If you like, I will declare it on oath in court, and no one will disbelieve my word."

"Wretched man," said the unfortunate widow, "may God forgive your soul; but your body will assuredly end on the gallows!"

It was in vain that she complained, and told of this abominable swindle; Derues had been beforehand with her, and the slander he had disseminated bore its fruits. It was said that his old mistress was endeavouring by an odious falsehood to destroy the reputation of a man who had refused to be her lover. Although reduced to poverty, she left the house where she had a right to remain rent free, preferring the hardest and dreariest life to the torture of remaining under the same roof with the man who had caused her ruin.

We might relate a hundred other pieces of knavery, but it must not be supposed that having begun by murder, Derues would draw back and remain contented with theft. Two fraudulent bankruptcies would have sufficed for most people; for him they were merely a harmless pastime. Here we must place two dark and obscure stories, two crimes of which he is accused, two victims whose death groans no one heard.

The hypocrite's excellent reputation had crossed the Parisian bounds. A young man from the country, intending to start as a grocer in the capital, applied to Derues for the necessary information and begged for advice. He arrived at the latter's house with a sum of eight thousand livres, which he placed in Derues' hands, asking him for assistance in finding a business. The sight of gold was enough to rouse the instinct of crime in Derues, and the witches who hailed Macbeth with the promise of royalty did not rouse the latter's ambitious desires to a greater height than the chance of wealth did the greed of the assassin; whose hands, once closed over the eight thousand livres, were never again relaxed. He received them as a deposit, and hid them along with his previous plunder, vowing never to return them. Several days had elapsed, when one afternoon Derues returned home with an air of such unusual cheerfulness that the young man questioned him. "Have you heard some good news for me?" he asked, "or have you had some luck yourself?"

"My young friend," answered Derues, "as for me, success depends on my own efforts, and fortune smiles on me. But I have promised to be useful to you, your parents have trusted me, and I must prove that their confidence is well founded. I have heard to-day of a business for disposal in one of the best parts of Paris. You can have it for twelve thousand livres, and I wish I could lend you the amount you want. But you must write to your father, persuade him, reason with him; do not lose so good a chance. He must make a little sacrifice, and he will be grateful to me later."

In accordance with their son's request, the young man's parents despatched a sum of four thousand livres, requesting Derues to lose no time in concluding the purchase.

Three weeks later, the father, very uneasy, arrived in Paris. He came to inquire about his son, having heard nothing from him. Derues received him with the utmost astonishment, appearing convinced that the young man had returned home. One day, he said, the youth informed him that he had heard from his

father, who had given up all idea of establishing him in Paris, having arranged an advantageous marriage for him near home; and he had taken his twelve thousand livres, for which Derues produced a receipt, and started on his return journey.

One evening, when nearly dark, Derues had gone out with his guest, who complained of headache and internal pains. Where did they go? No one knew; but Derues only returned at daybreak, alone, weary and exhausted, and the young man was never again heard of.

One of his apprentices was the constant object of reproof. The boy was accused of negligence, wasting his time, of spending three hours over a task which might have been done in less than one. When Derues had convinced the father, a Parisian bourgeois, that his son was a bad boy and a good-for-nothing, he came to this man one day in a state of wild excitement.

“Your son,” he said, “ran away yesterday with six hundred livres, with which I had to meet a bill to-day. He knew where I kept this money, and has taken it.”

He threatened to go before a magistrate and denounce the thief, and was only appeased by being paid the sum he claimed to have lost. But he had gone out with the lad the evening before, and returned alone in the early hours of the morning.

However, the veil which concealed the truth was becoming more and more transparent every day. Three bankruptcies had diminished the consideration he enjoyed, and people began to listen to complaints and accusations which till now had been considered mere inventions designed to injure him. Another attempt at trickery made him feel it desirable to leave the neighbourhood.

He had rented a house close to his own, the shop of which had been tenanted for seven or eight years by a wine merchant. He required from this man, if he wished to remain where he was, a sum of six hundred livres as a payment for goodwill. Although the wine merchant considered it an exorbitant charge, yet on reflection he decided to pay it rather than go, having established a good business on these premises, as was well known. Before long a still more arrant piece of dishonesty gave him an opportunity for revenge. A young man of good family, who was boarding with him in order to gain some business experience, having gone into Derues' shop to make some purchases, amused himself while waiting by idly writing his name on a piece of blank paper lying on the counter; which

he left there without thinking more about it. Derues, knowing the young man had means, as soon as he had gone, converted the signed paper into a promissory note for two thousand livres, to his order, payable at the majority of the signer. The bill, negotiated in trade, arrived when due at the wine merchant's, who, much surprised, called his young boarder and showed him the paper adorned with his signature. The youth was utterly confounded, having no knowledge of the bill whatever, but nevertheless could not deny his signature. On examining the paper carefully, the handwriting was recognised as Derues'. The wine merchant sent for him, and when he arrived, made him enter a room, and having locked the door, produced the promissory note. Derues acknowledged having written it, and tried various falsehoods to excuse himself. No one listened to him, and the merchant threatened to place the matter in the hands of the police. Then Derues wept, implored, fell on his knees, acknowledged his guilt, and begged for mercy. He agreed to restore the six hundred livres exacted from the wine merchant, on condition that he should see the note destroyed and that the matter should end there. He was then about to be married, and dreaded a scandal.

Shortly after, he married Marie-Louise Nicolais; daughter of a harness-maker at Melun.

One's first impression in considering this marriage is one of profound sorrow and utmost pity for the young girl whose destiny was linked with that of this monster. One thinks of the horrible future; of youth and innocence blighted by the tainting breath of the homicide; of candour united to hypocrisy; of virtue to wickedness; of legitimate desires linked to disgraceful passions; of purity mixed with corruption. The thought of these contrasts is revolting, and one pities such a dreadful fate. But we must not decide hastily. Madame Denies has not been convicted of any active part in her husband's later crimes, but her history, combined with his, shows no trace of suffering, nor of any revolt against a terrible complicity. In her case the evidence is doubtful, and public opinion must decide later.

In 1773, Derues relinquished retail business, and left the Saint Victor neighbourhood, having taken an apartment in the rue des Deux Boules, near the rue Bertin-Poiree, in the parish of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, where he had been married. He first acted on commission for the Benedictine-Camalduan fathers of the forest of Senart, who had heard of him as a man wholly given to piety; then, giving himself up to usury, he undertook what is known as "business affairs," a profession which, in such hands, could not fail to be lucrative, being aided by his

exemplary morals and honest appearance. It was the more easy for him to impose on others, as he could not be accused of any of the deadly vices which so often end in ruin—gaming, wine, and women. Until now he had displayed only one passion, that of avarice, but now another developed itself, that of ambition. He bought houses and land, and when the money was due, allowed himself to be sued for it; he bought even lawsuits, which he muddled with all the skill of a rascally attorney. Experienced in bankruptcy, he undertook the management of failures, contriving to make dishonesty appear in the light of unfortunate virtue. When this demon was not occupied with poison, his hands were busy with every social iniquity; he could only live and breathe in an atmosphere of corruption.

His wife, who had already presented him with a daughter, gave birth to a son in February 1774. Derues, in order to better support the airs of grandeur and the territorial title which he had assumed, invited persons of distinction to act as sponsors. The child was baptized Tuesday, February 15th. We give the text of the baptismal register, as a curiosity:—

“Antoine-Maximilian-Joseph, son of Antoine-Francois Derues, gentleman, seigneur of Gendeville, Herchies, Viquemont, and other places, formerly merchant grocer; and of Madame Marie-Louise Nicolais, his wife. Godfathers, T. H. and T. P., lords of, *etc. etc.* Godmothers, Madame M. Fr. C. D. V., *etc. etc.*

“(Signed) A. F. DERUES, Senior.”

But all this dignity did not exclude the sheriff’s officers, whom, as befitted so great a man, he treated with the utmost insolence, overwhelming them with abuse when they came to enforce an execution. Such scandals had several times aroused the curiosity of his neighbours, and did not redound to his credit. His landlord, wearied of all this clamour, and most especially weary of never getting any rent without a fight for it, gave him notice to quit. Derues removed to the rue Beaubourg, where he continued to act as commission agent under the name of Cyrano Derues de Bury.

And now we will concern ourselves no more with the unravelling of this tissue of imposition; we will wander no longer in this labyrinth of fraud, of low and vile intrigue, of dark crime of which the clue disappears in the night, and of which the trace is lost in a doubtful mixture of blood and mire; we will listen no

longer to the cry of the widow and her four children reduced to beggary, to the groans of obscure victims, to the cries of terror and the death-groan which echoed one night through the vaults of a country house near Beauvais. Behold other victims whose cries are yet louder, behold yet other crimes and a punishment which equals them in terror! Let these nameless ghosts, these silent spectres, lose themselves in the clear daylight which now appears, and make room for other phantoms which rend their shrouds and issue from the tomb demanding vengeance.

Derues was now soon to have a chance of obtaining immortality. Hitherto his blows had been struck by chance, henceforth he uses all the resources of his infernal imagination; he concentrates all his strength on one point—conceives and executes his crowning piece of wickedness. He employs for two years all his science as cheat, forger, and poisoner in extending the net which was to entangle a whole family; and, taken in his own snare, he struggles in vain; in vain does he seek to gnaw through the meshes which confine him. The foot placed on the last rung of this ladder of crime, stands also on the first step by which he mounts the scaffold.

About a mile from Villeneuve-le-Roi-les-Sens, there stood in 1775 a handsome house, overlooking the windings of the Yonne on one side, and on the other a garden and park belonging to the estate of Buisson-Souef. It was a large property, admirably situated, and containing productive fields, wood, and water; but not everywhere kept in good order, and showing something of the embarrassed fortune of its owner. During some years the only repairs had been those necessary in the house itself and its immediate vicinity. Here and there pieces of dilapidated wall threatened to fall altogether, and enormous stems of ivy had invaded and stifled vigorous trees; in the remoter portions of the park briers barred the road and made walking almost impossible. This disorder was not destitute of charm, and at an epoch when landscape gardening consisted chiefly in straight alleys, and in giving to nature a cold and monotonous symmetry, one's eye rested with pleasure on these neglected clumps, on these waters which had taken a different course to that which art had assigned to them, on these unexpected and picturesque scenes.

A wide terrace, overlooking the winding river, extended along the front of the house. Three men were walking on it—two priests, and the owner of Buisson-Souef, Monsieur de Saint-Faust de Lamotte. One priest was the cure of Villeneuve-le-Roi-les-Sens, the other was a Camaldulian monk, who had come

to see the cure about a clerical matter, and who was spending some days at the presbytery. The conversation did not appear to be lively. Every now and then Monsieur de Lamotte stood still, and, shading his eyes with his hand from the brilliant sunlight which flooded the plain, and was strongly reflected from the water, endeavoured to see if some new object had not appeared on the horizon, then slowly resumed his walk with a movement of uneasy impatience. The tower clock struck with a noisy resonance.

“Six o’clock already!” he exclaimed. “They will assuredly not arrive to-day.”

“Why despair?” said the cure. “Your servant has gone to meet them; we might see their boat any moment.”

“But, my father,” returned Monsieur de Lamotte, “the long days are already past. In another hour the mist will rise, and then they would not venture on the river.”

“Well, if that happens, we shall have to be patient; they will stay all night at some little distance, and you will see them tomorrow morning.”

“My brother is right,” said the other priest. “Come, monsieur; do not be anxious.”

“You both speak with the indifference of persons to whom family troubles are unknown.”

“What!” said the cure, “do you really think that because our sacred profession condemns us both to celibacy, we are therefore unable to comprehend an affection such as yours, on which I myself pronounced the hallowing benediction of the Church—if you remember—nearly fifteen years ago?”

“Is it perhaps intentionally, my father, that you recall the date of my marriage? I readily admit that the love of one’s neighbour may enlighten you as to another love to which you have yourself been a stranger. I daresay it seems odd to you that a man of my age should be anxious about so little, as though he were a love-sick youth; but for some time past I have had presentiments of evil, and I am really becoming superstitious!”

He again stood still, gazing up the river, and, seeing nothing, resumed his place between the two priests, who had continued their walk.

“Yes,” he continued, “I have presentiments which refuse to be shaken off. I am not so old that age can have weakened my powers and reduced me to childishness, I cannot even say what I am afraid of, but separation is painful and causes an involuntary terror. Strange, is it not? Formerly, I used to leave my wife for months together, when she was young and my son only, an infant; I loved her passionately, yet I could go with pleasure. Why, I wonder, is it so different now? Why should a journey to Paris on business, and a few hours’ delay, make, me so terribly uneasy? Do you remember, my father,” he resumed, after a pause, turning to the cure, “do you remember how lovely Marie looked on our wedding-day? Do you remember her dazzling complexion and the innocent candour of her expression?—the sure token of the most truthful and purest of minds! That is why I love her so much now; we do not now sigh for one another, but the second love is stronger than the first, for it is founded on recollection, and is tranquil and confident in friendship It is strange that they have not returned; something must have happened! If they do not return this evening, and I do not now think it possible, I shall go to Paris myself tomorrow.”

“I think;” said the other priest, “that at twenty you must indeed have been excitable, a veritable tinder-box, to have retained so much energy! Come, monsieur, try to calm yourself and have patience: you yourself admit it can only be a few hours’ delay.”

“But my son accompanied his mother, and he is our only one, and so delicate! He alone remains of our three children, and you do not realise how the affection of parents who feel age approaching is concentrated on an only child! If I lost Edouard I should die!”

“I suppose, then, as you let him go, his presence at Paris was necessary?”

“No; his mother went to obtain a loan which is needed for the improvements required on the estate.”

“Why, then, did you let him go?”

“I would willingly have kept him here, but his mother wished to take him. A separation is as trying to her as to me, and we all but quarrelled over it. I gave way.”

“There was one way of satisfying all three—you might have gone also.”

“Yes, but Monsieur le cure will tell you that a fortnight ago I was chained to my armchair, swearing under my breath like a pagan, and cursing the follies of my youth!—Forgive me, my father; I mean that I had the gout, and I forgot that I am not the only sufferer, and that it racks the old age of the philosopher quite as much as that of the courtier.”

The fresh wind which often rises just at sunset was already rustling in the leaves; long shadows darkened the course of the Yonne and stretched across the plain; the water, slightly troubled, reflected a confused outline of its banks and the clouded blue of the sky. The three gentlemen stopped at the end of the terrace and gazed into the already fading distance. A black spot, which they had just observed in the middle of the river, caught a gleam of light in passing a low meadow between two hills, and for a moment took shape as a barge, then was lost again, and could not be distinguished from the water. Another moment, and it reappeared more distinctly; it was indeed a barge, and now the horse could be seen towing it against the current. Again it was lost at a bend of the river shaded by willows, and they had to resign themselves to incertitude for several minutes. Then a white handkerchief was waved on the prow of the boat, and Monsieur de Lamotte uttered a joyful exclamation.

“It is indeed they!” he cried. “Do you see them, Monsieur le cure? I see my boy; he is waving the handkerchief, and his mother is with him. But I think there is a third person—yes, there is a man, is there not? Look well.”

“Indeed,” said the cure, “if my bad sight does not deceive me, I should say there was someone seated near the rudder; but it looks like a child.”

“Probably someone from the neighbourhood, who has profited by the chance of a lift home.”

The boat was advancing rapidly; they could now hear the cracking of the whip with which the servant urged on the tow-horse. And now it stopped, at an easy landing-place, barely fifty paces from the terrace. Madame de Lamotte landed with her son and the stranger, and her husband descended from the terrace to meet her. Long before he arrived at the garden gate, his son’s arms were around his neck.

“Are you quite well, Edouard ?”

“Oh yes, perfectly.”

“And your mother?”

“Quite well too. She is behind, in as great a hurry to meet you as I am. But she can’t run as I do, and you must go half-way.”

“Whom have you brought with you?”

“A gentleman from Paris.”

“From Paris?”

“Yes, a Monsieur Derues. But mamma will tell you all about that. Here she is.”

The cure and the monk arrived just as Monsieur de Lamotte folded his wife in his arms. Although she had passed her fortieth year, she was still beautiful enough to justify her husband’s eulogism. A moderate plumpness had preserved the freshness and softness of her skin; her smile was charming, and her large blue eyes expressed both gentleness and goodness. Seen beside this smiling and serene countenance, the appearance of the stranger was downright repulsive, and Monsieur de Lamotte could hardly repress a start of disagreeable surprise at the pitiful and sordid aspect of this diminutive person, who stood apart, looking overwhelmed by conscious inferiority. He was still more astonished when he saw his son take him by the hand with friendly kindness, and heard him say—

“Will you come with me, my friend? We will follow my father and mother.”

Madame de Lamotte, having greeted the cure, looked at the monk, who was a stranger to her. A word or two explained matters, and she took her husband’s arm, declining to answer any questions until she reached the louse, and laughing at his curiosity.

Pierre-Etienne de Saint-Faust de Lamotte, one of the king’s equerries, seigneur of Grange-Flandre, Valperfond, etc., had married Marie-Francoise Perier in 1760. Their fortune resembled many others of that period: it was more nominal than actual, more showy than solid. Not that the husband and wife had any cause for self-reproach, or that their estates had suffered from dissipation; unstained by the corrupt manners of the period, their union had been a model of sincere affection, of domestic virtue and mutual confidence. Marie-Francoise was quite beautiful enough to have made a sensation in society, but she renounced it of her own accord, in order to devote herself to the duties of a wife and mother. The

only serious grief she and her husband had experienced was the loss of two young children. Edouard, though delicate from his birth, had nevertheless passed the trying years of infancy and early adolescence; he was then nearly fourteen. With a sweet and rather effeminate expression, blue eyes and a pleasant smile, he was a striking likeness of his mother. His father's affection exaggerated the dangers which threatened the boy, and in his eyes the slightest indisposition became a serious malady; his mother shared these fears, and in consequence of this anxiety Edouard's education had been much neglected. He had been brought up at Buisson-Souef, and allowed to run wild from morning till night, like a young fawn, exercising the vigour and activity of its limbs. He had still the simplicity and general ignorance of a child of nine or ten.

The necessity of appearing at court and suitably defraying the expenses of his office had made great inroads on Monsieur de Lamotte's fortune. He had of late lived at Buisson-Souef in the most complete retirement; but notwithstanding this too long deferred attention to his affairs, his property was ruining him, for the place required a large expenditure, and absorbed a large amount of his income without making any tangible return. He had always hesitated to dispose of the estate on account of its associations; it was there he had met, courted, and married his beloved wife; there that the happy days of their youth had been spent; there that they both wished to grow old together.

Such was the family to which accident had now introduced Derues. The unfavourable impression made on Monsieur de Lamotte had not passed unperceived by him; but, being quite accustomed to the instinctive repugnance which his first appearance generally inspired, Derues had made a successful study of how to combat and efface this antagonistic feeling, and replace it by confidence, using different means according to the persons he had to deal with. He understood at once that vulgar methods would be useless with Monsieur de Lamotte, whose appearance and manners indicated both the man of the world and the man of intelligence, and also he had to consider the two priests, who were both observing him attentively. Fearing a false step, he assumed the most simple and insignificant deportment he could, knowing that sooner or later a third person would rehabilitate him in the opinion of those present. Nor did he wait long.

Arrived at the drawing-room, Monsieur de Lamotte requested the company to be seated. Derues acknowledged the courtesy by a bow, and there was a moment of silence, while Edouard and his mother looked at each other and smiled. The

silence was broken by Madame de Lamotte.

“Dear Pierre,” she said, “you are surprised to see us accompanied by a stranger, but when you hear what he has done for us you will thank me for having induced him to return here with us.”

“Allow me,” interrupted Derues, “allow me to tell you what happened. The gratitude which madame imagines she owes me causes her to exaggerate a small service which anybody would have been delighted to render.”

“No, monsieur; let me tell it.”

“Let mamma tell the story,” said Edouard.

“What is it, then? What happened?” said Monsieur de Lamotte.

“I am quite ashamed,” answered Derues; “but I obey your wishes, madame.”

“Yes,” replied Madame de Lamotte, “keep your seat, I wish it. Imagine, Pierre, just six days ago, an accident happened to Edouard and me which might have had serious consequences.”

“And you never wrote to me, Marie?”

“I should only have made you anxious, and to no purpose. I had some business in one of the most crowded parts of Paris; I took a chair, and Edouard walked beside me. In the rue Beaubourg we were suddenly surrounded by a mob of low people, who were quarrelling. Carriages stopped the way, and the horses of one of these took fright in the confusion and uproar, and bolted, in spite of the coachman’s endeavours to keep them in hand. It was a horrible tumult, and I tried to get out of the chair, but at that moment the chairmen were both knocked down, and I fell. It is a miracle I was not crushed. I was dragged insensible from under the horses’ feet and carried into the house before which all this took place. There, sheltered in a shop and safe from the crowd which encumbered the doorway, I recovered my senses, thanks to the assistance of Monsieur Derues, who lives there. But that is not all: when I recovered I could not walk, I had been so shaken by the fright, the fall, and the danger I had incurred, and I had to accept his offer of finding me another chair when the crowd should disperse, and meanwhile to take shelter in his rooms with his wife, who showed me the kindest attention.”

“Monsieur—” said Monsieur de Lamotte, rising. But his wife stopped him.

“Wait a moment; I have not finished yet. Monsieur Derues came back in an hour, and I was then feeling better; but before, I left I was stupid enough to say that I had been robbed in the confusion; my diamond earrings, which had belonged to my mother, were gone. You cannot imagine the trouble Monsieur Derues took to discover the thief, and all the appeals he made to the police—I was really ashamed!”

Although Monsieur de Lamotte did not yet understand what motive, other than gratitude, had induced his wife to bring this stranger home with her, he again rose from his seat, and going to Derues, held out his hand.

“I understand now the attachment my son shows for you. You are wrong in trying to lessen your good deed in order to escape from our gratitude, Monsieur Derues.”

“Monsieur Derues?” inquired the monk.

“Do you know the name, my father?” asked Madame de Lamotte eagerly.

“Edouard had already told me,” said the monk, approaching Derues.

“You live in the, rue Beaubourg, and you are Monsieur Derues, formerly a retail grocer?”

“The same, my brother.”

“Should you require a reference, I can give it. Chance, madame, has made you acquainted with a man whose, reputation for piety and honour is well established; he will permit me to add my praises to yours.”

“Indeed, I do not know how I deserve so much honour.”

“I am, Brother Marchois, of the Camaldulian order. You see that I know you well.”

The monk then proceeded to explain that his community had confided their affairs to Derues’ honesty, he undertaking to dispose of the articles manufactured by the monks in their retreat. He then recounted a number of good actions and of

marks of piety, which were heard with pleasure and admiration by those present. Derues received this cloud of incense with an appearance of sincere modesty and humility, which would have deceived the most skilful physiognomist.

When the eulogistic warmth of the good brother began to slacken it was already nearly dark, and the two priests had barely time to regain the presbytery without incurring the risk of breaking their necks in the rough road which led to it. They departed at once, and a room was got ready for Derues.

“Tomorrow,” said Madame de Lamotte as they separated, “you can discuss with my husband the business on which you came: tomorrow, or another day, for I beg that you will make yourself at home here, and the longer you will stay the better it will please us.”

The night was a sleepless one for Derues, whose brain was occupied by a confusion of criminal plans. The chance which had caused his acquaintance with Madame de Lamotte, and even more the accident of Brother Marchois appearing in the nick of time, to enlarge upon the praises which gave him so excellent a character, seemed like favourable omens not to be neglected. He began to imagine fresh villanies, to outline an unheard-of crime, which as yet he could not definitely trace out; but anyhow there would be plunder to seize and blood to spill, and the spirit of murder excited and kept him awake, just as remorse might have troubled the repose of another.

Meanwhile Madame de Lamotte, having retired with her husband, was saying to the latter—

“Well, now! what do you think of my protege, or rather, of the protector which Heaven sent me?”

“I think that physiognomy is often very deceptive, for I should have been quite willing to hang him on the strength of his.”

“It is true that his appearance is not attractive, and it led me into a foolish mistake which I quickly regretted. When I recovered consciousness, and saw him attending on me, much worse and more carelessly dressed than he is to-day.”

“You were frightened?”

“No, not exactly; but I thought I must be indebted to a man of the lowest class, to some poor fellow who was really starving, and my first effort at gratitude was to offer him a piece of gold.”

“Did he refuse it?”

“No; he accepted it for the poor of the parish. Then he told me his name, Cyrano Derues de Bury, and told me that the shop and the goods it contained were his own property, and that he occupied an apartment in the house. I floundered in excuses, but he replied that he blessed the mistake, inasmuch as it would enable him to relieve some unfortunate people. I was so touched with his goodness that I offered him a second piece of gold.”

“You were quite right, my dear; but what induced you to bring him to Buisson? I should have gone to see and thank him the first time I went to Paris, and meanwhile a letter would have been sufficient. Did he carry his complaisance and interest so far as to offer you his escort?”

“Ah! I see you cannot get over your first impression—honestly, is it not so?”

“Indeed,” exclaimed Monsieur de Lamotte, laughing heartily, “it is truly unlucky for a decent man to have such a face as that! He ought to give Providence no rest until he obtains the gift of another countenance.”

“Always these prejudices! It is not the poor man’s fault that he was born like that.”

“Well, you said something about business we were to discuss together —what is it?”

“I believe he can help us to obtain the money we are in want of.”

“And who told him that we wanted any?”

“I did.”

“You! Come, it certainly seems that this gentleman is to be a family friend. And pray what induced you to confide in him to this extent?”

“You would have known by now, if you did not interrupt. Let me tell you all in

order. The day after my accident I went out with Edouard about midday, and I went to again express my gratitude for his kindness. I was received by Madame Derues, who told me her husband was out, and that he had gone to my hotel to inquire after me and my son, and also to see if anything had been heard of my stolen earrings. She appeared a simple and very ordinary sort of person, and she begged me to sit down and wait for her husband. I thought it would be uncivil not to do so, and Monsieur Derues appeared in about two hours. The first thing he did, after having saluted me and inquired most particularly after my health, was to ask for his children, two charming little things, fresh and rosy, whom he covered with kisses. We talked about indifferent matters, then he offered me his services, placed himself at my disposal, and begged me to spare neither his time nor his trouble. I then told him what had brought me to Paris, and also the disappointments I had encountered, for of all the people I had seen not one had given me a favourable answer. He said that he might possibly be of some use to me, and the very next day told 'me that he had seen a capitalist, but could do nothing without more precise information. Then I thought it might be better to bring him here, so that he might talk matters over with you. When I first asked him, he refused altogether, and only yielded to my earnest entreaties and Edouard's. This is the history, dear, of the circumstances under which I made Monsieur Derues' acquaintance. I hope you do not think I have acted foolishly?"

"Very well," said Monsieur de Lamotte, "I will talk to him tomorrow, and in any case I promise you I will be civil to him. I will not forget that he has been useful to you." With which promise the conversation came to a close.

Skilled in assuming any kind of mask and in playing every sort of part, Derues did not find it difficult to overcome Monsieur de Lamotte's prejudices, and in order to obtain the goodwill of the father he made a skilful use of the friendship which the son had formed with him. One can hardly think that he already meditated the crime which he carried out later; one prefers to believe that these atrocious plots were not invented so long beforehand. But he was already a prey to the idea, and nothing henceforth could turn him from it. By what route he should arrive at the distant goal which his greed foresaw, he knew not as yet, but he had said to himself, "One day this property shall be mine." It was the death-warrant of those who owned it.

We have no details, no information as to Derues' first visit to Buisson-Souef, but when he departed he had obtained the complete confidence of the family, and a regular correspondence was carried on between him and the Lamottes. It was

thus that he was able to exercise his talent of forgery, and succeeded in imitating the writing of this unfortunate lady so as to be able even to deceive her husband. Several months passed, and none of the hopes which Derues had inspired were realised; a loan was always on the point of being arranged, and regularly failed because of some unforeseen circumstance. These pretended negotiations were managed by Derues with so much skill and cunning that instead of being suspected, he was pitied for having so much useless trouble. Meanwhile, Monsieur de Lamotte's money difficulties increased, and the sale of Buisson-Souef became inevitable. Derues offered himself as a purchaser, and actually acquired the property by private contract, dated December, 1775. It was agreed between the parties that the purchase-money of one hundred and thirty thousand livres should not be paid until 1776, in order to allow Derues to collect the various sums at his disposal. It was an important purchase, which, he said, he only made on account of his interest in Monsieur de Lamotte, and his wish to put an end to the latter's difficulties.

But when the period agreed on arrived, towards the middle of 1776, Derues found it impossible to pay. It is certain that he never meant to do so; and a special peculiarity of this dismal story is the avarice of the man, the passion for money which overruled all his actions, and occasionally caused him to neglect necessary prudence. Enriched by three bankruptcies, by continual thefts, by usury, the gold he acquired promptly seemed to disappear. He stuck at nothing to obtain it, and once in his grasp, he never let it go again. Frequently he risked the loss of his character for honest dealing rather than relinquish a fraction of his wealth. According to many credible people, it was generally believed by his contemporaries that this monster possessed treasures which he had buried in the ground, the hiding-place of which no one knew, not even his wife. Perhaps it is only a vague and unfounded rumour, which should be rejected; or is it, perhaps, a truth which failed to reveal itself? It would be strange if after the lapse of half a century the hiding-place were to open and give up the fruit of his rapine. Who knows whether some of this treasure, accidentally discovered, may not have founded fortunes whose origin is unknown, even to their possessors?

Although it was of the utmost importance not to arouse Monsieur de Lamotte's suspicions just at the moment when he ought to be paying him so large a sum, Derues was actually at this time being sued by his creditors. But in those days ordinary lawsuits had no publicity; they struggled and died between the magistrates and advocates without causing any sound. In order to escape the arrest and detention with which he was threatened, he took refuge at Buisson-

Souef with his family, and remained there from Whitsuntide till the end of November. After being treated all this time as a friend, Derues departed for Paris, in order, he said, to receive an inheritance which would enable him to pay the required purchase-money.

This pretended inheritance was that of one of his wife's relations, Monsieur Despeignes-Duplessis, who had been murdered in his country house, near Beauvais. It has been strongly suspected that Derues was guilty of this crime. There are, however, no positive proofs, and we prefer only to class it as a simple possibility.

Derues had made formal promises to Monsieur de Lamotte, and it was no longer possible for him to elude them. Either the payment must now be made, or the contract annulled. A new correspondence began between the creditors and the debtor; friendly letters were exchanged, full of protestations on one side and confidence on the other. But all Derues' skill could only obtain a delay of a few months. At length Monsieur de Lamotte, unable to leave Buisson-Souef himself, on account of important business which required his presence, gave his wife a power of attorney, consented to another separation, and sent her to Paris, accompanied by Edouard, and as if to hasten their misfortunes, sent notice of their coming to the expectant murderer.

We have passed quickly over the interval between the first meeting of Monsieur de Lamotte and Derues, and the moment when the victims fell into the trap: we might easily have invented long conversations, and episodes which would have brought Derues' profound hypocrisy into greater relief; but the reader now knows all that we care to show him. We have purposely lingered in our narration in the endeavour to explain the perversities of this mysterious organisation; we have over-loaded it with all the facts which seem to throw any light upon this sombre character. But now, after these long preparations, the drama opens, the scenes become rapid and lifelike; events, long impeded, accumulate and pass quickly before us, the action is connected and hastens to an end. We shall see Derues like an unwearied Proteus, changing names, costumes, language, multiplying himself in many forms, scattering deceptions and lies from one end of France to the other; and finally, after so many efforts, such prodigies of calculation and activity, end by wrecking himself against a corpse.

The letter written at Buisson-Souef arrived at Paris the morning of the 14th of December. In the course of the day an unknown man presented himself at the

hotel where Madame de Lamotte and her son had stayed before, and inquired what rooms were vacant. There were four, and he engaged them for a certain Dumoulin, who had arrived that morning from Bordeaux, and who had passed through Paris in order to meet, at some little distance, relations who would return with him. A part of the rent was paid in advance, and it was expressly stipulated that until his return the rooms should not be let to anyone, as the aforesaid Dumoulin might return with his family and require them at any moment. The same person went to other hotels in the neighbourhood and engaged vacant rooms, sometimes for a stranger he expected, sometimes for friends whom he could not accommodate himself.

At about three o'clock, the Place de Greve was full of people, thousands of heads crowded the windows of the surrounding houses. A parricide was to pay the penalty of his crime—a crime committed under atrocious circumstances, with an unheard-of refinement of barbarity. The punishment corresponded to the crime: the wretched man was broken on the wheel. The most complete and terrible silence prevailed in the multitude eager for ghastly emotions. Three times already had been heard the heavy thud of the instrument which broke the victim's limbs, and a loud cry escaped the sufferer which made all who heard it shudder with horror. One man only, who, in spite of all his efforts, could not get through the crowd and cross the square, remained unmoved, and looking contemptuously towards the criminal, muttered, "Idiot! he was unable to deceive anyone!"

A few moments later the flames began to rise from the funeral pile, the crowd began to move, and the than was able to make his way through and reach one of the streets leading out of the square.

The sky was overcast, and the grey daylight hardly penetrated the narrow lane, hideous and gloomy as the name it bore, and which; only a few years ago, still wound like a long serpent through the mire of this quarter. Just then it was deserted, owing to the attraction of the execution close by. The man who had just left the square proceeded slowly, attentively reading all the inscriptions on the doors. He stopped at Number 75, where on the threshold of a shop sat a stout woman busily knitting, over whom one read in big yellow letters, "Widow Masson." He saluted the woman, and asked—

"Is there not a cellar to let in this house?"

“There is, master,” answered the widow.

“Can I speak to the owner?”

“And that is myself, by your leave.”

“Will you show me the cellar? I am a provincial wine merchant, my business often brings me to Paris, and I want a cellar where I could deposit wine which I sell on commission.”

They went down together. After examining the place, and ascertaining that it was not too damp for the expensive wine which he wished to leave there, the man agreed about the rent, paid the first term in advance, and was entered on the widow Masson’s books under the name of Ducoudray. It is hardly necessary to remark that it should have been Derues.

When he returned home in the evening, his wife told him that a large box had arrived.

“It is all right,” he said, “the carpenter from whom I ordered it is a man of his word.” Then he supped, and caressed his children. The next day being Sunday, he received the communion, to the great edification of the devout people of the neighbourhood.

On Monday the 16th Madame de Lamotte and Edouard, descending from the Montereau stagecoach, were met by Derues and his wife.

“Did my husband write to you, Monsieur Derues?” inquired Madame de Lamotte.

“Yes, madame, two days ago; and I have arranged our dwelling for your reception.”

“What! but did not Monsieur de Lamotte ask you to engage the rooms I have had before at the Hotel de France?”

“He did not say so, and if that was your idea I trust you will change it. Do not deprive me of the pleasure of offering you the hospitality which for so long I have accepted from you. Your room is quite ready, also one for this dear boy,” and so saying he took Edouard’s hand; “and I am sure if you ask his opinion, he will say you had better be content to stay with me.”

“Undoubtedly,” said the boy; “and I do not see why there need be any hesitation

between friends.”

Whether by accident, or secret presentiment, or because she foresaw a possibility of business discussions between them, Madame de Lamotte objected to this arrangement. Derues having a business appointment which he was bound to keep, desired his wife to accompany the Lamottes to the Hotel de France, and in case of their not being able to find rooms there, mentioned three others as the only ones in the quarter where they could be comfortably accommodated. Two hours later Madame de Lamotte and her son returned to his house in the rue Beaubourg.

The house which Derues occupied stood opposite the rue des Menoriers, and was pulled down quite lately to make way for the rue Rambuteau. In 1776 it was one of the finest houses of the rue Beaubourg, and it required a certain income to be able to live there, the rents being tolerably high. A large arched doorway gave admittance to a passage, lighted at the other end by a small court, on the far side of which was the shop into which Madame de Lamotte had been taken on the occasion of the accident. The house staircase was to the right of the passage; and the Derues' dwelling on the entresol. The first room, lighted by a window looking into the court, was used as a dining room, and led into a simply furnished sitting-room, such as was generally found among the bourgeois and tradespeople of this period. To the right of the sitting-room was a large closet, which could serve as a small study or could hold a bed; to the left was a door opening into the Derues' bedroom, which had been prepared for Madame de Lamotte. Madame Derues would occupy one of the two beds which stood in the alcove. Derues had a bed made up in the sitting-room, and Edouard was accommodated in the little study.

Nothing particular happened during the first few days which followed the Lamottes' arrival. They had not come to Paris only on account of the Buisson-Souef affairs. Edouard was nearly sixteen, and after much hesitation his parents had decided on placing him in some school where his hitherto neglected education might receive more attention. Derues undertook to find a capable tutor, in whose house the boy would be brought up in the religious feeling which the cure of Buisson and his own exhortations had already tended to develop. These proceedings, added to Madame de Lamotte's endeavours to collect various sums due to her husband, took some time. Perhaps, when on the point of executing a terrible crime, Derues tried to postpone the fatal moment, although, considering his character, this seems unlikely, for one cannot do him the honour

of crediting him with a single moment of remorse, doubt, or pity. Far from it, it appears from all the information which can be gathered, that Derues, faithful to his own traditions, was simply experimenting on his unfortunate guests, for no sooner were they in his house than both began to complain of constant nausea, which they had never suffered from before. While he thus ascertained the strength of their constitution, he was able, knowing the cause of the malady, to give them relief, so that Madame de Lamotte, although she grew daily weaker, had so much confidence in him as to think it unnecessary to call in a doctor. Fearing to alarm her husband, she never mentioned her sufferings, and her letters only spoke of the care and kind attention which she received.

On the 15th of January, 1777, Edouard was placed in a school in the rue de l'Homme Arme. His mother never saw him again. She went out once more to place her husband's power of attorney with a lawyer in the rue de Paon. On her return she felt so weak and broken-down that she was obliged to go to bed and remain there for several days. On January 29th the unfortunate lady had risen, and was sitting near the window which overlooked the deserted rue des Menetriers, where clouds of snow were drifting before the wind. Who can guess the sad thoughts which may have possessed her?—all around dark, cold, and silent, tending to produce painful depression and involuntary dread. To escape the gloomy ideas which besieged her, her mind went back to the smiling times of her youth and marriage. She recalled the time when, alone at Buisson during her husband's enforced absences, she wandered with her child in the cool and shaded walks of the park, and sat out in the evening, inhaling the scent of the flowers, and listening to the murmur of the water, or the sound of the whispering breeze in the leaves. Then, coming back from these sweet recollections to reality, she shed tears, and called on her husband and son. So deep was her reverie that she did not hear the room door open, did not perceive that darkness had come on. The light of a candle, dispersing the shadows, made her start; she turned her head, and saw Derues coming towards her. He smiled, and she made an effort to keep back the tears which were shining in her eyes, and to appear calm.

“I am afraid I disturb you,” he said. “I came to ask a favour, madame.”

“What is it, Monsieur Derues?” she inquired.

“Will you allow me to have a large chest brought into this room? I ought to pack some valuable things in it which are in my charge, and are now in this cupboard. I am afraid it will be in your way.”

“Is it not your own house, and is it not rather I who am in the way and a cause of trouble? Pray have it brought in, and try to forget that I am here. You are most kind to me, but I wish I could spare you all this trouble and that I were fit to go back to Buisson. I had a letter from my husband yesterday—”

“We will talk about that presently, if you wish it,” said Derues. “I will go and fetch the servant to help me to carry in this chest. I have put it off hitherto, but it really must be sent in three days.”

He went away, and returned in a few minutes. The chest was carried in, and placed before the cupboard at the foot of the bed. Alas! the poor lady little thought it was her own coffin which stood before her!

The maid withdrew, and Derues assisted Madame de Lamotte to a seat near the fire, which he revived with more fuel. He sat down opposite to her, and by the feeble light of the candle placed on a small table between them could contemplate at leisure the ravages wrought by poison on her wasted features.

“I saw your son to-day,” he said: “he complains that you neglect him, and have not seen him for twelve days. He does not know you have been ill, nor did I tell him. The dear boy! he loves you so tenderly.”

“And I also long to see him. My friend, I cannot tell you what terrible presentiments beset me; it seems as if I were threatened with some great misfortune; and just now, when you came in, I could think only of death. What is the cause of this languor and weakness? It is surely no temporary ailment. Tell me the truth: am I not dreadfully altered? and do you not think my husband will be shocked when he sees me like this?”

“You are unnecessarily anxious,” replied Derues; “it is rather a failing of yours. Did I not see you last year tormenting yourself about Edouard’s health, when he was not even thinking of being ill? I am not so soon alarmed. My own old profession, and that of chemistry, which I studied in my youth, have given me some acquaintance with medicine. I have frequently been consulted, and have prescribed for patients whose condition was supposed to be desperate, and I can assure you I have never seen a better and stronger constitution than yours. Try to calm yourself, and do not call up chimeras; because a mind at ease is the greatest enemy of illness. This depression will pass, and then you will regain your strength.”

“May God grant it! for I feel weaker every day.”

“We have still some business to transact together. The notary at Beauvais writes that the difficulties which prevented his paying over the inheritance of my wife’s relation, Monsieur Duplessis, have mostly disappeared. I have a hundred thousand livres at my disposal,—that is to say, at yours,—and in a month at latest I shall be able to pay off my debt. You ask me to be sincere,” he continued, with a tinge of reproachful irony; “be sincere in your turn, madame, and acknowledge that you and your husband have both felt uneasy, and that the delays I have been obliged to ask for have not seemed very encouraging to you?”

“It is true,” she replied; “but we never questioned your good faith.”

“And you were right. One is not always able to carry out one’s intentions; events can always upset our calculations; but what really is in our power is the desire to do right—to be honest; and I can say that I never intentionally wronged anyone. And now. I am happy in being able to fulfil my promises to you. I trust when I am the owner of Buisson-Souef you will not feel obliged to leave it.”

“Thank you; I should like to come occasionally, for all my happy recollections are connected with it. Is it necessary for me to accompany you to Beauvais?”

“Why should you not? The change would do you good.”

She looked up at him and smiled sadly. “I am not in a fit state to undertake it.”

“Not if you imagine that you are unable, certainly. Come, have you any confidence in me?”

“The most complete confidence, as you know.”

“Very well, then: trust to my care. This very evening I will prepare a draught for you to take tomorrow morning, and I will even now fix the duration of this terrible malady which frightens you so much. In two days I shall fetch Edouard from his school to celebrate the beginning of your convalescence, and we will start, at latest, on February 1st. You are astonished at what I say, but you shall see if I am not a good doctor, and much cleverer than many who pass for such merely because they have obtained a diploma.”

“Then, doctor, I will place myself in your hands.”

“Remember what I say. You will leave this on February 1st.”

“To begin this cure, can you ensure my sleeping tonight?”

“Certainly. I will go now, and send my wife to you. She will bring a draught, which you must promise to take.”

“I will exactly follow your prescriptions. Goodnight, my friend.”

“Goodnight, madame; and take courage”; and bowing low, he left the room.

The rest of the evening was spent in preparing the fatal medicine. The next morning, an hour or two after Madame de Lamotte had swallowed it, the maid who had given it to her came and told Derues the invalid was sleeping very heavily and snoring, and asked if she ought to be awoke. He went into the room, and, opening the curtains, approached the bed. He listened for some time, and recognised that the supposed snoring was really he death-rattle. He sent the servant off into the country with a letter to one of his friends, telling her not to return until the Monday following, February 3rd. He also sent away his wife, on some unknown pretext, and remained alone with his victim.

So terrible a situation ought to have troubled the mind of the most hardened criminal. A man familiar with murder and accustomed to shed blood might have felt his heart sink, and, in the absence of pity, might have experienced disgust at the sight of this prolonged and useless torture; but Derues, calm and easy, as if unconscious of evil, sat coolly beside the bed, as any doctor might have done. From time to time he felt the slackening pulse, and looked at the glassy and sightless eyes which turned in their orbits, and he saw without terror the approach of night, which rendered this awful ‘tete-a-tete’ even more horrible. The most profound silence reigned in the house, the street was deserted, and the only sound heard was caused by an icy rain mixed with snow driven against the glass, and occasionally the howl of the wind, which penetrated the chimney and scattered the ashes. A single candle placed behind the curtains lighted this dismal scene, and the irregular flicker of its flame cast weird reflections and dancing shadows an the walls of the alcove. There came a lull in the wind, the rain ceased, and during this instant of calm someone knocked, at first gently, and then sharply, at the outer door. Derues dropped the dying woman’s hand and bent forward to listen. The knock was repeated, and he grew pale. He threw the sheet, as if it were a shroud, over his victim’s head drew the curtains of the alcove, and

went to the door. "Who is there?" he inquired.

"Open, Monsieur Derues," said a voice which he recognised as that of a woman of Chartres whose affairs he managed, and who had entrusted him with sundry deeds in order that he might receive the money due to her. This woman had begun to entertain doubts as to Derues' honesty, and as she was leaving Paris the next day, had resolved to get the papers out of his hands.

"Open the door," she repeated. "Don't you know my voice?"

"I am sorry I cannot let you in. My servant is out: she has taken the key and locked the door outside."

"You must let me in," the woman continued; "it is absolutely necessary I should speak to you."

"Come tomorrow."

"I leave Paris tomorrow, and I must have those papers tonight."

He again refused, but she spoke firmly and decidedly. "I must come in. The porter said you were all out, but, from the rue des Menetriers I could see the light in your room. My brother is with me, and I left him below. I shall call him if you don't open the door."

"Come in, then," said Derues; "your papers are in the sitting-room. Wait here, and I will fetch them." The woman looked at him and took his hand. "Heavens! how pale you are! What is the matter?"

"Nothing is the matter: will you wait here? "But she would not release his arm, and followed him into the sitting-room, where Derues began to seek hurriedly among the various papers which covered a table. "Here they are," he said; "now you can go."

"Really," said the woman, examining her deeds carefully, "never yet did I see you in such a hurry to give up things which don't belong to you. But do hold that candle steadily; your hand is shaking so that I cannot see to read."

At that moment the silence which prevailed all round was broken by a cry of anguish, a long groan proceeding from the chamber to the right of the sitting-

room.

“What is that?” cried the woman. “Surely it is a dying person!”

The sense of the danger which threatened made Derues pull himself together. “Do not be alarmed,” he said. “My wife has been seized with a violent fever; she is quite delirious now, and that is why I told the porter to let no one come up.”

But the groans in the next room continued, and the unwelcome visitor, overcome by terror which she could neither surmount nor explain, took a hasty leave, and descended the staircase with all possible rapidity. As soon as he could close the door, Derues returned to the bedroom.

Nature frequently collects all her expiring strength at the last moment of existence. The unhappy lady struggled beneath her coverings; the agony she suffered had given her a convulsive energy, and inarticulate sounds proceeded from her mouth. Derues approached and held her on the bed. She sank back on the pillow, shuddering convulsively, her hands plucking and twisting the sheets, her teeth chattering and biting the loose hair which fell over her face and shoulders. “Water! water!” she cried; and then, “Edouard,—my husband!—Edouard!—is it you?” Then rising with a last effort, she seized her murderer by the arm, repeating, “Edouard!—oh!” and then fell heavily, dragging Derues down with her. His face was against hers; he raised his head, but the dying hand, clenched in agony, had closed upon him like a vise. The icy fingers seemed made of iron and could not be opened, as though the victim had seized on her assassin as a prey, and clung to the proof of his crime.

Derues at last freed himself, and putting his hand on her heart, “It is over,” he remarked; “she has been a long time about it. What o’clock is it? Nine! She has struggled against death for twelve hours!”

While the limbs still retained a little warmth, he drew the feet together, crossed the hands on the breast, and placed the body in the chest. When he had locked it up, he remade the bed, undressed himself, and slept comfortably in the other one.

The next day, February 1st, the day he had fixed for the “going out” of Madame de Lamotte, he caused the chest to be placed on a handcart and carried at about ten o’clock in the morning to the workshop of a carpenter of his acquaintance called Mouchy, who dwelt near the Louvre. The two commissionaires employed

had been selected in distant quarters, and did not know each other. They were well paid, and each presented with a bottle of wine. These men could never be traced. Derues requested the carpenter's wife to allow the chest to remain in the large workshop, saying he had forgotten something at his own house, and would return to fetch it in three hours. But, instead of a few hours, he left it for two whole days—why, one does not know, but it may be supposed that he wanted the time to dig a trench in a sort of vault under the staircase leading to the cellar in the rue de la Mortellerie. Whatever the cause, the delay might have been fatal, and did occasion an unforeseen encounter which nearly betrayed him. But of all the actors in this scene he alone knew the real danger he incurred, and his coolness never deserted him for a moment.

The third day, as he walked alongside the handcart on which the chest was being conveyed, he was accosted at Saint Germain l'Auxerrois by a creditor who had obtained a writ of execution against him, and at the imperative sign made by this man the porter stopped. The creditor attacked Derues violently, reproaching him for his bad faith in language which was both energetic and uncomplimentary; to which the latter replied in as conciliatory a manner as he could assume. But it was impossible to silence the enemy, and an increasing crowd of idlers began to assemble round them.

“When will you pay me?” demanded the creditor. “I have an execution against you. What is there in that box? Valuables which you cart away secretly, in order to laugh at my just claims, as you did two years ago?”

Derues shuddered all over; he exhausted himself in protestations; but the other, almost beside himself, continued to shout.

“Oh!” he said, turning to the crowd, “all these tricks and grimaces and signs of the cross are no good. I must have my money, and as I know what his promises are worth, I will pay myself! Come, you knave, make haste. Tell me what there is in that box; open it, or I will fetch the police.”

The crowd was divided between the creditor and debtor, and possibly a free fight would have begun, but the general attention was distracted by the arrival of another spectator. A voice heard above all the tumult caused a score of heads to turn, it was the voice of a woman crying:

“The abominable history of Leroi de Valine, condemned to death at the age of

sixteen for having poisoned his entire family!”

Continually crying her wares, the drunken, staggering woman approached the crowd, and striking out right and left with fists and elbows, forced her way to Derues.

“Ah! ah!” said she, after looking him well over, “is it you, my gossip Derues! Have you again a little affair on hand like the one when you set fire to your shop in the rue Saint-Victor?”

Derues recognised the hawker who had abused him on the threshold of his shop some years previously, and whom he had never seen since. “Yes, yes,” she continued, “you had better look at me with your little round cat’s eyes. Are you going to say you don’t know me?”

Derues appealed to his creditor. “You see,” he said, “to what insults you are exposing me. I do not know this woman who abuses me.”

“What!—you don’t know me! You who accused me of being a thief! But luckily the Maniffets have been known in Paris as honest people for generations, while as for you—”

“Sir,” said Derues, “this case contains valuable wine which I am commissioned to sell. Tomorrow I shall receive the money for it; tomorrow, in the course of the day, I will pay what I owe you. But I am waited for now, do not in Heaven’s name detain me longer, and thus deprive me of the means of paying at all.”

“Don’t believe him, my good man,” said the hawker; “lying comes natural to him always.”

“Sir, I promise on my oath you shall be paid tomorrow; you had better trust the word of an honest man rather than the ravings of a drunken woman.”

The creditor still hesitated, but, another person now spoke in Derues’ favour; it was the carpenter Mouchy, who had inquired the cause of the quarrel.

“For God’s sake,” he exclaimed, “let the gentleman go on. That chest came from my workshop, and I know there is wine inside it; he told my wife so two days ago.”

“Will you be surety for me, my friend?” asked Derues.

“Certainly I will; I have not known you for ten years in order to leave you in trouble and refuse to answer for you. What the devil are respectable people to be stopped like this in a public place? Come, sir, believe his word, as I do.”

After some more discussion, the porter was at last allowed to proceed with his handcart. The hawker wanted to interfere, but Mouchy warned her off and ordered her to be silent. “Ah! ah!” she cried, “what does it matter to me? Let him sell his wine if he can; I shall not drink any on his premises. This is the second time he has found a surety to my knowledge; the beggar must have some special secret for encouraging the growth of fools. Goodbye, gossip Derues; you know I shall be selling your history some day. Meanwhile—

“The abominable history of Leroi de Valine, condemned to death at the age of sixteen for having poisoned his entire family!”

Whilst she amused the people by her grimaces and grotesque gestures, and while Mouchy held forth to some of them, Derues made his escape. Several times between Saint-Germain l’Auxerrois and the rue de la Mortellerie he nearly fainted, and was obliged to stop. While the danger lasted, he had had sufficient self-control to confront it coolly, but now that he calculated the depth of the abyss which for a moment had opened beneath his feet, dizziness laid hold on him.

Other precautions now became necessary. His real name had been mentioned before the commissionaire, and the widow Masson, who owned the cellar, only knew him as Ducoudray. He went on in front, asked for the keys, which till then had been left with her, and the chest was got downstairs without any awkward questions. Only the porter seemed astonished that this supposed wine, which was to be sold immediately, should be put in such a place, and asked if he might come the next day and move it again. Derues replied that someone was coming for it that very day. This question, and the disgraceful scene which the man had witnessed, made it necessary to get rid of him without letting him see the pit dug under the staircase. Derues tried to drag the chest towards the hole, but all his strength was insufficient to move it. He uttered terrible imprecations when he recognised his own weakness, and saw that he would be obliged to bring another stranger, an informer perhaps, into this charnel-house, where; as yet, nothing betrayed his crimes. No sooner escaped from one peril than he encountered

another, and already he had to struggle against his own deeds. He measured the length of the trench, it was too short. Derues went out and repaired to the place where he had hired the labourer who had dug it out, but he could not find the man, whom he had only seen once, and whose name he did not know. Two whole days were spent in this fruitless search, but on the third, as he was wandering on one of the quays at the time labourers were to be found there, a mason, thinking he was looking for someone, inquired what he wanted. Derues looked well at the man, and concluding from his appearance that he was probably rather simpleminded, asked—

“Would you like to earn a crown of three livres by an easy job?”

“What a question, master!” answered the mason. “Work is so scarce that I am going back into the country this very evening.”

“Very well! Bring your tools, spade, and pickaxe, and follow me.”

They both went down to the cellar, and the mason was ordered to dig out the pit till it was five and a half feet deep. While the man worked, Derues sat beside the chest and read. When it was half done, the mason stopped for breath, and leaning on his spade, inquired why he wanted a trench of such a depth. Derues, who had probably foreseen the question, answered at once, without being disconcerted—

“I want to bury some bottled wine which is contained in this case.”

“Wine!” said the other. “Ah! you are laughing at me, because you think I look a fool! I never yet heard of such a recipe for improving wine.”

“Where do you come from?”

“D’Alencon.”

“Cider drinker! You were brought up in Normandy, that is clear. Well, you can learn from me, Jean-Baptiste Ducoudray, a wine grower of Tours, and a wine merchant for the last ten years, that new wine thus buried for a year acquires the quality and characteristics of the oldest brands.”

“It is possible,” said the mason, again taking his spade, “but all the same it seems a little odd to me.”

When he had finished, Derues asked him to help to drag the chest alongside the trench, so that it might be easier to take out the bottles and arrange them: The mason agreed, but when he moved the chest the foetid odour which proceeded from it made him draw back, declaring that a smell such as that could not possibly proceed from wine. Derues tried to persuade him that the smell came from drains under the cellar, the pipe of which could be seen. It appeared to satisfy him, and he again took hold of the chest, but immediately let it go again, and said positively that he could not execute Derues' orders, being convinced that the chest must contain a decomposing corpse. Then Derues threw himself at the man's feet and acknowledged that it was the dead body of a woman who had unfortunately lodged in his house, and who had died there suddenly from an unknown malady, and that, dreading lest he should be accused of having murdered her, he had decided to conceal the death and bury her here.

The mason listened, alarmed at this confidence, and not knowing whether to believe it or not. Derues sobbed and wept at his feet, beat his breast and tore out his hair, calling on God and the saints as witnesses of his good faith and his innocence. He showed the book he was reading while the mason excavated: it was the Seven Penitential Psalms. "How unfortunate I am!" he cried. "This woman died in my house, I assure you—died suddenly, before I could call a doctor. I was alone; I might have been accused, imprisoned, perhaps condemned for a crime I did not commit. Do not ruin me! You leave Paris tonight, you need not be uneasy; no one would know that I employed you, if this unhappy affair should ever be discovered. I do not know your name, I do not wish to know it, and I tell you mine, it is Ducoudray. I give myself up to you, but have some pity!—if not for me, yet for my wife and my two little children—for these poor creatures whose only support I am!"

Seeing that the mason was touched, Derues opened the chest.

"Look," he said, "examine the body of this woman, does it show any mark of violent death? My God!" he continued, joining his hands and in tones of despairing agony,—“my God, Thou who readest all hearts, and who knowest my innocence, canst Thou not ordain a miracle to save an honest man? Wilt Thou not command this dead body to bear witness for me?"

The mason was stupefied by this flow of language. Unable to restrain his tears, he promised to keep silence, persuaded that Derues was innocent, and that appearances only were against him. The latter, moreover, did not neglect other

means of persuasion; he handed the mason two gold pieces, and between them they buried the body of Madame de Lamotte.

However extraordinary this fact, which might easily be supposed imaginary, may appear, it certainly happened. In the examination at his trial. Derues himself revealed it, repeating the story which had satisfied the mason. He believed that this man had denounced him: he was mistaken, for this confidant of his crime, who might have been the first to put justice on his track, never reappeared, and but for Derues' acknowledgment his existence would have remained unknown.

This first deed accomplished, another victim was already appointed. Trembling at first as to the consequences of his forced confession, Derues waited some days, paying, however, his creditor as promised. He redoubles his demonstrations of piety, he casts a furtive glance on everyone he meets, seeking for some expression of distrust. But no one avoids him, or points him out with a raised finger, or whispers on seeing him; everywhere he encounters the customary expression of goodwill. Nothing has changed; suspicion passes over his head without alighting there. He is reassured, and resumes his work. Moreover, had he wished to remain passive, he could not have done so; he was now compelled to follow that fatal law of crime which demands that blood must be effaced with blood, and which is compelled to appeal again to death in order to stifle the accusing voice already issuing from the tomb.

Edouard de Lamotte, loving his mother as much as she loved him, became uneasy at receiving no visits, and was astonished at this sudden indifference. Derues wrote to him as follows:

“I have at length some good news for you, my dear boy, but you must not tell your mother I have betrayed her secret; she would scold me, because she is planning a surprise for you, and the various steps and care necessary in arranging this important matter have caused her absence. You were to know nothing until the 11th or 12th of this month, but now that all is settled, I should blame myself if I prolonged the uncertainty in which you have been left, only you must promise me to look as much astonished as possible. Your mother, who only lives for you, is going to present you with the greatest gift a youth of your age can receive—that of liberty. Yes, dear boy, we thought we had discovered that you have no very keen taste for study, and that a secluded life will suit neither your character nor your health. In saying this I utter no reproach, for every man is born with his own decided tastes, and the way to success and happiness is-often-

to allow him to follow these instincts. We have had long discussions on this subject—your mother and I—and we have thought much about your future; she has at last come to a decision, and for the last ten days has been at Versailles, endeavouring to obtain your admission as a royal page. Here is the mystery, this is the reason which has kept her from you, and as she knew you would hear it with delight, she wished to have the pleasure of telling you herself. Therefore, once again, when you see her, which will be very soon, do not let her see I have told you; appear to be greatly surprised. It is true that I am asking you to tell a lie, but it is a very innocent one, and its good intention will counteract its sinfulness—may God grant we never have worse upon our consciences! Thus, instead of lessons and the solemn precepts of your tutors, instead of a monotonous school-life, you are going to enjoy your liberty; also the pleasures of the court and the world. All that rather alarms me, and I ought to confess that I at first opposed this plan. I begged your mother to reflect, to consider that in this new existence you would run great risk of losing the religious feeling which inspires you, and which I have had the happiness, during my sojourn at Buisson-Souef, of further developing in your mind. I still recall with emotion your fervid and sincere aspirations towards the Creator when you approached the Sacred Table for the first time, and when, kneeling beside you, and envying the purity of heart and innocence of soul which appeared to animate your countenance as with a divine radiance, I besought God that, in default of my own virtue, the love for heavenly Truth with which I have inspired you might be reckoned to my account. Your piety is my work, Edouard, and I defended it against your mother's plans; but she replied that in every career a man is master of his own good or evil actions; and as I have no authority over you, and friendship only gives me the right to advise, I must give way. If this be your vocation, then follow it.

“My occupations are so numerous (I have to collect from different sources this hundred thousand livres intended to defray the greater part of the Buisson purchase) that I have not a moment in which to come and see you this week. Spend the time in reflection, and write to me fully what you think about this plan. If, like me, you feel any scruples, you must tell them to your mother, who decidedly wants only to make you happy. Speak to me freely, openly. It is arranged that I am to fetch you on the 11th of this month, and escort you to Versailles, where Madame de Lamotte will be waiting to receive you with the utmost tenderness. Adieu, dear boy; write to me. Your father knows nothing as yet; his consent will be asked after your decision.”

The answer to this letter did not have to be waited for: it was such as Derues expected; the lad accepted joyfully. The answer was, for the murderer, an arranged plea of defence, a proof which, in a given case, might link the present with the past.

On the morning of February 11th, Shrove Tuesday, he went to fetch the young de Lamotte from his school, telling the master that he was desired by the youth's mother to conduct him to Versailles. But, instead, he took him to his own house, saying that he had a letter from Madame de Lamotte asking them not to come till the next day; so they started on Ash Wednesday, Edouard having breakfasted on chocolate. Arrived at Versailles, they stopped at the Fleur-de-lys inn, but there the sickness which the boy had complained of during the journey became very serious, and the innkeeper, having young children, and believing that he recognised symptoms of smallpox, which just then was ravaging Versailles, refused to receive them, saying he had no vacant room. This might have disconcerted anyone but Derues, but his audacity, activity, and resource seemed to increase with each fresh obstacle. Leaving Edouard in a room on the ground floor which had no communication with the rest of the inn, he went at once to look for lodgings, and hastily explored the town. After a fruitless search, he found at last, at the junction of the rue Saint-Honore with that of the Orangerie, a cooper named Martin, who had a furnished room to spare. This he hired at thirty sous per day for himself and his nephew, who had been taken suddenly ill, under the name of Beaupre. To avoid being questioned later, he informed the cooper in a few words that he was a doctor; that he had come to Versailles in order to place his nephew in one of the offices of the town; that in a few days the latter's mother would arrive to join him in seeing and making application to influential persons about the court, to whom he had letters of introduction. As soon as he had delivered this fable with all the appearance of truth with which he knew so well how to disguise his falsehoods, he went back to the young de Lamotte, who was already so exhausted that he was hardly able to drag himself as far as the cooper's house. He fainted on arrival, and was carried into the hired room, where Derues begged to be left alone with him, and only asked for certain beverages which he told the people how to prepare.

Whether it was that the strength of youth fought against the poison, or that Derues took pleasure in watching the sufferings of his victim, the agony of the poor lad was prolonged until the fourth day. The sickness continuing incessantly, he sent the cooper's wife for a medicine which he prepared and administered himself. It produced terrible pain, and Edouard's cries brought the cooper and his

wife upstairs. They represented to Derues that he ought to call in a doctor and consult with him, but he refused decidedly, saying that a doctor hastily fetched might prove to be an ignorant person with whom he could not agree, and that he could not allow one so dear to him to be prescribed for and nursed by anyone but himself.

“I know what the malady is,” he continued, raising his eyes to heaven; “it is one that has to be concealed rather than acknowledged. Poor youth! whom I love as my own son, if God, touched by my tears and thy suffering, permits me to save thee, thy whole life will be too short for thy blessings and thy gratitude!” And as Madame Martin asked what this malady might be, he answered with hypocritical blushes—

“Do not ask, madame; there are things of which you do not know even the name.”

At another time, Martin expressed his surprise that the young man’s mother had not yet appeared, who, according to Derues, was to have met him at Versailles. He asked how she could know that they were lodging in his house, and if he should send to meet her at any place where she was likely to arrive.

“His mother,” said Derues, looking compassionately at Edouard, who lay pale, motionless, and as if insensible,—“his mother! He calls for her incessantly. Ah! monsieur, some families are greatly to be pitied! My entreaties prevailed on her to decide on coming hither, but will she keep her promise? Do not ask me to tell you more; it is too painful to have to accuse a mother of having forgotten her duties in the presence of her son ... there are secrets which ought not to be told—unhappy woman!”

Edouard moved, extended his arms, and repeated, “Mother! ... mother!”

Derues hastened to his side and took his hands in his, as if to warm them.

“My mother!” the youth repeated. “Why have I not seen her? She was to have met me.”

You shall soon see her, dear boy; only keep quiet.”

“But just now I thought she was dead.”

“Dead!” cried Derues. “Drive away these sad thoughts. They are caused by the fever only.”

“No! oh no! ... I heard a secret voice which said, ‘Thy mother is dead!’ ... And then I beheld a livid corpse before me ... It was she! ... I knew her well! and she seemed to have suffered so much—”

“Dear boy, your mother is not dead My God! what terrible chimeras you conjure up! You will see her again, I assure you; she has arrived already. Is it not so, madame?” he asked, turning towards the Martins, who were both leaning against the foot of the bed, and signing to them to support this pious falsehood, in order to calm the young man. “Did she not arrive and come to his bedside and kiss him while he slept, and she will soon come again?”

“Yes, yes,” said Madame Martin, wiping her eyes; “and she begged my husband and me to help your uncle to take great care of you—”

The youth moved again, and looking round him with a dazed expression, said, “My uncle—?”

“You had better go,” said Derues in a whisper to the Martins. “I am afraid he is delirious again; I will prepare a draught, which will give him a little rest and sleep.”

“Adieu, then, adieu,” answered Madame Martin; “and may Heaven bless you for the care you bestow on this poor young man!”

On Friday evening violent vomiting appeared to have benefited the sufferer. He had rejected most of the poison, and had a fairly quiet night. But on the Saturday morning Derues sent the cooper’s little girl to buy more medicine, which he prepared, himself, like the first. The day was horrible, and about six in the evening, seeing his victim was at the last gasp, he opened a little window overlooking the shop and summoned the cooper, requesting him to go at once for a priest. When the latter arrived he found Derues in tears, kneeling at the dying boy’s bedside. And now, by the light of two tapers placed on a table, flanking the holy water-stoup, there began what on one side was an abominable and sacrilegious comedy, a disgraceful parody of that which Christians consider most sacred and most dear; on the other, a pious and consoling ceremony. The cooper and his wife, their eyes bathed in tears, knelt in the middle of the room, murmuring such prayers as they could remember.

Derues gave up his place to the priest, but as Edouard did not answer the latter's questions, he approached the bed, and bending over the sufferer, exhorted him to confession.

"Dear boy," he said, "take courage; your sufferings here will be counted to you above: God will weigh them in the scales of His infinite mercy. Listen to the words of His holy minister, cast your sins into His bosom, and obtain from Him forgiveness for your faults."

"I am in such terrible pain!" cried Edouard. "Water! water! Extinguish the fire which consumes me!"

A violent fit came on, succeeded by exhaustion and the death-rattle. Derues fell on his knees, and the priest administered extreme unction. There was then a moment of absolute silence, more impressive than cries and sobs. The priest collected himself for a moment, crossed himself, and began to pray. Derues also crossed himself, and repeated in a low voice, apparently choked by grief

"Go forth, O Christian soul, from this world, in the name of God the Father Almighty, who created thee; in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who suffered for thee; in the name of the Holy Ghost, who was poured out upon thee."

The youth struggled in his bed, and a convulsive movement agitated his limbs. Derues continued—

"When thy soul departs from this body may it be admitted to the holy Mountain of Sion, to the Heavenly Jerusalem, to the numerous company of Angels, and to the Church of the Firstborn, whose names are written in Heaven--"

"Mother! ... My mother!" cried Edouard. Derues resumed—

"Let God arise, and let the Powers of Darkness be dispersed! let the Spirits of Evil, who reign over the air, be put to flight; let them not dare to attack a soul redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ."

"Amen," responded the priest and the Martins.

There was another silence, broken only by the stifled sobs of Derues. The priest again crossed himself and took up the prayer.

“We beseech Thee, O beloved and only Son of God, by the merits of Thy sacred Passion, Thy Cross and Thy Death, to deliver this Thy servant from the pains of Hell, and to lead him to that happy place whither Thou didst vouchsafe to lead the thief, who, with Thee, was bound upon the Cross: Thou, who art God, living and reigning with the Father and the Holy Ghost.”

“Amen,” repeated those present. Derues now took up the prayer, and his voice mingled with the dying gasps of the sufferer.

“And there was a darkness over all the earth—

“To Thee, O Lord, we commend the soul of this Thy servant, that, being dead to the world, he may, live to Thee: and the sins he hath committed through the frailty of his mortal nature, do Thou in Thy most merciful goodness, forgive and wash away. Amen.”

After which all present sprinkled holy water on the body....

When the priest had retired, shown out by Madame Martin, Derues said to her husband—

“This unfortunate young man has died without the consolation of beholding his mother.... His last thought was for her.... There now remains the last duty, a very painful one to accomplish, but my poor nephew imposed it on me. A few hours ago, feeling that his end was near, he asked me, as a last mark of friendship, not to entrust these final duties to the hands of strangers.”

While he applied himself to the necessary work in presence of the cooper, who was much affected by the sight of such sincere and profound affliction, Derues added, sighing—

“I shall always grieve for this dear boy. Alas! that evil living should have caused his early death!”

When he had finished laying out the body, he threw some little packets into the fire which he professed to have found in the youth’s pockets, telling Martin, in order to support this assertion, that they contained drugs suitable to this disgraceful malady.

He spent the night in the room with the corpse, as he had done in the case of

Madame de Lamotte, and the next day, Sunday, he sent Martin to the parish church of St. Louis, to arrange for a funeral of the simplest kind; telling him to fill up the certificate in the name of Beaupre, born at Commercy, in Lorraine. He declined himself either to go to the church or to appear at the funeral, saying that his grief was too great. Martin, returning from the funeral, found him engaged in prayer. Derues gave him the dead youth's clothes and departed, leaving some money to be given to the poor of the parish, and for masses to be said for the repose of the soul of the dead.

He arrived at home in the evening, found his wife entertaining some friends; and told them he had just come from Chartres, where he had been summoned on business. Everyone noticed his unusual air of satisfaction, and he sang several songs during supper.

Having accomplished these two crimes, Derues did not remain idle. When the murderer's part of his nature was at rest, the thief reappeared. His extreme avarice now made him regret the expense' caused by the deaths of Madame de Lamotte and her son, and he wished to recoup himself. Two days after his return from Versailles, he ventured to present himself at Edouard's school. He told the master that he had received a letter from Madame de Lamotte, saying that she wished to keep her son, and asking him to obtain Edouard's belongings. The schoolmaster's wife, who was present, replied that that could not be; that Monsieur de Lamotte would have known of his wife's intention; that she would not have taken such a step without consulting him; and that only the evening before, they had received a present of game from Buisson-Souef, with a letter in which Monsieur de Lamotte entreated them to take great care of his son.

"If what you say is true," she continued, "Madame de Lamotte is no doubt acting on your advice in taking away her son. But I will write to Buisson."

"You had better not do anything in the matter;" said Derues, turning to the schoolmaster. "It is quite possible that Monsieur de Lamotte does not know. I am aware that his wife does not always consult him. She is at Versailles, where I took Edouard to her, and I will inform her of your objection."

To insure impunity for these murders, Derues had resolved on the death of Monsieur de Lamotte; but before executing this last crime, he wished for some proof of the recent pretended agreements between himself and Madame de Lamotte. He would not wait for the disappearance of the whole family before

presenting himself as the lawful proprietor, of Buisson-Souef. Prudence required him to shelter himself behind a deed which should have been executed by that lady. On February 27th he appeared at the office of Madame de Lamotte's lawyer in the rue du Paon, and, with all the persuasion of an artful tongue, demanded the power of attorney on that lady's behalf, saying that he had, by private contract, just paid a hundred thousand livres on the total amount of purchase, which money was now deposited with a notary. The lawyer, much astonished that an affair of such importance should have been arranged without any reference to himself, refused to give up the deed to anyone but Monsieur or Madame de Lamotte, and inquired why the latter did not appear herself. Derues replied that she was at Versailles, and that he was to send the deed to her there. He repeated his request and the lawyer his refusal, until Derues retired, saying he would find means to compel him to give up the deed. He actually did, the same day, present a petition to the civil authority, in which Cyrano Derues de Bury sets forth arrangements, made with Madame de Lamotte, founded on the deed given by her husband, and requires permission to seize and withdraw said deed from the custody in which it remains at present. The petition is granted. The lawyer objects that he can only give up the deed to either Monsieur or Madame de Lamotte, unless he be otherwise ordered. Derues has the effrontery to again appeal to the civil authority, but, for the reasons given by that public officer, the affair is adjourned.

These two futile efforts might have compromised Derues had they been heard of at Buisson-Souef; but everything seemed to conspire in the criminal's favour: neither the schoolmaster's wife nor the lawyer thought of writing to Monsieur de Lamotte. The latter, as yet unsuspecting, was tormented by other anxieties, and kept at home by illness.

In these days, distance is shortened, and one can travel from Villeneuve-le-Roi-les-Sens to Paris in a few hours. This was not the case in 1777, when private industry and activity, stifled by routine and privilege, had not yet experienced the need of providing the means for rapid communication. Half a day was required to go from the capital to Versailles; a journey of twenty leagues required at least two days and a night, and bristled with obstacles and delays of all kinds. These difficulties of transport, still greater during bad weather, and a long and serious attack of gout, explain why Monsieur de Lamotte, who was so ready to take alarm, had remained separated from his wife from the middle of December to the end of February. He had received reassuring letters from her, written at first with freedom and simplicity; but he thought he noticed a gradual change in the later

ones, which appeared to proceed more from the mind than the heart. A style which aimed at being natural was interspersed with unnecessary expressions of affection, unusual between married people well assured of their mutual love. Monsieur de Lamotte observed and exaggerated these peculiarities, and though endeavouring to persuade himself that he was mistaken, he could not forget them, or regain his usual tranquility. Being somewhat ashamed of his anxiety, he kept his fears to himself.

One morning, as he was sunk in a large armchair by the fire, his sitting-room door opened, and the cure entered, who was surprised by his despondent, sad, and pale appearance. "What is the matter?" he inquired, "Have you had an extra bad night?"

"Yes," answered Monsieur de Lamotte.

"Well, have you any news from Paris?"

"Nothing for a whole week: it is odd, is it not?"

"I am always hoping that this sale may fall through; it drags on for so very long; and I believe that Monsieur Derues, in spite of what your wife wrote a month ago, has not as much money as he pretends to have. Do you know that it is said that Monsieur Despeignes-Duplessis, Madame Derues' relative, whose money they inherited, was assassinated?"

"Where did you hear that?"

"It is a common report in the country, and was brought here by a man who came recently from Beauvais."

"Have the murderers been discovered?"

"Apparently not; justice seems unable to discover anything at all."

Monsieur de Lamotte hung his head, and his countenance assumed an expression of painful thought, as though this news affected him personally.

"Frankly," resumed the cure, "I believe you will remain Seigneur du Buisson-Souef, and that I shall be spared the pain of writing another name over your seat in the church of Villeneuve."

“The affair must be settled in a few days, for I can wait no longer; if the purchaser be not Monsieur Derues, it will have to be someone else. “What makes you think he is short of money?”

“Oh! oh!” said the cure, “a man who has money either pays his debts, or is a cheat. Now Heaven preserve me from suspecting Monsieur Derues’ honesty!”

“What do you know about him?”

“Do you remember Brother Marchois of the Camaldulians, who came to see me last spring, and who was here the day Monsieur Derues arrived, with your wife and Edouard?”

“Perfectly. Well?”

“Well, I happened to tell him in one of my letters that Monsieur Derues had become the purchaser of Buisson-Souef, and that I believed the arrangements were concluded. Thereupon Brother Marchois wrote asking me to remind him that he owes them a sum of eight hundred livres, and that, so far, they have not seen a penny of it.”

“Ah!” said Monsieur de Lamotte, “perhaps I should have done better not to let myself be deluded by his fine promises. He certainly has money on his tongue, and when once one begins to listen to him, one can’t help doing what he wants. All the same, I had rather have had to deal with someone else.”

“And is it this which worries you, and makes you seem so anxious?”

“This and other things.”

“What, then?”

“I am really ashamed to own it, but I am as credulous and timid as any old woman. Now do not laugh at me too much. Do you believe in dreams?”

“Monsieur,” said the cure, smiling, “you should never ask a coward whether he is afraid, you only risk his telling a lie. He will say ‘No,’ but he means ‘Yes.’”

“And are you a coward, my father?”

“A little. I don’t precisely believe all the nursery, tales, or in the favourable or unfavourable meaning of some object seen during our sleep, but—”

A sound of steps interrupted them, a servant entered, announcing Monsieur Derues.

On hearing the name, Monsieur de Lamotte felt troubled in spite of himself, but, overcoming the impression, he rose to meet the visitor.

“You had better stay,” he said to the cure, who was also rising to take leave. “Stay; we have probably nothing to say which cannot be said before you.”

Derues entered the room, and, after the usual compliments, sat down by the fire, opposite Monsieur de Lamotte.

“You did not expect me,” he said, “and I ought to apologise for surprising you thus.”

Give me some news of my wife,” asked Monsieur de Lamotte anxiously.

“She has never been better. Your son is also to perfect health.”

“But why are you alone? Why does not Marie accompany you? It is ten weeks since she went to Paris.”

“She has not yet quite finished the business with which you entrusted her. Perhaps I am partly the cause of this long absence, but one cannot transact business as quickly as one would wish. But, you have no doubt heard from her, that all is finished, or nearly so, between us. We have drawn up a second private contract, which annuls the former agreement, and I have paid over a sum of one hundred thousand livres.”

“I do not comprehend,” said Monsieur de Lamotte. “What can induce my wife not to inform me of this?”

“You did not know?”

“I know nothing. I was wondering just now with Monsieur le cure why I did not

hear from her.”

“Madame de Lamotte was going to write to you, and I do not know what can have hindered her.”

“When did you leave her?”

“Several days ago. I have not been at Paris; I am returning from Chartres. I believed you were informed of everything.”

Monsieur de Lamotte remained silent for some moments. Then, fixing his eyes upon Derues’ immovable countenance, he said, with some emotion—

“You are a husband and father, sir; in the name of this double and sacred affection which is, not unknown to you, do not hide anything from me: I fear some misfortune has happened to my wife which you are concealing.”

Derues’ physiognomy expressed nothing but a perfectly natural astonishment.

“What can have suggested such ideas to you; dear sir?” In saying this he glanced at the cure; wishing to ascertain if this distrust was Monsieur de Lamotte’s own idea, or had been suggested to him. The movement was so rapid that neither of the others observed it. Like all knaves, obliged by their actions to be continually on the watch, Derues possessed to a remarkable extent the art of seeing all round him without appearing to observe anything in particular. He decided that as yet he had only to combat a suspicion unfounded on proof, and he waited till he should be attacked more seriously.

“I do not know,” he said, “what may have happened during my absence; pray explain yourself, for you are making me share your disquietude.”

“Yes, I am exceedingly anxious; I entreat you, tell me the whole truth. Explain this silence, and this absence prolonged beyond all expectation. You finished your business with Madame de Lamotte several days ago: once again, why did she not write? There is no letter, either from her or my son! Tomorrow I shall send someone to Paris.”

“Good heavens!” answered Derues, “is there nothing but an accident which could cause this delay? ... Well, then,” he continued, with the embarrassed look of a man compelled to betray a confidence,- -“well, then, I see that in order to

reassure you, I shall have to give up a secret entrusted to me.”

He then told Monsieur de Lamotte that his wife was no longer at Paris, but at Versailles, where she was endeavouring to obtain an important and lucrative appointment, and that, if she had left him in ignorance of her efforts in this direction; it was only to give him an agreeable surprise. He added that she had removed her son from the school, and hoped to place him either in the riding school or amongst the royal pages. To prove his words, he opened his paper-case, and produced the letter written by Edouard in answer to the one quoted above.

All this was related so simply, and with such an appearance of good faith, that the cure was quite convinced. And to Monsieur de Lamotte the plans attributed to his wife were not entirely improbably. Derues had learnt indirectly that such a career for Edouard had been actually under consideration. However, though Monsieur de Lamotte’s entire ignorance prevented him from making any serious objection, his fears were not entirely at rest, but for the present he appeared satisfied with the explanation.

The cure resumed the conversation. “What you tell us ought to drive away gloomy ideas. Just now, when you were announced, Monsieur de Lamotte was confiding his troubles to me. I was as concerned as he was, and I could say nothing to help him; never did visitor arrive more apropos. Well, my friend, what now remains of your vain terrors? What was it you were saying just as Monsieur Derues arrived? ... Ah! we were discussing dreams, you asked if I believed in them.”

Monsieur, de Lamotte, who had sunk back in his easy-chair and seemed lost in his reflections, started on hearing these words. He raised his head and looked again at Derues. But the latter had had time to note the impression produced by the cure’s remark, and this renewed examination did not disturb him.

“Yes,” said Monsieur de Lamotte, “I had asked that question.”

“And I was going to answer that there are certain secret warnings which can be received by the soul long before they are intelligible to the bodily senses—revelations not understood at first, but which later connect themselves with realities of which they are in some way the precursors. Do you agree with me, Monsieur Derues?”

“I have no opinion on such a subject, and must leave the discussion to more learned people than myself. I do not know whether such apparitions really mean anything or not, and I have not sought to fathom these mysteries, thinking them outside the realm of human intelligence.”

“Nevertheless,” said the cure, “we are obliged to recognise their existence.”

“Yes, but without either understanding or explaining them, like many other eternal truths. I follow the rule given in the Imitation of Jesus Christ: ‘Beware, my son, of considering too curiously the things beyond thine intelligence.’”

“And I also submit, and avoid too curious consideration. But has not the soul knowledge of many wondrous things which we can yet neither see nor touch? I repeat, there are things which cannot be denied.”

Derues listened attentively, continually on his guard; and afraid, he knew not why, of becoming entangled in this conversation, as in a trap. He carefully watched Monsieur de Lamotte, whose eyes never left him. The cure resumed—

“Here is an instance which I was bound to accept, seeing it happened to myself. I was then twenty, and my mother lived in the neighbourhood of Tours, whilst I was at the seminary of Montpellier. After several years of separation, I had obtained permission to go and see her. I wrote, telling her of this good news, and I received her answer—full of joy and tenderness. My brother and sister were to be informed, it was to be a family meeting, a real festivity; and I started with a light and joyous heart. My impatience was so great, that, having stopped for supper at a village inn some ten leagues from Tours, I would not wait till the next morning for the coach which went that way, but continued the journey on foot and walked all night. It was a long and difficult road, but happiness redoubled my strength. About an hour after sunrise I saw distinctly the smoke and the village roofs, and I hurried on to surprise my family a little sooner. I never felt more active, more light-hearted and gay; everything seemed to smile before and around me. Turning a corner of the hedge, I met a peasant whom I recognised. All at once it seemed as if a veil spread over my sight, all my hopes and joy suddenly vanished, a funereal idea took possession of me, and I said, taking the hand of the man, who had not yet spoken—

“‘My mother is dead, I am convinced my mother is dead!’

“He hung down his head and answered—

“She is to be buried this morning!’

“Now whence came this revelation? I had seen no one, spoken to no one; a moment before I had no idea of it!”

Derues made a gesture of surprise. Monsieur de Lamotte put his hand to his eyes, and said to the cure—

“Your presentiments were true; mine, happily, are unfounded. But listen, and tell me if in the state of anxiety which oppressed me I had not good reason for alarm and for fearing some fatal misfortune.”

His eyes again sought Derues. “Towards the middle of last night I at length fell asleep, but, interrupted every moment, this sleep was more a fatigue than a rest; I seemed to hear confused noises all round me. I saw brilliant lights which dazzled me, and then sank back into silence and darkness. Sometimes I heard someone weeping near my bed; again plaintive voices called to me out of the darkness. I stretched out my arms, but nothing met them, I fought with phantoms; at length a cold hand grasped mine and led me rapidly forward. Under a dark and damp vault a woman lay on the ground, bleeding, inanimate—it was my wife! At the same moment, a groan made me look round, and I beheld a man striking my son with a dagger. I cried out and awoke, bathed in cold perspiration, panting under this terrible vision. I was obliged to get up, walk about, and speak aloud, in order to convince myself it was only a dream. I tried to go to sleep again, but the same visions still pursued me. I saw always the same man armed with two daggers streaming with blood; I heard always the cries of his two victims. When day came, I felt utterly broken, worn-out; and this morning, you, my father, could see by my despondency what an impression this awful night had made upon me.”

During this recital Derues’ calmness never gave way for a single moment, and the most skilful physiognomist could only have discovered an expression of incredulous curiosity on his countenance.

“Monsieur le cure’s story,” said he, “impressed me much; yours only brings back my uncertainty. It is less possible than ever to deliver any opinion on this serious question of dreams, since the second instance contradicts the first.”

“It is true,” answered the cure, “no possible conclusion can be drawn from two facts which contradict each other, and the best thing we can do is to choose a less dismal subject of conversation.”

“Monsieur Derues;” asked Monsieur de Lamatte, “if you are not too tired with your journey, shall we go and look at the last improvements I have made? It is now your affair to decide upon them, since I shall shortly be only your guest here.”

“Just as I have been yours for long enough, and I trust you will often give me the opportunity of exercising hospitality in my turn. But you are ill, the day is cold and damp; if you do not care to go out, do not let me disturb you. Had you not better stay by the fire with Monsieur le cure? For me, Heaven be thanked! I require no assistance. I will look round the park, and come back presently to tell you what I think. Besides, we shall have plenty of time to talk about it. With your permission, I should like to stay two or three days.”

“I shall be pleased if you will do so.”

Derues went out, sufficiently uneasy in his mind, both on account of his reception of Monsieur de Lamotte’s fears and of the manner in which the latter had watched him during the conversation. He walked quickly up and down the park—

“I have been foolish, perhaps; I have lost twelve or fifteen days, and delayed stupidly from fear of not foreseeing everything. But then, how was I to imagine that this simple, easily deceived man would all at once become suspicious? What a strange dream! If I had not been on my guard, I might have been disconcerted. Come, come, I must try to disperse these ideas and give him something else to think about.”

He stopped, and after a few minutes consideration turned back towards the house.

As soon as he had left the room, Monsieur de Lamotte had bent over towards the cure, and had said—

“He did not show any emotion, did—he?”

“None whatever.”

“He did not start when I spoke of the man armed with those two daggers?”

“No. But put aside these ideas; you must see they are mistaken.”

“I did not tell everything, my father: this murderer whom I saw in my dream—was Derues himself! I know as well as you that it must be a delusion, I saw as well as you did that he remained quite calm, but, in spite of myself, this terrible dream haunts me ... There, do not listen to me, do not let me talk about it; it only makes me blush for myself.”

Whilst Derues remained at Buisson-Souef, Monsieur de Lamotte received several letters from his wife, some from Paris, some from Versailles. She remarked that her son and herself were perfectly well.... The writing was so well imitated that no one could doubt their genuineness. However, Monsieur de Lamotte’s suspicions continually increased and he ended by making the cure share his fears. He also refused to go with Derues to Paris, in spite of the latter’s entreaties. Derues, alarmed at the coldness shown him, left Buisson-Souef, saying that he intended to take possession about the middle of spring.

Monsieur de Lamotte was, in spite of himself, still detained by ill-health. But a new and inexplicable circumstance made him resolve to go to Paris and endeavour to clear up the mystery which appeared to surround his wife and son. He received an unsigned letter in unknown handwriting, and in which Madame de Lamotte’s reputation was attacked with a kind of would-be reticence, which hinted that she was an unfaithful wife and that in this lay the cause of her long absence. Her husband did not believe this anonymous denunciation, but the fate of the two beings dearest to him seemed shrouded in so much obscurity that he could delay no longer, and started for Paris.

His resolution not to accompany Derues had saved his life. The latter could not carry out his culminating crime at Buisson-Souef; it was only in Paris that his victims would disappear without his being called to account. Obligated to leave hold of his prey, he endeavoured to bewilder him in a labyrinth where all trace of truth might be lost. Already, as he had arranged beforehand, he had called calumny to his help, and prepared the audacious lie which was to vindicate himself should an accusation fall upon his head. He had hoped that Monsieur de Lamotte would fall defenceless into his hands; but now a careful examination of his position, showing the impossibility of avoiding an explanation had become inevitable, made him change all his plans, and compelled him to devise an infernal plot, so skilfully laid that it bid fair to defeat all human sagacity.

Monsieur de Lamotte arrived in Paris early in March. Chance decided that he should lodge in the rue de la Mortellerie, in a house not far from the one where

his wife's body lay buried. He went to see Derues, hoping to surprise him, and determined to make him speak, but found he was not at home. Madame Derues, whether acting with the discretion of an accomplice or really ignorant of her husband's proceedings, could not say where he was likely to be found. She said that he told her nothing about his actions, and that Monsieur de Lamotte must have observed during their stay at Buisson (which was true) that she never questioned him, but obeyed his wishes in everything; and that he had now gone away without saying where he was going. She acknowledged that Madame de Lamotte had lodged with them for six weeks, and that she knew that lady had been at Versailles, but since then she had heard nothing. All Monsieur de Lamotte's questions, his entreaties, prayers, or threats, obtained no other answer. He went to the lawyer in the rue de Paon, to the schoolmaster, and found the same uncertainty, the same ignorance. His wife and his son had gone to Versailles, there the clue ended which ought to guide his investigations. He went to this town; no one could give him any information, the very name of Lamotte was unknown. He returned to Paris, questioned and examined the people of the quarter, the proprietor of the Hotel de France, where his wife had stayed on her former visit; at length, wearied with useless efforts, he implored help from justice. Then his complaints ceased; he was advised to maintain a prudent silence, and to await Derues' return.

The latter thoroughly understood that, having failed to dissipate Monsieur de Lamotte's fears, there was no longer an instant to lose, and that the pretended private contract of February 12th would not of itself prove the existence of Madame de Lamotte. This is how he employed the time spent by the unhappy husband in fruitless investigation.

On March 12th, a woman, her face hidden in the hood of her cloak, or "Therese," as it was then called, appeared in the office of Maitre N——, a notary at Lyons. She gave her name as Marie Francoise Perffier, wife of Monsieur Saint-Faust de Lamotte, but separated, as to goods and estate, from him. She caused a deed to be drawn up, authorising her husband to receive the arrears of thirty thousand livres remaining from the price of the estate of Buisson-Souef, situated near Villeneuve-le-Roi-lez-Sens. The deed was drawn up and signed by Madame de Lamotte, by the notary, and one of his colleagues.

This woman was Derues. If we remember that he only arrived at Buisson February 28th, and remained there for some days, it becomes difficult to understand how at that period so long a journey as that from Paris to Lyons

could have been accomplished with such rapidity. Fear must have given him wings. We will now explain what use he intended to make of it, and what fable, a masterpiece of cunning and of lies, he had invented.

On his arrival in Paris he found a summons to appear before the magistrate of police. He expected this, and appeared quite tranquil, ready to answer any questions. Monsieur de Lamotte was present. It was a formal examination, and the magistrate first asked why he had left Paris.

“Monsieur,” replied Derues, “I have nothing to hide, and none of my actions need fear the daylight, but before replying, I should like to understand my position. As a domiciled citizen I have a right to require this. Will you kindly inform me why I have been summoned to appear before you, whether on account of anything personal to myself, or simply to give information as to something which may be within my knowledge?”

“You are acquainted with this gentleman, and cannot therefore be ignorant of the cause of the present inquiry.”

“I am, nevertheless, quite in ignorance of it.”

“Be good enough to answer my question. Why did you leave Paris? And where have you been?”

“I was absent for business reasons.”

“What business?”

“I shall say no more.”

“Take care! you have incurred serious suspicions, and silence will not tend to clear you.”

Derues hung down his head with an air of resignation; and Monsieur de Lamotte, seeing in this attitude a silent confession of crime, exclaimed, “Wretched man! what have you done with my wife and my son?”

“Your son!—” said Derues slowly and with peculiar emphasis. He again cast down his eyes.

The magistrate conducting the inquiry was struck by the expression of Derues' countenance and by this half answer, which appeared to hide a mystery and to aim at diverting attention by offering a bait to curiosity. He might have stopped Derues at the moment when he sought to plunge into a tortuous argument, and compelled him to answer with the same clearness and decision which distinguished Monsieur de Lamotte's question; but he reflected that the latter's inquiries, unforeseen, hasty, and passionate, were perhaps more likely to disconcert a prepared defence than cooler and more skilful tactics. He therefore changed his plans, contenting "himself for the moment with the part of an observer only, and watching a duel between two fairly matched antagonists.

"I require: you to tell me what has become of them," repeated Monsieur de Lamotte. "I have been to Versailles, you assured me they were there."

"And I told you the truth, monsieur."

"No one has seen them, no one knows them; every trace is lost. Your Honour, this man must be compelled to answer, he must say what has become of my wife and son!"

"I excuse your anxiety, I understand your trouble, but why appeal to me? Why am I supposed to know what may have happened to them?"

"Because I confided them to your care."

"As a friend, yes, I agree. Yes, it is quite true that last December I received a letter from you informing me of the impending arrival of your wife and son. I received them in my own house, and showed them the same hospitality which I had received from you. I saw them both, your son often, your wife every day, until the day she left me to go to Versailles. Yes, I also took Edouard to his mother, who was negotiating an appointment for him. I have already told you all this, and I repeat it because it is the truth. You believed me then: why do you not believe me now? Why has what I say become strange and incredible? If your wife and your son have disappeared, am I responsible? Did you transmit your authority to me? And now, in what manner are you thus calling me to account? Is it to the friend who might have pitied, who might have aided your search, that you thus address yourself? Have you come to confide in me, to ask for advice, for consolation? No, you accuse me; very well! then I refuse to speak, because, having no proofs, you yet accuse an honest man; because your fears, whether

real or imaginary, do not excuse you for casting, I know not what odious suspicions, on a blameless reputation, because I have the right to be offended. Monsieur” he continued, turning to the magistrate, “I believe you will appreciate my moderation, and will allow me to retire. If charges are brought against me, I am quite ready to meet them, and to show what they are really worth. I shall remain in Paris, I have now no business which requires my presence elsewhere.”

He emphasised these last words, evidently intending to draw attention to them. It did not escape the magistrate, who inquired—

“What do you mean by that?”

“Nothing beyond my words, your Honour, Have I your permission to retire?”

“No, remain; you are pretending not to understand.”

“I do not understand these insinuations so covertly made.”

Monsieur de Lamotte rose, exclaiming—

“Insinuations! What more can I say to compel you to answer? My wife and son have disappeared. It is untrue that, as you pretend, they have been at Versailles. You deceived me at Buisson-Souef, just as you are deceiving me now, as you are endeavouring to deceive justice by inventing fresh lies. Where are they? What has become of them? I am tormented by all the fears possible to a husband and father; I imagine all the most terrible misfortunes, and I accuse you to your face of having caused their death! Is this sufficient, or do you still accuse me of covert insinuations?”

Derues turned to the magistrate. “Is this charge enough to place me in the position of a criminal if I do not give a satisfactory explanation?”

“Certainly; you should have thought of that sooner.”

“Then,” he continued, addressing Monsieur de Lamotte, “I understand you persist in this odious accusation?”

“I certainly persist in it.”

“You have forgotten our friendship, broken all bonds between us: I am in your

eyes only a miserable assassin? You consider my silence as guilty, you will ruin me if I do not speak?"

"It is true."

"There is still time for reflection; consider what you are doing; I will forget your insults and your anger. Your trouble is great enough without my reproaches being added to it. But you desire that I should speak, you desire it absolutely?"

"I do desire it."

"Very well, then; it shall be as you wish."

Derues surveyed Monsieur de Lamotte with a look which seemed to say, "I pity you." He then added, with a sigh—

"I am now ready to answer. Your Honour, will you have the kindness to resume my examination?"

Derues had succeeded in taking up an advantageous position. If he had begun narrating the extraordinary romance he had invented, the least penetrating eye must have perceived its improbability, and one would have felt it required some support at every turn. But since he had resisted being forced to tell it, and apparently only ceded to Monsieur de Lamotte's violent persistency, the situation was changed; and this refusal to speak, coming from a man who thereby compromised his personal safety, took the semblance of generosity, and was likely to arouse the magistrate's curiosity and prepare his mind for unusual and mysterious revelations. This was exactly what Derues wanted, and he awaited the interrogation with calm and tranquillity.

"Why did you leave Paris?" the magistrate demanded a second time.

"I have already had the honour to inform you that important business necessitated my absence."

"But you refused to explain the nature of this business. Do you still persist in this refusal?"

"For the moment, yes. I will explain it later."

“Where have you been? Whence do you return?”

“I have been to Lyons, and have returned thence.”

“What took you there?”

“I will tell you later.”

“In the month of December last, Madame de Lamotte and her son came to Paris?”

“That is so.”

“They both lodged in your house?”

“I have no reason to deny it.”

“But neither she herself, nor Monsieur de Lamotte, had at first intended that she should accept a lodging in the house which you occupied.”

“That is quite true. We had important accounts to settle, and Madame de Lamotte told me afterwards that she feared some dispute on the question of money might arise between us—at least, that is the reason she gave me. She was mistaken, as the event proved, since I always intended to pay, and I have paid. But she may have had another reason which she preferred not to give.”

“It was the distrust of this man which she felt,” exclaimed Monsieur de Lamotte. Derues answered only with a melancholy smile.

“Silence, monsieur,” said the magistrate, “silence; do not interrupt.” Then addressing Derues—

“Another motive? What motive do you suppose?”

“Possibly she preferred to be more free, and able to receive any visitor she wished.”

“What do you mean?”

“It is only supposition on my part, I do not insist upon it.”

“But the supposition appears to contain a hint injurious to Madame de Lamotte’s

reputation?”

“No, oh no!” replied Derues, after a moment’s silence.

This sort of insinuation appeared strange to the magistrate, who resolved to try and force Derues to abandon these treacherous reticences behind which he sheltered himself. Again recommending silence to Monsieur de Lamotte, he continued to question Derues, not perceiving that he was only following the lead skilfully given by the latter, who drew him gradually on by withdrawing himself, and that all the time thus gained was an advantage to the accused.

“Well,” said the magistrate, “whatever Madame de Lamotte’s motives may have been, it ended in her coming to stay with you. How did you persuade her to take this step?”

“My wife accompanied her first to the Hotel de France, and then to other hotels. I said no more than might be deemed allowable in a friend; I could not presume to persuade her against her will. When I returned home, I was surprised to find her there with her son. She could not find a disengaged room in any of the hotels she tried, and she then accepted my offer.”

“What date was this?”

“Monday, the 16th of last December.”

“And when did she leave your house?”

“On the 1st of February.”

“The porter cannot remember having seen her go out on that day.”

“That is possible. Madame de Lamotte went and came as her affairs required. She was known, and no more attention would be paid to her than to any other inmate.”

“The porter also says that for several days before this date she was ill, and obliged to keep her room?”

“Yes, it was a slight indisposition, which had no results, so slight that it seemed unnecessary to call in a doctor. Madame de Lamotte appeared preoccupied and

anxious. I think her mental attitude influenced her health.”

“Did you escort her to Versailles?”

“No; I went there to see her later.”

“What proof can you give of her having actually stayed there?”

“None whatever, unless it be a letter which I received from her.”

“You told Monsieur de, Lamotte that she was exerting herself to procure her son’s admission either as a king’s page or into the riding school. Now, no one at Versailles has seen this lady, or even heard of her.”

“I only repeated what she told me.”

“Where was she staying?”

“I do not know.”

“What! she wrote to you, you went to see her, and yet you do not know where she was lodging?”

“That is so.”

“But it is impossible.”

“There are many things which would appear impossible if I were to relate them, but which are true, nevertheless.”

“Explain yourself.”

“I only received one letter from Madame de Lamotte, in which she spoke of her plans for Edouard, requesting me to send her her son on a day she fixed, and I told Edouard of her projects. Not being able to go to the school to see him, I wrote, asking if he would like to give up his studies and become a royal page. When I was last at Buisson-Souef, I showed his answer to Monsieur de Lamotte; it is here.”

And he handed over a letter to the magistrate, who read it, and passing it on to Monsieur de Lamotte, inquired—

“Did you then, and do you now, recognise your son’s handwriting?”

“Perfectly, monsieur.”

“You took Edouard to Versailles?”

“I did.”

“On what day?”

“February 11th, Shrove Tuesday. It is the only time I have been to Versailles. The contrary might be supposed; for I have allowed it to be understood that I have often seen Madame de Lamotte since she left my house, and was acquainted with all her actions, and that the former confidence and friendship still existed between us. In allowing this, I have acted a lie, and transgressed the habitual sincerity of my whole life.”

This assertion produced a bad impression on the magistrate. Derues perceived it, and to avert evil consequences, hastened to add—

“My conduct can only be appreciated when it is known in entirety. I misunderstood the meaning of Madame de Lamotte’s letter. She asked me to send her her son, I thought to oblige her by accompanying him, and not leaving him to go alone. So we travelled together, and arrived at Versailles about midday. As I got down from the coach I saw Madame de Lamotte at the palace gate, and observed, to my astonishment, that my presence displeased her. She was not alone.”

He stopped, although he had evidently reached the most interesting point of his story.

“Go on,” said the magistrate; “why do you stop now?”

“Because what I have to say is so painful—not to me, who have to justify myself, but for others, that I hesitate.”

“Go on.”

“Will you then interrogate me, please?”

“Well, what happened in this interview?”

Derues appeared to collect himself for a moment, and then said with the air of a man who has decide on speaking out at last—

“Madame de Lamotte was not alone; she was attended by a gentleman whom I did not know, whom I never saw either at Buisson-Souef or in Paris, and whom I have never seen again since. I will ask you to allow me to recount everything; even to the smallest details. This man’s face struck me at once, on account of a singular resemblance; he paid no attention to me at first, and I was able to examine him at leisure. His manners were those of a man belonging to the highest classes of society, and his dress indicated wealth. On seeing Edouard, he said to Madame de Lamotte—

“‘So this is he?’ and he then kissed him tenderly. This and the marks of undisguised pleasure which he evinced surprised me, and I looked at Madame de Lamotte, who then remarked with some asperity—

“‘I did not expect to see you, Monsieur Derues. I had not asked you to accompany my son.’

“Edouard seemed quite as much surprised as I was. The stranger gave me a look of haughty annoyance, but seeing I did not avoid his glance his countenance assumed a more gentle expression, and Madame de Lamotte introduced him as a person who took great interest in Edouard.”

“It is a whole tissue of imposture!” exclaimed Monsieur de Lamotte.

“Allow me to finish,” answered Derues. “I understand your doubts, and that you are not anxious to believe what I say, but I have been brought here by legal summons to tell the truth, and I am going to tell it. You can then weigh the two accusations in the balance, and choose between them. The reputation of an honourable man is as sacred, as important, as worthy of credit as the reputation of a woman, and I never heard that the virtue of the one was more fragile than that of the other.”

Monsieur de Lamotte, thunderstruck by such a revelation, could not contain his impatience and indignation.

“This, then,” he said, “is the explanation of an anonymous letter which I

received, and of the injurious suggestions' concerning my wife's honour which it contained; it was written to give an appearance of probability to this infamous legend. The whole thing is a disgraceful plot, and no doubt Monsieur Derues wrote the letter himself."

"I know nothing about it," said Derues unconcernedly, "and the explanation which you profess to find in it I should rather refer to something else I am going to mention. I did not know a secret warning had been sent to you: I now learn it from you, and I understand perfectly that such a letter, may have been written. But that you have received such a warning ought surely to be a reason for listening patiently and not denouncing all I say as imposture."

While saying this Derues mentally constructed the fresh falsehood necessitated by the interruption, but no variation of countenance betrayed his thought. He had an air of dignity natural to his position. He saw that, in spite of clear-headedness and long practice in studying the most deceptive countenances, the magistrate so far had not scented any of his falsehoods, and was getting bewildered in the windings of this long narrative, through which Derues led him as he chose; and he resumed with confidence—

"You know that I made Monsieur de Lamotte's acquaintance more than a year ago, and I had reason to believe his friendship as sincere as my own. As a friend, I could not calmly accept the suspicion which then entered my mind, nor could I conceal my surprise. Madame de Lamotte saw this, and understood from my looks that I was not satisfied with the explanation she wished me to accept. A glance of intelligence passed between her and her friend, who was still holding Edouard's hand. The day, though cold, was fine, and she proposed a walk in the park. I offered her my arm, and the stranger walked in front with Edouard. We had a short conversation, which has remained indelibly fixed in my memory.

"'Why did you come?' she inquired.

"I did not answer, but looked sternly at her, in order to discompose her. At length I said—

"'You should have written, madame, and warned me that my coming would be indiscreet.'

"She seemed much disconcerted, and exclaimed—

“I am lost! I see you guess everything, and will tell my husband. I am an unhappy woman, and a sin once committed can never be erased from the pages of a woman’s life! Listen, Monsieur Derues, listen, I implore you! You see this man, I shall not tell you who he is, I shall not give his name ... but I loved him long ago; I should have been his wife, and had he not been compelled to leave France, I should have married no one else.”

Monsieur de Lamotte started, and grew pale.

“What is the matter?” the magistrate inquired.

“Oh! this dastardly wretch is profiting by his knowledge of secrets which a long intimacy has enabled him to discover. Do not believe him, I entreat you, do not believe him!”

Derues resumed. “Madame de Lamotte continued: ‘I saw him again sixteen years ago, always in hiding, always proscribed. To-day he reappears under a name which is not his own: he wishes to link my fate with his; he has insisted on seeing Edouard. But I shall escape him. I have invented this fiction of placing my son among the, royal pages to account for my stay here. Do not contradict me, but help me; for a little time ago I met one of Monsieur de Lamotte’s friends, I am afraid he suspected something. Say you have seen me several times; as you have come, let it be known that you brought Edouard here. I shall return to Buisson as soon as possible, but will you go first, see my husband, satisfy him if he is anxious? I am in your hands; my honour, my reputation, my very life, are at your mercy; you can either ruin or help to save me. I may be guilty, but I am not corrupt. I have wept for my sin day after day, and I have already cruelly expiated it.’”

This execrable calumny was not related without frequent interruptions on the part of Monsieur de Lamotte. He was, however, obliged to own to himself that it was quite true that Marie Perier had really been promised to a man whom an unlucky affair had driven into exile, and whom he had supposed to be dead. This revelation, coming from Derues, who had the strongest interest in lying, by no means convinced him of his wife’s dishonour, nor destroyed the feelings of a husband and father; but Derues was not speaking for him lone, and what appeared incredible to Monsieur de Lamotte might easily seem less improbable to the colder and less interested judgment of the magistrate.

“I was wrong,” Derues continued, “in allowing myself to be touched by her tears, wrong in believing in her repentance, more wrong still in going to Buisson to satisfy her husband. But I only consented on conditions: Madame de Lamotte promised me to return shortly to Paris, vowing that her son should never know the truth, and that the rest of her life should be devoted to atoning for her sin by a boundless devotion. She then begged me to leave her, and told me she would write to me at Paris to fix the day of her return. This is what happened, and this is why I went to Buissan and gave my support to a lying fiction. With one word I might have destroyed the happiness of seventeen years. I did not wish to do so. I believed in the remorse; I believe in it still, in spite of all appearances; I have refused to speak this very day, and made every effort to prolong an illusion which I know it will be terrible to lose.”

There was a moment of silence. This fable, so atrociously ingenious, was simply and impressively narrated, and with an air of candour well contrived to impose on the magistrate, or, at least, to suggest grave doubts to his mind. Derues, with his usual cunning, had conformed his language to the quality of his listener. Any tricks, profession of piety, quotations from sacred books, so largely indulged in when he wished to bamboozle people of a lower class, would here have told against him. He knew when to abstain, and carried the art of deception far enough to be able to lay aside the appearance of hypocrisy. He had described all the circumstances without affectation, and if this unexpected accusation was wholly unproved, it yet rested on a possible fact, and did not appear absolutely incredible. The magistrate went through it all again, and made him repeat every detail, without being able to make him contradict himself or show the smallest embarrassment. While interrogating Derues, he kept his eyes fixed upon him; and this double examination being quite fruitless, only increased his perplexity. However, he never relaxed the incredulous severity of his demeanour, nor the imperative and threatening tone of his voice.

“You acknowledge having been at Lyons?” he asked.

“I have been there.”

“At the beginning of this examination you said you would explain the reason of this journey later.”

“I am ready to do so, for the journey is connected with the facts I have just narrated; it was caused by them.”

“Explain it.”

“I again ask permission to relate fully. I did not hear from Versailles: I began to fear Monsieur de Lamotte’s anxiety would bring him to Paris. Bound by the promise I had made to his wife to avert all suspicion and to satisfy any doubts he might conceive, and, must I add, also remembering that it was important for me to inform him of our new arrangements, and of this payment of a hundred thousand livres.”

“That payment is assuredly fictitious,” interrupted Monsieur de Lamotte; “we must have some proof of it.”

“I will prove it presently,” answered Derues. “So I went to Buisson, as I have already told you. On my return I found a letter from Madame de Lamotte, a letter with a Paris stamp, which had arrived that morning. I was surprised that she should write, when actually in Paris; I opened the letter, and was still more surprised. I have not the letter with me, but I recollect the sense of it perfectly, if not the wording, and I can produce it if necessary. Madame de Lamotte was at Lyons with her son and this person whose name I do not know, and whom I do not care to mention before her husband. She had confided this letter to a person who was coming to Paris, and who was to bring it me; but this individual, whose name was Marquis, regretted that having to start again immediately, he was obliged to entrust it to the post. This is the sense of its contents. Madame de Lamotte wrote that she found herself obliged to follow this nameless person to Lyons; and she begged me to send her news of her husband and of the state of his affairs, but said not one single word of any probable return. I became very uneasy at the news of this clandestine departure. I had no security except a private contract annulling our first agreement on the payment of one hundred thousand livres, and that this was not a sufficient and regular receipt I knew, because the lawyer had already refused to surrender Monsieur de Lamotte’s power of attorney. I thought over all the difficulties which this flight, which would have to be kept secret, was likely to produce, and I started for Lyons without writing or giving any notice of my intention. I had no information, I did not even know whether Madame de Lamotte was passing by another name, as at Versailles, but chance decreed that I met her the very day of my arrival. She was alone, and complained bitterly of her fate, saying she had been compelled to follow this individual to Lyons, but that very soon she would be free and would return to Paris. But I was struck by the uncertainty of her manner, and said I should not leave her without obtaining a deed in proof of our recent

arrangements. She refused at first, saying it was unnecessary, as she would soon return; but I insisted strongly. I told her I had already promised myself by telling Monsieur de Lamotte that she was at Versailles, endeavouring to procure an appointment for her son; that since she had been compelled to come to Lyons, the same person might take her elsewhere, so that she might disappear any day, might leave France without leaving any trace, without any written acknowledgment of her own dishonour; and that when all these falsehoods were discovered, I should appear in the light of an accomplice. I said also that, as she had unfortunately lodged in my house in Paris, and had requested me to remove her son from his school, explanations would be required from me, and perhaps I should be accused of this double disappearance. Finally, I declared that if she did not give me some proofs of her existence, willingly or unwillingly, I would go at once to a magistrate. My firmness made her reflect. 'My good Monsieur Derues,' she said, 'I ask your forgiveness for all the trouble I have caused you. I will give you this deed tomorrow, to-day it is too late; but come to this same place tomorrow, and you shall see me again.' I hesitated, I confess, to let her go. 'Ah,' she said, grasping my hands, 'do not suspect me of intending to deceive you! I swear that I will meet you here at four o'clock. It is enough that I have ruined myself, and perhaps my son, without also entangling you in my unhappy fate. Yes, you are right; this deed is important, necessary for you, and you shall have it. But do not show yourself here; if you were seen, I might not be able to do what I ought to do. Tomorrow you shall see me again, I swear it.' She then left me. The next day, the 12th, of March, I was exact at the rendezvous, and Madame de Lamotte arrived a moment later. She gave me a deed, authorising her husband to receive the arrears of thirty thousand livres remaining from the purchase-money of Buisson-Souef. I endeavoured again to express my opinion of her conduct; she listened in silence, as if my words affected her deeply. We were walking together, when she told me she had some business in a house we were passing, and asked me to wait for her. I waited more than an hour, and then discovered that this house, like many others in Lyons, had an exit in another street; and I understood that Madame de Lamotte had escaped by this passage, and that I might wait in vain. Concluding that trying to follow her would be useless, and seeing also that any remonstrance would be made in vain, I returned to Paris, deciding to say nothing as yet, and to conceal the truth as long as possible. I still had hopes, and I did not count on being so soon called on to defend myself: I thought that when I had to speak, it would be as a friend, and not as an accused person. This, sir, is the explanation of my conduct, and I regret that this justification, so easy for myself, should be so cruelly painful for another. You have seen the efforts which I made to defer it."

Monsieur de Lamotte had heard this second part of Derues' recital with a more silent indignation, not that he admitted its probability, but he was confounded by this monstrous imposture, and, as it were, terror-stricken by such profound hypocrisy. His mind revolted at the idea of his wife being accused of adultery; but while he repelled this charge with decision, he saw the confirmation of his secret terrors and presentiments, and his heart sank within him at the prospect of exploring this abyss of iniquity. He was pale, gasping for breath, as though he himself had been the criminal, while scorching tears furrowed his cheeks. He tried to speak, but his voice failed; he wanted to fling back at Derues the names of traitor and assassin, and he was obliged to bear in silence the look of mingled grief and pity which the latter bestowed upon him.

The magistrate, calmer, and master of his emotions, but tolerably bewildered in this labyrinth of cleverly connected lies, thought it desirable to ask some further questions.

"How," said he, "did you obtain this sum of a hundred thousand livres which you say you paid over to Madame de Lamotte?"

"I have been engaged in business for several years, and have acquired some fortune."

"Nevertheless, you have postponed the obligation of making this payment several times, so that Monsieur de Lamotte had begun to feel uneasiness on the subject. This was the chief reason of his wife's coming to Paris."

"One sometimes experiences momentary difficulties, which presently disappear."

"You say you have a deed given you at Lyons by Madame de Lamotte, which you were to give to her husband?"

"It is here."

The magistrate examined the deed carefully, and noted the name of the lawyer in whose office it had been drawn up.

"You may go," he said at last.

"What!" exclaimed Monsieur de Lamotte.

Derues stopped, but the magistrate signed to him to go, intimating, however, that he was on no account to leave Paris.

“But,” said Monsieur de Lamotte, when they were alone, “this man is indeed guilty. My wife has not betrayed me! She!—forget her duties as a wife! she was virtue incarnate! Ah! I assure you these terrible calumnies are invented to conceal double crime! I throw myself at your feet,—I implore your justice!”

“Rise, monsieur. This is only a preliminary examination, and I confess that, so far, he comes well out of it, for imagination can hardly understand such a depth of deceit. I watched him closely the whole time, and I could discover no sign of alarm, no contradiction, in either face or language; if guilty, he must be the greatest hypocrite that ever existed. But I shall neglect nothing: if a criminal is allowed to flatter himself with impunity, he frequently forgets to be prudent, and I have seen many betray themselves when they thought they had nothing to fear. Patience, and trust to the justice of both God and man.”

Several days passed, and Derues flattered himself the danger was over: his every action meanwhile was most carefully watched, but so that he remained unaware of the surveillance. A police officer named Mutel, distinguished for activity and intelligence beyond his fellows, was charged with collecting information and following any trail. All his bloodhounds were in action, and hunted Paris thoroughly, but could trace nothing bearing on the fate of Madame de Lamotte and her son. Mutel, however, soon discovered that in the rue Saint Victor, Derues had failed—three successive times, that he had been pursued by numerous creditors, and been often near imprisonment for debt, and that in 1771 he had been publicly accused of incendiarism. He reported on these various circumstances, and then went himself to Derues’ abode, where he obtained no results. Madame Derues declared that she knew nothing whatever, and the police, having vainly searched the whole house, had to retire. Derues himself was absent; when he returned he found another order to appear before the magistrate.

His first success had encouraged him. He appeared before the magistrate accompanied by a lawyer and full of confidence, complaining loudly that the police, in searching during his absence, had offended against the rights of a domiciled burgess, and ought to have awaited his return. Affecting a just indignation at Monsieur de Lamotte’s conduct towards him, he presented a demand that the latter should be declared a calumniator, and should pay damages

for the injury caused to his reputation. But this time his effrontery and audacity were of little avail, the magistrate easily detected him in flagrant lies. He declared at first that he had paid the hundred thousand livres with his own money but when reminded of his various bankruptcies, the claims of his creditors, and the judgments obtained against him as an insolvent debtor, he made a complete volte-face, and declared he had borrowed the money from an advocate named Duclos, to whom he had given a bond in presence of a notary. In spite of all his protestations, the magistrate committed him to solitary confinement at Fort l'Eveque.

As yet, nothing was publicly known; but vague reports and gossip, carried from shop to shop, circulated among the people, and began to reach the higher classes of society. The infallible instinct which is aroused among the masses is truly marvellous; a great crime is committed, which seems at first likely to defeat justice, and the public conscience is aroused. Long before the tortuous folds which envelop the mystery can be penetrated, while it is still sunk in profound obscurity, the voice of the nation, like an excited hive, buzzes around the secret; though the magistrates doubt, the public curiosity fixes itself, and never leaves go; if the criminal's hiding-place is changed, it follows the track, points it out, descries it in the gloom. This is what happened on the news of Derues' arrest. The affair was everywhere discussed, although the information was incomplete, reports inexact, and no real publicity to be obtained. The romance which Derues had invented by way of defence, and which became known as well as Monsieur de Lamotte's accusation, obtained no credence whatever; on the contrary, all the reports to his discredit were eagerly adopted. As yet, no crime could be traced, but the public presentiment divined an atrocious one. Have we not often seen similar agitations? The names of Bastide, of Castaing, of Papavoine, had hardly been pronounced before they completely absorbed all the public attention, and this had to be satisfied, light had to be thrown on the darkness: society demanded vengeance.

Derues felt some alarm in his dungeon, but his presence of mind and his dissimulation in no wise deserted him, and he swore afresh every day to the truth of his statements. But his last false assertion turned against him: the bond for a hundred thousand livres which he professed to have given to Duclos was a counterfeit which Duclos had annulled by a sort of counter declaration made the same day. Another circumstance, intended to ensure his safety, only redoubled suspicion. On April 8th, notes payable to order to the amount of seventy-eight thousand livres, were received by Monsieur de Lamotte's lawyer, as if coming

from Madame de Lamotte. It appeared extraordinary that these notes, which arrived in an ordinary stamped envelope, should not be accompanied by any letter of advice, and suspicion attached to Madame Derues, who hitherto had remained unnoticed. An inquiry as to where the packet had been posted soon revealed the office, distinguished by a letter of the alphabet, and the postmaster described a servant-maid who had brought the letter and paid for it. The description resembled the Derues' servant; and this girl, much alarmed, acknowledged, after a great deal of hesitation, that she had posted the letter in obedience to her mistress's orders. Whereupon Madame Derues was sent as a prisoner to Fort l'Eveque, and her husband transferred to the Grand-Chatelet. On being interrogated, she at length owned that she had sent these notes to Monsieur de Lamotte's lawyer, and that her husband had given them her in an envelope hidden in the soiled linen for which she had brought him clean in exchange.

All this certainly amounted to serious presumptive evidence of guilt, and if Derues had shown himself to the multitude, which followed every phase of the investigation with increasing anxiety, a thousand arms would have willingly usurped the office of the executioner; but the distance thence to actual proof of murder was enormous for the magistracy. Derues maintained his tranquillity, always asserting that Madame de Lamotte and her son were alive, and would clear him by their reappearance. Neither threats nor stratagems succeeded in making him contradict himself, and his assurance shook the strongest conviction. A new difficulty was added to so much uncertainty.

A messenger had been sent off secretly with all haste to Lyons; his return was awaited for a test which it was thought would be decisive.

One morning Derues was fetched from his prison and taken to a lower hall of the Conciergerie. He received no answers to the questions addressed to his escort, and this silence showed him the necessity of being on his guard and preserving his imperturbable demeanour whatever might happen. On arriving, he found the commissioner of police, Mutel, and some other persons. The hall being very dark, had been illuminated with several torches, and Derues was so placed that the light fell strongly on his face, and was then ordered to look towards a particular part of the hall. As he did so, a door opened, and a man entered. Derues beheld him with indifference, and seeing that the stranger was observing him attentively, he bowed to him as one might bow to an unknown person whose curiosity seems rather unusual.

It was impossible to detect the slightest trace of emotion, a hand placed on his heart would not have felt an increased pulsation, yet this stranger's recognition would be fatal!

Mutel approached the newcomer and whispered—

“Do you recognise him?”

“No, I do not.”

“Have the kindness to leave the room for a moment; we will ask you to return immediately.”

This individual was the lawyer in whose office at Lyons the deed had been drawn up which Derues had signed, disguised as a woman, and under the name of Marie-Francoise Perier, wife of the Sieur de Lamotte.

A woman's garments were brought in, and Derues was ordered to put them on, which he did readily, affecting much amusement. As he was assisted to disguise himself, he laughed, stroked his chin and assumed mincing airs, carrying effrontery so far as to ask for a mirror.

“I should like to see if it is becoming,” he said; “perhaps I might make some conquests.”

The lawyer returned: Derues was made to pass before him, to sit at a table, sign a paper, in fact to repeat everything it was imagined he might have said or done in the lawyer's office. This second attempt at identification succeeded no better than the first. The lawyer hesitated; then, understanding all the importance of his deposition, he refused to swear to anything, and finally declared that this was not the person who had come to him at Lyons.

“I am sorry, sir,” said Derues, as they removed him, “that you should have been troubled by having to witness this absurd comedy. Do not blame me for it; but ask Heaven to enlighten those who do not fear to accuse me. As for me, knowing that my innocence will shortly be made clear, I pardon them henceforth.”

Although justice at this period was generally expeditious, and the lives of accused persons were by no means safeguarded as they now are, it was impossible to condemn Derues in the absence of any positive proofs of guilt. He

knew this, and waited patiently in his prison for the moment when he should triumph over the capital accusation which weighed against him. The storm no longer thundered over his head, the most terrible trials were passed, the examinations became less frequent, and there were no more surprises to dread. The lamentations of Monsieur de Lamotte went to the hearts of the magistrates, but his certainty could not establish theirs, and they pitied, but could not avenge him. In certain minds a sort of reaction favourable to the prisoner began to set in. Among the dupes of Derues' seeming piety, many who at first held their peace under these crushing accusations returned to their former opinion. The bigots and devotees, all who made a profession of kneeling in the churches, of publicly crossing themselves and dipping their fingers in the holy water, and who lived on cant and repetitions of "Amen" and "Alleluia," talked of persecution, of martyrdom, until Derues nearly became a saint destined by the Almighty to find canonisation in a dungeon. Hence arose quarrels and arguments; and this abortive trial, this unproved accusation, kept the public imagination in a constant ferment.

To the greater part of those who talk of the "Supreme Being," and who expect His intervention in human affairs, "Providence" is only a word, solemn and sonorous, a sort of theatrical machine which sets all right in the end, and which they glorify with a few banalities proceeding from the lips, but not from the heart. It is true that this unknown and mysterious Cause which we call "God" or "Chance" often appears so exceedingly blind and deaf that one may be permitted to wonder whether certain crimes are really set apart for punishment, when so many others apparently go scot-free. How many murders remain buried in the night of the tomb! how many outrageous and avowed crimes have slept peacefully in an insolent and audacious prosperity! We know the names of many criminals, but who can tell the number of unknown and forgotten victims? The history of humanity is twofold, and like that of the invisible world, which contains marvels unexplored by the science of the visible one, the history recounted in books is by no means the most curious and strange. But without delaying over questions such as these, without protesting here against sophistries which cloud the conscience and hide the presence of an avenging Deity, we leave the facts to the general judgment, and have now to relate the last episode in this long and terrible drama.

Of all the populous quarters of Paris which commented on the "affaire Derues," none showed more excitement than that of the Greve, and amongst all the surrounding streets none could boast more numerous crowds than the rue de la

Mortellerie. Not that a secret instinct magnetised the crowd in the very place where the proof lay buried, but that each day its attention was aroused by a painful spectacle. A pale and grief-stricken man, whose eyes seemed quenched in tears, passed often down the street, hardly able to drag himself along; it was Monsieur de Lamotte, who lodged, as we have said, in the rue de la Mortellerie, and who seemed like a spectre wandering round a tomb. The crowd made way and uncovered before him, everybody respected such terrible misfortune, and when he had passed, the groups formed up again, and continued discussing the mystery until nightfall.

On April 17th, about four in the afternoon, a score of workmen and gossiping women had collected in front of a shop. A stout woman, standing on the lowest step, like an orator in the tribune, held forth and related for the twentieth time what she knew, or rather, did not know. There were listening ears and gaping mouths, even a slight shudder ran through the group; for the widow Masson, discovering a gift of eloquence at the age of sixty, contrived to mingle great warmth and much indignation in her recital. All at once silence fell on the crowd, and a passage was made for Monsieur de Lamotte. One man ventured to ask—

“Is there anything fresh to-day?”

A sad shake of the head was the only answer, and the unhappy man continued his way.

“Is that Monsieur de Lamotte?” inquired a particularly dirty woman, whose cap, stuck on the side of her head, allowed locks of grey hair to straggle from under it. “Ah! is that Monsieur de Lamotte?”

“Dear me!” said a neighbour, “don’t you know him by this time? He passes every day.”

“Excuse me! I don’t belong to this quarter, and—no offence—but it is not so beautiful as to bring one out of curiosity! Nothing personal—but it is rather dirty.”

Madame is probably accustomed to use a carriage.”

“That would suit you better than me, my dear, and would save your having to buy shoes to keep your feet off the ground!”

The crowd seemed inclined to hustle the speaker,—

“Wait a moment!” she continued, “I didn’t mean to offend anyone. I am a poor woman, but there’s no disgrace in that, and I can afford a glass of liqueur. Eh, good gossip, you understand, don’t you? A drop of the best for Mother Maniffret, and if my fine friend there will drink with me to settle our difference, I will stand her a glass.”

The example set by the old hawker was contagious, and instead of filling two little glasses only, widow Masson dispensed a bottleful.

“Come, you have done well,” cried Mother Maniffret; “my idea has brought you luck.”

“Faith! not before it was wanted, either!”

“What! are you complaining of trade too?”

“Ah! don’t mention it; it is miserable!”

“There’s no trade at all. I scream myself hoarse all day, and choke myself for twopence halfpenny. I don’t know what’s to come of it all. But you seem to have a nice little custom.”

“What’s the good of that, with a whole house on one’s hands? It’s just my luck; the old tenants go, and the new ones don’t come.”

“What’s the matter, then?”

“I think the devil’s in it. There was a nice man on the first floor-gone; a decent family on the third, all right except that the man beat his wife every night, and made such a row that no one could sleep—gone also. I put up notices—no one even looks at them! A few months ago—it was the middle of December, the day of the last execution—”

“The 15th, then,” said the hawker. “I cried it, so I know; it’s my trade, that.”

“Very well, then, the 15th,” resumed widow Masson. “On that day, then, I let the cellar to a man who said he was a wine merchant, and who paid a term in advance, seeing that I didn’t know him, and wouldn’t have lent him a farthing on

the strength of his good looks. He was a little bit of a man, no taller than that,”—contemptuously holding out her hand,—“and he had two round eyes which I didn’t like at, all. He certainly paid, he did that, but we are more than half through the second term and I have no news of my tenant.”

“And have you never seen him since?”

“Yes, once—no, twice. Let’s see—three times, I am sure. He came with a handcart and a commissionaire, and had a big chest taken downstairs—a case which he said contained wine in bottles....

“No, he came before that, with a workman I think.

“Really, I don’t know if it was before or after—doesn’t matter. Anyhow, it was bottled wine. The third time he brought a mason, and I am sure they quarreled. I heard their voices. He carried off the key, and I have seen neither him nor his wine again. I have another key, and I went down one day; perhaps the rats have drunk the wine and eaten the chest, for there certainly is nothing there any more than there is in my hand now. Nevertheless, I saw what I saw. A big chest, very big, quite new, and corded all round with strong rope.”

“Now, what day was that? “asked the hawker.

“What day? Well, it was—no, I can’t remember.”

“Nor I either; I am getting stupid. Let’s have another little glass—shall we? just to clear our memories!”

The expedient was not crowned with success, the memories failed to recover themselves. The crowd waited, attentive, as may be supposed. Suddenly the hawker exclaimed:

“What a fool I am! I am going to find that, if only I have still got it.”

She felt eagerly in the pocket of her underskirt, and produced several pieces of dirty, crumpled paper. As she unfolded one after another, she asked:

“A big chest, wasn’t it?”

“Yes, very big.”

“And quite new?”

“Quite new.”

“And corded?”

“Yes, I can see it now.”

“So can I, good gracious! It was the day when I sold the history of Leroi de Valines, the 1st of February.”

“Yes, it was a Saturday; the next day was Sunday.”

“That’s it, that’s it!—Saturday, February 1st. Well, I know that chest too! I met your wine merchant on the Place du Louvre, and he wasn’t precisely enjoying himself: one of his creditors wanted to seize the chest, the wine, the whole kettle of fish! A little man, isn’t he?—a scarecrow?”

“Just SO.”

“And has red hair?”

“That’s the man.”

“And looks a hypocrite?”

“You’ve hit it exactly.”

“And he is a hypocrite! enough to make one shudder! No doubt he can’t pay his rent! A thief, my dears, a beggarly thief, who set fire to his own cellar, and who accused me of trying to steal from him, while it was he who cheated me, the villain, out of a piece of twenty-four sous. It’s lucky I turned up here! Well, well, we shall have some fun! Here’s another little business on your hands, and you will have to say where that wine has got to, my dear gossip Derues.”

“Derues!” cried twenty voices all at once.

“What! Derues who is in Prison?”

“Why, that’s Monsieur de Lamotte’s man.”

“The man who killed Madame de Lamotte?”

“The man who made away with her son?”

“A scoundrel, my dears, who accused me of stealing, an absolute monster!”

“It is just a little unfortunate,” said widow Masson, “that it isn’t the man. My tenant calls himself Ducoudray. There’s his name on the register.”

“Confound it, that doesn’t look like it at all,” said the hawker: “now that’s a bore! Oh yes, I have a grudge against that thief, who accused me of stealing. I told him I should sell his history some day. When that happens, I’ll treat you all round.”

As a foretaste of the fulfilment of this promise, the company disposed of a second bottle of liqueur, and, becoming excited, they chattered at random for some time, but at length slowly dispersed, and the street relapsed into the silence of night. But, a few hours later, the inhabitants were surprised to see the two ends occupied by unknown people, while other sinister-looking persons patrolled it all night, as if keeping guard. The next morning a carriage escorted by police stopped at the widow Masson’s door. An officer of police got out and entered a neighbouring house, whence he emerged a quarter of an hour later with Monsieur de Lamotte leaning on his arm. The officer demanded the key of the cellar which last December had been hired from the widow Masson by a person named Ducoudray, and went down to it with Monsieur de Lamotte and one of his subordinates.

The carriage standing at the door, the presence of the commissioner Mutel, the chatter of the previous evening, had naturally roused everybody’s imagination. But this excitement had to be kept for home use: the whole street was under arrest, and its inhabitants were forbidden to leave their houses. The windows, crammed with anxious faces, questioning each other, in the expectation of something wonderful, were a curious sight; and the ignorance in which they remained, these mysterious preparations, these orders silently executed, doubled the curiosity, and added a sort of terror: no one could see the persons who had accompanied the police officer; three men remained in the carriage, one guarded by the two others. When the heavy coach turned into the rue de la Mortellerie, this man had bent towards the closed window and asked—

“Where are we?”

And when they answered him, he said—

“I do not know this street; I was never in it.”

After saying this quite quietly, he asked—

“Why am I brought here?”

As no one replied, he resumed his look of indifference, and betrayed no emotion, neither when the carriage stopped nor when he saw Monsieur de Lamotte enter the widow Masson’s house.

The officer reappeared on the threshold, and ordered Derues to be brought in.

The previous evening, detectives, mingling with the crowd, had listened to the hawker’s story of having met Derues near the Louvre escorting a large chest. The police magistrate was informed in the course of the evening. It was an indication, a ray of light, perhaps the actual truth, detached from obscurity by chance gossip; and measures were instantly taken to prevent anyone either entering or leaving the street without being followed and examined. Mutel thought he was on the track, but the criminal might have accomplices also on the watch, who, warned in time, might be able to remove the proofs of the crime, if any existed.

Derues was placed between two men who each held an arm. A third went before, holding a torch. The commissioner, followed by men also carrying torches, and provided with spades and pickaxes, came behind, and in this order they descended to the vault. It was a dismal and terrifying procession; anyone beholding these dark and sad countenances, this pale and resigned man, passing thus into these damp vaults illuminated by the flickering glare of torches, might well have thought himself the victim of illusion and watching some gloomy execution in a dream. But all was real and when light penetrated this dismal charnel-house it seemed at once to illuminate its secret depths, so that the light of truth might at length penetrate these dark shadows, and that the voice of the dead would speak from the earth and the walls.

“Wretch!” exclaimed Monsieur de Lamotte, when he saw Derues appear, “is it here that you murdered my wife and my son?”

Derues looked calmly at him, and replied—

“I beg you, sir, not to add insult to the misfortunes you have already caused. If you stood in my place and I were in yours, I should feel some pity and respect for so terrible a position. What do you want me? and why am I brought here?”

He did not know the events of last evening, and could only mentally accuse the mason who had helped to bury the chest. He felt that he was lost, but his audacity never forsook him.

“You are here, in the first place, to be confronted with this woman,” said the officer, causing the widow Masson to stand opposite to him.

“I do not know her.”

“But I know you, and know you well. It was you who hired this cellar under the name of Ducoudray.”

Derues shrugged his shoulders and answered bitterly—

“I can understand a man being condemned to the torture if he is guilty, but that in order to accomplish one’s mission as accuser, and to discover a criminal, false witnesses who can give no evidence should be brought a hundred leagues, that the rabble should be roused up, that divers faces and imaginary names should be bestowed on an innocent man, in order to turn a movement of surprise or an indignant gesture to his disadvantage, all this is iniquitous, and goes beyond the right of judgment bestowed upon men by God. I do not know this woman, and no matter what she says or does, I shall say no more.”

Neither the skill nor threats of the police officer could shake this resolution. It was to no purpose that the widow Masson repeated and asseverated that she recognised him as her tenant Ducoudray, and that he had had a large case of wine taken down into the cellar; Derues folded his arms, and remained as motionless as if he had been blind and deaf.

The walls were sounded, the stones composing them carefully examined, the floor pierced in several places, but nothing unusual was discovered.

Would they have to give it up? Already the officer was making signs to this effect, when the man who had remained at first below with Monsieur de Lamotte, and who, standing in shadow, had carefully watched Derues when he was brought down, came forward, and pointing to the recess under the stairs,

said—

“Examine this corner. The prisoner glanced involuntarily in this direction when he came down; I have watched him, and it is the only sign he has given. I was the only person who could see him, and he did not see me. He is very clever, but one can’t be for ever on one’s guard, and may the devil take me if I haven’t scented the hiding-place.”

“Wretch!” said Derues to himself, “then you have had your hand on me for a whole hour, and amused yourself by prolonging my agony! Oh! I ought to have known it; I have found my master. Never mind, you shall learn nothing from my face, nor yet from the decaying body you will find; worms and poison can only have left an unrecognisable corpse.”

An iron rod sunk into the ground, encountered a hard substance some four feet below. Two men set to work, and dug with energy. Every eye was fixed upon this trench increasing in depth with every shovelful of earth which the two labourers cast aside. Monsieur de Lamotte was nearly fainting, and his emotion impressed everyone except Derues. At length the silence was broken by the spades striking heavily on wood, and the noise made everyone shudder. The chest was uncovered and hoisted out of the trench; it was opened, and the body of a woman was seen, clad only in a chemise, with a red and white headband, face downwards. The body was turned over, and Monsieur de Lamotte recognised his wife, not yet disfigured.

The feeling of horror was so great that no one spoke or uttered a sound. Derues, occupied in considering the few chances which remained to him, had not observed that, by the officer’s order, one of the guards had left the cellar before the men began to dig. Everybody had drawn back both from the corpse and the murderer, who alone had not moved, and who was repeating prayers. The flame of the torches placed on the ground cast a reddish light on this silent and terrible scene.

Derues started and turned round on hearing a terrified cry behind him. His wife had just been brought to the cellar. The commissioner seized her with one hand, and taking a torch in the other, compelled her to look down on the body.

“It is Madame de Lamotte!” she exclaimed.

“Yes, yes,” she answered, overwhelmed with terror,—“yes, I recognise her!”

Unable to support the sight any longer, she grew pale and fainted away. She and her husband were removed separately. One would have supposed the discovery was already known outside, for the people showered curses and cries of “Assassin!” and “Poisoner!” on the carriage which conveyed Derues. He remained silent during the drive, but before reentering his dungeon, he said—

“I must have been mad when I sought to hide the death and burial of Madame de Lamotte from public knowledge. It is the only sin I have committed, and, innocent of aught else, I resign myself as a Christian to the judgment of God.”

It was the only line of defence which remained open to him, and he clung to it, with the hope of imposing on the magistrates by redoubled hypocrisy and pious observances. But all this laboriously constructed scaffolding of lies was shaken to its base and fell away piece by piece. Every moment brought fresh and overwhelming revelations. He professed that Madame de Lamotte had died suddenly in his house, and that, fearing suspicion, he had buried her secretly. But the doctors called on to examine the body declared that she had been poisoned with corrosive sublimate and opium. The pretended payment was clearly an odious imposture, the receipt a forgery! Then, like a threatening spectre, arose another question, to which he found no reply, and his own invention turned against him.

Why, knowing his mother was no more, had he taken young de Lamotte to Versailles? What had become of the youth? What had befallen him? Once on the track, the cooper with whom he had lodged on the 12th of February was soon discovered, and an Act of Parliament ordered the exhumation of the corpse buried under the name of Beaupre, which the cooper identified by a shirt which he had given for the burial. Derues, confounded by the evidence, asserted that the youth died of indigestion and venereal disease. But the doctors again declared the presence of corrosive sublimate and opium. All this evidence of guilt he met with assumed resignation, lamenting incessantly for Edouard, whom he declared he had loved as his own son. “Alas!” he said, “I see that poor boy every night! But it softens my grief to know that he was not deprived of the last consolations of religion! God, who sees me, and who knows my innocence, will enlighten the magistrates, and my honour will be vindicated.”

The evidence being complete, Derues was condemned by sentence of the Chatelet, pronounced April 30th, and confirmed by Parliament, May 5th. We give the decree as it is found in the archives:

“This Court having considered the trial held before the Provost of Paris, or his Deputy-Lieutenant at the Chatelet, for the satisfaction of the aforesaid Deputy at the aforesaid Chatelet, at the request of the Deputy of the King’s Attorney General at the aforesaid Court, summoner and plaintiff, against Antoine-Francois Derues, and Marie-Louise Nicolais, his wife, defendants and accused, prisoners in the prisons of the Conciergerie of the Palace at Paris, who have appealed from the sentence given at the aforesaid trial, the thirtieth day of April 1777, by which the aforesaid Antoine-Francois Derues has been declared duly attainted and convicted of attempting unlawfully to appropriate without payment, the estate of Buissony Souef, belonging to the Sieur and Dame de Saint Faust de Lamotte, from whom he had bought the said estate by private contract on the twenty-second day of December 1775, and also of having unworthily abused the hospitality shown by him since the sixteenth day of December last towards the aforesaid Dame de Lamotte, who arrived in Paris on the aforesaid day in order to conclude with him the bargain agreed on in December 1775, and who, for this purpose, and at his request, lodged with her son in the house of the said Derues, who of premeditated design poisoned the said Dame de Lamotte, whether by a medicine composed and prepared by him on the thirtieth day of January last, or by the beverages and drinks administered by him after the aforesaid medicine (he having taken the precaution to send his servant into the country for two or three days), and to keep away strangers from the room where the said Dame de Lamotte was lying), from the effects of which poison the said Dame de Lamotte died on the night of the said thirty-first day of January last; also of having kept her demise secret, and of having himself enclosed in a chest the body of the said Dame de Lamotte, which he then caused to be secretly transported to a cellar in the rue de la Mortellerie hired by him for this purpose, under the assumed name of Ducoudray, wherein he buried it himself, or caused it to be buried; also of having persuaded the son of the above Dame de Lamotte (who, with his mother, had lodged in his house from the time of their arrival in Paris until the fifteenth day of January, last,—and who had then been placed in a school that the aforesaid Dame de Lamotte was at Versailles and desired him to join her there, and, under this pretence, of having conducted the said younger Sieur de Lamotte, the twelfth day of February (after having given him some chocolate), to the aforesaid town of Versailles, to a lodging hired at a cooper’s, and of having there wilfully poisoned him, either in the chocolate taken by the said younger Sieur de Lamotte before starting, or in beverages and medicaments which the said Derues himself prepared, mixed, and administered to the aforesaid Sieur de Lamotte the younger, during the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth days of February last, having kept him lying ill in the aforesaid hired room, and having refused to

call in physicians or surgeons, notwithstanding the progress of the malady, and the representations made to him on the subject, saying that he himself was a physician and surgeon; from which poison the said Sieur de Lamotte the younger died on the fifteenth day of February last, at nine o'clock in the evening, in the arms of the aforesaid Derues, who, affecting the deepest grief, and shedding tears, actually exhorted the aforesaid Sieur de Lamotte to confession, and repeated the prayers for the dying; after which he himself laid out the body for burial, saying that the deceased had begged him to do so, and telling the people of the house that he had died of venereal disease; also of having caused him to be buried the next day in the churchyard of the parish church of Saint Louis at the aforesaid Versailles, and of having entered the deceased in the register of the said parish under a false birthplace, and the false name of Beaupre, which name the said Derues had himself assumed on arriving at the said lodging, and had given to the said Sieur de Lamotte the younger, whom he declared to be his nephew. Also, to cover these atrocities, and in order to appropriate to himself the aforesaid estate of Buisson-Souef, he is convicted of having calumniated the aforesaid Dame de Lamotte, and of having used various manoeuvres and practised several deceptions, to wit—

“First, in signing, or causing to be signed, the names of the above Dame de Lamotte to a deed of private contract between the said Derues and his wife on one side and the aforesaid Dame de Lamotte by right of a power of attorney given by her husband on the other (the which deed is dated the twelfth day of February, and was therefore written after the decease of the said Dame de Lamotte); by which deed the said Dame de Lamotte appears to change the previous conventions agreed on in the first deed of the twenty-second of December in the year 1775, and acknowledges receipt from the said Derues of a sum of one hundred thousand livres, as being the price of the estate of Buisson;

“Secondly, in signing before a notary, the ninth day of February last, a feigned acknowledgment for a third part of a hundred thousand livres, in order to give credence to the pretended payment made by him;

“Thirdly, in announcing and publishing, and attesting even by oath at the time of an examination before the commissioner Mutel, that he had really paid in cash to the aforesaid Dame de Lamotte the aforesaid hundred thousand livres, and that she, being provided with this money, had fled with her son and a certain person unknown;

“Fourthly, in depositing with a notary the deed of private contract bearing the pretended receipt for the above sum of one hundred thousand livres, and pursuing at law the execution of this deed and of his claim to the possession of the said estate;

“Fifthly, in signing or causing to be signed by another person, before the notaries of the town of Lyons, whither he had gone for this purpose, a deed dated the twelfth day of March, by which the supposed Dame de Lamotte appeared to accept the payment of the hundred thousand livres, and to give authority to the Sieur de Lamotte, her husband, to receive the arrears of the remainder of the price of the said estate, the which deed he produced as a proof of the existence of the said Dame de Lamotte;

“Sixthly, in causing to be sent, by other hands, under the name of the aforesaid Dame de Lamotte, to a lawyer, on the eighth day of April 1777 (at a time when he was in prison, and had been compelled to abandon the fable that he had paid the aforesaid sum of one hundred thousand livres in hard cash, and had substituted a pretended payment made in notes), the notes pretended to have been given by him in payment to the said Dame de Lamotte

“Seventh, and finally, in maintaining constantly, until the discovery of the body of the aforesaid Dame de Lamotte, that the said Dame was still alive, and that he had seen her at the town of Lyons, as has been stated above.

“In atonement has been condemned, *etc. etc. etc.*

“His goods are hereby declared acquired and confiscated to the King, or to whomsoever His Majesty shall appoint, first deducting the sum of two hundred livres as fine for the King, in case the confiscation is not to the sole profit of His Majesty; and also the sum of six hundred livres for masses to be said for the repose of the souls of the aforesaid Dame de Lamotte and her son. And, before being executed, the said Antoine-Francois Derues shall suffer the question ordinary and extraordinary, in order that from his mouth may be learned the truth of these facts, and also the names of his accomplices. And the decision of the judges in the proceedings with regard to the above-mentioned Marie-Louise Nicolais, wife of Derues, is delayed until after the execution of the above sentence. It is also decreed that the mortuary act of the aforesaid de Lamotte the younger, dated the sixteenth day of February last, in the register of deaths belonging to the parish church of Saint-Louis at Versailles, be amended, and his

correct names be substituted, in order that the said Sieur de Lamotte, the father, and other persons interested, may produce said names before the magistrates if required. And it is also decreed that this sentence be printed and published by the deputy of the Attorney-General at the Chatelet, and affixed to the walls in the usual places and cross roads of the town, provostship and viscounty of Paris, and wherever else requisite.

“With regard to the petition of Pierre-Etienne de Saint-Faust de Lamotte, a Royal Equerry, Sieur de Grange-Flandre, Buisson-Souef, Valperfond, and other places, widower and inheritor of Marie Francois Perier, his wife, according to their marriage contract signed before Baron and partner, notaries at Paris, the fifth day of September 1762, whereby he desires to intervene in the action brought against Derues and his accomplices, concerning the assassination and poisoning committed on the persons of the wife and son of the said Sieur de Saint-Faust de Lamotte, on the accusation made by him to the Deputy Attorney-General of the King at the Chatelet at present pending in the Court, on the report of the final judgment given in the said action the 30th of April last, and which allowed the intervention; it is decreed that there shall be levied on the goods left by the condemned, before the rights of the Treasury, and separate from them, the sum of six thousand livres, or such other sum as it shall please the Court to award; from which sum the said Saint-Faust de Lamotte shall consent to deduct the sum of two thousand seven hundred and forty-eight livres, which he acknowledges has been sent or remitted to him by the said Derues and his wife at different times; which first sum of six thousand livres, or such other, shall be employed by the said Sieur de Saint-Faust de Lamotte, who is authorised to found therewith, in the parish church of Saint Nicholas de Villeneuve-le-Roy, in which parish the estate of Buisson-Souef is situate, and which is mentioned in the action, an annual and perpetual service for the repose of the souls of the wife and son of the said Sieur de Saint-Faust de Lamotte, of which an act shall be inserted in the decree of intervention, and a copy of this act or decree shall be inscribed upon a stone which shall be set in the wall of the said church of Saint Nicholas de Villeneuve-le-Roy, in such place as is expedient. And the deed of contract for private sale, made between the late spouse of the said Sieur de Saint-Faust de Lamotte and the above-named Derues and his wife, is hereby declared null and void, as having had no value in absence of any payment or realisation of contract before a notary; and the pretended agreement of the twelfth day of February last, as also all other deeds fabricated by the said Derues or others, named in the above action, as also any which may hereafter be presented, are hereby declared to be null and void.

“The Court declares the judgment pronounced by the magistrates of the Chatelet against the above named Derues to be good and right, and his appeal against the same to be bad and ill-founded.

“It is decreed that the sentence shall lose its full and entire effect with regard to Marie-Louise Nicolais, who is condemned to the ordinary fine of twelve livres. The necessary relief granted on the petition of Pierre-Etienne de Saint-Faust de Lamotte, the second day of May this present month, and delay accorded until after the suspended judgment pronounced with regard to the said Marie-Louise Nicolais.

“(Signed) De Gourgues, President. “OUTREMONT, Councillor.”

Derues’ assurance and calmness never deserted him for one moment. For three-quarters of an hour he harangued the Parliament, and his defence was remarkable both for its presence of mind and the art with which he made the most of any circumstances likely to suggest doubts to the magistrates and soften the severity of the first sentence. Found guilty on every point, he yet protested that he was innocent of poisoning. Remorse, which often merely means fear of punishment, had no place in his soul, and torture he seemed not to dread. As strong in will as he was weak in body, he desired to die like a martyr in the faith of his religion, which was hypocrisy, and the God whom he gloried on the scaffold was the god of lies.

On May 6th, at seven in the morning, the sentence of execution was read to him. He listened calmly, and when it was finished, remarked:

“I had not anticipated so severe a sentence.”

A few hours later the instruments of torture were got ready. He was told that this part of his punishment would be remitted if he would confess his crimes and the names of his accomplices. He replied:

“I have no more to say. I know what terrible torture awaits me, I know I must die to-day, but I have nothing to confess.”

He made no resistance when his knees and legs were bound, and endured the torture courageously. Only, in a moment of agony, he exclaimed:

“Accursed money! has thou reduced me to this?”

Thinking that pain would overcome his resolution, the presiding magistrate bent towards him, and said:

“Unhappy man! confess thy crime, since death is near at hand.”

He recovered his firmness, and, looking at the magistrate, replied:

“I know it, monseigneur; I have perhaps not three hours to live.”

Thinking that his apparently feeble frame could not endure the last wedges, the executioner was ordered to stop. He was unbound and laid on a mattress, and a glass of wine was brought, of which he only drank a few drops; after this, he made his confession to the priest. For, dinner, they brought him soup and stew, which he ate eagerly, and inquiring of the gaoler if he could have something more, an entree was brought in addition. One might have thought that this final repast heralded, not death but deliverance. At length three o'clock struck the hour appointed for leaving the prison.

According to the report of credible persons whom we have consulted, Paris on this occasion presented a remarkable appearance, which those who saw it were never able to forget. The great anthill was troubled to its very lowest depth. Whether by accident or design, the same day had been fixed for a function which ought to have proved a considerable counter attraction. A great festival in honour of a German prince was given on the Plaine de Grenelle, at which all the court was present; and probably more than one great lady regretted missing the emotions of the Place de Greve, abandoned to the rabble and the bourgeoisie. The rest of the city was deserted, the streets silent, the houses closed. A stranger transported suddenly into such a solitude might have reasonably thought that during the night the town had been smitten by the Angel of Death, and that only a labyrinth of vacant buildings remained, testifying to the life and turmoil of the preceding day. A dark and dense atmosphere hung over the abandoned town; lightning furrowed the heavy motionless clouds; in the distance the occasional rumble of thunder was heard, answered by the cannon of the royal fete. The crowd was divided between the powers of heaven and earth: the terrible majesty of the Eternal on one side, on the other the frivolous pomp of royalty—eternal

punishment and transient grandeur in opposition. Like the waters of a flood leaving dry the fields which they have covered, so the waves of the multitude forsook their usual course. Thousands of men and women crowded together along the route which the death-cart would take; an ocean of heads undulated like the ears in a wheatfield. The old houses, hired at high rates, quivered under the weight of eager spectators, and the window sashes had been removed to afford a better view.

Attired in the shirt worn by condemned criminals, and bearing a placard both in front and behind, with the words "Wilful Poisoner," Derues descended the great staircase of the Chatelet with a firm step. It was at this moment, on seeing the crucifix, that he exclaimed, "O Christ, I shall suffer like Thee!" He mounted the tumbril, looking right and left amongst the crowd. During the progress he recognised and bowed to several of his old associates, and bade adieu in a clear voice to the former mistress of his 'prentice days, who has recorded that she never saw him look so pleasant. Arrived at the door of Notre Dame, where the clerk was awaiting him, he descended from the tumbril without assistance, took a lighted wax taper weighing two pounds in his hand, and did penance, kneeling, bareheaded and barefooted, a rope round his neck, repeating the words of the death-warrant. He then reascended the cart in the midst of the cries and execrations of the populace, to which he appeared quite insensible. One voice only, endeavouring to dominate the tumult, caused him to turn his head: it was that of the hawker who was crying his sentence, and who broke off now and then to say—

"Well! my poor gossip Derues, how do you like that fine carriage you're in? Oh yes, mutter your prayers and look up to heaven as much as you like, you won't take us in now. Ah! thief who said I stole from you! Wasn't I right when I said I should be selling your sentence some day?"

Then, adding her own wrongs to the list of crimes, she declared that the Parliament had condemned him as much for having falsely accused her of theft as for having poisoned Madame de Lamotte and her son!

When arrived at the scaffold, he gazed around him, and a sort of shiver of impatience ran through the crowd. He smiled, and as if anxious to trick mankind for the last time, asked to be taken to the Hotel de Ville, which was granted, in the hope that he would at last make some confession; but he only persisted in saying that he was guiltless of poisoning. He had an interview with his wife, who

nearly fainted on seeing him, and remained for more than a quarter of an hour unable to say a word. He lavished tender names upon her, and professed much affliction at seeing her in so miserable a condition.

When she was taken away, he asked permission to embrace her, and took a most touching farewell. His last words have been preserved.

“My dear wife,” he said, “I recommend our beloved children to your care: bring them up in the fear of God. You must go to Chartres, you will there see the bishop, on whom I had the honour of waiting when I was there last, and who has always been kind to me; I believe he has thought well of me, and that I may hope he will take pity on you and on our children.”

It was now seven in the evening, and the crowd began to murmur at the long delay. At length the criminal reappeared. An onlooker who saw him go to the Hotel de Ville, and who was carried by the movement of the crowd to the foot of the scaffold, says that when handed over to the executioner he took off his clothes himself. He kissed the instrument of punishment with devotion, then extended himself on the St. Andrew’s cross, asking with a resigned smile that they would make his sufferings as short as possible. As soon as his head was covered, the executioner gave the signal. One would have thought a very few blows would have finished so frail a being, but he seemed as hard to kill as the venomous reptiles which must be crushed and cut to pieces before life is extinct, and the coup de grace was found necessary. The executioner uncovered his head and showed the confessor that the eyes were closed and that the heart had ceased to beat. The body was then removed from the cross, the hands and feet fastened together, and it was thrown on the funeral pile.

While the execution was proceeding the people applauded. On the morrow they bought up the fragments of bone, and hastened to buy lottery tickets, in the firm conviction that these precious relics would bring luck to the fortunate possessors!

In 1777, Madame Derues was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment, and confined at the Salpetriere. She was one of the first victims who perished in the prison massacres.

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CELEBRATED CRIMES VOLUME 5 (of 8), Part 2

By Alexandre Dumas, Pere

LA CONSTANTIN

1660

CHAPTER I

Before beginning our story, we must warn the reader that it will not be worth his while to make researches among contemporary or other records as to the personage whose name it bears. For in truth neither Marie Leroux, widow of Jacques Constantin, nor her accomplice, Claude Perregaud, was of sufficient importance to find a place on any list of great criminals, although it is certain that they were guilty of the crimes with which they were charged. It may seem strange that what follows is more a history of the retribution which overtook the criminals than a circumstantial description of the deeds for which they were punished; but the crimes were so revolting, and so unsuitable for discussion, that it was impossible for us to enter into any details on the subject, so that what we offer in these pages is, we confess quite openly, not a full, true, and particular account of a certain series of events leading up to a certain result; it is not even a picture wherein that result is depicted with artistic completeness, it is only an imperfect narrative imperfectly rounded off. We feel sure, however, that the healthy-minded reader will be grateful for our reticence and total disregard of proportion. In spite of the disadvantage which such a theme imposes on any writer with a deep sense of responsibility, we have resolved to let in some light on these obscure figures; for we can imagine no more effective way of throwing into high relief the low morals and deep corruption into which all classes of society had sunk at the termination of the factious dissensions of the Fronde, which formed such a fitting prelude to the licence of the reign of the grand roi.

After this explanation, we shall, without further preamble, introduce the reader to a little tavern in Paris, situated in the rue Saint-Andre-des-Arts, on an evening in November 1658.

It was about seven o'clock. Three gentlemen were seated at one of the tables in a low, smoky room. They had already emptied several bottles, and one of them seemed to have just suggested some madcap scheme to the others, the thought of which sent them off into shouts of laughter.

“Pardu!” said one of them, who was the first to recover his breath, “I must say it would be an excellent trick.”

“Splendid!” said another; “and if you like, Commander de Jars, we can try it this

very evening.”

“All right, my worthy king’s treasurer, provided my pretty nephew here won’t be too much shocked,” and as he spoke de Jars gave to the youngest of the three a caressing touch on the cheek with the back of his hand.

“That reminds me, de Jars!” said the treasurer, “that word you have just said piques my curiosity. For some months now this little fellow here, Chevalier de Moranges, follows you about everywhere like your shadow. You never told us you had a nephew. Where the devil did you get him?”

The commander touched the chevalier’s knee under the table, and he, as if to avoid speaking, slowly filled and emptied his glass.

“Look here,” said the treasurer, “do you want to hear a few plain words, such as I shall rap out when God takes me to task about the peccadilloes of my past life? I don’t believe a word about the relationship. A nephew must be the son of either a brother or a sister. Now, your only sister is an abbess, and your late brother’s marriage was childless. There is only one way of proving the relationship, and that is to confess that when your brother was young and wild he and Love met, or else Madame l’Abbesse—.”

“Take care, Treasurer Jeannin! no slander against my sister!”

” Well, then, explain; you can’t fool me! May I be hanged if I leave this place before I have dragged the secret out of you! Either we are friends or we are not. What you tell no one else you ought to tell me. What! would you make use of my purse and my sword on occasion and yet have secrets from me? It’s too bad: speak, or our friendship is at an end! I give you fair warning that I shall find out everything and publish it abroad to court and city: when I strike a trail there’s no turning me aside. It will be best for you to whisper your secret voluntarily into my ear, where it will be as safe as in the grave.”

“How full of curiosity you are, my good friend!” said de Jars, leaning one elbow on the table, and twirling the points of his moustache with his hand; “but if I were to wrap my secret round the point of a dagger would you not be too much afraid of pricking your fingers to pull it off?”

“Not I,” said the king’s treasurer, beginning to twirl his moustache also: “the doctors have always told me that I am of too full a complexion and that it would

do me all the good in the world to be bled now and then. But what would be an advantage to me would be dangerous to you. It's easy to see from your jaundiced phiz that for you blood-letting is no cure."

"And you would really go that length? You would risk a duel if I refused to let you get to the bottom of my mystery?"

"Yes, on my honour! Well, how is it to be?"

"My dear boy," said de Jars to the youth, "we are caught, and may as well yield gracefully. You don't know this big fellow as well as I do. He's obstinacy itself. You can make the most obstinate donkey go on by pulling its tail hard enough, but when Jeannin gets a notion into his pate, not all the legions of hell can get it out again. Besides that, he's a skilful fencer, so there's nothing for it but to trust him."

"Just as you like," said the young man; "you know all my circumstances and how important it is that my secret should be kept."

"Oh! among Jeannin's many vices there are a few virtues, and of these discretion is the greatest, so that his curiosity is harmless. A quarter of an hour hence he will let himself be killed rather than reveal what just now he is ready to risk his skin to find out, whether we will or no."

Jeannin nodded approvingly, refilled the glasses, and raising his to his lips, said in a tone of triumph—

"I am listening, commander."

"Well, if it must be, it must. First of all, learn that my nephew is not my nephew at all."

"Go on."

"That his name is not Moranges."

"And the next?"

"I am not going to reveal his real name to you."

“Why not?”

“Because I don’t know ft myself, and no more does the chevalier.”

“What’ nonsense!”

“No nonsense at all, but the sober truth. A few months ago the chevalier came to Paris, bringing me a letter of introduction from a German whom I used to know years ago. This letter requested me to look after the bearer and help him in his investigations. As you said just now, Love and someone once met somewhere, and that was about all was known as to his origin. Naturally the young man wants to cut a figure in the world, and would like to discover the author of his existence, that he may have someone at hand to pay the debts he is going to incur. We have brought together every scrap of information we could collect as to this person, hoping to find therein a clue that we could follow up. To be quite open with you, and convince you at the same time how extremely prudent and discreet we must be, I must tell you that we think we have found one, and that it leads to no less a dignitary than a Prince of the Church. But if he should get wind of our researches too soon everything would be at an end, don’t you see? So keep your tongue between your teeth.”

“Never fear,” said Jeannin.

“Now, that’s what I call speaking out as a friend should. I wish you luck, my gallant Chevalier de Moranges, and until you unearth your father, if you want a little money, my purse is at your service. On my word, de Jars, you must have been born with a caul. There never was your equal for wonderful adventures. This one promises well-spicy intrigues, scandalous revelations, and you’ll be in the thick of it all. You’re a lucky fellow! It’s only a few months since you had the most splendid piece of good fortune sent you straight from heaven. A fair lady falls in love with you and makes you carry her off from the convent of La Raquette. But why do you never let anyone catch a glimpse of her? Are you jealous? Or is it that she is no such beauty, after all, but old and wrinkled, like that knave of a Mazarin?”

“I know what I’m about,” answered de Jars, smiling; “I have my very good reasons. The elopement caused a great deal of indignation, and it’s not easy to get fanatics to listen to common sense. No, I am not in the least jealous; she is madly in love with me. Ask my nephew.”

“Does he know her?”

“We have no secrets from each other; the confidence between us is without a flaw. The fair one, believe me, is good to look on, and is worth all the ogling, fan-flirting baggages put together that one sees at court or on the balconies of the Palais Roy: ah! I’ll answer for that. Isn’t she, Moranges?”

“I’m quite of your opinion,” said the youth; exchanging with de jars a singularly significant look; “and you had better treat her well, uncle, or I shall play you some trick.”

“Ah! ah!” cried Jeannin. “You poor fellow! I very much fear that you are warming a little serpent in your bosom. Have an eye to this dandy with the beardless chin! But joking apart, my boy, are you really on good terms with the fair lady?”

“Certainly I am.”

“And you are not uneasy, commander?”

” Not the least little bit.”

“He is quite right. I answer for her as for my self, you know; as long as he loves her she will love him; as long as he is faithful she will be faithful. Do you imagine that a woman who insists on her lover carrying her off can so easily turn away from the man of her choice? I know her well; I have had long talks with her, she and I alone: she is feather-brained, given to pleasure, entirely without prejudices and those stupid scruples which spoil the lives of other women; but a good sort on the whole; devoted to my uncle, with no deception about her; but at the same time extremely jealous, and has no notion of letting herself be sacrificed to a rival. If ever she finds herself deceived, goodbye to prudence and reserve, and then—”

A look and a touch of the commander’s knee cut this panegyric short, to which the treasurer was listening with open-eyed astonishment.

“What enthusiasm!” he exclaimed. “Well, and then--”

“Why, then,” went on the young man, with a laugh, “if my uncle behaves badly, I, his nephew, will try to make up for his wrong-doing: he can’t blame me then.

But until then he may be quite easy, as he well knows.”

“Oh yes, and in proof of that I am going to take Moranges with me tonight. He is young and inexperienced, and it will be a good lesson for him to see how a gallant whose amorous intrigues did not begin yesterday sets about getting even with a coquette. He can turn it to account later on.

“On my word,” said Jeannin, “my notion is that he is in no great need of a teacher; however, that’s your business, not mine. Let us return to what we were talking about just now. Are we agreed; and shall we amuse ourselves by paying out the lady in, her own coin?”

“If you like.”

“Which of us is to begin?”

De Jars struck the table with the handle of his dagger.

“More wine, gentlemen?” said the drawer, running up.

“No, dice; and be quick about it.”

“Three casts each and the highest wins,” said Jeannin. “You begin.”

“I throw for myself and nephew.” The dice rolled on the table.

“Ace and three.”

“It’s my turn now. Six and five.”

“Pass it over. Five and two.”

“We’re equal. Four and two.”

“Now let me. Ace and blank.”

“Double six.”

“You have won.”

“And I’m off at once, said Jeannin, rising, and muffling himself in his mantle,

“It’s now half-past seven. We shall see each other again at eight, so I won’t say goodbye.”

“Good luck to you!”

Leaving the tavern and turning into the rue Pavee, he took the direction of the river.

CHAPTER II

In 1658, at the corner of the streets Git-le-Coeur and Le Hurepoix (the site of the latter being now occupied by the Quai des Augustins as far as Pont Saint-Michel), stood the great mansion which Francis I had bought and fitted up for the Duchesse d'Etampes. It was at this period if not in ruins at least beginning to show the ravages of time. Its rich interior decorations had lost their splendour and become antiquated. Fashion had taken up its abode in the Marais, near the Place Royale, and it was thither that profligate women and celebrated beauties now enticed the humming swarm of old rakes and young libertines. Not one of them all would have thought of residing in the mansion, or even in the quarter, wherein the king's mistress had once dwelt. It would have been a step downward in the social scale, and equivalent to a confession that their charms were falling in the public estimation. Still, the old palace was not empty; it had, on the contrary, several tenants. Like the provinces of Alexander's empire, its vast suites of rooms had been subdivided; and so neglected was it by the gay world that people of the commonest description strutted about with impunity where once the proudest nobles had been glad to gain admittance. There in semi-isolation and despoiled of her greatness lived Angelique-Louise de Guerchi, formerly companion to Mademoiselle de Pons and then maid of honour to Anne of Austria. Her love intrigues and the scandals they gave rise to had led to her dismissal from court. Not that she was a greater sinner than many who remained behind, only she was unlucky enough or stupid enough to be found out. Her admirers were so indiscreet that they had not left her a shred of reputation, and in a court where a cardinal is the lover of a queen, a hypocritical appearance of decorum is indispensable to success. So Angelique had to suffer for the faults she was not clever enough to hide. Unfortunately for her, her income went up and down with the number and wealth of her admirers, so when she left the court all her possessions consisted of a few articles she had gathered together out of the wreck of her former luxury, and these she was now selling one by one to procure the necessaries of life, while she looked back from afar with an envious eye at the brilliant world from which she had been exiled, and longed for better days. All hope was not at an end for her. By a strange law which does not speak well for human nature, vice finds success easier to attain than virtue. There is no courtesan, no matter how low she has fallen, who cannot find a dupe ready to defend against the world an honour of which no vestige remains. A man who doubts the virtue of the most virtuous woman, who shows himself inexorably

severe when he discovers the lightest inclination to falter in one whose conduct has hitherto been above reproach, will stoop and pick up out of the gutter a blighted and tarnished reputation and protect and defend it against all slights, and devote his life to the attempt to restore lustre to the unclean thing dulled by the touch of many fingers. In her days of prosperity Commander de Jars and the king's treasurer had both fluttered round Mademoiselle de Guerchi, and neither had fluttered in vain. Short as was the period necessary to overcome her scruples, in as short a period it dawned on the two candidates for her favour that each had a successful rival in the other, and that however potent as a reason for surrender the doubloons of the treasurer had been, the personal appearance of the commander had proved equally cogent. As both had felt for her only a passing fancy and not a serious passion, their explanations with each other led to no quarrel between them; silently and simultaneously they withdrew from her circle, without even letting her know they had found her out, but quite determined to revenge, themselves on her should a chance ever offer. However, other affairs of a similar nature had intervened to prevent their carrying out this laudable intention; Jeannin had laid siege to a more inaccessible beauty, who had refused to listen to his sighs for less than 30 crowns, paid in advance, and de Jars had become quite absorbed by his adventure with the convent boarder at La Raquette, and the business of that young stranger whom he passed off as his nephew. Mademoiselle de Guerchi had never seen them again; and with her it was out of sight out of mind. At the moment when she comes into our story she was weaving her toils round a certain Duc de Vitry, whom she had seen at court, but whose acquaintance she had never made, and who had been absent when the scandalous occurrence which led to her disgrace came to light. He was a man of from twenty-five to twenty-six years of age, who idled his life away: his courage was undoubted, and being as credulous as an old libertine, he was ready to draw his sword at any moment to defend the lady whose cause he had espoused, should any insolent slanderer dare to hint there was a smirch on her virtue. Being deaf to all reports, he seemed one of those men expressly framed by heaven to be the consolation of fallen women; such a man as in our times a retired opera-dancer or a superannuated professional beauty would welcome with open arms. He had only one fault—he was married. It is true he neglected his wife, according to the custom of the time, and it is probably also true that his wife cared very little about his infidelities. But still she was an insurmountable obstacle to the fulfilment of Mademoiselle de Guerchi's hopes, who but for her might have looked forward to one day becoming a duchess.

For about three weeks, however, at the time we are speaking of, the duke had

neither crossed her threshold nor written. He had told her he was going for a few days to Normandy, where he had large estates, but had remained absent so long after the date he had fixed for his return that she began to feel uneasy. What could be keeping him? Some new flame, perhaps. The anxiety of the lady was all the more keen, that until now nothing had passed between them but looks of languor and words of love. The duke had laid himself and all he possessed at the feet of Angelique, and Angelique had refused his offer. A too prompt surrender would have justified the reports so wickedly spread against her; and, made wise by experience, she was resolved not to compromise her future as she had compromised her past. But while playing at virtue she had also to play at disinterestedness, and her pecuniary resources were consequently almost exhausted. She had proportioned the length of her resistance to the length of her purse, and now the prolonged absence of her lover threatened to disturb the equilibrium which she had established between her virtue and her money. So it happened that the cause of the lovelorn Duc de Vitry was in great peril just at the moment when de Jars and Jeannin resolved to approach the fair one anew. She was sitting lost in thought, pondering in all good faith on the small profit it was to a woman to be virtuous, when she heard voices in the antechamber. Then her door opened, and the king's treasurer walked in.

As this interview and those which follow took place in the presence of witnesses, we are obliged to ask the reader to accompany us for a time to another part of the same house.

We have said there were several tenants: now the person who occupied the rooms next to those in which Mademoiselle de Guerchi lived was a shopkeeper's widow called Rapally, who was owner of one of the thirty-two houses which then occupied the bridge Saint-Michel. They had all been constructed at the owner's cost, in return for a lease for ever. The widow Rapally's avowed age was forty, but those who knew her longest added another ten years to that: so, to avoid error, let us say she was forty-five. She was a solid little body, rather stouter than was necessary for beauty; her hair was black, her complexion brown, her eyes prominent and always moving; lively, active, and if one once yielded to her whims, exacting beyond measure; but until then buxom and soft, and inclined to pet and spoil whoever, for the moment, had arrested her volatile fancy. Just as we make her acquaintance this happy individual was a certain Maitre Quennebert, a notary of Saint Denis, and the comedy played between him and the widow was an exact counterpart of the one going on in the rooms of Mademoiselle de Guerchi, except that the roles were inverted; for while the lady

was as much in love as the Duc de Vitry, the answering devotion professed by the notary was as insincere as the disinterested attachment to her lover displayed by the whilom maid of honour.

Maitre Quennebert was still young and of attractive appearance, but his business affairs were in a bad way. For long he had been pretending not to understand the marked advances of the widow, and he treated her with a reserve and respect she would fain have dispensed with, and which sometimes made her doubt of his love. But it was impossible for her as a woman to complain, so she was forced to accept with resignation the persistent and unwelcome consideration with which he surrounded her. Maitre Quennebert was a man of common sense and much experience, and had formed a scheme which he was prevented from carrying out by an obstacle which he had no power to remove. He wanted, therefore, to gain time, for he knew that the day he gave the susceptible widow a legal right over him he would lose his independence. A lover to whose prayers the adored one remains deaf too long is apt to draw back in discouragement, but a woman whose part is restricted to awaiting those prayers, and answering with a yes or no, necessarily learns patience. Maitre Quennebert would therefore have felt no anxiety as to the effect of his dilatoriness on the widow, were it not for the existence of a distant cousin of the late Monsieur Rapally, who was also paying court to her, and that with a warmth much greater than had hitherto been displayed by himself. This fact, in view of the state of the notary's affairs, forced him at last to display more energy. To make up lost ground and to outdistance his rival once more, he now began to dazzle the widow with fine phrases and delight her with compliments; but to tell the truth all this trouble was superfluous; he was beloved, and with one fond look he might have won pardon for far greater neglect.

An hour before the treasurer's arrival there had been a knock at the door of the old house, and Maitre Quennebert, curled, pomaded, and prepared for conquest, had presented himself at the widow's. She received him with a more languishing air than usual, and shot such arrows at him froth her eyes that to escape a fatal wound he pretended to give way by degrees to deep sadness. The widow, becoming alarmed, asked with tenderness—

“What ails you this evening?”

He rose, feeling he had nothing to fear from his rival, and, being master of the field, might henceforth advance or recede as seemed best for his interests.

“What ails me?” he repeated, with a deep sigh. “I might deceive you, might give you a misleading answer, but to you I cannot lie. I am in great trouble, and how to get out of it I don’t know.”

“But tell me what it is,” said the widow, standing up in her turn.

Maitre Quennebert took three long strides, which brought him to the far end of the room, and asked—

“Why do you want to know? You can’t help me. My trouble is of a kind a man does not generally confide to women.”

“What is it? An affair of honour?”

“Yes.”

“Good God! You are going to fight!” she exclaimed, trying to seize him by the arm. “You are going to fight!”

“Ah! if it were nothing worse than that!” said Quennebert, pacing up and down the room: “but you need not be alarmed; it is only a money trouble. I lent a large sum, a few months ago, to a friend, but the knave has run away and left me in the lurch. It was trust money, and must be replaced within three days. But where am I to get two thousand francs?”

“Yes, that is a large sum, and not easy to raise at such short notice.”

“I shall be obliged to have recourse to some Jew, who will drain me dry. But I must save my good name at all costs.”

Madame Rapally gazed at him in consternation. Maitre Quennebert, divining her thought, hastened to add—

“I have just one-third of what is needed.”

“Only one-third?”

“With great care, and by scraping together all I possess, I can make up eight hundred livres. But may I be damned in the next world, or punished as a swindler in this, and one’s as bad as the other to me, if I can raise one farthing

more.”

“But suppose someone should lend you the twelve hundred francs, what then?”

“Pardieu! I should accept them,” cried the notary as if he had not the least suspicion whom she could mean. “Do you happen to know anyone, my dear Madame Rapally?”

The widow nodded affirmatively, at the same time giving him a passionate glance.

“Tell me quick the name of this delightful person, and I shall go to him tomorrow morning. You don’t know what a service you are rendering me. And I was so near not telling you of the fix I was in, lest you should torment yourself uselessly. Tell me his name.”

“Can you not guess it?”

“How should I guess it?”

“Think well. Does no one occur to you?”

“No, no one,” said Quennebert, with the utmost innocence.

“Have you no friends?”

“One or two.”

“Would they not be glad to help you?”

“They might. But I have mentioned the matter to no one.”

“To no one?”

“Except you.”

“Well?”

“Well, Madame Rapally—I hope I don’t understand you; it’s not possible; you would not humiliate me. Come, come, it’s a riddle, and I am too stupid to solve it. I give it up. Don’t tantalise me any longer; tell me the name.”

The widow, somewhat abashed by this exhibition of delicacy on the part of Maitre Quennebert, blushed, cast down her eyes, and did not venture to speak.

As the silence lasted some time, it occurred to the notary that he had been perhaps too hasty in his supposition, and he began to cast round for the best means of retrieving his blunder.

“You do not speak,” he said; “I see it was all a joke.”

“No,” said the widow at last in a timid voice, “it was no joke; I was quite in earnest. But the way you take things is not very encouraging.”

“What do you mean?”

“Pray, do you imagine that I can go on while you glare at me with that angry frown puckering your forehead, as if you had someone before you who had tried to insult you?”

A sweet smile chased the frown from the notary’s brow. Encouraged by the suspension of hostilities, Madame Rapally with sudden boldness approached him, and, pressing one of his hands in both her own, whispered—

” It is I who am going to lend you the money.”

He repulsed her gently, but with an air of great dignity, and said—

“Madame, I thank you, but I cannot accept.”

“Why can’t you?”

At this he began to walk round and round the room, while the widow, who stood in the middle, turned as upon a pivot, keeping him always in view. This circus-ring performance lasted some minutes before Quennebert stood still and said—

“I cannot be angry with you, Madame Rapally, I know your offer was made out of the kindness of your heart,—but I must repeat that it is impossible for me to accept it.”

“There you go again! I don’t understand you at all! Why can’t you accept? What harm would it do?”

“If there were no other reason, because people might suspect that I confided my difficulties to you in the hope of help.”

“And supposing you did, what then? People speak hoping to be understood. You wouldn’t have minded asking anyone else.”

“So you really think I did come in that hope?”

“Mon Dieu! I don’t think anything at all that you don’t want. It was I who dragged the confidence from you by my questions, I know that very well. But now that you have told me your secret, how can you hinder me from sympathising with you, from desiring to aid you? When I learned your difficulty, ought I to have been amused, and gone into fits of laughter? What! it’s an insult to be in a position to render you a service! That’s a strange kind of delicacy!”

“Are you astonished that I should feel so strongly about it?”

“Nonsense! Do you still think I meant to offend you? I look on you as the most honourable man in the world. If anyone were to tell me that he had seen you commit a base action, I should reply that it was a lie. Does that satisfy you?”

“But suppose they got hold of it in the city, suppose it were reported that Maitre Quennebert had taken money from Madame de Rapally, would it be the same as if they said Maitre Quennebert had borrowed twelve hundred livres from Monsieur Robert or some other business man?”

“I don’t see what difference it could make.”

“But I do.”

“What then?”

“It’s not easy to express, but—”

“But you exaggerate both the service and the gratitude you ought to feel. I think I know why you refuse. You’re ashamed to take it as a gift, aren’t you.”

“Yes, I am.”

“Well, I’m not going to make you a gift. Borrow twelve hundred livres from me.

For how long do you want the money?”

“I really don’t know how soon I can repay you.”

“Let’s say a year, and reckon the interest. Sit down there, you baby, and write out a promissory note.”

Maitre Quennebert made some further show of resistance, but at last yielded to the widow’s importunity. It is needless to say that the whole thing was a comedy on his part, except that he really needed the money. But he did not need it to replace a sum of which a faithless friend had robbed him, but to satisfy his own creditors, who, out of all patience with him, were threatening to sue him, and his only reason for seeking out Madame de Rapally was to take advantage of her generous disposition towards himself. His feigned delicacy was intended to induce her to insist so urgently, that in accepting he should not fall too much in her esteem, but should seem to yield to force. And his plan met with complete success, for at the end of the transaction he stood higher than ever in the opinion of his fair creditor, on account of the noble sentiments he had expressed. The note was written out in legal form and the money counted down on the spot.

“How glad I am!” said she then, while Quennebert still kept up some pretence of delicate embarrassment, although he could not resist casting a stolen look at the bag of crowns lying on the table beside his cloak. “Do you intend to go back to Saint Denis tonight?”

Even had such been his intention, the notary would have taken very good care not to say so; for he foresaw the accusations of imprudence that would follow, the enumeration of the dangers by the way; and it was quite on the cards even that, having thus aroused his fears, his fair hostess should in deference to them offer him hospitality for the night, and he did not feel inclined for an indefinitely prolonged tete-a-tete.

“No;” he said, “I am going to sleep at Maitre Terrasson’s, rue des Poitevins; I have sent him word to expect me. But although his house is only a few yards distant, I must leave you earlier than I could have wished, on account of this money.”

“Will you think of me?”

“How can you ask?” replied Quennebert, with a sentimental expression. “You

have compelled me to accept the money, but—I shall not be happy till I have repaid you. Suppose this loan should make us fall out?”

“You may be quite sure that if you don’t pay when the bill falls due, I shall have recourse to the law.”

“Oh, I know that very well.”

“I shall enforce all my rights as a creditor.”

“I expect nothing else.”

“I shall show no pity.”

And the widow gave a saucy laugh and shook her finger at him.

“Madame Rapally,” said the notary, who was most anxious to bring this conversation to an end, dreading every moment that it would take a languishing tone,—“Madame Rapally, will you add to your goodness by granting me one more favour?”

“What is it?”

“The gratitude that is simulated is not difficult to bear, but genuine, sincere gratitude, such as I feel, is a heavy burden, as I can assure you. It is much easier to give than to receive. Promise me, then, that from now till the year is up there shall be no more reference between us to this money, and that we shall go on being good friends as before. Leave it to me to make arrangements to acquit myself honourably of my obligations towards you. I need say no more; till a year’s up, mum’s the word.”

“It shall be as you desire, Maitre Quennebert,” answered Madame Rapally, her eyes shining with delight. “It was never my intention to lay you under embarrassing obligations, and I leave it all to you. Do you know that I am beginning to believe in presentiments?”

“You becoming superstitious! Why, may I ask?”

“I refused to do a nice little piece of ready-money business this morning.”

“Did you?”

“Yes, because I had a sort of feeling that made me resist all temptation to leave myself without cash. Imagine! I received a visit to-day from a great lady who lives in this house—in the suite of apartments next to mine.”

“What is her name?”

“Mademoiselle de Guerchi.”

“And what did she want with you?”

“She called in order to ask me to buy, for four hundred livres, some of her jewels which are well worth six hundred, for I understand such things; or should I prefer it to lend her that sum and keep the jewels as security? It appears that mademoiselle is in great straits. De Guerchi—do you know the name?”

“I think I have heard it.”

“They say she has had a stormy past, and has been greatly talked of; but then half of what one hears is lies. Since she came to live here she has been very quiet. No visitors except one—a nobleman, a duke—wait a moment! What’s his name? The Duc-Duc de Vitry; and for over three weeks even he hasn’t been near her. I imagine from this absence that they have fallen out, and that she is beginning to feel the want of money.”

“You seem to be intimately acquainted with this young woman’s affairs.”

“Indeed I am, and yet I never spoke to her till this morning.”

“How did you get your information, then?”

“By chance. The room adjoining this and one of those she occupies were formerly one large room, which is now divided into two by a partition wall covered with tapestry; but in the two corners the plaster has crumbled away with time, and one can see into the room through slits in the tapestry without being seen oneself. Are you inquisitive?”

“Not more than you, Madame Rapally.”

“Come with me. Someone knocked at the street door a few moments ago; there’s no one else in the douse likely to have visitors at this hour. Perhaps her admirer has come back.”

“If so, we are going to witness a scene of recrimination or reconciliation. How delightful!”

Although he was not leaving the widow’s lodgings, Maitre Quennebert took up his hat and cloak and the blessed bag of crown pieces, and followed Madame Rapally on tiptoe, who on her side moved as slowly as a tortoise and as lightly as she could. They succeeded in turning the handle of the door into the next room without making much noise.

“Sh!” breathed the widow softly; “listen, they are speaking.”

She pointed to the place where he would find a peephole in one corner of the room, and crept herself towards the corresponding corner. Quennebert, who was by no means anxious to have her at his side, motioned to her to blow out the light. This being done, he felt secure, for he knew that in the intense darkness which now enveloped them she could not move from her place without knocking against the furniture between them, so he glued his face to the partition. An opening just large enough for one eye allowed him to see everything that was going on in the next room. Just as he began his observations, the treasurer at Mademoiselle de Guerchi’s invitation was about to take a seat near her, but not too near for perfect respect. Both of them were silent, and appeared to labour under great embarrassment at finding themselves together, and explanations did not readily begin. The lady had not an idea of the motive of the visit, and her quondam lover feigned the emotion necessary to the success of his undertaking. Thus Maitre Quennebert had full time to examine both, and especially Angelique. The reader will doubtless desire to know what was the result of the notary’s observation.

CHAPTER III

ANGELIQUE-LOUISE DE GUERCHI was a woman of about twenty-eight years of age, tall, dark, and well made. The loose life she had led had, it is true, somewhat staled her beauty, marred the delicacy of her complexion, and coarsened the naturally elegant curves of her figure; but it is such women who from time immemorial have had the strongest attraction for profligate men. It seems as if dissipation destroyed the power to perceive true beauty, and the man of pleasure must be aroused to admiration by a bold glance and a meaning smile, and will only seek satisfaction along the trail left by vice. Louise-Angelique was admirably adapted for her way of life; not that her features wore an expression of shameless effrontery, or that the words that passed her lips bore habitual testimony to the disorders of her existence, but that under a calm and sedate demeanour there lurked a secret and indefinable charm. Many other women possessed more regular features, but none of them had a greater power of seduction. We must add that she owed that power entirely to her physical perfections, for except in regard to the devices necessary to her calling, she showed no cleverness, being ignorant, dull and without inner resources of any kind. As her temperament led her to share the desires she excited, she was really incapable of resisting an attack conducted with skill and ardour, and if the Duc de Vitry had not been so madly in love, which is the same as saying that he was hopelessly blind, silly, and dense to everything around him, he might have found a score of opportunities to overcome her resistance. We have already seen that she was so straitened in money matters that she had been driven to try to sell her jewels that very morning.

Jeannin was the first to 'break silence.

"You are astonished at my visit, I know, my charming Angelique. But you must excuse my thus appearing so unexpectedly before you. The truth is, I found it impossible to leave Paris without seeing you once more."

"Thank you for your kind remembrance," said she, "but I did not at all expect it."

"Come, come, you are offended with me."

She gave him a glance of mingled disdain and resentment; but he went on, in a

timid, wistful tone—

“I know that my conduct must have seemed strange to you, and I acknowledge that nothing can justify a man for suddenly leaving the woman he loves—I do not dare to say the woman who loves him—without a word of explanation. But, dear Angelique, I was jealous.”

“Jealous!” she repeated incredulously.

“I tried my best to overcome the feeling, and I hid my suspicions from you. Twenty times I came to see you bursting with anger and determined to overwhelm you with reproaches, but at the sight of your beauty I forgot everything but that I loved you. My suspicions dissolved before a smile; one word from your lips charmed me into happiness. But when I was again alone my terrors revived, I saw my rivals at your feet, and rage possessed me once more. Ah! you never knew how devotedly I loved you.”

She let him speak without interruption; perhaps the same thought was in her mind as in Quennebert’s, who, himself a past master in the art of lying; was thinking—

“The man does not believe a word of what he is saying.”

But the treasurer went on—

“I can see that even now you doubt my sincerity.”

“Does my lord desire that his handmaiden should be blunt? Well, I know that there is no truth in what you say.”

“Oh! I can see that you imagine that among the distractions of the world I have kept no memory of you, and have found consolation in the love of less obdurate fair ones. I have not broken in on your retirement; I have not shadowed your steps; I have not kept watch on your actions; I have not surrounded you with spies who would perhaps have brought me the assurance, ‘If she quitted the world which outraged her, she was not driven forth by an impulse of wounded pride or noble indignation; she did not even seek to punish those who misunderstood her by her absence; she buried herself where she was unknown, that she might indulge in stolen loves.’ Such were the thoughts that came to me, and yet I respected your hiding-place; and to-day I am ready to believe you true,

if you will merely say, 'I love no one else!'"

Jeannin, who was as fat as a stage financier, paused here to gasp; for the utterance of this string of banalities, this rigmarole of commonplaces, had left him breathless. He was very much dissatisfied with his performance; and ready to curse his barren imagination. He longed to hit upon swelling phrases and natural and touching gestures, but in vain. He could only look at Mademoiselle de Guerchi with a miserable, heartbroken air. She remained quietly seated, with the same expression of incredulity on her features.

So there was nothing for it but to go on once more.

"But this one assurance that I ask you will not give. So what I have—been told is true: you have given your love to him."

She could not check a startled movement.

"You see it is only when I speak of him that I can overcome in you the insensibility which is killing me. My suspicions were true after all: you deceived me for his sake. Oh! the instinctive feeling of jealousy was right which forced me to quarrel with that man, to reject the perfidious friendship which he tried to force upon me. He has returned to town, and we shall meet! But why do I say 'returned'? Perhaps he only pretended to go away, and safe in this retreat has flouted with impunity, my despair and braved my vengeance!"

Up to this the lady had played a waiting game, but now she grew quite confused, trying to discover the thread of the treasurer's thoughts. To whom did he refer? The Duc de Vitry? That had been her first impression. But the duke had only been acquainted with her for a few months—since she had—left Court. He could not therefore have excited the jealousy of her whilom lover; and if it were not he, to whom did the words about rejecting "perfidious friendship," and "returned to town," and so on, apply? Jeannin divined her embarrassment, and was not a little proud of the tactics which would, he was almost sure; force her to expose herself. For there are certain women who can be thrown into cruel perplexity by speaking to them of their love-passages without affixing a proper name label to each. They are placed as it were on the edge of an abyss, and forced to feel their way in darkness. To say "You have loved" almost obliges them to ask "Whom?"

Nevertheless, this was not the word uttered by Mademoiselle de Guerchi while she ran through in her head a list of possibilities. Her answer was—

“Your language astonishes me; I don’t understand what you mean.”

The ice was broken, and the treasurer made a plunge. Seizing one of Angelique’s hands, he asked—

“Have you never seen Commander de Jars since then?”

“Commander de Jars!” exclaimed Angelique.

“Can you swear to me, Angelique, that you love him not?”

“Mon Dieu! What put it into your head that I ever cared for him? It’s over four months since I saw him last, and I hadn’t an idea whether he was alive or dead. So he has been out of town? That’s the first I heard of it.”

“My fortune is yours, Angelique! Oh! assure me once again that you do not love him—that you never loved him!” he pleaded in a faltering voice, fixing a look of painful anxiety upon her.

He had no intention of putting her out of countenance by the course he took; he knew quite well that a woman like Angelique is never more at her ease than when she has a chance of telling an untruth of this nature. Besides, he had prefaced this appeal by the magic words, “My fortune’ is yours!” and the hope thus aroused was well worth a perjury. So she answered boldly and in a steady voice, while she looked straight into his eyes—

“Never!”

“I believe you!” exclaimed Jeannin, going down on his knees and covering with his kisses the hand he still held. “I can taste happiness again. Listen, Angelique. I am leaving Paris; my mother is dead, and I am going back to Spain. Will you follow me thither?”

“I—follow you?”

“I hesitated long before finding you out, so much did I fear a repulse. I set out tomorrow. Quit Paris, leave the world which has slandered you, and come with me. In a fortnight we shall be man and wife.”

“You are not in earnest!”

“May I expire at your feet if I am not! Do you want me to sign the oath with my blood?”

“Rise,” she said in a broken voice. “Have I at last found a man to love me and compensate me for all the abuse that has been showered on my head? A thousand times I thank you, not for what you are doing for me, but for the balm you pour on my wounded spirit. Even if you were to say to me now, ‘After all, I am obliged to give you up’ the pleasure of knowing you esteem me would make up for all the rest. It would be another happy memory to treasure along with my memory of our love, which was ineffaceable, although you so ungratefully suspected me of having deceived you.”

The treasurer appeared fairly intoxicated with joy. He indulged in a thousand ridiculous extravagances and exaggerations, and declared himself the happiest of men. Mademoiselle de Guerchi, who was desirous of being prepared for every peril, asked him in a coaxing tone—

“Who can have put it into your head to be jealous of the commander? Has he been base enough to boast that I ever gave him my love?”

“No, he never said anything about you; but somehow I was afraid.”

She renewed her assurances. The conversation continued some time in a sentimental tone. A thousand oaths, a thousand protestations of love were, exchanged. Jeannin feared that the suddenness of their journey would inconvenience his mistress, and offered to put it off for some days; but to this she would not consent, and it was arranged that the next day at noon a carriage should call at the house and take Angelique out of town to an appointed place at which the treasurer was to join her.

Maitre Quennebert, eye and ear on the alert, had not lost a word of this conversation, and the last proposition of the treasurer changed his ideas.

“Pardieu!” he said to himself, “it looks as if this good man were really going to let himself be taken in and done for. It is singular how very clear-sighted we can be about things that don’t touch us. This poor fly is going to let himself be caught by a very clever spider, or I’m much mistaken. Very likely my widow is quite of my opinion, and yet in what concerns herself she will remain stone-blind. Well, such is life! We have only two parts to choose between: we must be either knave or fool. What’s Madame Rapally doing, I wonder?”

At this moment he heard a stifled whisper from the opposite corner of the room, but, protected by the distance and the darkness, he let the widow murmur on, and applied his eye once more to his peephole. What he saw confirmed his opinion. The damsel was springing up and down, laughing, gesticulating, and congratulating herself on her unexpected good fortune.

“Just imagine! He loves me like that!” she was saying to herself. “Poor Jeannin! When I remember how I used to hesitate. How fortunate that Commander de Jars, one of the most vain and indiscreet of men, never babbled about me! Yes, we must leave town tomorrow without fail. I must not give him time to be enlightened by a chance word. But the Duc de Vitry? I am really sorry for him. However, why did he go away, and send no word? And then, he’s a married man. Ah! if I could only get back again to court some day!... Who would ever have expected such a thing? Good God! I must keep talking to myself, to be sure I’m not dreaming. Yes, he was there, just now, at my feet, saying to me, ‘Angelique, you are going to become my wife.’ One thing is sure, he may safely entrust his honour to my care. It would be infamous to betray a man who loves me as he does, who will give me his name. Never, no, never will I give him cause to reproach me! I would rather —”

A loud and confused noise on the stairs interrupted this soliloquy. At one moment bursts of laughter were heard, and the next angry voices. Then a loud exclamation, followed by a short silence. Being alarmed at this disturbance in a house which was usually so quiet, Mademoiselle de Guerchi approached the door of her room, intending either to call for protection or to lock herself in, when suddenly it was violently pushed open. She recoiled with fright, exclaiming—

“Commander de Jars!”

“On my word!” said Quennebert behind the arras, “‘tis as amusing as a play! Is the commander also going to offer to make an honest woman of her? But what do I see?”

He had just caught sight of the young man on whom de Jars had bestowed the title and name of Chevalier de Moranges, and whose acquaintance the reader has already made at the tavern in the rue Saint-Andre-des-Arts. His appearance had as great an effect on the notary as a thunderbolt. He stood motionless, trembling, breathless; his knees ready to give way beneath him; everything black before his

eyes. However, he soon pulled himself together, and succeeded in overcoming the effects of his surprise and terror. He looked once more through the hole in the partition, and became so absorbed that no one in the whole world could have got a word from him just then; the devil himself might have shrieked into his ears unheeded, and a naked sword suspended over his head would not have induced him to change his place.

CHAPTER IV

Before Mademoiselle de Guerchi had recovered from her fright the commander spoke.

“As I am a gentleman, my beauty, if you were the Abbess of Montmartre, you could not be more difficult of access. I met a blackguard on the stairs who tried to stop me, and whom I was obliged to thrash soundly. Is what they told me on my return true? Are you really doing penance, and do you intend to take the veil?”

“Sir,” answered Angelique, with great dignity, “whatever may be my plans, I have a right to be surprised at your violence and at your intrusion at such an hour.”

“Before we go any farther,” said de Jars, twirling round on his heels, “allow me to present to you my nephew, the Chevalier de Moranges.”

“Chevalier de Moranges!” muttered Quennebert, on whose memory in that instant the name became indelibly engraven.

“A young man,” continued the commander, “who has come back with me from abroad. Good style, as you see, charming appearance. Now, you young innocent, lift up your great black eyes and kiss madame’s hand; I allow it.”

“Monsieur le commandeur, leave my room; begone, or I shall call—”

“Whom, then? Your lackeys? But I have beaten the only one you keep, as I told you, and it will be some time before he’ll be in a condition to light me downstairs: ‘Begone,’ indeed! Is that the way you receive an old friend? Pray be seated, chevalier.”

He approached Mademoiselle de Guerchi, and, despite her resistance, seized hold of one of her hands, and forcing her to sit down, seated himself beside her.

“That’s right, my girl,” said he; “now let us talk sense. I understand that before a stranger you consider yourself obliged to appear astonished at my ways of going on. But he knows all about us, and nothing he may see or hear will surprise him.

So a truce to prudery! I came back yesterday, but I could not make out your hiding-place till to-day. Now I'm not going to ask you to tell me how you have gone on in my absence. God and you alone know, and while He will tell me nothing, you would only tell me fibs, and I want to save you from that venial sin at least. But here I am, in as good spirits as ever, more in love than ever, and quite ready to resume my old habits."

Meantime the lady, quite subdued by his noisy entrance and ruffianly conduct, and seeing that an assumption of dignity would only draw down on her some fresh impertinence, appeared to resign herself to her position. All this time Quennebert never took his eyes from the chevalier, who sat with his face towards the partition. His elegantly cut costume accentuated his personal advantages. His jet black hair brought into relief the whiteness of his forehead; his large dark eyes with their veined lids and silky lashes had a penetrating and peculiar expression—a mixture of audacity and weakness; his thin and somewhat pale lips were apt to curl in an ironical smile; his hands were of perfect beauty, his feet of dainty smallness, and he showed with an affectation of complaisance a well-turned leg above his ample boots, the turned down tops of which, garnished with lace, fell in irregular folds over his ankles in the latest fashion. He did not appear to be more than eighteen years of age, and nature had denied his charming face the distinctive sign of his sex for not the slightest down was visible on his chin, though a little delicate pencilling darkened his upper lip: His slightly effeminate style of beauty, the graceful curves of his figure, his expression, sometimes coaxing, sometimes saucy, reminding one of a page, gave him the appearance of a charming young scapegrace destined to inspire sudden passions and wayward fancies. While his pretended uncle was making himself at home most unceremoniously, Quennebert remarked that the chevalier at once began to lay siege to his fair hostess, bestowing tender and love-laden glances on her behind that uncle's back. This redoubled his curiosity.

"My dear girl," said the commander, "since I saw you last I have come into a fortune of one hundred thousand livres, neither more nor less. One of my dear aunts took it into her head to depart this life, and her temper being crotchety and spiteful she made me her sole heir, in order to enrage those of her relatives who had nursed her in her illness. One hundred thousand livres! It's a round sum—enough to cut a great figure with for two years. If you like, we shall squander it together, capital and interest. Why do you not speak? Has anyone else robbed me by any chance of your heart? If that were so, I should be in despair, upon my word—for the sake of the fortunate individual who had won your favour; for I will

brook no rivals, I give you fair warning.”

“Monsieur le commandeur,” answered Angelique, “you forget, in speaking to me in that manner, I have never given you any right to control my actions.”

“Have we severed our connection?”

At this singular question Angelique started, but de Jars continued—

“When last we parted we were on the best of terms, were we not? I know that some months have elapsed since then, but I have explained to you the reason of my absence. Before filling up the blank left by the departed we must give ourselves space to mourn. Well, was I right in my guess? Have you given me a successor?”

Mademoiselle de Guerchi had hitherto succeeded in controlling her indignation, and had tried to force herself to drink the bitter cup of humiliation to the dregs; but now she could bear it no longer. Having thrown a look expressive of her suffering at the young chevalier, who continued to ogle her with great pertinacity, she decided on bursting into tears, and in a voice broken by sobs she exclaimed that she was miserable at being treated in this manner, that she did not deserve it, and that Heaven was punishing her for her error in yielding to the entreaties of the commander. One would have sworn she was sincere and that the words came from her heart. If Maitre Quennebert had not witnessed the scene with Jeannin, if he had not known how frail was the virtue of the weeping damsel, he might have been affected by her touching plaint. The chevalier appeared to be deeply moved by Angelique’s grief, and while his, uncle was striding up and down the room and swearing like a trooper, he gradually approached her and expressed by signs the compassion he felt.

Meantime the notary was in a strange state of mind. He had not yet made up his mind whether the whole thing was a joke arranged between de Jars and Jeannin or not, but of one thing he was quite convinced, the sympathy which Chevalier de Moranges was expressing by passionate sighs and glances was the merest hypocrisy. Had he been alone, nothing would have prevented his dashing head foremost into this imbroglio, in scorn of consequence, convinced that his appearance would be as terrible in its effect as the head of Medusa. But the presence of the widow restrained him. Why ruin his future and dry up the golden spring which had just begun to gush before his eyes, for the sake of taking part

in a melodrama? Prudence and self-interest kept him in the side scenes.

The tears of the fair one and the glances of the chevalier awoke no repentance in the breast of the commander; on the contrary, he began to vent his anger in terms still more energetic. He strode up and down the oaken floor till it shook under his spurred heels; he stuck his plumed hat on the side of his head, and displayed the manners of a bully in a Spanish comedy. Suddenly he seemed to have come to a swift resolution: the expression of his face changed from rage to icy coldness, and walking up to Angelique, he said, with a composure more terrible than the wildest fury—

“My rival’s name?”

“You shall never learn it from me!”

“Madame, his name?”

“Never! I have borne your insults too long. I am not responsible to you for my actions.”

“Well, I shall learn it, in spite of you, and I know to whom to apply. Do you think you can play fast and loose with me and my love? No, no! I used to believe in you; I turned, a deaf ear to your traducers. My mad passion for you became known; I was the jest and the butt of the town. But you have opened my eyes, and at last I see clearly on whom my vengeance ought to fall. He was formerly my friend, and I would believe nothing against him; although I was often warned, I took no notice. But now I will seek him out, and say to him, ‘You have stolen what was mine; you are a scoundrel! It must be your life, or mine!’ And if, there is justice in heaven, I shall kill him! Well, madame, you don’t ask me the name of this man! You well know whom I mean!”

This threat brought home to Mademoiselle de Guerchi how imminent was her danger. At first she had thought the commander’s visit might be a snare laid to test her, but the coarseness of his expressions, the cynicism of his overtures in the presence of a third person, had convinced her she was wrong. No man could have imagined that the revolting method of seduction employed could meet with success, and if the commander had desired to convict her of perfidy he would have come alone and made use of more persuasive weapons. No, he believed he still had claims on her, but even if he had, by his manner of enforcing them he had rendered them void. However, the moment he threatened to seek out a rival

whose identity he designated quite clearly, and reveal to him the secret it was so necessary to her interests to keep hidden, the poor girl lost her head. She looked at de Jars with a frightened expression, and said in a trembling voice—

“I don’t know whom you mean.”

“You don’t know? Well, I shall commission the king’s treasurer, Jeannin de Castille, to come here tomorrow and tell you, an hour before our duel.”

“Oh no! no! Promise me you will not do that!” cried she, clasping her hands.

“Adieu, madame.”

“Do not leave me thus! I cannot let you go till you give me your promise!”

She threw herself on her knees and clung with both her hands to de Jars’ cloak, and appealing to Chevalier de Moranges, said—

“You are young, monsieur; I have never done you any harm; protect me, have pity on me, help me to soften him!”

“Uncle,” said the chevalier in a pleading tone, “be generous, and don’t drive this woman to despair.”

“Prayers are useless!” answered the commander.

“What do you want me to do?” said Angelique. “Shall I go into a convent to atone? I am ready to go. Shall I promise never to see him again? For God’s sake, give me a little time; put off your vengeance for one single day! Tomorrow evening, I swear to you, you will have nothing more to fear from me. I thought myself forgotten by you and abandoned; and how should I think otherwise? You left me without a word of farewell, you stayed away and never sent me a line! And how do you know that I did not weep when you deserted me, leaving me to pass my days in monotonous solitude? How do you know that I did not make every effort to find out why you were so long absent from my side? You say you had left town but how was I to know that? Oh! promise me, if you love me, to give up this duel! Promise me not to seek that man out tomorrow!”

The poor creature hoped to work wonders with her eloquence, her tears, her pleading glances. On hearing her prayer for a reprieve of twenty-four hours,

swearing that after that she would never see Jeannin again, the commander and the chevalier were obliged to bite their lips to keep from laughing outright. But the former soon regained his self-possession, and while Angelique, still on her knees before him, pressed his hands to her bosom, he forced her to raise her head, and looking straight into her eyes, said—

“Tomorrow, madame, if not this evening, he shall know everything, and a meeting shall take place.”

Then pushing her away, he strode towards the door.

“Oh! how unhappy I am!” exclaimed Angelique.

She tried to rise and rush after him, but whether she was really overcome by her feelings, or whether she felt the one chance of prevailing left her was to faint, she uttered a heartrending cry, and the chevalier had no choice but to support her sinking form.

De Jars, on seeing his nephew staggering under this burden, gave a loud laugh, and hurried away. Two minutes later he was once more at the tavern in the rue Saint-Andre-des-Arts.

“How’s this? Alone?” said Jeannin.

“Alone.”

“What have you done with the chevalier?”

“I left him with our charmer, who was unconscious, overcome with grief, exhausted Ha! ha! ha! She fell fainting into his arms! Ha! ha! ha!”

“It’s quite possible that the young rogue, being left with her in such a condition, may cut me out.”

“Do you think so?—Ha! ha! ha!”

And de Jars laughed so heartily and so infectiously that his worthy friend was obliged to join in, and laughed till he choked.

In the short silence which followed the departure of the commander, Maitre

Quennebert could hear the widow still murmuring something, but he was less disposed than ever to attend to her.

“On my word,” said he, “the scene now going on is more curious than all that went before. I don’t think that a man has ever found himself in such a position as mine. Although my interests demand that I remain here and listen, yet my fingers are itching to box the ears of that Chevalier de Moranges. If there were only some way of getting at a proof of all this! Ah! now we shall hear something; the hussy is coming to herself.”

And indeed Angelique had opened her eyes and was casting wild looks around her; she put her hand to her brow several times, as if trying to recall clearly what had happened.

“Is he gone?” she exclaimed at last. “Oh, why did you let him go? You should not have minded me, but kept him here.”

“Be calm,” answered the chevalier, “be calm, for heaven’s sake. I shall speak to my uncle and prevent his ruining your prospects. Only don’t weep any more, your tears break my heart. Ah, my God! how cruel it is to distress you so! I should never be able to withstand your tears; no matter what reason I had for anger, a look from you would make me forgive you everything.”

“Noble young man!” said Angelique.

“Idiot!” muttered Maitre Quennebert; “swallow the honey of his words, do But how the deuce is it going to end? Not Satan himself ever invented such a situation.”

“But then I could never believe you guilty without proof, irrefutable proof; and even then a word from you would fill my mind with doubt and uncertainty again. Yes, were the whole world to accuse you and swear to your guilt, I should still believe your simple word. I am young, madam, I have never known love as yet—until an instant ago I had no idea that more quickly than an image can excite the admiration of the eye, a thought can enter the heart and stir it to its depths, and features that one may never again behold leave a lifelong memory behind. But even if a woman of whom I knew absolutely nothing were to appeal to me, exclaiming, ‘I implore your help, your protection!’ I should, without stopping to consider, place my sword and my arm at her disposal, and devote myself to her service. How much more eagerly would I die for you, madam, whose beauty has

ravished my heart! What do you demand of me? Tell me what you desire me to do.”

“Prevent this duel; don’t allow an interview to take place between your uncle and the man whom he mentioned. Tell me you will do this, and I shall be safe; for you have never learned to lie; I know.”

“Of course he hasn’t, you may be sure of that, you simpleton!” muttered Maitre Quennebert in his corner. “If you only knew what a mere novice you are at that game compared with the chevalier! If you only knew whom you had before you!”

“At your age,” went on Angelique, “one cannot feign—the heart is not yet hardened, and is capable of compassion. But a dreadful idea occurs to me—a horrible suspicion! Is it all a devilish trick—a snare arranged in joke? Tell me that it is not all a pretence! A poor woman encounters so much perfidy. Men amuse themselves by troubling her heart and confusing her mind; they excite her vanity, they compass her round with homage, with flattery, with temptation, and when they grow tired of fooling her, they despise and insult her. Tell me, was this all a preconcerted plan? This love, this jealousy, were they only acted?”

“Oh, madame,” broke in the chevalier, with an expression of the deepest indignation, “how can you for an instant imagine that a human heart could be so perverted? I am not acquainted with the man whom the commander accused you of loving, but whoever he may be I feel sure that he is worthy of your love, and that he would never have consented to such a dastardly joke. Neither would my uncle; his jealousy mastered him and drove him mad—

“But I am not dependent on him; I am my own master, and can do as I please. I will hinder this duel; I will not allow the illusion and ignorance of him who loves you and, alas that I must say it, whom you love, to be dispelled, for it is in them he finds his happiness. Be happy with him! As for me, I shall never see you again; but the recollection of this meeting, the joy of having served you, will be my consolation.”

Angelique raised her beautiful eyes, and gave the chevalier a long look which expressed her gratitude more eloquently than words.

“May I be hanged!” thought Maitre Quennebert, “if the baggage isn’t making eyes at him already! But one who is drowning clutches at a straw.”

“Enough, madam,” said the chevalier; “I understand all you would say. You thank me in his name, and ask me to leave you: I obey—yes, madame, I am going; at the risk of my life I will prevent this meeting, I will stifle this fatal revelation. But grant me one last prayer—permit me to look forward to seeing you once more before I leave this city, to which I wish I had never come. But I shall quit it in a day or two, tomorrow perhaps—as soon as I know that your happiness is assured. Oh! do not refuse my last request; let the light of your eyes shine on me for the last time; after that I shall depart—I shall fly far away for ever. But if perchance, in spite of every effort, I fail, if the commander’s jealousy should make him impervious to my entreaties—to my tears, if he whom you love should come and overwhelm you with reproaches and then abandon you, would you drive me from your presence if I should then say, ‘I love you’? Answer me, I beseech you.”

“Go!” said she, “and prove worthy of my gratitude—or my love.”

Seizing one of her hands, the chevalier covered it with passionate kisses.

“Such barefaced impudence surpasses everything I could have imagined!” murmured Quennebert: “fortunately, the play is over for tonight; if it had gone on any longer, I should have done something foolish. The lady hardly imagines what the end of the comedy will be.”

Neither did Quennebert. It was an evening of adventures. It was written that in the space of two hours Angelique was to run the gamut of all the emotions, experience all the vicissitudes to which a life such as she led is exposed: hope, fear, happiness, mortification, falsehood, love that was no love, intrigue within intrigue, and, to crown all, a totally unexpected conclusion.

CHAPTER V

The chevalier was still holding Angelique's hand when a step resounded outside, and a voice was heard.

"Can it be that he has come back?" exclaimed the damsel, hastily freeing herself from the passionate embrace of the chevalier. "It's not possible! Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! it's his voice!"

She grew pale to the lips, and stood staring at the door with outstretched arms, unable to advance or recede.

The chevalier listened, but felt sure the approaching voice belonged neither to the commander nor to the treasurer.

"'His voice'?" thought Quennebert to himself. "Can this be yet another aspirant to her favour?"

The sound came nearer.

"Hide yourself!" said Angelique, pointing to a door opposite to the partition behind which the widow and the notary were ensconced. "Hide yourself there!—there's a secret staircase—you can get out that way."

"I hide myself!" exclaimed Moranges, with a swaggering air. "What are you thinking of? I remain."

It would have been better for him to have followed her advice, as may very well have occurred to the youth two minutes later, as a tall, muscular young man entered in a state of intense excitement. Angelique rushed to meet him, crying—

"Ah! Monsieur le duc, is it you?"

"What is this I hear, Angelique?" said the Duc de Vitry. "I was told below that three men had visited you this evening; but only two have gone out—where is the third? Ha! I do not need long to find him," he added, as he caught sight of the chevalier, who stood his ground bravely enough.

“In Heaven’s name!” cried Angelique,—“in Heaven’s name, listen to me!”

“No, no, not a word. Just now I am not questioning you. Who are you, sir?”

The chevalier’s teasing and bantering disposition made him even at that critical moment insensible to fear, so he retorted insolently

“Whoever I please to be, sir; and on my word I find the tone in which you put your question delightfully amusing.”

The duke sprang forward in a rage, laying his hand on his sword. Angelique tried in vain to restrain him.

“You want to screen him from my vengeance, you false one!” said he, retreating a few steps, so as to guard the door. “Defend your life, sir!”

“Do you defend yours!”

Both drew at the same moment.

Two shrieks followed, one in the room, the other behind the tapestry, for neither Angelique nor the widow had been able to restrain her alarm as the two swords flashed in air. In fact the latter had been so frightened that she fell heavily to the floor in a faint.

This incident probably saved the young man’s life; his blood had already begun to run cold at the sight of his adversary foaming with rage and standing between him and the door, when the noise of the fall distracted the duke’s attention.

“What was that?” he cried. “Are there other enemies concealed here too? “And forgetting that he was leaving a way of escape free, he rushed in the direction from which the sound came, and lunged at the tapestry-covered partition with his sword. Meantime the chevalier, dropping all his airs of bravado, sprang from one end of the room to the other like a cat pursued by a dog; but rapid as were his movements, the duke perceived his flight, and dashed after him at the risk of breaking both his own neck and the chevalier’s by a chase through unfamiliar rooms and down stairs which were plunged in darkness.

All this took place in a few seconds, like a flash of lightning. Twice, with hardly any interval, the street door opened and shut noisily, and the two enemies were

in the street, one pursued and the other pursuing.

“My God! Just to think of all that has happened is enough to make one die of fright!” said Mademoiselle de Guerchi. “What will come next, I should like to know? And what shall I say to the duke when he comes back?”

Just at this instant a loud cracking sound was heard in the room. Angelique stood still, once more struck with terror, and recollecting the cry she had heard. Her hair, which was already loosened, escaped entirely from its bonds, and she felt it rise on her head as the figures on the tapestry moved and bent towards her. Falling on her knees and closing her eyes, she began to invoke the aid of God and all the saints. But she soon felt herself raised by strong arms, and looking round, she found herself in the presence of an unknown man, who seemed to have issued from the ground or the walls, and who, seizing the only light left unextinguished in the scuffle, dragged her more dead than alive into the next room.

This man was, as the reader will have already guessed, Maitre Quennebert. As soon as the chevalier and the duke had disappeared, the notary had run towards the corner where the widow lay, and having made sure that she was really unconscious, and unable to see or hear anything, so that it would be quite safe to tell her any story he pleased next day, he returned to his former position, and applying his shoulder to the partition, easily succeeded in freeing the ends of the rotten laths from the nails which held there, and, pushing them before him, made an aperture large enough to allow of his passing through into the next apartment. He applied himself to this task with such vigour, and became so absorbed in its accomplishment, that he entirely forgot the bag of twelve hundred livres which the widow had given him.

“Who are you? What do you want with me?” cried Mademoiselle de Guerchi, struggling to free herself.

“Silence!” was Quennebert’s answer.

“Don’t kill me, for pity’s sake!”

“Who wants to kill you? But be silent; I don’t want your shrieks to call people here. I must be alone with you for a few moments. Once more I tell you to be quiet, unless you want me to use violence. If you do what I tell you, no harm shall happen to you.”

“But who are you, monsieur?”

“I am neither a burglar nor a murderer; that’s all you need to know; the rest is no concern of yours. Have you writing materials at hand?”

“Yes, monsieur; there they are, on that table.”

“Very well. Now sit down at the table.”

“Why?”

“Sit down, and answer my questions.”

“The first man who visited you this evening was M. Jeannin, was he not?”

“Yes, M. Jeannin de Castille.”

“The king’s treasurer?”

“Yes.”

“All right. The second was Commander de Jars, and the young man he brought with him was his nephew, the Chevalier de Moranges. The last comer was a duke; am I not right?”

“The Duc de Vitry.”

“Now write from my dictation.”

He spoke very slowly, and Mademoiselle de Guerchi, obeying his commands, took up her pen.

“‘To-day,’” dictated Quennebert,—“‘to-day, this twentieth day of the month of November, in the year of the Lord 1658, I—

“What is your full name?”

“Angelique-Louise de Guerchi.”

“Go on! ‘I, Angelique-Louise de Guerchi, was visited, in the rooms which—I occupy, in the mansion of the Duchesse d’Etampes, corner of the streets Git-le-

Coeur and du Hurepoix, about half-past seven o'clock in the evening, in the first place, by Messire Jeannin de Castille, King's Treasurer; in the second place, by Commander de Jars, who was accompanied by a young man, his nephew, the Chevalier de Moranges; in the third place, after the departure of Commander de Jars, and while I was alone with the Chevalier de Moranges, by the Duc de Vitry, who drew his sword upon the said chevalier and forced him to take flight.'

"Now put in a line by itself, and use capitals

"DESCRIPTION OF THE CHEVALIER DE MORANGES."

"But I only saw him for an instant," said Angelique, "and I can't recall--

"Write, and don't talk. I can recall everything, and that is all that is wanted."

"Height about five feet.' The chevalier," said Quennebert, interrupting himself, "is four feet eleven inches three lines and a half, but I don't need absolute exactness." Angelique gazed at him in utter stupefaction.

"Do you know him, then?" she asked.

"I saw him this evening for the first time, but my eye is very accurate.

"Height about five feet; hair black, eyes ditto, nose aquiline, mouth large, lips compressed, forehead high, face oval, complexion pale, no beard.'

"Now another line, and in capitals:

"SPECIAL MARKS.'

"A small mole on the neck behind the right ear, a smaller mole on the left hand.'

"Have you written that? Now sign it with your full name."

"What use are you going to make of this paper?"

"I should have told you before, if I had desired you to know. Any questions are quite useless. I don't enjoin secrecy on you, however," added the notary, as he folded the paper and put it into his doublet pocket. "You are quite free to tell anyone you like that you have written the description of the Chevalier de

Moranges at the dictation of an unknown man, who got into your room you don't know how, by the chimney or through the ceiling perhaps, but who was determined to leave it by a more convenient road. Is there not a secret staircase? Show me where it is. I don't want to meet anyone on my way out."

Angelique pointed out a door to him hidden by a damask curtain, and Quennebert saluting her, opened it and disappeared, leaving Angelique convinced that she had seen the devil in person. Not until the next day did the sight of the displaced partition explain the apparition, but even then so great was her fright, so deep was the terror which the recollection of the mysterious man inspired, that despite the permission to tell what had happened she mentioned her adventure to no one, and did not even complain to her neighbour, Madame Rapally, of the inquisitiveness which had led the widow to spy on her actions.

CHAPTER VI

We left de Jars and Jeannin, roaring with laughter, in the tavern in the rue Saint Andre-des-Arts.

“What!” said the treasurer, “do you really think that Angelique thought I was in earnest in my offer?—that she believes in all good faith I intend to marry her?”

“You may take my word for it. If it were not so, do you imagine she would have been in such desperation? Would she have fainted at my threat to tell you that I had claims on her as well as you? To get married! Why, that is the goal of all such creatures, and there is not one of them who can understand why a man of honour should blush to give her his name. If you had only seen her terror, her tears! They would have either broken your heart or killed you with laughter.”

“Well,” said Jeannin, “it is getting late. Are we going to wait for the chevalier?”

“Let us call, for him.”

“Very well. Perhaps he has made up his mind to stay. If so, we shall make a horrible scene, cry treachery and perjury, and trounce your nephew well. Let’s settle our score and be off.”

They left the wine-shop, both rather the worse for the wine they had so largely indulged in. They felt the need of the cool night air, so instead of going down the rue Pavee they resolved to follow the rue Saint-Andre-des-Arts as far as the Pont Saint-Michel, so as to reach the mansion by a longer route.

At the very moment the commander got up to leave the tavern the chevalier had run out of the mansion at the top of his speed. It was not that he had entirely lost his courage, for had he found it impossible to avoid his assailant it is probable that he would have regained the audacity which had led him to draw his sword. But he was a novice in the use of arms, had not reached full physical development, and felt that the chances were so much against him that he would only have faced the encounter if there were no possible way of escape. On leaving the house he had turned quickly into the rue Git-le-Coeur; but on hearing the door close behind his pursuer he disappeared down the narrow and crooked rue de l’Hirondelle, hoping to throw the Duc de Vitry off the scent. The duke,

however, though for a moment in doubt, was guided by the sound of the flying footsteps. The chevalier, still trying to send him off on a false trail, turned to the right, and so regained the upper end of the rue Saint-Andre, and ran along it as far as the church, the site of which is occupied by the square of the same name to-day. Here he thought he would be safe, for, as the church was being restored and enlarged, heaps of stone stood all round the old pile. He glided in among these, and twice heard Vitry searching quite close to him, and each time stood on guard expecting an onslaught. This marching and countermarching lasted for some minutes; the chevalier began to hope he had escaped the danger, and eagerly waited for the moment when the moon which had broken through the clouds should again withdraw behind them, in order to steal into some of the adjacent streets under cover of the darkness. Suddenly a shadow rose before him and a threatening voice cried—

” Have I caught you at last, you coward?”

The danger in which the chevalier stood awoke in him a flickering energy, a feverish courage, and he crossed blades with his assailant. A strange combat ensued, of which the result was quite uncertain, depending entirely on chance; for no science was of any avail on a ground so rough that the combatants stumbled at every step, or struck against immovable masses, which were one moment clearly lit up, and the next in shadow. Steel clashed on steel, the feet of the adversaries touched each other, several times the cloak of one was pierced by the sword of the other, more than once the words “Die then!” rang out. But each time the seemingly vanquished combatant sprang up unwounded, as agile and as lithe and as quick as ever, while he in his turn pressed the enemy home. There was neither truce nor pause, no clever feints nor fencer’s tricks could be employed on either side; it was a mortal combat, but chance, not skill, would deal the deathblow. Sometimes a rapid pass encountered only empty air; sometimes blade crossed blade above the wielders’ heads; sometimes the fencers lunged at each other’s breast, and yet the blows glanced aside at the last moment and the blades met in air once more. At last, however, one of the two, making a pass to the right which left his breast unguarded, received a deep wound. Uttering a loud cry, he recoiled a step or two, but, exhausted by the effort, tripped and fell backward over a large stone, and lay there motionless, his arms extended in the form of a cross.

The other turned and fled.

“Hark, de Jars!” said Jeannin, stopping, “There’s fighting going on hereabouts; I hear the clash of swords.”

Both listened intently.

“I hear nothing now.”

“Hush! there it goes again. It’s by the church.”

“What a dreadful cry!”

They ran at full speed towards the place whence it seemed to come, but found only solitude, darkness, and silence. They looked in every direction.

“I can’t see a living soul,” said Jeannin, “and I very much fear that the poor devil who gave that yell has mumbled his last prayer,”

“I don’t know why I tremble so,” replied de Jars; “that heartrending cry made me shiver from head to foot. Was it not something like the chevalier’s voice?”

“The chevalier is with La Guerchi, and even if he had left her this would not have been his way to rejoin us. Let us go on and leave the dead in peace.”

“Look, Jeannin! what is that in front of us?”

“On that stone? A man who has fallen!”

“Yes, and bathed in blood,” exclaimed de Jars, who had darted to his side. “Ah! it’s he! it’s he! Look, his eyes are closed, his hands cold! My child he does not hear me! Oh, who has murdered him?”

He fell on his knees, and threw himself on the body with every mark of the most violent despair.

“Come, come,” said Jeannin, surprised at such an explosion of grief from a man accustomed to duels, and who on several similar occasions had been far from displaying much tenderness of heart, “collect yourself, and don’t give way like a woman. Perhaps the wound is not mortal. Let us try to stop the bleeding and call for help.”

“No, no—”

“Are you mad?”

“Don’t call, for Heaven’s sake! The wound is here, near the heart. Your handkerchief, Jeannin, to arrest the flow of blood. There—now help me to lift him.”

“What does that mean?” cried Jeannin, who had just laid his hand on the chevalier. “I don’t know whether I’m awake or asleep! Why, it’s a—”

“Be silent, on your life! I shall explain everything—but now be silent; there is someone looking at us.”

There was indeed a man wrapped in a mantle standing motionless some steps away.

“What are you doing here?” asked de Jars.

“May I ask what you are doing, gentlemen?” retorted Maitre Quennebert, in a calm and steady voice.

“Your curiosity may cost you dear, monsieur; we are not in the habit of allowing our actions to be spied on.”

“And I am not in the habit of running useless risks, most noble cavaliers. You are, it is true, two against one; but,” he added, throwing back his cloak and grasping the hilts of a pair of pistols tucked in his belt, “these will make us equal. You are mistaken as to my intentions. I had no thought of playing the spy; it was chance alone that led me here; and you must acknowledge that finding you in this lonely spot, engaged as you are at this hour of the night, was quite enough to awake the curiosity of a man as little disposed to provoke a quarrel as to submit to threats.”

“It was chance also that brought us here. We were crossing the square, my friend and I, when we heard groans. We followed the sound, and found this young gallant, who is a stranger to us, lying here, with a wound in his breast.”

As the moon at that moment gleamed doubtfully forth, Maitre Quennebert bent for an instant over the body of the wounded man, and said:

“I know him more than you. But supposing someone were to come upon us here, we might easily be taken for three assassins holding a consultation over the corpse of our victim. What were you going to do?”

“Take him to a doctor. It would be inhuman to leave him here, and while we are talking precious time is being lost.”

“Do you belong to this neighbourhood?”

“No,” said the treasurer.

“Neither do I,” said Quennebert. “but I believe I have heard the name of a surgeon who lives close by, in the rue Hauteville.”

“I also know of one,” interposed de Jars, “a very skilful man.”

“You may command me.”

“Gladly, monsieur; for he lives some distance from here.”

“I am at your service.”

De Jars and Jeannin raised the chevalier’s shoulders, and the stranger supported his legs, and carrying their burden in this order, they set off.

They walked slowly, looking about them carefully, a precaution rendered necessary by the fact that the moon now rode in a cloudless sky. They glided over the Pont Saint-Michel between the houses that lined both sides, and, turning to the right, entered one of the narrow streets of the Cite, and after many turnings, during which they met no one, they stopped at the door of a house situated behind the Hotel-de-Ville.

“Many thanks, monsieur,” said de Jars,—“many thanks; we need no further help.”

As the commander spoke, Maitre Quennebert let the feet of the chevalier fall abruptly on the pavement, while de Jars and the treasurer still supported his body, and, stepping back two paces, he drew his pistols from his belt, and placing a finger on each trigger, said—

“Do not stir, messieurs, or you are dead men.” Both, although encumbered by their burden, laid their hands upon their swords.

“Not a movement, not a sound, or I shoot.”

There was no reply to this argument, it being a convincing one even for two duellists. The bravest man turns pale when he finds himself face to face with sudden inevitable death, and he who threatened seemed to be one who would, without hesitation, carry out his threats. There was nothing for it but obedience, or a ball through them as they stood.

“What do you want with us, sir?” asked Jeannin.

Quennebert, without changing his attitude, replied—

“Commander de Jars, and you, Messire Jeannin de Castille, king’s treasurer,—you see, my gentles, that besides the advantage of arms which strike swiftly and surely, I have the further advantage of knowing who you are, whilst I am myself unknown,—you will carry the wounded man into this house, into which I will not enter, for I have nothing to do within; but I shall remain here; to await your return. After you have handed over the patient to the doctor, you will procure paper and write—now pay great attention—that on November 20th, 1658, about midnight, you, aided by an unknown man, carried to this house, the address of which you will give, a young man whom you call the Chevalier de Moranges, and pass off as your nephew—”

“As he really is.”

“Very well.”

“But who told you—?”

“Let me go on: who had been wounded in a fight with swords on the same night behind the church of Saint-Andre-des-Arts by the Duc de Vitry.”

“The Duc de Vitry!—How do you know that?”

“No matter how, I know it for a fact. Having made this declaration, you will add that the said Chevalier de Moranges is no other than Josephine-Charlotte Boullenois, whom you, commander, abducted four months ago from the convent

of La Raquette, whom you have made your mistress, and whom you conceal disguised as a man; then you will add your signature. Is my information correct?"

De Jars and Jeannin were speechless with surprise for a few instants; then the former stammered—

"Will you tell us who you are?"

"The devil in person, if you like. Well, will you do as I order? Supposing that I am awkward enough not to kill you at two paces, do you want me to ask you in broad daylight and aloud what I now ask at night and in a whisper? And don't think to put me off with a false declaration, relying on my not being able to read it by the light of the moon; don't think either that you can take me by surprise when you hand it me: you will bring it to me with your swords sheathed as now. If this condition is not observed, I shall fire, and the noise will bring a crowd about us. Tomorrow I shall speak differently from to-day: I shall proclaim the truth at all the street corners, in the squares, and under the windows of the Louvre. It is hard, I know, for men of spirit to yield to threats, but recollect that you are in my power and that there is no disgrace in paying a ransom for a life that one cannot defend. What do you say?"

In spite of his natural courage, Jeannin, who found himself involved in an affair from which he had nothing to gain, and who was not at all desirous of being suspected of having helped in an abduction, whispered to the commander—

"Faith! I think our wisest course is to consent."

De Jars, however, before replying, wished to try if he could by any chance throw his enemy off his guard for an instant, so as to take him unawares. His hand still rested on the hilt of his sword, motionless, but ready to draw.

"There is someone coming over yonder," he cried,—“do you hear?"

"You can't catch me in that way," said Quennebert. "Even were there anyone coming, I should not look round, and if you move your hand all is over with you."

"Well," said Jeannin, "I surrender at discretion—not on my own account, but out of regard for my friend and this woman. However, we are entitle to some pledge

of your silence. This statement that you demand, once written,—you can ruin us tomorrow by its means.”

“I don’t yet know what use I shall make of it, gentlemen. Make up your minds, or you will have nothing but a dead body to place—in the doctor’s hands. There is no escape for you.”

For the first time the wounded man faintly groaned.

“I must save her!” cried de Jars,—“I yield.”

“And I swear upon my honour that I will never try to get this woman out of your hands, and that I will never interfere with your conquest. Knock, gentlemen, and remain as long as may be necessary. I am patient. Pray to God, if you will, that she may recover; my one desire is that she may die.”

They entered the house, and Quennebert, wrapping himself once more in his mantle, walked up and down before it, stopping to listen from time to time. In about two hours the commander and the treasurer came out again, and handed him a written paper in the manner agreed on.

“I greatly fear that it will be a certificate of death,” said de Jars.

“Heaven grant it, commander! Adieu, messieurs.”

He then withdrew, walking backwards, keeping the two friends covered with his pistols until he had placed a sufficient distance between himself and them to be out of danger of an attack.

The two gentlemen on their part walked rapidly away, looking round from time to time, and keeping their ears open. They were very much mortified at having been forced to let a mere boor dictate to them, and anxious, especially de Jars, as to the result of the wound.

CHAPTER VII

On the day following this extraordinary series of adventures, explanations between those who were mixed up in them, whether as actors or spectators, were the order of the day. It was not till Maitre Quennebert reached the house of the friend who had offered to put him up for the night that it first dawned on him, that the interest which the Chevalier de Moranges had awakened in his mind had made him utterly forget the bag containing the twelve hundred livres which he owed to the generosity of the widow. This money being necessary to him, he went back to her early next morning. He found her hardly recovered from her terrible fright. Her swoon had lasted far beyond the time when the notary had left the house; and as Angelique, not daring to enter the bewitched room, had taken refuge in the most distant corner of her apartments, the feeble call of the widow was heard by no one. Receiving no answer, Madame Rapally groped her way into the next room, and finding that empty, buried herself beneath the bedclothes, and passed the rest of the night dreaming of drawn swords, duels, and murders. As soon as it was light she ventured into the mysterious room once more; without calling her servants, and found the bag of crowns lying open on the floor, with the coins scattered all around, the partition broken, and the tapestry hanging from it in shreds. The widow was near fainting again: she imagined at first she saw stains of blood everywhere, but a closer inspection having somewhat reassured her, she began to pick up the coins that had rolled to right and left, and was agreeably surprised to find the tale complete. But how and why had Maitre Quennebert abandoned them? What had become of him? She had got lost in the most absurd suppositions and conjectures when the notary appeared. Discovering from the first words she uttered that she was in complete ignorance of all that had taken place, he explained to her that when the interview between the chevalier and Mademoiselle de Guerchi had just at the most interesting moment been so unceremoniously interrupted by the arrival of the duke, he had become so absorbed in watching them that he had not noticed that the partition was bending before the pressure of his body, and that just as the duke drew his sword it suddenly gave way, and he, Quennebert, being thus left without support, tumbled head foremost into the next room, among a perfect chaos of overturned furniture and lamps; that almost before he could rise he was forced to draw in self-defence, and had to make his escape, defending himself against both the duke and the chevalier; that they had pursued him so hotly, that when he found himself free he was too far from the house and the hour was too

advanced to admit of his returning, Quennebert added innumerable protestations of friendship, devotion, and gratitude, and, furnished with his twelve hundred crowns, went away, leaving the widow reassured as to his safety, but still shaken from her fright.

While the notary was thus soothing the widow, Angelique was exhausting all the expedients her trade had taught her in the attempt to remove the duke's suspicions. She asserted she was the victim of an unforeseen attack which nothing in her conduct had ever authorised. The young Chevalier de Moranges had, gained admittance, she declared, under the pretext that he brought her news from the duke, the one man who occupied her thoughts, the sole object of her love. The chevalier had seen her lover, he said, a few days before, and by cleverly appealing to things back, he had led her to fear that the duke had grown tired of her, and that a new conquest was the cause of his absence. She had not believed these insinuations, although his long silence would have justified the most mortifying suppositions, the most cruel doubts. At length the chevalier had grown bolder, and had declared his passion for her; whereupon she had risen and ordered him to leave her. Just at that moment the duke had entered, and had taken the natural agitation and confusion of the chevalier as signs of her guilt. Some explanation was also necessary to account for the presence of the two other visitors of whom he had been told below stairs. As he knew nothing at all about them, the servant who admitted them never having seen either of them before, she acknowledged that two gentlemen had called earlier in the evening; that they had refused to send in their names, but as they had said they had come to inquire about the duke, she suspected them of having been in league with the chevalier in the attempt to ruin her reputation, perhaps they had even promised to help him to carry her off, but she knew nothing positive about them or their plans. The duke, contrary to his wont, did not allow himself to be easily convinced by these lame explanations, but unfortunately for him the lady knew how to assume an attitude favourable to her purpose. She had been induced, she said, with the simple confidence born of love, to listen to people who had led her to suppose they could give her news of one so dear to her as the duke. From this falsehood she proceeded to bitter reproaches: instead of defending herself, she accused him of having left her a prey to anxiety; she went so far as to imply that there must be some foundation for the hints of the chevalier, until at last the duke, although he was not guilty of the slightest infidelity, and had excellent reasons to give in justification of his silence, was soon reduced to a penitent mood, and changed his threats into entreaties for forgiveness. As to the shriek he had heard, and which he was sure had been uttered by the stranger who had

forced his way into her room after the departure of the others, she asserted that his ears must have deceived him. Feeling that therein lay her best chance of making things smooth, she exerted herself to convince him that there was no need for other information than she could give, and did all she could to blot the whole affair from his memory; and her success was such that at the end of the interview the duke was more enamoured and more credulous than ever, and believing he had done her wrong, he delivered himself up to her, bound hand and foot. Two days later he installed his mistress in another dwelling....

Madame Rapally also resolved to give up her rooms, and removed to a house that belonged to her, on the Pont Saint-Michel.

The commander took the condition of Charlotte Boullenois very much to heart. The physician under whose care he had placed her, after examining her wounds, had not given much hope of her recovery. It was not that de Jars was capable of a lasting love, but Charlotte was young and possessed great beauty, and the romance and mystery surrounding their connection gave it piquancy. Charlotte's disguise, too, which enabled de Jars to conceal his success and yet flaunt it in the face, as it were, of public morality and curiosity, charmed him by its audacity, and above all he was carried away by the bold and uncommon character of the girl, who, not content with a prosaic intrigue, had trampled underfoot all social prejudices and proprieties, and plunged at once into unmeasured and unrestrained dissipation; the singular mingling in her nature of the vices of both sexes; the unbridled licentiousness of the courtesan coupled with the devotion of a man for horses, wine, and fencing; in short, her eccentric character, as it would now be called, kept a passion alive which would else have quickly died away in his blase heart. Nothing would induce him to follow Jeannin's advice to leave Paris for at least a few weeks, although he shared Jeannin's fear that the statement they had been forced to give the stranger would bring them into trouble. The treasurer, who had no love affair on hand, went off; but the commander bravely held his ground, and at the end of five or six days, during which no one disturbed him, began to think the only result of the incident would be the anxiety it had caused him.

Every evening as soon as it was dark he betook himself to the doctor's, wrapped in his cloak, armed to the teeth, and his hat pulled down over his eyes. For two days and nights, Charlotte, whom to avoid confusion we shall continue to call the Chevalier de Moranges, hovered between life and death. Her youth and the strength of her constitution enabled her at last to overcome the fever, in spite of

the want of skill of the surgeon Perregaud.

Although de Jars was the only person who visited the chevalier, he was not the only one who was anxious about the patient's health. Maitre Quennebert, or men engaged by him to watch, for he did not want to attract attention, were always prowling about the neighbourhood, so that he was kept well informed of everything that went on: The instructions he gave to these agents were, that if a funeral should leave the house, they were to find out the name of the deceased, and then to let him know without delay. But all these precautions seemed quite useless: he always received the same answer to all his questions, "We know nothing." So at last he determined to address himself directly to the man who could give him information on which he could rely.

One night the commander left the surgeon's feeling more cheerful than usual, for the chevalier had passed a good day, and there was every hope that he was on the road to complete recovery. Hardly had de Jars gone twenty paces when someone laid a hand on his shoulder. He turned and saw a man whom, in the darkness, he did not recognise.

"Excuse me for detaining you, Commander de Jars," said Quennebert, "but I have a word to say to you."

"Ali! so it's you, sir," replied the commander. "Are you going at last to give me the opportunity I was so anxious for?"

"I don't understand."

"We are on more equal terms this time; to-day you don't catch me unprepared, almost without weapons, and if you are a man of honour you will measure swords with me."

"Fight a duel with you! why, may I ask? You have never insulted me."

"A truce to pleasantries, sir; don't make me regret that I have shown myself more generous than you. I might have killed you just now had I wished. I could have put my pistol to your breast and fired, or said to you, 'Surrender at discretion!' as you so lately said to me."

"And what use would that have been?"

“It would have made a secret safe that you ought never to have known.”

“It would have been the most unfortunate thing for you that could have happened, for if you had killed me the paper would have spoken. So! you think that if you were to assassinate me you would only have to stoop over my dead body and search my pockets, and, having found the incriminating document, destroy it. You seem to have formed no very high opinion of my intelligence and common sense. You of the upper classes don’t need these qualities, the law is on, your side. But when a humble individual like myself, a mere nobody, undertakes to investigate a piece of business about which those in authority are not anxious to be enlightened, precautions are necessary. It’s not enough for him to have right on his side, he must, in order to secure his own safety, make good use of his skill, courage, and knowledge. I have no desire to humiliate you a second time, so I will say no more. The paper is in the hands of my notary, and if a single day passes without his seeing me he has orders to break the seal and make the contents public. So you see chance is still on my side. But now that you are warned there is no need for me to bluster. I am quite prepared to acknowledge your superior rank, and if you insist upon it, to speak to you uncovered.”

“What do you desire to know, sir?”

“How is the Chevalier de Moranges getting on?”

“Very badly, very badly.”

“Take care, commander; don’t deceive me. One is so easily tempted to believe what one hopes, and I hope so strongly that I dare not believe what you say. I saw you coming out of the house, not at all with the air of a man who had just heard bad news, (quite the contrary) you looked at the sky, and rubbed your hands, and walked with a light, quick step, that did not speak of grief.”

“You’re a sharp observer, sir.”

“I have already explained to you, sir, that when one of us belonging to a class hardly better than serfs succeeds by chance or force of character in getting out of the narrow bounds in which he was born, he must keep both eyes and ears open. If I had doubted your word as you have doubted mine on the merest suspicion, you would have said to your servants, ‘Chastise this rascal.’ But I am obliged to prove to you that you did not tell me the truth. Now I am sure that the chevalier is out of danger.”

“If you were so well informed why did you ask me?”

“I only knew it by your asserting the contrary.”

“What do you mean?” cried de Jars, who was growing restive under this cold, satirical politeness.

“Do me justice, commander. The bit chafes, but yet you must acknowledge that I have a light hand. For a full week you have been in my power. Have I disturbed your quiet? Have I betrayed your secret? You know I have not. And I shall continue to act in the same manner. I hope with all my heart, however great would be your grief; that the chevalier may die of his wound. I have not the same reasons for loving him that you have, so much you can readily understand, even if I do not explain the cause of my interest in his fate. But in such a matter hopes count for nothing; they cannot make his temperature either rise or fall. I have told you I have no wish to force the chevalier to resume his real name. I may make use of the document and I may not, but if I am obliged to use it I shall give you warning. Will you, in return, swear to me upon your honour that you will keep me informed as to the fate of the chevalier, whether you remain in Paris or whether you leave? But let this agreement be a secret between us, and do not mention it to the so-called Moranges.”

“I have your oath, monsieur, that you will give me notice before you use the document I have given you against me, have I? But what guarantee have I that you will keep your word?”

“My course of action till to-day, and the fact that I have pledged you my word of my own free will.”

“I see, you hope not to have long to wait for the end.”

“I hope not; but meantime a premature disclosure would do me as much harm as you. I have not the slightest rancour against you, commander; you have robbed me of no treasure; I have therefore no compensation to demand. What you place such value on would be only a burden to me, as it will be to you later on. All I want is, to know as soon as it is no longer in your possession, whether it has been removed by the will of God or by your own, I am right in thinking that to-day there is some hope of the chevalier’s recovery, am I not?”

“Yes, Sir,”

“Do you give me your promise that if ever he leave this house safe and sound you will let me know?”

“I give you my promise,”

“And if the result should be different, you will also send me word?”

“Certainly. But to whom shall I address my message?”

“I should have thought that since our first meeting you would have found out all about me, and that to tell you my name would be superfluous. But I have no reason to hide it: Maitre Quennebert, notary, Saint-Denis. I will not detain you any longer now, commander; excuse a simple citizen for dictating conditions to a noble such as you. For once chance has been on my side although a score of times it has gone against me.”

De Jars made no reply except a nod, and walked away quickly, muttering words of suppressed anger between his teeth at all the— humiliations to which he had been obliged to submit so meekly.

“He’s as insolent as a varlet who has no fear of a larruping before his eyes: how the rascal gloried in taking advantage of his position! Taking-off his hat while putting his foot on my neck! If ever I can be even with you, my worthy scrivener, you’ll pass a very bad quarter of an hour, I can tell you.”

Everyone has his own idea of what constitutes perfect honour. De Jars, for instance, would have allowed himself to be cut up into little pieces rather than have broken the promise he had given Quennebert a week ago, because it was given in exchange for his life, and the slightest paltering with his word under those circumstances would have been dastardly. But the engagement into which he had just entered had in his eyes no such moral sanction; he had not been forced into it by threats, he had escaped by its means no serious danger, and therefore in regard to it his conscience was much more accommodating. What he should best have liked to do, would have been to have sought out the notary and provoked him by insults to send him a challenge.

That a clown such as that could have any chance of leaving the ground alive never entered his head. But willingly as he would have encompassed his death in this manner, the knowledge that his secret would not die with Quennebert restrained him, for when everything came out he felt that the notary’s death

would be regarded as an aggravation of his original offence, and in spite of his rank he was not at all certain that if he were put on his trial even now he would escape scot free, much less if a new offence were added to the indictment. So, however much he might chafe against the bit, he felt he must submit to the bridle.

“By God!” said he, “I know what the clodhopper is after; and even if I must suffer in consequence, I shall take good care that he cannot shake off his bonds. Wait a bit! I can play the detective too, and be down on him without letting him see the hand that deals the blows. It’ll be a wonder if I can’t find a naked sword to suspend above his head.”

However, while thus brooding over projects of vengeance, Commander de Jars kept his word, and about a month after the interview above related he sent word to Quennebert that the Chevalier de Moranges had left Perregaud’s completely recovered from his wound. But the nearly fatal result of the chevalier’s last prank seemed to have subdued his adventurous spirit; he was no longer seen in public, and was soon forgotten by all his acquaintances with the exception of Mademoiselle de Guerchi. She faithfully treasured up the memory of his words of passion, his looks of love, the warmth of his caresses, although at first she struggled hard to chase his image from her heart. But as the Due de Vitry assured her that he had killed him on the spot, she considered it no breach of faith to think lovingly of the dead, and while she took the goods so bounteously provided by her living lover, her gentlest thoughts, her most enduring regrets, were given to one whom she never hoped to see again.

CHAPTER VIII

With the reader's permission, we must now jump over an interval of rather more than a year, and bring upon the stage a person who, though only of secondary importance, can no longer be left behind the scenes.

We have already said that the loves of Quennebert and Madame Rapally were regarded with a jealous eye by a distant cousin of the lady's late husband. The love of this rejected suitor, whose name was Trumeau, was no more sincere than the notary's, nor were his motives more honourable. Although his personal appearance was not such as to lead him to expect that his path would be strewn with conquests, he considered that his charms at least equalled those of his defunct relative; and it may be said that in thus estimating them he did not lay himself—open to the charge of overweening vanity. But however persistently he preened himself before the widow, she vouchsafed him not one glance. Her heart was filled with the love of his rival, and it is no easy thing to tear a rooted passion out of a widow's heart when that widow's age is forty-six, and she is silly enough to believe that the admiration she feels is equalled by the admiration she inspires, as the unfortunate Trumeau found to his cost. All his carefully prepared declarations of love, all his skilful insinuations against Quennebert, brought him nothing but scornful rebuffs. But Trumeau was nothing if not persevering, and he could not habituate himself to the idea of seeing the widow's fortune pass into other hands than his own, so that every baffled move only increased his determination to spoil his competitor's game. He was always on the watch for a chance to carry tales to the widow, and so absorbed did he become in this fruitless pursuit, that he grew yellower and more dried up from day to day, and to his jaundiced eye the man who was at first simply his rival became his mortal enemy and the object of his implacable hate, so that at length merely to get the better of him, to outwit him, would, after so long-continued and obstinate a struggle and so many defeats, have seemed to him too mild a vengeance, too incomplete a victory.

Quennebert was well aware of the zeal with which the indefatigable Trumeau sought to injure him. But he regarded the manoeuvres of his rival with supreme unconcern, for he knew that he could at any time sweep away the network of cunning machinations, underhand insinuations, and malicious hints, which was spread around him, by allowing the widow to confer on him the advantages she

was so anxious to bestow. The goal, he knew, was within his reach, but the problem he had to solve was how to linger on the way thither, how to defer the triumphal moment, how to keep hope alive in the fair one's breast and yet delay its fruition. His affairs were in a bad way. Day by day full possession of the fortune thus dangled before his eyes, and fragments of which came to him occasionally by way of loan, was becoming more and more indispensable, and tantalising though it was, yet he dared not put out his hand to seize it. His creditors dunned him relentlessly: one final reprieve had been granted him, but that at an end, if he could not meet their demands, it was all up with his career and reputation.

One morning in the beginning of February 1660, Trumeau called to see his cousin. He had not been there for nearly a month, and Quennebert and the widow had begun to think that, hopeless of success, he had retired from the contest. But, far from that, his hatred had grown more intense than ever, and having come upon the traces of an event in the past life of his rival which if proved would be the ruin of that rival's hopes, he set himself to gather evidence. He now made his appearance with beaming looks, which expressed a joy too great for words. He held in one hand a small scroll tied with a ribbon. He found the widow alone, sitting in a large easy-chair before the fire. She was reading for the twentieth time a letter which Quennebert had written her the evening before. To judge by the happy and contented expression of the widow's face, it must have been couched in glowing terms. Trumeau guessed at once from whom the missive came, but the sight of it, instead of irritating him, called forth a smile.

"Ah! so it's you, cousin?" said the widow, folding the precious paper and slipping it into the bosom of her dress. "How do you do? It's a long time since I saw you, more than a fortnight, I think. Have you been ill?"

"So you remarked my absence! That is very flattering, my dear cousin; you do not often spoil me by such attentions. No, I have not been ill, thank God, but I thought it better not to intrude upon you so often. A friendly call now and then such as to-day's is what you like, is it not? By the way, tell me about your handsome suitor, Maitre Quennebert; how is he getting along?"

"You look very knowing, Trumeau: have you heard of anything happening to him?"

"No, and I should be exceedingly sorry to hear that anything unpleasant had

happened to him.”

Now you are not saying what you think, you know you can't bear him.”

“Well, to speak the truth, I have no great reason to like him. If it were not for him, I should perhaps have been happy to-day; my love might have moved your heart. However, I have become resigned to my loss, and since your choice has fallen on him,—and here he. sighed,—“well, all I can say is, I hope you may never regret it.”

“Many thanks for your goodwill, cousin; I am delighted to find you in such a benevolent mood. You must not be vexed because I could not give you the kind of love you wanted; the heart, you know, is not amenable to reason.”

“There is only one thing I should like to ask.”

“What is it?”

“I mention it for your good more than for my own. If you want to be happy, don't let this handsome quill-driver get you entirely into his hands. You are saying to yourself that because of my ill-success with you I am trying to injure him; but what if I could prove that he does not love you as much as he pretends —?”

“Come, come, control your naughty tongue! Are you going to begin backbiting again? You are playing a mean part, Trumeau. I have never hinted to Maitre Quennebert all the nasty little ways in which you have tried to put a spoke in his wheel, for if he knew he would ask you to prove your words, and then you would look very foolish.”.

“Not at all, I swear to you. On the contrary, if I were to tell all I know in his presence, it is not I who would be disconcerted. Oh! I am weary of meeting with nothing from you but snubs, scorn, and abuse. You think me a slanderer when I say, ‘This gallant wooer of widows does not love you for yourself but for your money-bags. He fools you by fine promises, but as to marrying you—never, never!’”

“May I ask you to repeat that?” broke in Madame Rapally,

“Oh! I know what I am saying. You will never be Madame Quennebert.”

“Really?”

“Really.”

“Jealousy has eaten away whatever brains you used to possess, Trumeau. Since I saw you last, cousin, important changes have taken place: I was just going to send you to-day an invitation to my wedding.”

“To your wedding?”

“Yes; I am to be married tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow? To Quennebert?” stammered Trumeau.

“To Quennebert,” repeated the widow in a tone of triumph.

“It’s not possible!” exclaimed Trumeau.

“It is so possible that you will see us united tomorrow. And for the future I must beg of you to regard Quennebert no longer as a rival but as my husband, whom to offend will be to offend me.”

The tone in which these words were spoken no longer left room for doubt as to the truth of the news. Trumeau looked down for a few moments, as if reflecting deeply before definitely making up his mind. He twisted the little roll of papers between his fingers, and seemed to be in doubt whether to open it and give it to Madame Rapally to read or not. In the end, however, he put it in his pocket, rose, and approaching his cousin, said—

“I beg your pardon, this news completely changes my opinion. From the moment Maitre Quennebert becomes your husband I shall not have a word to say against him. My suspicions were unjust, I confess it frankly, and I hope that in consideration of the motives which prompted me you will forget the warmth of my attacks. I shall make no protestations, but shall let the future show how sincere is my devotion to your interests.”

Madame Rapally was too happy, too certain of being loved, not to pardon easily. With the self-complacency and factitious generosity of a woman who feels herself the object of two violent passions, she was so good as to feel pity for the lover who was left out in the cold, and offered him her hand. Trumeau kissed it

with every outward mark of respect, while his lips curled unseen in a smite of mockery. The cousins parted, apparently the best of friends, and on the understanding that Trumeau would be present at the nuptial benediction, which was to be given in a church beyond the town hall, near the house in which the newly-married couple were to live; the house on the Pont Saint-Michel having lately been sold to great advantage.

“On my word,” said Trumeau, as he went off, “it would have been a great mistake to have spoken. I have got that wretch of a Quennebert into my clutches at last; and there is nobody but himself to blame. He is taking the plunge of his own free will, there is no need for me to shove him off the precipice.”

The ceremony took place next day. Quennebert conducted his interesting bride to the altar, she hung with ornaments like the shrine of a saint, and, beaming all over with smiles, looked so ridiculous that the handsome bridegroom reddened to the roots of his hair with shame. Just as they entered the church, a coffin, on which lay a sword, and which was followed by a single mourner, who from his manners and dress seemed to belong to the class of nobles, was carried in by the same door. The wedding guests drew back to let the funeral pass on, the living giving precedence to the dead. The solitary mourner glanced by chance at Quennebert, and started as if the sight of him was painful.

“What an unlucky meeting!” murmured Madame Rapally; “it is sure to be a bad omen.”

“It’s sure to be the exact opposite,” said Quennebert smiling.

The two ceremonies took place simultaneously in two adjoining chapels; the funeral dirges which fell on the widow’s ear full of sinister prediction seemed to have quite another meaning for Quennebert, for his features lost their look of care, his wrinkles smoothed themselves out, till the guests, among whom was Trumeau, who did not suspect the secret of his relief from suspense, began to believe, despite their surprise, that he was really rejoiced at obtaining legal possession of the charming Madame Rapally.

As for her, she fleeted the daylight hours by anticipating the joyful moment when she would have her husband all to herself. When night came, hardly had she entered the nuptial chamber than she uttered a piercing shriek. She had just found and read a paper left on the bed by Trumeau, who before leaving had

contrived to glide into the room unseen. Its contents were of terrible import, so terrible that the new-made wife fell unconscious to the ground.

Quennebert, who, without a smile, was absorbed in reflections on the happiness at last within his grasp, heard the noise from the next room, and rushing in, picked up his wife. Catching sight of the paper, he also uttered a cry of anger and astonishment, but in whatever circumstances he found himself he was never long uncertain how to act. Placing Madame Quennebert, still unconscious, on the bed, he called her maid, and, having impressed on her that she was to take every care of her mistress, and above all to tell her from him as soon as she came to herself that there was no cause for alarm, he left the house at once. An hour later, in spite of the efforts of the servants, he forced his way into the presence of Commander de Jars. Holding out the fateful document to him, he said:

“Speak openly, commander! Is it you who in revenge for your long constraint have done this? I can hardly think so, for after what has happened you know that I have nothing to fear any longer. Still, knowing my secret and unable to do it in any other way, have you perchance taken your revenge by an attempt to destroy my future happiness by sowing dissension and disunion between me and my wife?”

The commander solemnly assured him that he had had no hand in bringing about the discovery.

‘Then if it’s not you, it must be a worthless being called Trumeau, who, with the unerring instinct of jealousy, has run the truth to earth. But he knows only half: I have never been either so much in love or so stupid as to allow myself to be trapped. I have given you my promise to be discreet and not to misuse my power, and as long as was compatible with my own safety I have kept my word. But now you must see that I am bound to defend myself, and to do that I shall be obliged to summon you as a witness. So leave Paris tonight and seek out some safe retreat where no one can find you, for tomorrow I shall speak. Of course if I am quit for a woman’s tears, if no more difficult task lies before me than to soothe a weeping wife, you can return immediately; but if, as is too probable, the blow has been struck by the hand of a rival furious at having been defeated, the matter will not so easily be cut short; the arm of the law will be invoked, and then I must get my head out of the noose which some fingers I know of are itching to draw tight.’”

“You are quite right, sir,” answered the commander; “I fear that my influence at court is not strong enough to enable me to brave the matter out. Well, my success has cost me dear, but it has cured me for ever of seeking out similar adventures. My preparations will not take long, and tomorrow’s dawn will find me far from Paris.”

Quennebert bowed and withdrew, returning home to console his Ariadne.

CHAPTER IX

The accusation hanging over the head of Maitre Quennebert was a very serious one, threatening his life, if proved. But he was not uneasy; he knew himself in possession of facts which would enable him to refute it triumphantly.

The platonic love of Angelique de Guerchi for the handsome Chevalier de Moranges had resulted, as we have seen, in no practical wrong to the Duc de Vitry. After her reconciliation with her lover, brought about by the eminently satisfactory explanations she was able to give of her conduct, which we have already laid before our readers, she did not consider it advisable to shut her heart to his pleadings much longer, and the consequence was that at the end of a year she found herself in a condition which it was necessary to conceal from everyone. To Angelique herself, it is true, the position was not new, and she felt neither grief nor shame, regarding the coming event as a means of making her future more secure by forging a new link in the chain which bound the duke to her. But he, sure that but for himself Angelique would never have strayed from virtue's path, could not endure the thought of her losing her reputation and becoming an object for scandal to point her finger at; so that Angelique, who could not well seem less careful of her good name than he, was obliged to turn his song of woe into a duet, and consent to certain measures being taken.

One evening, therefore, shortly before Maitre Quennebert's marriage, the fair lady set out, ostensibly on a journey which was to last a fortnight or three weeks. In reality she only made a circle in a post-chaise round Paris, which she reentered at one of the barriers, where the duke awaited her with a sedan-chair. In this she was carried to the very house to which de Jars had brought his pretended nephew after the duel. Angelique, who had to pay dearly for her errors, remained there only twenty-four hours, and then left in her coffin, which was hidden in a cellar under the palace of the Prince de Conde, the body being covered with quicklime. Two days after this dreadful death, Commander de Jars presented himself at the fatal house, and engaged a room in which he installed the chevalier.

This house, which we are about to ask the reader to enter with us, stood at the corner of the rue de la Tixeranderie and the rue Deux-Portes. There was nothing in the exterior of it to distinguish it from any other, unless perhaps two brass

plates, one of which bore the words MARIE LEROUX-CONSTANTIN, WIDOW, CERTIFIED MIDWIFE, and the other CLAUDE PERREGAUD, SURGEON. These plates were affixed to the blank wall in the rue de la Tixeranderie, the windows of the rooms on that side looking into the courtyard. The house door, which opened directly on the first steps of a narrow winding stair, was on the other side, just beyond the low arcade under whose vaulted roof access was gained to that end of the rue des Deux-Portes. This house, though dirty, mean, and out of repair, received many wealthy visitors, whose brilliant equipages waited for them in the neighbouring streets. Often in the night great ladies crossed its threshold under assumed names and remained there for several days, during which La Constantin and Claude Perregaud, by an infamous use of their professional knowledge, restored their clients to an outward appearance of honour, and enabled them to maintain their reputation for virtue. The first and second floors contained a dozen rooms in which these abominable mysteries were practised. The large apartment, which served as waiting and consultation room, was oddly furnished, being crowded with objects of strange and unfamiliar form. It resembled at once the operating-room of a surgeon, the laboratory of a chemist and alchemist, and the den of a sorcerer. There, mixed up together in the greatest confusion, lay instruments of all sorts, caldrons and retorts, as well as books containing the most absurd ravings of the human mind. There were the twenty folio volumes of Albertus Magnus; the works of his disciple, Thomas de Cantopre, of Alchindus, of Averroes, of Avicenna, of Alchabitius, of David de Plaine-Campy, called L'Edelphe, surgeon to Louis XIII and author of the celebrated book *The Morbific Hydra Exterminated by the Chemical Hercules*. Beside a bronze head, such as the monk Roger Bacon possessed, which answered all the questions that were addressed to it and foretold the future by means of a magic mirror and the combination of the rules of perspective, lay an eggshell, the same which had been used by Caret, as d'Aubigne tells us, when making men out of germs, mandrakes, and crimson silk, over a slow fire. In the presses, which had sliding-doors fastening with secret springs, stood Jars filled with noxious drugs, the power of which was but too efficacious; in prominent positions, facing each other, hung two portraits, one representing Hierophilos, a Greek physician, and the other Agnodice his pupil, the first Athenian midwife.

For several years already La Constantin and Claude Perregaud had carried on their criminal practices without interference. A number of persons were of course in the secret, but their interests kept them silent, and the two accomplices had at last persuaded themselves that they were perfectly safe. One evening,

however, Perregaud came home, his face distorted by terror and trembling in every limb. He had been warned while out that the suspicions of the authorities had been aroused in regard to him and La Constantin. It seemed that some little time ago, the Vicars-General had sent a deputation to the president of the chief court of justice, having heard from their priests that in one year alone six hundred women had avowed in the confessional that they had taken drugs to prevent their having children. This had been sufficient to arouse the vigilance of the police, who had set a watch on Perregaud's house, with the result that that very night a raid was to be made on it. The two criminals took hasty counsel together, but, as usual under such circumstances, arrived at no practical conclusions. It was only when the danger was upon them that they recovered their presence of mind. In the dead of night loud knocking at the street door was heard, followed by the command to open in the name of the king.

“We can yet save ourselves!” exclaimed surgeon, with a sudden flash of inspiration.

Rushing into the room where the pretended chevalier was lying, he called out—

“The police are coming up! If they discover your sex you are lost, and so am I. Do as I tell you.”

At a sign from him, La Constantin went down and opened the door. While the rooms on the first floor were being searched, Perregaud made with a lancet a superficial incision in the chevalier's right arm, which gave very little pain, and bore a close resemblance to a sword-cut. Surgery and medicine were at that time so inextricably involved, required such apparatus, and bristled with such scientific absurdities, that no astonishment was excited by the extraordinary collection of instruments which loaded the tables and covered the floors below: even the titles of certain treatises which there had been no time to destroy, awoke no suspicion.

Fortunately for the surgeon and his accomplice, they had only one patient—the chevalier—in their house when the descent was made. When the chevalier's room was reached, the first thing which the officers of the law remarked were the hat, spurred boots, and sword of the patient. Claude Perregaud hardly looked up as the room was invaded; he only made a sign to those—who came in to be quiet, and went on dressing the wound. Completely taken in, the officer in command merely asked the name of the patient and the cause of the wound. La

Constantin replied that it' was the young Chevalier de Moranges, nephew of Commander de Jars, who had had an affair of honour that same night, and being slightly wounded had been brought thither by his uncle hardly an hour before. These questions and the apparently trustworthy replies elicited by them being duly taken down, the uninvited visitors retired, having discovered nothing to justify their visit.

All might have been well had there been nothing the matter but the wound on the chevalier's sword-arm. But at the moment when Perregaud gave it to him the poisonous nostrums employed by La Constantin were already working in his blood. Violent fever ensued, and in three days the chevalier was dead. It was his funeral which had met Quennebert's wedding party at the church door.

Everything turned out as Quennebert had anticipated. Madame Quennebert, furious at the deceit which had been practised on her, refused to listen to her husband's justification, and Trumeau, not letting the grass grow under his feet, hastened the next day to launch an accusation of bigamy against the notary; for the paper which had been found in the nuptial chamber was nothing less than an attested copy of a contract of marriage concluded between Quennebert and Josephine-Charlotte Boullenois. It was by the merest chance that Trumeau had come on the record of the marriage, and he now challenged his rival to produce a certificate of the death of his first wife. Charlotte Boullenois, after two years of marriage, had demanded a deed of separation, which demand Quennebert had opposed. While the case was going on she had retired to the convent of La Raquette, where her intrigue with de Jars began. The commander easily induced her to let herself be carried off by force. He then concealed his conquest by causing her to adopt male attire, a mode of dress which accorded marvellously well with her peculiar tastes and rather masculine frame. At first Quennebert had instituted an active but fruitless search for his missing wife, but soon became habituated to his state of enforced single blessedness, enjoying to the full the liberty it brought with it. But his business had thereby suffered, and once having made the acquaintance of Madame Rapally, he cultivated it assiduously, knowing her fortune would be sufficient to set him straight again with the world, though he was obliged to exercise the utmost caution and reserve in his intercourse with her, as she on her side displayed none of these qualities. At last, however, matters came to such a pass that he must either go to prison or run the risk of a second marriage. So he reluctantly named a day for the ceremony, resolving to leave Paris with Madame Rapally as soon as he had settled with his creditors.

In the short interval which ensued, and while Trumeau was hugging the knowledge of the discovery he had made, a stroke of luck had brought the pretended chevalier to La Constantin. As Quennebert had kept an eye on de Jars and was acquainted with all his movements, he was aware of everything that happened at Perregaud's, and as Charlotte's death preceded his second marriage by one day, he knew that no serious consequences would ensue from the legal proceedings taken against him. He produced the declarations made by Mademoiselle de Guerchi and the commander, and had the body exhumed. Extraordinary and improbable as his defence appeared at first to be, the exhumation proved the truth of his assertions. These revelations, however, drew the eye of justice again on Perregaud and his partner in crime, and this time their guilt was brought home to them. They were condemned by parliamentary decree to "be hanged by the neck till they were dead, on a gallows erected for that purpose at the cross roads of the Croix-du-Trahoir; their bodies to remain there for twenty-four hours, then to be cut down and brought back to Paris, where they were to be exposed on a gibbet," etc., etc.

It was proved that they had amassed immense fortunes in the exercise of their infamous calling. The entries in the books seized at their house, though sparse, would have led, if made public, to scandals, involving many in high places; it was therefore judged best to limit the accusation to the two deaths by blood-poisoning of Angelique de Querchi and Charlotte Boullenois.

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CELEBRATED CRIMES VOLUME 6(of 8), Part 1

By Alexandre Dumas, Pere

JOAN OF NAPLES

1343-1382

CHAPTER I

In the night of the 15th of January 1343, while the inhabitants of Naples lay wrapped in peaceful slumber, they were suddenly awakened by the bells of the three hundred churches that this thrice blessed capital contains. In the midst of the disturbance caused by so rude a call the first thought in the mind of all was that the town was on fire, or that the army of some enemy had mysteriously landed under cover of night and could put the citizens to the edge of the sword. But the doleful, intermittent sounds of all these bells, which disturbed the silence at regular and distant intervals, were an invitation to the faithful pray for a passing soul, and it was soon evident that no disaster threatened the town, but that the king alone was in danger.

Indeed, it had been plain for several days past that the greatest uneasiness prevailed in Castel Nuovo; the officers of the crown were assembled regularly twice a day, and persons of importance, whose right it was to make their way into the king's apartments, came out evidently bowed down with grief. But although the king's death was regarded as a misfortune that nothing could avert, yet the whole town, on learning for certain of the approach of his last hour, was affected with a sincere grief, easily understood when one learns that the man about to die, after a reign of thirty-three years, eight months, and a few days, was Robert of Anjou, the most wise, just, and glorious king who had ever sat on the throne of Sicily. And so he carried with him to the tomb the eulogies and regrets of all his subjects.

Soldiers would speak with enthusiasm of the long wars he had waged with Frederic and Peter of Aragon, against Henry VII and Louis of Bavaria; and felt their hearts beat high, remembering the glories of campaigns in Lombardy and Tuscany; priests would gratefully extol his constant defence of the papacy against Ghibelline attacks, and the founding of convents, hospitals, and churches throughout his kingdom; in the world of letters he was regarded as the most learned king in Christendom; Petrarch, indeed, would receive the poet's crown from no other hand, and had spent three consecutive days answering all the questions that Robert had deigned to ask him on every topic of human knowledge. The men of law, astonished by the wisdom of those laws which now enriched the Neapolitan code, had dubbed him the Solomon of their day; the nobles applauded him for protecting their ancient privileges, and the people were

eloquent of his clemency, piety, and mildness. In a word, priests and soldiers, philosophers and poets, nobles and peasants, trembled when they thought that the government was to fall into the hands of a foreigner and of a young girl, recalling those words of Robert, who, as he followed in the funeral train of Charles, his only son, turned as he reached the threshold of the church and sobbingly exclaimed to his barons about him, "This day the crown has fallen from my head: alas for me! alas for you!"

Now that the bells were ringing for the dying moments of the good king, every mind was full of these prophetic words: women prayed fervently to God; men from all parts of the town bent their steps towards the royal palace to get the earliest and most authentic news, and after waiting some moments, passed in exchanging sad reflections, were obliged to return as they had come, since nothing that went on in the privacy of the family found its way outside—the castle was plunged in complete darkness, the drawbridge was raised as usual, and the guards were at their post.

Yet if our readers care to be present at the death of the nephew of Saint Louis and the grandson of Charles of Anjou, we may conduct them into the chamber of the dying man. An alabaster lamp suspended from the ceiling serves to light the vast and sombre room, with walls draped in black velvet sewn with golden fleur-de-lys. Near the wall which faces the two entrance doors that at this moment are both shut close, there stands beneath a brocaded canopy an ebony bed, supported on four twisted columns carved with symbolic figures. The king, after a struggle with a violent paroxysm, has fallen swooning in the arms of his confessor and his doctor, who each hold one of his dying hands, feeling his pulse anxiously and exchanging looks of intelligence. At the foot of the bed stands a woman about fifty years of age, her hands clasped, her eyes raised to heaven, in an attitude of resigned grief: this woman is the queen, No tears dim her eyes: her sunken cheek has that waxen yellow tinge that one sees on the bodies of saints preserved by miracle. In her look is that mingling of calm and suffering that points to a soul at once tried by sorrow and imbued with religion. After the lapse of an hour, while no movement had disturbed the profound silence which reigned about the bed of death, the king trembled slightly; opened his eyes, and endeavoured feebly to raise his head. They thanking the physician and priest with a smile, who had both hastened to arrange his pillows, he begged the queen to come near, and told her in a low voice that he would speak with her a moment alone. The doctor and confessor retired, deeply bowing, and the king followed them with his eyes up to the moment when one of the doors closed behind them. He passed his hand

across his brow, as though seeking to collect his thoughts, and rallying all his forces for the supreme effort, pronounced these words:

“What I must say to you, Sancha, has no concern with those two good persons who were here a moment ago: their task is ended. One has done all for my body that human science could teach him, and all that has come of it is that my death is yet a little deferred; the other has now absolved me of all my sins, and assured me of God’s forgiveness, yet cannot keep from me those dread apparitions which in this terrible hour arise before me. Twice have you seen me battling with a superhuman horror. My brow has been bathed in sweat, my limbs rigid, my cries have been stifled by a hand of iron. Has God permitted the Evil Spirit to tempt me? Is this remorse in phantom shape? These two conflicts I have suffered have so subdued my strength that I can never endure a third. Listen then, my Sandra, for I have instructions to give you on which perhaps the safety of my soul depends.”

“My lord and my master,” said the queen in the most gentle accents of submission, “I am ready to listen to your orders; and should it be that God, in the hidden designs of His providence, has willed to call you to His glory while we are plunged in grief, your last wishes shall be fulfilled here on earth most scrupulously and exactly. But,” she added, with all the solicitude of a timid soul, “pray suffer me to sprinkle drops of holy water and banish the accursed one from this chamber, and let me offer up some part of that service of prayer that you composed in honour of your sainted brother to implore God’s protection in this hour when we can ill afford to lose it.”

Then opening a richly bound book, she read with fervent devotion certain verses of the office that Robert had written in a very pure Latin for his brother Louis, Bishop of Toulouse, which was, in use in the Church as late as the time of the Council of Trent.

Soothed by the charm of the prayers he had himself composed, the king was near forgetting the object of the interview he had so solemnly and eagerly demanded and letting himself lapse into a state of vague melancholy, he murmured in a subdued voice, “Yes, yes, you are right; pray for me, for you too are a saint, and I am but a poor sinful man.”

“Say not so, my lord,” interrupted Dona Sancha; “you are the greatest, wisest, and most just king who has ever sat upon the throne of Naples.”

“But the throne is usurped,” replied Robert in a voice of gloom; “you know that the kingdom belonged to my elder brother, Charles Martel; and since Charles was on the throne of Hungary, which he inherited from his mother, the kingdom of Naples devolved by right upon his eldest son, Carobert, and not on me, who am the third in rank of the family. And I have suffered myself to be crowned in my nephew’s stead, though he was the only lawful-king; I have put the younger branch in the place of the elder, and for thirty-three years I have stifled the reproaches of my conscience. True, I have won battles, made laws, founded churches; but a single word serves to give the lie to all the pompous titles showered upon me by the people’s admiration, and this one word rings out clearer in my ears than all the, flattery of courtiers, all the songs of poets, all the orations of the crowd:—I am an usurper!”

“Be not unjust towards yourself, my lord, and bear in mind that if you did not abdicate in favour of the rightful heir, it was because you wished to save the people from the worst misfortunes. Moreover,” continued the queen, with that air of profound conviction that an unanswerable argument inspires, “you have remained king by the consent and authority of our Holy Father the sovereign pontiff, who disposes of the throne as a fief belonging to the Church.”

“I have long quieted my scruples thus,” replied the dying man, “and the pope’s authority has kept me silent; but whatever security one may pretend to feel in one’s lifetime, there yet comes a dreadful solemn hour when all illusions needs must vanish: this hour for me has come, and now I must appear before God, the one unfailing judge.”

“If His justice cannot fail, is not His mercy infinite?” pursued the queen, with the glow of sacred inspiration. “Even if there were good reason for the fear that has shaken your soul, what fault could not be effaced by a repentance so noble? Have you not repaired the wrong you may have done your nephew Carobert, by bringing his younger son Andre to your kingdom and marrying him to Joan, your poor Charles’s elder daughter? Will not they inherit your crown?”

“Alas!” cried Robert, with a deep sigh, “God is punishing me perhaps for thinking too late of this just reparation. O my good and noble Sandra, you touch a chord which vibrates sadly in my heart, and you anticipate the unhappy confidence I was about to make. I feel a gloomy presentiment—and in the hour of death presentiment is prophecy—that the two sons of my nephew, Louis, who has been King of Hungary since his father died, and Andre, whom I desired to

make King of Naples, will prove the scourge of my family. Ever since Andre set foot in our castle, a strange fatality has pursued and overturned my projects. I had hoped that if Andre and Joan were brought up together a tender intimacy would arise between the two children; and that the beauty of our skies, our civilisation, and the attractions of our court would end by softening whatever rudeness there might be in the young Hungarian's character; but in spite of my efforts all has tended to cause coldness, and even aversion, between the bridal pair. Joan, scarcely fifteen, is far ahead of her age. Gifted with a brilliant and mobile mind, a noble and lofty character, a lively and glowing fancy, now free and frolicsome as a child, now grave and proud as a queen, trustful and simple as a young girl, passionate and sensitive as a woman, she presents the most striking contrast to Andre, who, after a stay of ten years at our court, is wilder, more gloomy, more intractable than ever. His cold, regular features, impassive countenance, and indifference to every pleasure that his wife appears to love, all this has raised between him and Joan a barrier of indifference, even of antipathy. To the tenderest effusion his reply is no more than a scornful smile or a frown, and he never seems happier than when on a pretext of the chase he can escape from the court. These, then, are the two, man and wife, on whose heads my crown shall rest, who in a short space will find themselves exposed to every passion whose dull growl is now heard below a deceptive calm, but which only awaits the moment when I breathe my last, to burst forth upon them."

"O my God, my God!" the queen kept repeating in her grief: her arms fell by her side, like the arms of a statue weeping by a tomb.

"Listen, Dona Sandra. I know that your heart has never clung to earthly vanities, and that you only wait till God has called me to Himself to withdraw to the convent of Santa Maria delta Croce, founded by yourself in the hope that you might there end your days. Far be it from me to dissuade you from your sacred vocation, when I am myself descending into the tomb and am conscious of the nothingness of all human greatness. Only grant me one year of widowhood before you pass on to your bridal with the Lord, one year in which you will watch over Joan and her husband, to keep from them all the dangers that threaten. Already the woman who was the seneschal's wife and her son have too much influence over our granddaughter; be specially careful, and amid the many interests, intrigues, and temptations that will surround the young queen, distrust particularly the affection of Bertrand d'Artois, the beauty of Louis of Tarentum; and the ambition of Charles of Durazzo."

The king paused, exhausted by the effort of speaking; then turning on his wife a supplicating glance and extending his thin wasted hand, he added in a scarcely audible voice:

“Once again I entreat you, leave not the court before a year has passed. Do you promise me?”

“I promise, my lord.”

“And now,” said Robert, whose face at these words took on a new animation, “call my confessor and the physician and summon the family, for the hour is at hand, and soon I shall not have the strength to speak my last words.”

A few moments later the priest and the doctor reentered the room, their faces bathed, in tears. The king thanked them warmly for their care of him in his last illness, and begged them help to dress him in the coarse garb of a Franciscan monk, that God, as he said, seeing him die in poverty, humility, and penitence, might the more easily grant him pardon. The confessor and doctor placed upon his naked feet the sandals worn by mendicant friars, robed him in a Franciscan frock, and tied the rope about his waist. Stretched thus upon his bed, his brow surmounted by his scanty locks, with his long white beard, and his hands crossed upon his breast, the King of Naples looked like one of those aged anchorites who spend their lives in mortifying the flesh, and whose souls, absorbed in heavenly contemplation, glide insensibly from out their last ecstasy into eternal bliss. Some time he lay thus with closed eyes, putting up a silent prayer to God; then he bade them light the spacious room as for a great solemnity, and gave a sign to the two persons who stood, one at the head, the other at the foot of the bed. The two folding doors opened, and the whole of the royal family, with the queen at their head and the chief barons following, took their places in silence around the dying king to hear his last wishes.

His eyes turned toward Joan, who stood next him on his right hand, with an indescribable look of tenderness and grief. She was of a beauty so unusual and so marvellous, that her grandfather was fascinated by the dazzling sight, and mistook her for an angel that God had sent to console him on his deathbed. The pure lines of her fine profile, her great black liquid eyes, her noble brow uncovered, her hair shining like the raven’s wing, her delicate mouth, the whole effect of this beautiful face on the mind of those who beheld her was that of a deep melancholy and sweetness, impressing itself once and for ever. Tall and

slender, but without the excessive thinness of some young girls, her movements had that careless supple grace that recall the waving of a flower stalk in the breeze. But in spite of all these smiling and innocent graces one could yet discern in Robert's heiress a will firm and resolute to brave every obstacle, and the dark rings that circled her fine eyes plainly showed that her heart was already agitated by passions beyond her years.

Beside Joan stood her younger sister, Marie, who was twelve or thirteen years of age, the second daughter of Charles, Duke of Calabria, who had died before her birth, and whose mother, Marie of Valois, had unhappily been lost to her from her cradle. Exceedingly pretty and shy, she seemed distressed by such an assembly of great personages, and quietly drew near to the widow of the grand seneschal, Philippa, surnamed the Catanese, the princesses' governess, whom they honoured as a mother. Behind the princesses and beside this lady stood her son, Robert of Cabane, a handsome young man, proud and upright, who with his left hand played with his slight moustache while he secretly cast on Joan a glance of audacious boldness. The group was completed by Dona Cancha, the young chamberwoman to the princesses, and by the Count of Terlizzi, who exchanged with her many a furtive look and many an open smile. The second group was composed of Andre, Joan's husband, and Friar Robert, tutor to, the young prince, who had come with him from Budapesth, and never left him for a minute. Andre was at this time perhaps eighteen years old: at first sight one was struck by the extreme regularity of his features, his handsome, noble face, and abundant fair hair; but among all these Italian faces, with their vivid animation, his countenance lacked expression, his eyes seemed dull, and something hard and icy in his looks revealed his wild character and foreign extraction. His tutor's portrait Petrarch has drawn for us: crimson face, hair and beard red, figure short and crooked; proud in poverty, rich and miserly; like a second Diogenes, with hideous and deformed limbs barely concealed beneath his friar's frock.

In the third group stood the widow of Philip, Prince of Tarentum, the king's brother, honoured at the court of Naples with the title of Empress of Constantinople, a style inherited by her as the granddaughter of Baldwin II. Anyone accustomed to sound the depths of the human heart would at one glance have perceived that this woman under her ghastly pallor concealed an implacable hatred, a venomous jealousy, and an all-devouring ambition. She had her three sons about her—Robert, Philip and Louis, the youngest. Had the king chosen out from among his nephews the handsomest, bravest, and most

generous, there can be no doubt that Louis of Tarentum would have obtained the crown. At the age of twenty-three he had already excelled the cavaliers of most renown in feats of arms; honest, loyal, and brave, he no sooner conceived a project than he promptly carried it out. His brow shone in that clear light which seems to, serve as a halo of success to natures so privileged as his; his fine eyes, of a soft and velvety black, subdued the hearts of men who could not resist their charm, and his caressing smile made conquest sweet. A child of destiny, he had but to use his will; some power unknown, some beneficent fairy had watched over his birth, and undertaken to smooth away all obstacles, gratify all desires.

Near to him, but in the fourth group, his cousin Charles of Duras stood and scowled. His mother, Agnes, the widow of the Duke of Durazzo and Albania, another of the king's brothers, looked upon him affrighted, clutching to her breast her two younger sons, Ludovico, Count of Gravina, and Robert, Prince of Morea. Charles, pale-faced, with short hair and thick beard, was glancing with suspicion first at his dying uncle and then at Joan and the little Marie, then again at his cousins, apparently so excited by tumultuous thoughts that he could not stand still. His feverish uneasiness presented a marked contrast with the calm, dreamy face of Bertrand d'Artois, who, giving precedence to his father Charles, approached the queen at the foot of the bed, and so found himself face to face with Joan. The young man was so absorbed by the beauty of the princess that he seemed to see nothing else in the room.

As soon as Joan and Andre; the Princes of Tarentum and Durazzo, the Counts of Artois, and Queen Sancha had taken their places round the bed of death, forming a semicircle, as we have just described, the vice-chancellor passed through the rows of barons, who according to their rangy were following closely after the princes of the blood; and bowing low before the king, unfolded a parchment sealed with the royal seal, and read in a solemn voice, amid a profound silence:

“Robert, by the grace of God King of Sicily and Jerusalem, Count of Provence, Forcalquier, and Piedmont, Vicar of the Holy Roman Church, hereby nominates and declares his sole heiress in the kingdom of Sicily on this side and the other side of the strait, as also in the counties of Provence, Forcalquier, and Piedmont, and in all his other territories, Joan, Duchess of Calabria, elder daughter of the excellent lord Charles, Duke of Calabria, of illustrious memory.

“Moreover, he nominates and declares the honourable lady Marie, younger daughter of the late Duke of Calabria, his heiress in the county of Alba and in

the jurisdiction of the valley of Grati and the territory of Giordano, with all their castles and dependencies; and orders that the lady thus named receive them in fief direct from the aforesaid duchess and her heirs; on this condition, however, that if the duchess give and grant to her illustrious sister or to her assigns the sum of 10,000 ounces of gold by way of compensation, the county and jurisdiction aforesaid—shall remain in the possession of the duchess and her heirs.

“Moreover, he wills and commands, for private and secret reasons, that the aforesaid lady Marie shall contract a marriage with the very illustrious prince, Louis, reigning King of Hungary. And in case any impediment should appear to this marriage by reason of—the union said to be already arranged and signed between the King of Hungary and the King of Bohemia and his daughter, our lord the king commands that the illustrious lady Marie shall contract a marriage with the elder son of the mighty lord Don Juan, Duke of Normandy, himself the elder son of the reigning King of France.”

At this point Charles of Durazzo gave Marie a singularly meaning look, which escaped the notice of all present, their attention being absorbed by the reading of Robert’s will. The young girl herself, from the moment when she first heard her own name, had stood confused and thunderstruck, with scarlet cheeks, not daring to raise her eyes.

The vice-chancellor continued:

“Moreover, he has willed and commanded that the counties of Forcalquier and Provence shall in all perpetuity be united to his kingdom, and shall form one sole and inseparable dominion, whether or not there be several sons or daughters or any other reason of any kind for its partition, seeing that this union is of the utmost importance for the security and common prosperity of the kingdom and counties aforesaid.

“Moreover, he has decided and commanded that in case of the death of the Duchess Joan—which God avert!—without lawful issue of her body, the most illustrious lord Andre, Duke of Calabria, her husband, shall have the principality of Salerno, with the title fruits, revenues, and all the rights thereof, together with the revenue of 2000 ounces of gold for maintenance.

“Moreover, he has decided and ordered that the Queen above all, and also the

venerable father Don Philip of Cabassole, Bishop of Cavaillon, vice-chancellor of the kingdom of Sicily, and the magnificent lords Philip of Sanguineto, seneschal of Provence, Godfrey of Marsan, Count of Squillace, admiral of the kingdom, and Charles of Artois, Count of Aire, shall be governors, regents, and administrators of the aforesaid lord Andre and the aforesaid ladies Joan and Marie, until such time as the duke, the duchess, and the very illustrious lady Marie shall have attained their twenty-fifth year," *etc. etc.*

When the vice-chancellor had finished reading, the king sat up, and glancing round upon his fair and numerous family, thus spoke:

“My children, you have heard my last wishes. I have bidden you all to my deathbed, that you may see how the glory of the world passes away. Those whom men name the great ones of the earth have more duties to perform, and after death more accounts to render: it is in this that their greatness lies. I have reigned thirty-three years, and God before whom I am about to appear, God to whom my sighs have often arisen during my long and painful life, God alone knows the thoughts that rend my heart in the hour of death. Soon shall I be lying in the tomb, and all that remains of me in this world will live in the memory of those who pray for me. But before I leave you for ever, you, oh, you who are twice my daughters, whom I have loved with a double love, and you my nephews who have had from me all the care and affection of a father, promise me to be ever united in heart and in wish, as indeed you are in my love. I have lived longer than your fathers, I the eldest of all, and thus no doubt God has wished to tighten the bonds of your affection, to accustom you to live in one family and to pay honour to one head. I have loved you all alike, as a father should, without exception or preference. I have disposed of my throne according to the law of nature and the inspiration of my conscience: Here are the heirs of the crown of Naples; you, Joan, and you, Andre, will never forget the love and respect that are due between husband and wife, and mutually sworn by you at the foot of the altar; and you, my nephews all; my barons, my officers, render homage to your lawful sovereigns; Andre of Hungary, Louis of Tarentum, Charles of Durazzo, remember that you are brothers; woe to him who shall imitate the perfidy of Cain! May his blood fall upon his own head, and may he be accursed by Heaven as he is by the mouth of a dying man; and may the blessing of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit descend upon that man whose heart is good, when the Lord of mercy shall call to my soul Himself!”

The king remained motionless, his arms raised, his eyes fixed on heaven, his

cheeks extraordinarily bright, while the princes, barons, and officers of the court proffered to Joan and her husband the oath of fidelity and allegiance. When it was the turn of the Princes of Duras to advance, Charles disdainfully stalked past Andre, and bending his knee before the princess, said in a loud voice, as he kissed her hand—

“To you, my queen, I pay my homage.”

All looks were turned fearfully towards the dying man, but the good king no longer heard. Seeing him fall back rigid and motionless, Dona Sancha burst into sobs, and cried in a voice choked with tears

“The king is dead; let us pray for his soul.”

At the very same moment all the princes hurried from the room, and every passion hitherto suppressed in the presence of the king now found its vent like a mighty torrent breaking through its banks.

“Long live Joan! “Robert of Cabane, Louis of Tarentum, and Bertrand of Artois were the first to exclaim, while the prince’s tutor, furiously breaking through the crowd and apostrophising the various members of the council of regency, cried aloud in varying tones of passion, “Gentlemen, you have forgotten the king’s wish already; you must cry, ‘Long live Andre!’ too”; then, wedding example to precept, and himself making more noise than all the barons together, he cried in a voice of thunder—

“Long live the King of Naples!”

But there was no echo to his cry, and Charles of Durazzo, measuring the Dominican with a terrible look, approached the queen, and taking her by the hand, slid back the curtains of the balcony, from which was seen the square and the town of Naples. So far as the eye could reach there stretched an immense crowd, illuminated by streams of light, and thousands of heads were turned upward towards Castel Nuovo to gather any news that might be announced. Charles respectfully drawing back and indicating his fair cousin with his hand, cried out—

“People of Naples, the King is dead: long live the Queen!”

“Long live Joan, Queen of Naples!” replied the people, with a single mighty cry

that resounded through every quarter of the town.

The events that on this night had followed each other with the rapidity of a dream had produced so deep an impression on Joan's mind, that, agitated by a thousand different feelings, she retired to her own rooms, and shutting herself up in her chamber, gave free vent to her grief. So long as the conflict of so many ambitions waged about the tomb, the young queen, refusing every consolation that was offered her, wept bitterly for the death of her grandfather, who had loved her to the point of weakness. The king was buried with all solemnity in the church of Santa Chiara, which he had himself founded and dedicated to the Holy Sacrament, enriching it with magnificent frescoes by Giotto and other precious relics, among which is shown still, behind the tribune of the high altar, two columns of white marble taken from Solomon's temple. There still lies Robert, represented on his tomb in the dress of a king and in a monk's frock, on the right of the monument to his son Charles, the Duke of Calabria.

CHAPTER II

As soon as the obsequies were over, Andre's tutor hastily assembled the chief Hungarian lords, and it was decided in a council held in the presence of the prince and with his consent, to send letters to his mother, Elizabeth of Poland, and his brother, Louis of Hungary, to make known to them the purport of Robert's will, and at the same time to lodge a complaint at the court of Avignon against the conduct of the princes and people of Naples in that they had proclaimed Joan alone Queen of Naples, thus overlooking the rights of her husband, and further to demand for him the pope's order for Andre's coronation. Friar Robert, who had not only a profound knowledge of the court intrigues, but also the experience of a philosopher and all a monk's cunning, told his pupil that he ought to profit by the depression of spirit the king's death had produced in Joan, and ought not to suffer her favourites to use this time in influencing her by their seductive counsels.

But Joan's ability to receive consolation was quite as ready as her grief had at first been impetuous the sobs which seemed to be breaking her heart ceased all at once; new thoughts, more gentle, less lugubrious, took possession of the young queen's mind; the trace of tears vanished, and a smile lit up her liquid eyes like the sun's ray following on rain. This change, anxiously awaited, was soon observed by Joan's chamberwoman: she stole to the queen's room, and falling on her knees, in accents of flattery and affection, she offered her first congratulations to her lovely mistress. Joan opened her arms and held her in a long embrace; far Dona Cancha was far more to her than a lady-in-waiting; she was the companion of infancy, the depositary of all her secrets, the confidante of her most private thoughts. One had but to glance at this young girl to understand the fascination she could scarcely fail to exercise over the queen's mind. She had a frank and smiling countenance, such as inspires confidence and captivates the mind at first sight. Her face had an irresistible charm, with clear blue eyes, warm golden hair, mouth bewitchingly turned up at the corners, and delicate little chin. Wild, happy, light of heart, pleasure and love were the breath of her being; her dainty refinement, her charming inconstancies, all made her at sixteen as lovely as an angel, though at heart she was corrupt. The whole court was at her feet, and Joan felt more affection for her than for her own sister.

"Well, my dear Cancha," she murmured, with a sigh, "you find me very sad and

very unhappy!”

“And you find me, fair queen,” replied the confidante, fixing an admiring look on Joan,—“you find me just the opposite, very happy that I can lay at your feet before anyone else the proof of the joy that the people of Naples are at this moment feeling. Others perhaps may envy you the crown that shines upon your brow, the throne which is one of the noblest in the world, the shouts of this entire town that sound rather like worship than homage; but I, madam, I envy you your lovely black hair, your dazzling eyes, your more than mortal grace, which make every man adore you.”

“And yet you know, my Cancha, I am much to be pitied both as a queen and as a woman: when one is fifteen a crown is heavy to wear, and I have not the liberty of the meanest of my subjects—I mean in my affections; for before I reached an age when I could think I was sacrificed to a man whom I can never love.”

“Yet, madam,” replied Cancha in a more insinuating voice, “in this court there is a young cavalier who might by virtue of respect, love, and devotion have made you forget the claims of this foreigner, alike unworthy to be our king and to be your husband.”

The queen heaved a heavy sigh.

“When did you lose your skill to read my heart?” she cried. “Must I actually tell you that this love is making me wretched? True, at the very first this unsanctioned love was a keen joy: a new life seemed to wake within my heart; I was drawn on, fascinated by the prayers, the tears, and the despair of this man, by the opportunities that his mother so easily granted, she whom I had always looked upon as my own mother; I have loved him.... O my God, I am still so young, and my past is so unhappy. At times strange thoughts come into my mind: I fancy he no longer loves me, that he never did love me; I fancy he has been led on by ambition, by self-interest, by some ignoble motive, and has only feigned a feeling that he has never really felt. I feel myself a coldness I cannot account for; in his presence I am constrained, I am troubled by his look, his voice makes me tremble: I fear him; I would sacrifice a year of my life could I, never have listened to him.”

These words seemed to touch the young confidante to the very depths of her soul; a shade of sadness crossed her brow, her eyelids dropped, and for some

time she answered nothing, showing sorrow rather than surprise. Then, lifting her head gently, she said, with visible embarrassment—

“I should never have dared to pass so severe a judgment upon a man whom my sovereign lady has raised above other men by casting upon him a look of kindness; but if Robert of Cabane has deserved the reproach of inconstancy and ingratitude, if he has perjured himself like a coward, he must indeed be the basest of all miserable beings, despising a happiness which other men might have entreated of God the whole time of their life and paid for through eternity. One man I know, who weeps both night and day without hope or consolation, consumed by a slow and painful malady, when one word might yet avail to save him, did it come from the lips of my noble mistress.”

“I will not hear another word,” cried Joan, suddenly rising; “there shall be no new cause for remorse in my life. Trouble has come upon me through my loves, both lawful and criminal; alas! no longer will I try to control my awful fate, I will bow my head without a murmur. I am the queen, and I must yield myself up for the good of my subjects.”

“Will you forbid me, madam,” replied Dona Cancha in a kind, affectionate tone —“will you forbid me to name Bertrand of Artois in your presence, that unhappy man, with the beauty of an angel and the modesty of a girl? Now that you are queen and have the life and death of your subjects in your own keeping, will you feel no kindness towards an unfortunate one whose only fault is to adore you, who strives with all his mind and strength to bear a chance look of yours without dying of his joy?”

“I have struggled hard never to look on him,” cried the queen, urged by an impulse she was not strong enough to conquer: then, to efface the impression that might well have been made on her friend’s mind, she added severely, “I forbid you to pronounce his name before me; and if he should ever venture to complain, I bid you tell him from me that the first time I even suspect the cause of his distress he will be banished for ever from my presence.”

“Ah, madam, dismiss me also; for I shall never be strong enough to do so hard a bidding: the unhappy man who cannot awake in your heart so much as a feeling of pity may now be struck down by yourself in your wrath, for here he stands; he has heard your sentence, and come to die at your feet.”

The last words were spoken in a louder voice, so that they might be heard from outside, and Bertrand of Artois came hurriedly into the room and fell on his knees before the queen. For a long time past the young lady-in-waiting had perceived that Robert of Cabane had, through his own fault, lost the love of Joan;—for his tyranny had indeed become more unendurable to her than her husband's.

Dona Cancha had been quick enough to perceive that the eyes of her young mistress were wont to rest with a kind of melancholy gentleness on Bertrand, a young man of handsome appearance but with a sad and dreamy expression; so when she made up her mind to speak in his interests, she was persuaded that the queen already loved him. Still, a bright colour overspread Joan's face, and her anger would have fallen on both culprits alike, when in the next room a sound of steps was heard, and the voice of the grand seneschal's widow in conversation with her son fell on the ears of the three young people like a clap of thunder. Dona Cancha, pale as death, stood trembling; Bertrand felt that he was lost—all the more because his presence compromised the queen; Joan only, with that wonderful presence of mind she was destined to preserve in the most difficult crises of her future life, thrust the young man against the carved back of her bed, and concealed him completely beneath the ample curtain: she then signed to Cancha to go forward and meet the governess and her son.

But before we conduct into the queen's room these two persons, whom our readers may remember in Joan's train about the bed of King Robert, we must relate the circumstances which had caused the family of the Catanese to rise with incredible rapidity from the lowest class of the people to the highest rank at court. When Dona Violante of Aragon, first wife of Robert of Anjou, became the mother of Charles, who was later on the Duke of Calabria, a nurse was sought for the infant among the most handsome women of the people. After inspecting many women of equal merit as regards beauty, youth; and, health, the princess's choice lighted on Philippa, a young Catanese woman, the wife of a fisherman of Trapani, and by condition a laundress. This young woman, as she washed her linen on the bank of a stream, had dreamed strange dreams: she had fancied herself summoned to court, wedded to a great personage, and receiving the honours of a great lady. Thus when she was called to Castel Nuovo her joy was great, for she felt that her dreams now began to be realised. Philippa was installed at the court, and a few months after she began to nurse the child the fisherman was dead and she was a widow. Meanwhile Raymond of Cabane, the major-domo of King Charles II's house, had bought a negro from some corsairs,

and having had him baptized by his own name, had given him his liberty; afterwards observing that he was able and intelligent, he had appointed him head cook in the king's kitchen; and then he had gone away to the war. During the absence of his patron the negro managed his own affairs at the court so cleverly, that in a short time he was able to buy land, houses, farms, silver plate, and horses, and could vie in riches with the best in the kingdom; and as he constantly won higher favour in the royal family, he passed on from the kitchen to the wardrobe. The Catanese had also deserved very well of her employers, and as a reward for the care she had bestowed on the child, the princess married her to the negro, and he, as a wedding gift, was granted the title of knight.

From this day forward, Raymond of Cabane and Philippa the laundress rose in the world so rapidly that they had no equal in influence at court. After the death of Dona Violante, the Catanese became the intimate friend of Dona Sandra, Robert's second wife, whom we introduced to our readers at the beginning of this narrative. Charles, her foster son, loved her as a mother, and she was the confidante of his two wives in turn, especially of the second wife, Marie of Valois. And as the quondam laundress had in the end learned all the manners and customs of the court, she was chosen at the birth of Joan and her sister to be governess and mistress over the young girls, and at this juncture Raymond was created major-domo. Finally, Marie of Valois on her deathbed commended the two young princesses to her care, begging her to look on them as her own-daughters. Thus Philippa the Catanese, honoured in future as foster mother of the heiress to the throne of Naples, had power to nominate her husband grand seneschal, one of the seven most important offices in the kingdom, and to obtain knighthood for her sons. Raymond of Cabane was buried like a king in a marble tomb in the church of the Holy Sacrament, and there was speedily joined by two of his sons. The third, Robert, a youth of extraordinary strength and beauty, gave up an ecclesiastical career, and was himself made major-domo, his two sisters being married to the Count of Merlizzi and the Count of Morcone respectively. This was now the state of affairs, and the influence of the grand seneschal's widow seemed for ever established, when an unexpected event suddenly occurred, causing such injury as might well suffice to upset the edifice of her fortunes that had been raised stone by stone patiently and slowly: this edifice was now undermined and threatened to fall in a single day. It was the sudden apparition of Friar Robert, who followed to the court of Rome his young pupil, who from infancy had been Joan's destined husband, which thus shattered all the designs of the Catanese and seriously menaced her future. The monk had not been slow to understand that so long as she remained at the court, Andre would

be no more than the slave, possibly even the victim, of his wife. Thus all Friar Robert's thoughts were obstinately concentrated on a single end, that of getting rid of the Catanese or neutralising her influence. The prince's tutor and the governess of the heiress had but to exchange one glance, icy, penetrating, plain to read: their looks met like lightning flashes of hatred and of vengeance. The Catanese, who felt she was detected, lacked courage to fight this man in the open, and so conceived the hope of strengthening her tottering empire by the arts of corruption and debauchery. She instilled by degrees into her pupil's mind the poison of vice, inflamed her youthful imagination with precocious desires, sowed in her heart the seeds of an unconquerable aversion for her husband, surrounded the poor child with abandoned women, and especially attached to her the beautiful and attractive Dona Cancha, who is branded by contemporary authors with the name of a courtesan; then summed up all these lessons in infamy by prostituting Joan to her own son. The poor girl, polluted by sin before she knew what life was, threw her whole self into this first passion with all the ardour of youth, and loved Robert of Cabane so violently, so madly, that the Catanese congratulated herself on the success of her infamy, believing that she held her prey so fast in her toils that her victim would never attempt to escape them.

A year passed by before Joan, conquered by her infatuation, conceived the smallest suspicion of her lover's sincerity. He, more ambitious than affectionate, found it easy to conceal his coldness under the cloak of a brotherly intimacy, of blind submission, and of unswerving devotion; perhaps he would have deceived his mistress for a longer time had not Bertrand of Artois fallen madly in love with Joan. Suddenly the bandage fell from the young girl's eyes; comparing the two with the natural instinct of a woman beloved which never goes astray, she perceived that Robert of Cabane loved her for his own sake, while Bertrand of Artois would give his life to make her happy. A light fell upon her past: she mentally recalled the circumstances that preceded and accompanied her earliest love; and a shudder went through her at the thought that she had been sacrificed to a cowardly seducer by the very woman she had loved most in the world, whom she had called by the name of mother.

Joan drew back into herself, and wept-bitterly. Wounded by a single blow in all her affections, at first her grief absorbed her; then, roused to sudden anger, she proudly raised her head, for now her love was changed to scorn. Robert, amazed at her cold and haughty reception of him, following on so great a love, was stung by jealousy and wounded pride. He broke out into bitter reproach and violent

recrimination, and, letting fall the mask, once for all lost his place in Joan's heart.

His mother at last saw that it was time to interfere: she rebuked her son, accusing him of upsetting all her plans by his clumsiness.

“As you have failed to conquer her by love,” she said, “you must now subdue her by fear. The secret of her honour is in our hands, and she will never dare to rebel. She plainly loves Bertrand of Artois, whose languishing eyes and humble sighs contrast in a striking manner with your haughty indifference and your masterful ways. The mother of the Princes of Tarentum, the Empress of Constantinople, will easily seize an occasion of helping on the princess's love so as to alienate her more and more from her husband: Cancha will be the go between, and sooner or later we shall find Bertrand at Joan's feet. Then she will be able to refuse us nothing.”

While all this was going on, the old king died, and the Catanese, who had unceasingly kept on the watch for the moment she had so plainly foreseen, loudly called to her son, when she saw Bertrand slip into Joan's apartment, saying as she drew him after her—

“Follow me, the queen is ours.”

It was thus that she and her son came to be there. Joan, standing in the middle of the chamber, pallid, her eyes fixed on the curtains of the bed, concealed her agitation with a smile, and took one step forward towards her governess, stooping to receive the kiss which the latter bestowed upon her every morning. The Catanese embraced her with affected cordiality, and turning, to her son, who had knelt upon one knee, said, pointing to Robert—

“My fair queen, allow the humblest of your subjects to offer his sincere congratulations and to ay his homage at your feet.”

“Rise, Robert,” said Joan, extending her hand kindly, and with no show of bitterness. “We were brought up together, and I shall never forget that in our childhood—I mean those happy days when we were both innocent—I called you my brother.”

“As you allow me, madam,” said Robert, with an ironical smile, “I too shall always remember the names you formerly gave me.”

“And I,” said the Catanese, “shall forget that I speak to the Queen of Naples, in embracing once more my beloved daughter. Come, madam, away with care: you have wept long enough; we have long respected your grief. It is now time to show yourself to these good Neapolitans who bless Heaven continually for granting them a queen so beautiful and good; it is time that your favours upon the heads of your faithful subjects; and my son, who surpasses all in his fidelity, comes first to ask a favour of you, in order that he may serve you yet more zealously.”

Joan cast on Robert a withering look, and, speaking to the Catanese, said with a scornful air—

“You know, madam, I can refuse your son nothing.”

“All he asks,” continued the lady, “is a title which is his due, and which he inherited from his father—the title of Grand Seneschal of the Two Sicilies: I trust, my, daughter, you will have no difficulty in granting this.”

“But I must consult the council of regency.”

“The council will hasten to ratify the queen’s wishes,” replied Robert, handing her the parchment with an imperious gesture: “you need only speak to the Count of Artois.”

And he cast a threatening glance at the curtain, which had slightly moved.

“You are right,” said the queen at once; and going up to a table she signed the parchment with a trembling hand.

“Now, my daughter, I have come in the name of all the care I bestowed on your infancy, of all the maternal love I have lavished on you, to implore a favour that my family will remember for evermore.”

The queen recoiled one’ step, crimson with astonishment and rage; but before she could find words to reply, the lady continued in a voice that betrayed no feeling—

“I request you to make my son Count of Eboli.”

“That has nothing to do with me, madam; the barons of this kingdom would

revolt to a man if I were on my own authority to exalt to one of the first dignities the son of a—”

“A laundress and a negro; you would say, madam?” said Robert, with a sneer. “Bertrand of Artois would be annoyed perhaps if I had a title like his.”

He advanced a step towards the bed, his hand upon the hilt of his sword.

“Have mercy, Robert!” cried the queen, checking him: “I will do all you ask.”

And she signed the parchment naming him Count of Eboli.

“And now,” Robert went on impudently, “to show that my new title is not illusory, while you are busy about signing documents, let me have the privilege of taking part in the councils of the crown: make a declaration that, subject to your good pleasure, my mother and I are to have a deliberative voice in the council whenever an important matter is under discussion.”

“Never!” cried Joan, turning pale. “Philippa end Robert, you abuse my weakness and treat your queen shamefully. In the last few days I have wept and suffered continually, overcome by a terrible grief; I have no strength to turn to business now. Leave me, I beg: I feel my strength gives, way.”

“What, my daughter,” cried the Catanese hypocritically, “are you feeling unwell? Come and lie down at once.” And hurrying to the bed, she took hold of the curtain that concealed the Count of Artois.

The queen uttered a piercing cry, and threw herself before Philippa with the fury of a lioness. “Stop!” she cried in a choking voice; “take the privilege you ask, and now, if you value your own life, leave me.”

The Catanese and her son departed instantly, not even waiting to reply, for they had got all they wanted; while Joan, trembling, ran desperately up to Bertrand, who had angrily drawn his dagger, and would have fallen upon the two favourites to take vengeance for the insults they had offered to the queen; but he was very soon disarmed by the lovely shining eyes raised to him in supplication, the two arms cast about him, and the tears shed by Joan: he fell at her feet and kissed them rapturously, with no thought of seeking excuse for his presence, with no word of love, for it was as if they had loved always: he lavished the tenderest caresses on her, dried her tears, and pressed his trembling lips upon her

lovely head. Joan began to forget her anger, her vows, and her repentance: soothed by the music of her lover's speech, she returned uncomprehending monosyllables: her heart beat till it felt like breaking, and once more she was falling beneath love's resistless spell, when a new interruption occurred, shaking her roughly out of her ecstasy; but this time the young count was able to pass quietly and calmly into a room adjoining, and Joan prepared to receive her importunate visitor with severe and frigid dignity.

The individual who arrived at so inopportune a moment was little calculated to smooth Joan's ruffled brow, being Charles, the eldest son of the Durazzo family. After he had introduced his fair cousin to the people as their only legitimate sovereign, he had sought on various occasions to obtain an interview with her, which in all probability would be decisive. Charles was one of those men who to gain their end recoil at nothing; devoured by raging ambition and accustomed from his earliest years to conceal his most ardent desires beneath a mask of careless indifference, he marched ever onward, plot succeeding plot, towards the object he was bent upon securing, and never deviated one hair's-breadth from the path he had marked out, but only acted with double prudence after each victory, and with double courage after each defeat. His cheek grew pale with joy; when he hated most, he smiled; in all the emotions of his life, however strong, he was inscrutable. He had sworn to sit on the throne of Naples, and long had believed himself the rightful heir, as being nearest of kin to Robert of all his nephews. To him the hand of Joan would have been given, had not the old king in his latter days conceived the plan of bringing Andre from Hungary and reestablishing the elder branch in his person, though that had long since been forgotten. But his resolution had never for a moment been weakened by the arrival of Andre in the kingdom, or by the profound indifference wherewith Joan, preoccupied with other passion, had always received the advances of her cousin Charles of Durazzo. Neither the love of a woman nor the life of a man was of any account to him when a crown was weighed in the other scale of the balance.

During the whole time that the queen had remained invisible, Charles had hung about her apartments, and now came into her presence with respectful eagerness to inquire for his cousin's health. The young duke had been at pains to set off his noble features and elegant figure by a magnificent dress covered with, golden fleur-de-lys and glittering with precious stones. His doublet of scarlet velvet and cap of the same showed up—by their own splendour the warm colouring of his skin, while his face seemed illumined by his black eyes that shone keen as an

eagle's.

Charles spoke long with his cousin of the people's enthusiasm on her accession and of the brilliant destiny before her; he drew a hasty but truthful sketch of the state of the kingdom; and while he lavished praises on the queen's wisdom, he cleverly pointed out what reforms were most urgently needed by the country; he contrived to put so much warmth, yet so much reserve, into his speech that he destroyed the disagreeable impression his arrival had produced. In spite of the irregularities of her youth and the depravity brought about by her wretched education, Joan's nature impelled her to noble action: when the welfare of her subjects was concerned, she rose above the limitations of her age and sex, and, forgetting her strange position, listened to the Duke of Durazzo with the liveliest interest and the kindest attention. He then hazarded allusions to the dangers that beset a young queen, spoke vaguely of the difficulty in distinguishing between true devotion and cowardly complaisance or interested attachment; he spoke of the ingratitude of many who had been loaded with benefits, and had been most completely trusted. Joan, who had just learned the truth of his words by sad experience, replied with a sigh, and after a moment's silence added—

May God, whom I call to witness for the loyalty and uprightness of my intentions, may God unmask all traitors and show me my true friends! I know that the burden laid upon me is heavy, and I presume not on my strength, but I trust that the tried experience, of those counsellors to whom my uncle entrusted me, the support of my family, and your warm and sincere friendship above all, my dear cousin, will help me to accomplish my duty.”

“My sincerest prayer is that you may succeed, my fair cousin, and I will not darken with doubts and fears a time that ought to be given up to joy; I will not mingle with the shouts of gladness that rise on all sides to proclaim you queen, any vain regrets over that blind fortune which has placed beside the woman whom we all alike adore, whose single glance would make a man more blest than the angels, a foreigner unworthy of your love and unworthy of your throne.”

“You forget, Charles,” said the queen, putting out her hand as though to check his words, “Andre is my husband, and it was my grandfather's will that he should reign with me.”

“Never!” cried the duke indignantly; “he King of Naples! Nay, dream that the

town is shaken to its very foundations, that the people rise as one man, that our church bells sound a new Sicilian vespers, before the people of Naples will endure the rule of a handful of wild Hungarian drunkards, a deformed canting monk, a prince detested by them even as you are beloved!”

“But why is Andre blamed? What has he done?”

“What has he done? Why is he blamed, madam? The people blame him as stupid, coarse, a savage; the nobles blame him for ignoring their privileges and openly supporting men of obscure birth; and I, madam,”—here he lowered his voice, “I blame him for making you unhappy.”

Joan shuddered as though a wound had been touched by an unkind hand; but hiding her emotion beneath an appearance of calm, she replied in a voice of perfect indifference—

“You must be dreaming, Charles; who has given you leave to suppose I am unhappy?”

“Do not try to excuse him, ‘my dear cousin,’ replied Charles eagerly; “you will injure yourself without saving him.”

The queen looked fixedly at her cousin, as though she would read him through and through and find out the meaning of his words; but as she could not give credence to the horrible thought that crossed her mind, she assumed a complete confidence in her cousin’s friendship, with a view to discovering his plans, and said carelessly—

“Well, Charles, suppose I am not happy, what remedy could you offer me that I might escape my lot?”

“You ask me that, my dear cousin? Are not all remedies good when you suffer, and when you wish for revenge?”

“One must fly to those means that are possible. Andre will not readily give up his pretensions: he has a party of his own, and in case of open rupture his brother the King of Hungary may declare war upon us, and bring ruin and desolation upon our kingdom.”

The Duke of Duras faintly smiled, and his countenance assumed a sinister,

expression.

“You do not understand me,” he said.

“Then explain without circumlocution,” said the queen, trying to conceal the convulsive shudder that ran through her limbs.

“Listen, Joan,” said Charles, taking his cousin’s hand and laying it upon his heart: “can you feel that dagger?”

“I can,” said Joan, and she turned pale.

“One word from you—and—”

“Yes?”

“Tomorrow you will be free.”

“A murder!” cried Joan, recoiling in horror: “then I was not deceived; it is a murder that you have proposed.”

“It is a necessity,” said the duke calmly: “today I advise; later on you will give your orders.”

“Enough, wretch! I cannot tell if you are more cowardly or more rash: cowardly, because you reveal a criminal plot feeling sure that I shall never denounce you; rash, because in revealing it to me you cannot tell what witnesses are near to hear it all.”

“In any case, madam, since I have put myself in your hands, you must perceive that I cannot leave you till I know if I must look upon myself as your friend or as your enemy.”

“Leave me,” cried Joan, with a disdainful gesture; “you insult your queen.”

“You forget, my dear cousin, that some day I may very likely have a claim to your kingdom.”

“Do not force me to have you turned out of this room,” said Joan, advancing towards the door.

“Now do not get excited, my fair cousin; I am going: but at least remember that I offered you my hand and you refused it. Remember what I say at this solemn moment: to-day I am the guilty man; some day perhaps I may be the judge.”

He went away slowly, twice turning his head, repeating in the language of signs his menacing prophecy. Joan hid her face in her hands, and for a long time remained plunged in dismal reflections; then anger got the better of all her other feelings, and she summoned Dona Cancha, bidding her not to allow anybody to enter, on any pretext whatsoever.

This prohibition was not for the Count of Artois, for the reader will remember that he was in the adjoining room.

CHAPTER III

Night fell, and from the Molo to the Mergellina, from the Capuano Castle to the hill of St. Elmo, deep silence had succeeded the myriad sounds that go up from the noisiest city in the world. Charles of Durazzo, quickly walking away from the square of the Correggi, first casting one last look of vengeance at the Castel Nuovo, plunged into the labyrinth of dark streets that twist and turn, cross and recross one another, in this ancient city, and after a quarter of an hour's walking, that was first slow, then very rapid, arrived at his ducal palace near the church of San Giovanni al Mare. He gave certain instructions in a harsh, peremptory tone to a page who took his sword and cloak. Then Charles shut himself into his room, without going up to see his poor mother, who was weeping, sad and solitary over her son's ingratitude, and like every other mother taking her revenge by praying God to bless him.

The Duke of Durazzo walked up and down his room several times like a lion in a cage, counting the minutes in a fever of impatience, and was on the point of summoning a servant and renewing his commands, when two dull raps on the door informed him that the person he was waiting for had arrived. He opened at once, and a man of about fifty, dressed in black from head to foot, entered, humbly bowing, and carefully shut the door behind him. Charles threw himself into an easy-chair, and gazing fixedly at the man who stood before him, his eyes on the ground and his arms crossed upon his breast in an attitude of the deepest respect and blind obedience, he said slowly, as though weighing each word—

“Master Nicholas of Melazzo, have you any remembrance left of the services I once rendered you?”

The man to whom these words were addressed trembled in every limb, as if he heard the voice of Satan come to claim his soul; then lifting a look of terror to his questioner's face, he asked in a voice of gloom—

“What have I done, my lord, to deserve this reproach?”

“It is not a reproach: I ask a simple question.”

“Can my lord doubt for a moment of my eternal gratitude? Can I forget the favours your Excellency showed me? Even if I could so lose my reason and my

memory, are not my wife and son ever here to remind me that to you we owe all our life, our honour, and our fortune? I was guilty of an infamous act," said the notary, lowering his voice, "a crime that would not only have brought upon my head the penalty of death, but which meant the confiscation of my goods, the ruin of my family, poverty and shame for my only son—that very son, sire, for whom I, miserable wretch, had wished to ensure a brilliant future by means of my frightful crime: you had in your hands the proofs of this!

"I have them still."

"And you will not ruin me, my lord," resumed the notary, trembling; "I am at your feet, your Excellency; take my life and I will die in torment without a murmur, but save my son since you have been so merciful as to spare him till now; have pity on his mother; my lord, have pity!"

"Be assured," said Charles, signing to him to rise; "it is nothing to do with your life; that will come later, perhaps. What I wish to ask of you now is a much simpler, easier matter."

"My lord, I await your command."

"First," said the duke, in a voice of playful irony, "you must draw up a formal contract of my marriage."

"At once, your Excellency."

"You are to write in the first article that my wife brings me as dowry the county of Alba, the jurisdiction of Grati and Giordano, with all castles, fiefs, and lands dependent thereto."

"But, my lord—" replied the poor notary, greatly embarrassed.

"Do you find any difficulty, Master Nicholas?"

"God forbid, your Excellency, but—"

"Well, what is it?"

"Because, if my lord will permit because there is only one person in Naples who possesses that dowry your Excellency mentions."

“And so?”

“And she,” stammered the notary, embarrassed more and more,—“she is the queen’s sister.”

“And in the contract you will write the name of Marie of Anjou.”

“But the young maiden,” replied Nicholas timidly, “whom your Excellency would marry is destined, I thought, under the will of our late king of blessed memory, to become the wife of the King of Hungary or else of the grandson of the King of France.”

“Ah, I understand your surprise: you may learn from this that an uncle’s intentions are not always the same as his nephew’s.”

“In that case, sire, if I dared—if my lord would deign to give me leave—if I had an opinion I might give, I would humbly entreat your Excellency to reflect that this would mean the abduction of a minor.”

“Since when did you learn to be scrupulous, Master Nicholas?”

These words were uttered with a glance so terrible that the poor notary was crushed, and had hardly the strength to reply—

“In an hour the contract will be ready.”

“Good: we agree as to the first point,” continued Charles, resuming his natural tone of voice. “You now will hear my second charge. You have known the Duke of Calabria’s valet for the last two years pretty intimately?”

“Tommaso Pace; why, he is my best friend.”

“Excellent. Listen, and remember that on your discretion the safety or ruin of your family depends. A plot will soon be on foot gainst the queen’s husband; the conspirators no doubt will gain over Andre’s valet, the man you call your best friend; never leave him for an instant, try to be his shadow; day by day and hour by hour come to me and report the progress of the plot, the names of the plotters.”

“Is this all your Excellency’s command?”

“All.”

The notary respectfully bowed, and withdrew to put the orders at once into execution. Charles spent the rest of that night writing to his uncle the Cardinal de Perigord, one of the most influential prelates at the court of Avignon. He begged him before all things to use his authority so as to prevent Pope Clement from signing the bull that would sanction Andre’s coronation, and he ended his letter by earnestly entreating his uncle to win the pope’s consent to his marriage with the queen’s sister.

“We shall see, fair cousin,” he said as he sealed his letter, “which of us is best at understanding where our interest lies. You would not have me as a friend, so you shall have me as an enemy. Sleep on in the arms of your lover: I will wake you when the time comes. I shall be Duke of Calabria perhaps some day, and that title, as you well know, belongs to the heir to the throne.”

The next day and on the following days a remarkable change took place in the behaviour of Charles towards Andre: he showed him signs of great friendliness, cleverly flattering his inclinations, and even persuading Friar Robert that, far from feeling any hostility in the matter of Andre’s coronation, his most earnest desire was that his uncle’s wishes should be respected; and that, though he might have given the impression of acting contrary to them, it had only been done with a view to appeasing the populace, who in their first excitement might have been stirred up to insurrection against the Hungarians. He declared with much warmth that he heartily detested the people about the queen, whose counsels tended to lead her astray, and he promised to join Friar Robert in the endeavour to get rid of Joan’s favourites by all such means as fortune might put at his disposal. Although the Dominican did not believe in the least in the sincerity of his ally’s protestations, he yet gladly welcomed the aid which might prove so useful to the prince’s cause, and attributed the sudden change of front to some recent rupture between Charles and his cousin, promising himself that he would make capital out of his resentment. Be that as it might, Charles wormed himself into Andre’s heart, and after a few days one of them could hardly be seen without the other. If Andre went out hunting, his greatest pleasure in life, Charles was eager to put his pack or his falcons at his disposal; if Andre’ rode through the town, Charles was always ambling by his side. He gave way to his whims, urged him to extravagances, and inflamed his angry passions: in a word, he was the good angel—or the bad one—who inspired his every thought and guided his every action.

Joan soon understood this business, and as a fact had expected it. She could have ruined Charles with a single word; but she scorned so base a revenge, and treated him with utter contempt. Thus the court was split into two factions: the Hungarians with Friar Robert at their head and supported by Charles of Durazzo; on the other side all the nobility of Naples, led by the Princes of Tarentum. Joan, influenced by the grand seneschal's widow and her two daughters, the Countesses of Terlizzi and Morcone, and also by Dona Cancha and the Empress of Constantinople, took the side of the Neapolitan party against the pretensions of her husband. The partisans of the queen made it their first care to have her name inscribed upon all public acts without adding Andre's; but Joan, led by an instinct of right and justice amid all the corruption of her court, had only consented to this last after she had taken counsel with Andre d'Isernia, a very learned lawyer of the day, respected as much for his lofty character as for his great learning. The prince, annoyed at being shut out in this way, began to act in a violent and despotic manner. On his own authority he released prisoners; he showered favours upon Hungarians, and gave especial honours and rich gifts to Giovanni Pipino, Count of Altanuera, the enemy of all others most dreaded and detested by the Neapolitan barons. Then the Counts of San Severino, Mileto, Terlizzi and Balzo, Calanzaro and Sant' Angelo, and most of the grandees, exasperated by the haughty insolence of Andre's favourite, which grew every day more outrageous, decided that he must perish, and his master with him, should he persist in attacking their privileges and defying their anger.

Moreover, the women who were about Joan at the court egged her on, each one urged by a private interest, in the pursuit of her fresh passion. Poor Joan,—neglected by her husband and betrayed by Robert of Cabane; gave way beneath the burden of duties beyond her strength to bear, and fled for refuge to the arms of Bertrand of Artois, whose love she did not even attempt to resist; for every feeling for religion and virtue had been destroyed in her own set purpose, and her young inclinations had been early bent towards vice, just as the bodies of wretched children are bent and their bones broken by jugglers when they train them. Bertrand himself felt an adoration for her surpassing ordinary human passion. When he reached the summit of a happiness to which in his wildest dreams he had never dared to aspire, the young count nearly lost his reason. In vain had his father, Charles of Artois (who was Count of Aire, a direct descendant of Philip the Bold, and one of the regents of the kingdom), attempted by severe admonitions to stop him while yet on the brink of the precipice: Bertrand would listen to nothing but his love for Joan and his implacable hatred for all the queen's enemies. Many a time, at the close of day, as the breeze from

Posilippo or Sorrento coming from far away was playing in his hair, might Bertrand be seen leaning from one of the casements of Castel Nuovo, pale and motionless, gazing fixedly from his side of the square to where the Duke of Calabria and the Duke of Durazzo came galloping home from their evening ride side by side in a cloud of dust. Then the brows of the young count were violently contracted, a savage, sinister look shone in his blue eyes once so innocent, like lightning a thought of death and vengeance flashed into his mind; he would all at once begin to tremble, as a light hand was laid upon his shoulder; he would turn softly, fearing lest the divine apparition should vanish to the skies; but there beside him stood a young girl, with cheeks aflame and heaving breast, with brilliant liquid eyes: she had come to tell how her past day had been spent, and to offer her forehead for the kiss that should reward her labours and unwilling absence. This woman, dictator of laws and administrator of justice among grave magistrates and stern ministers, was but fifteen years old; this man; who knew her griefs, and to avenge them was meditating regicide, was not yet twenty: two children of earth, the playthings of an awful destiny!

Two months and a few days after the old king's death, on the morning of Friday the 28th of March of the same year, 1343, the widow of the grand seneschal, Philippa, who, had already contrived to get forgiven for the shameful trick she had used to secure all her son's wishes, entered the queen's apartments, excited by a genuine fear, pale and distracted, the bearer of news that spread terror and lamentation throughout the court: Marie, the queen's younger sister, had disappeared.

The gardens and outside courts had been searched for any trace of her; every corner of the castle had been examined; the guards had been threatened with torture, so as to drag the truth from them; no one had seen anything of the princess, and nothing could be found that suggested either flight or abduction. Joan, struck down by this new blow in the midst of other troubles, was for a time utterly prostrated; then, when she had recovered from her first surprise, she behaved as all people do if despair takes the place of reason: she gave orders for what was already done to be done again, she asked the same questions that could only bring the same answers, and poured forth vain regrets and unjust reproaches. The news spread through the town, causing the greatest astonishment: there arose a great commotion in the castle, and the members of the regency hastily assembled, while couriers were sent out in every direction, charged to promise 12,000 ducats to whomsoever should discover the place where the princess was concealed. Proceedings were at once taken against the

soldiers who were on guard at the fortress at the time of the disappearance.

Bertrand of Artois drew the queen apart, telling her his suspicions, which fell directly upon Charles of Durazzo; but Joan lost no time in persuading him of the improbability of his hypothesis: first of all, Charles had never once set his foot in Castel Nuovo since the day of his stormy interview with the queen, but had made a point of always leaving Andre by the bridge when he came to the town with him; besides, it had never been noticed, even in the past, that the young duke had spoken to Marie or exchanged looks with her: the result of all attainable evidence was, that no stranger had entered the castle the evening before except a notary named Master Nicholas of Melazzo, an old person, half silly, half fanatical, for whom Tommaso Pace, valet de chambre to the Duke of Calabria, was ready to answer with his life. Bertrand yielded to the queen's reasoning, and day by day advanced new suggestions, each less probable than the last, to draw his mistress on to feel a hope that he was far from feeling himself.

But a month later, and precisely on the morning of Monday the 30th of April, a strange and unexpected scene took place, an exhibition of boldness transcending all calculations. The Neapolitan people were stupefied in astonishment, and the grief of Joan and her friends was changed to indignation. Just as the clock of San Giovanni struck twelve, the gate of the magnificent palace of the Durazzo flung open its folding doors, and there came forth to the sound of trumpets a double file of cavaliers on richly caparisoned horses, with the duke's arms on their shields. They took up their station round the house to prevent the people outside from disturbing a ceremony which was to take place before the eyes of an immense crowd, assembled suddenly, as by a miracle, upon the square. At the back of the court stood an altar, and upon the steps lay two crimson velvet cushions embroidered with the fleur-de-lys of France and the ducal crown. Charles came forward, clad in a dazzling dress, and holding by the hand the queen's sister, the Princess Marie, at that time almost thirteen years of age. She knelt down timidly on one of the cushions, and when Charles had done the same, the grand almoner of the Duras house asked the young duke solemnly what was his intention in appearing thus humbly before a minister of the Church. At these words Master Nicholas of Melazzo took his place on the left of the altar, and read in a firm, clear voice, first, the contract of marriage between Charles and Marie, and then the apostolic letters from His Holiness the sovereign pontiff, Clement VI, who in his own name removing all obstacles that might impede the union, such as the age of the young bride and the degrees of affinity between the

two parties, authorised his dearly beloved son Charles, Duke of Durazzo and Albania, to take in marriage the most illustrious Marie of Anjou, sister of Joan, Queen of Naples and Jerusalem, and bestowed his benediction on the pair.

The almoner then took the young girl's hand, and placing it in that of Charles, pronounced the prayers of the Church. Charles, turning half round to the people, said in a loud voice—

“Before God and man, this woman is my wife.”

“And this man is my husband,” said Marie, trembling.

“Long live the Duke and Duchess of Durazzo!” cried the crowd, clapping their hands. And the young pair, at once mounting two beautiful horses and followed by their cavaliers and pages, solemnly paraded through the town, and reentered their palace to the sound of trumpets and cheering.

When this incredible news was brought to the queen, her first feeling was joy at the recovery of her sister; and when Bertrand of Artois was eager to head a band of barons and cavaliers and bent on falling upon the cortege to punish the traitor, Joan put up her hand to stop him with a very mournful look.

“Alas!” she said sadly, “it is too late. They are legally married, for the head of the Church—who is moreover by my grandfather's will the head of our family—has granted his permission. I only pity my poor sister; I pity her for becoming so young the prey of a wretched man who sacrifices her to his own ambition, hoping by this marriage to establish a claim to the throne. O God! what a strange fate oppresses the royal house of Anjou! My father's early death in the midst of his triumphs; my mother's so quickly after; my sister and I, the sole offspring of Charles I, both before we are women grown fallen into the hands of cowardly men, who use us but as the stepping-stones of their ambition!” Joan fell back exhausted on her chair, a burning tear trembling on her eyelid.

“This is the second time,” said Bertrand reproachfully, “that I have drawn my sword to avenge an insult offered to you, the second time I return it by your orders to the scabbard. But remember, Joan, the third time will not find me so docile, and then it will not be Robert of Cabane or Charles of Durazzo that I shall strike, but him who is the cause of all your misfortunes.”

“Have mercy, Bertrand! do not you also speak these words; whenever this

horrible thought takes hold of me, let me come to you: this threat of bloodshed that is drummed into my ears, this sinister vision that haunts my sight; let me come to you, beloved, and weep upon your bosom, beneath your breath cool my burning fancies, from your eyes draw some little courage to revive my perishing soul. Come, I am quite unhappy enough without needing to poison the future by an endless remorse. Tell me rather to forgive and to forget, speak not of hatred and revenge; show me one ray of hope amid the darkness that surrounds me; hold up my wavering feet, and push me not into the abyss.”

Such altercations as this were repeated as often as any fresh wrong arose from the side of Andre or his party; and in proportion as the attacks made by Bertrand and his friends gained in vehemence—and we must add, in justice—so did Joan’s objections weaken. The Hungarian rule, as it became, more and more arbitrary and unbearable, irritated men’s minds to such a point, that the people murmured in secret and the nobles proclaimed aloud their discontent. Andre’s soldiers indulged in a libertinage which would have been intolerable in a conquered city: they were found everywhere brawling in the taverns or rolling about disgustingly drunk in the gutters; and the prince, far from rebuking such orgies, was accused of sharing them himself. His former tutor, who ought to have felt bound to drag him away from so ignoble a mode of life, rather strove to immerse him in degrading pleasures, so as to keep him out of business matters; without suspecting it, he was hurrying on the denouement of the terrible drama that was being acted behind the scenes at Castel Nuovo. Robert’s widow, Dona Sancha of Aragon, the good and sainted lady whom our readers may possibly have forgotten, as her family had done, seeing that God’s anger was hanging over her house, and that no counsels, no tears or prayers of hers could avail to arrest it, after wearing mourning for her husband one whole year, according to her promise, had taken the veil at the convent of Santa Maria delta Croce, and deserted the court and its follies and passions, just as the prophets of old, turning their back on some accursed city, would shake the dust from off their sandals and depart. Sandra’s retreat was a sad omen, and soon the family dissensions, long with difficulty suppressed, sprang forth to open view; the storm that had been threatening from afar broke suddenly over the town, and the thunderbolt was shortly to follow.

On the last day of August 1344, Joan rendered homage to Americ, Cardinal of Saint Martin and legate of Clement VI, who looked upon the kingdom of Naples as being a fief of the Church ever since the time when his predecessors had presented it to Charles of Anjou, and overthrown and excommunicated the house

of Suabia. For this solemn ceremony the church of Saint Clara was chosen, the burial-place of Neapolitan kings, and but lately the tomb of the grandfather and father of the young queen, who reposed to right and left of the high altar. Joan, clad in the royal robe, with the crown upon her head, uttered her oath of fidelity between the hands of the apostolic legate in the presence of her husband, who stood behind her simply as a witness, just like the other princes of the blood. Among the prelates with their pontifical insignia who formed the brilliant following of the envoy, there stood the Archbishops of Pisa, Bari, Capua, and Brindisi, and the reverend fathers Ugolino, Bishop of Castella, and Philip, Bishop of Cavaillon, chancellor to the queen. All the nobility of Naples and Hungary were present at this ceremony, which debarred Andre from the throne in a fashion at once formal and striking. Thus, when they left the church the excited feelings of both parties made a crisis imminent, and such hostile glances, such threatening words were exchanged, that the prince, finding himself too weak to contend against his enemies, wrote the same evening to his mother, telling her that he was about to leave a country where from his infancy upwards he had experienced nothing but deceit and disaster.

Those who know a mother's heart will easily guess that Elizabeth of Poland was no sooner aware of the danger that threatened her son than she travelled to Naples, arriving there before her coming was suspected. Rumour spread abroad that the Queen of Hungary had come to take her son away with her, and the unexpected event gave rise to strange comments: the fever of excitement now blazed up in another direction. The Empress of Constantinople, the Catanese, her two daughters, and all the courtiers, whose calculations were upset by Andre's departure, hurried to honour the arrival of the Queen of Hungary by offering a very cordial and respectful reception, with a view to showing her that, in the midst of a court so attentive and devoted, any isolation or bitterness of feeling on the young prince's part must spring from his pride, from an unwarrantable mistrust, and his naturally savage and untrained character. Joan received her husband's mother with so much proper dignity in her behaviour that, in spite of preconceived notions, Elizabeth could not help admiring the noble seriousness and earnest feeling she saw in her daughter-in-law. To make the visit more pleasant to an honoured guest, fetes and tournaments were given, the barons vying with one another in display of wealth and luxury. The Empress of Constantinople, the Catanese, Charles of Duras and his young wife, all paid the utmost attention to the mother of the prince. Marie, who by reason of her extreme youth and gentleness of character had no share in any intrigues, was guided quite as much by her natural feeling as by her husband's orders when she

offered to the Queen of Hungary those marks of regard and affection that she might have felt for her own mother. In spite, however, of these protestations of respect and love, Elizabeth of Poland trembled for her son, and, obeying a maternal instinct, chose to abide by her original intention, believing that she should never feel safe until Andre was far away from a court in appearance so friendly but in reality so treacherous. The person who seemed most disturbed by the departure, and tried to hinder it by every means in his power, was Friar Robert. Immersed in his political schemes, bending over his mysterious plans with all the eagerness of a gambler who is on the point of gaining, the Dominican, who thought himself on the eve of a tremendous event, who by cunning, patience, and labour hoped to scatter his enemies and to reign as absolute autocrat, now falling suddenly from the edifice of his dream, stiffened himself by a mighty effort to stand and resist the mother of his pupil. But fear cried too loud in the heart of Elizabeth for all the reasonings of the monk to lull it to rest: to every argument he advanced she simply said that while her son was not king and had not entire unlimited power, it was imprudent to leave him exposed to his enemies. The monk, seeing that all was indeed lost and that he could not contend against the fears of this woman, asked only the boon of three days' grace, at the end of which time, should a reply he was expecting have not arrived, he said he would not only give up his opposition to Andre's departure, but would follow himself, renouncing for ever a scheme to which he had sacrificed everything.

Towards the end of the third day, as Elizabeth was definitely making her preparations for departure, the monk entered radiant. Showing her a letter which he had just hastily broken open, he cried triumphantly—

“God be praised, madam! I can at last give you incontestable proofs of my active zeal and accurate foresight.”

Andre's mother, after rapidly running through the document, turned her eyes on the monk with yet some traces of mistrust in her manner, not venturing to give way to her sudden joy.

“Yes, madam,” said the monk, raising his head, his plain features lighted up by his glance of intelligence—“yes, madam, you will believe your eyes, perhaps, though you would never believe my words: this is not the dream of an active imagination, the hallucination of a credulous mind, the prejudice of a limited intellect; it is a plan slowly conceived, painfully worked out, my daily thought

and my whole life's work. I have never ignored the fact that at the court of Avignon your son had powerful enemies; but I knew also that on the very day I undertook a certain solemn engagement in the prince's name, an engagement to withdraw those laws that had caused coldness between the pope and Robert; who was in general so devoted to the Church, I knew very well that my offer would never be rejected, and this argument of mine I kept back for the last. See, madam, my calculations are correct; your enemies are put to shame and your son is triumphant."

Then turning to Andre, who was just coming in and stood dumbfounded-at the threshold on hearing the last words, he added—

"Come, my son, our prayers are at last fulfilled you are king."

"King!" repeated Andre, transfixed with joy, doubt, and amazement.

"King of Sicily and Jerusalem: yes, my lord; there is no need for you to read this document that brings the joyful, unexpected news. You can see it in your mother's tears; she holds out her arms to press you to her bosom; you can see it in the happiness of your old teacher; he falls on his knees at your feet to salute you by this title, which he would have paid for with his own blood had it been denied to you much longer."

"And yet," said Elizabeth, after a moment's mournful reflection, "if I obey my presentiments, your news will make no difference to our plans for departure."

"Nay, mother," said Andre firmly, "you would not force me to quit the country to the detriment of my honour. If I have made you feel some of the bitterness and sorrow that have spoiled my own young days because of my cowardly—enemies, it is not from a poor spirit, but because I was powerless, and knew it, to take any sort of striking vengeance for their secret insults, their crafty injuries, their underhand intrigues. It was not because my arm wanted strength, but because my head wanted a crown. I might have put an end to some of these wretched beings, the least dangerous maybe; but it would have been striking in the dark; the ringleaders would have escaped, and I should never have really got to the bottom of their infernal plots. So I have silently eaten out my own heart in shame and indignation. Now that my sacred rights are recognised by the Church, you will see, my mother, how these terrible barons, the queen's counsellors, the governors of the kingdom, will lower their heads in the dust: for they are

threatened with no sword and no struggle; no peer of their own is he who speaks, but the king; it is by him they are accused, by the law they shall be condemned, and shall suffer on the scaffold.”

“O my beloved son,” cried the queen in tears, “I never doubted your noble feelings or the justice of your claims; but when your life is in danger, to what voice can I listen but the voice of fear? what can move my counsels but the promptings of love?”

“Mother, believe me, if the hands and hearts alike of these cowards had not trembled, you would have lost your son long ago.”

“It is not violence that I fear, my son, it is treachery.”

“My life, like every man’s, belongs to God, and the lowest of sbirri may take it as I turn the corner of the street; but a king owes something to his people.”

The poor mother long tried to bend the resolution of Andre by reason and entreaties; but when she had spoken her last word and shed her last tear, she summoned Bertram de Baux, chief-justice of the kingdom, and Marie, Duchess of Durazzo. Trusting in the old man’s wisdom and the girl’s innocence, she commended her son to them in the tenderest and most affecting words; then drawing from her own hand a ring richly wrought, and taking the prince aside, she slipped it upon his finger, saying in a voice that trembled with emotion as she pressed him to her heart—

“My son, as you refuse to come with me, here is a wonderful talisman, which I would not use before the last extremity. So long as you wear this ring on your finger, neither sword nor poison will have power against you.”

“You see then, mother,” said the prince, smiling, “with this protection there is no reason at all to fear for my life.”

There are other dangers than sword or poison,” sighed the queen.

“Be calm, mother: the best of all talismans is your prayer to God for me: it is the tender thought of you that will keep me for ever in the path of duty and justice; your maternal love will watch over me from afar, and cover me like the wings of a guardian angel.”

Elizabeth sobbed as she embraced her son, and when she left him she felt her heart was breaking. At last she made up her mind to go, and was escorted by the whole court, who had never changed towards her for a moment in their chivalrous and respectful devotion. The poor mother, pale, trembling, and faint, leaned heavily upon Andre's arm, lest she should fall. On the ship that was to take her for ever from her son, she cast her arms for the last time about his neck, and there hung a long time, speechless, tearless, and motionless; when the signal for departure was given, her women took her in their arms half swooning. Andre stood on the shore with the feeling of death at his heart: his eyes were fixed upon the sail that carried ever farther from him the only being he loved in the world. Suddenly he fancied he beheld something white moving a long way off: his mother had recovered her senses by a great effort, and had dragged herself up to the bridge to give a last signal of farewell: the unhappy lady knew too well that she would never see her son again.

At almost the same moment that Andre's mother left the kingdom, the former queen of Naples, Robert's widow, Dona Sancha, breathed her last sigh. She was buried in the convent of Santa Maria delta Croce, under the name of Clara, which she had assumed on taking her vows as a nun, as her epitaph tells us, as follows:

“Here lies, an example of great humility, the body of the sainted sister Clara, of illustrious memory, otherwise Sancha, Queen of Sicily and Jerusalem, widow of the most serene Robert, King of Jerusalem and Sicily, who, after the death of the king her husband, when she had completed a year of widowhood, exchanged goods temporary for goods eternal. Adopting for the love of God a voluntary poverty, and distributing her goods to the poor, she took upon her the rule of obedience in this celebrated convent of Santa Croce, the work of her own hands, in the year 1344, on the first of January of the twelfth indiction, where, living a life of holiness under the rule of the blessed Francis, father of the poor, she ended her days religiously in the year of our Lord 1345, on the 28th of July of the thirteenth indiction. On the day following she was buried in this tomb.”

The death of Dona Sancha served to hasten on the catastrophe which was to stain the throne of Naples with blood: one might almost fancy that God wished to spare this angel of love and resignation the sight of so terrible a spectacle; that she offered-herself as a propitiatory sacrifice to redeem the crimes of her family.

CHAPTER IV

Eight days after the funeral of the old queen, Bertrand of Artois came to Joan, distraught, dishevelled, in a state of agitation and confusion impossible to describe.

Joan went quickly up to her lover, asking him with a look of fear to explain the cause of his distress.

“I told you, madam,” cried the young baron excitedly, “you will end by ruining us all, as you will never take any advice from me.”

“For God’s sake, Bertrand, speak plainly: what has happened? What advice have I neglected?”

“Madam, your noble husband, Andre of Hungary, has just been made King of Jerusalem and Sicily, and acknowledged by the court of Avignon, so henceforth you will be no better than his slave.”

“Count of Artois, you are dreaming.”

“No, madam, I am not dreaming: I have this fact to prove the truth of my words, that the pope’s ambassadors are arrived at Capua with the bull for his coronation, and if they do not enter Castel Nuovo this very evening, the delay is only to give the new king time to make his preparations.”

The queen bent her head as if a thunderbolt had fallen at her feet.

“When I told you before,” said the count, with growing fury, “that we ought to use force to make a stand against him, that we ought to break the yoke of this infamous tyranny and get rid of the man before he had the means of hurting you, you always drew back in childish fear, with a woman’s cowardly hesitation.”

Joan turned a tearful look upon her lover.

“God, my God!” she cried, clasping her hands in desperation, “am I to hear for ever this awful cry of death! You too, Bertrand, you too say the word, like Robert of Cabane, like Charles of Duras? Wretched man, why would you raise

this bloody spectre between us, to check with icy hand our adulterous kisses? Enough of such crimes; if his wretched ambition makes him long to reign, let him be king: what matters his power to me, if he leaves me with your love?"

"It is not so sure that our love will last much longer."

"What is this, Bertrand? You rejoice in this merciless torture."

"I tell you, madam, that the King of Naples has a black flag ready, and on the day of his coronation it will be carried before him."

"And you believe," said Joan, pale as a corpse in its shroud,—“you believe that this flag is a threat?"

"Ay, and the threat begins to be put in execution."

The queen staggered, and leaned against a table to save herself from falling.

"Tell me all," she cried in a choking voice; "fear not to shock me; see, I am not trembling. O Bertrand, I entreat you!"

"The traitors have begun with the man you most esteemed, the wisest counsellor of the crown, the best of magistrates, the noblest-hearted, most rigidly virtuous—"

"Andrea of Isernia!"

"Madam, he is no more."

Joan uttered a cry, as though the noble old man had been slain before her eyes: she respected him as a father; then, sinking back, she remained profoundly silent.

"How did they kill him?" she asked at last, fixing her great eyes in terror on the count.

"Yesterday evening, as he left this castle, on the way to his own home, a man suddenly sprang out upon him before the Porta Petruccia: it was one of Andre's favourites, Conrad of Gottis chosen no doubt because he had a grievance against the incorruptible magistrate on account of some sentence passed against him,

and the murder would therefore be put down to motives of private revenge. The cowardly wretch gave a sign to two or three companions, who surrounded the victim and robbed him of all means of escape. The poor old man looked fixedly, —at his assassin, and asked him what he wanted. ‘I want you to lose your life at my hands, as I lost my case at yours!’ cried the murderer; and leaving him no time to answer, he ran him through with his sword. Then the rest fell upon the poor man, who did not even try to call for help, and his body was riddled with wounds and horribly mutilated, and then left bathed in its blood.”

“Terrible!” murmured the queen, covering her face.

“It was only their first effort: the proscription lists are already full: Andre must needs have blood to celebrate his accession to the throne of Naples. And do you know, Joan, whose name stands first in the doomed list?”

“Whose?” cried the queen, shuddering from head to foot.

“Mine,” said the count calmly.

“Yours!” cried Joan, drawing herself up to her full height; “are you to be killed next! Oh, be careful, Andre; you have pronounced your own death-sentence. Long have I turned aside the dagger pointing to your breast, but you put an end to all my patience. Woe to you, Prince of Hungary! the blood which you have spilt shall fall on your own head.”

As she spoke she had lost her pallor: her lovely face was fired with revenge, her eyes flashed lightning. This child of sixteen was terrible to behold: she pressed her lover’s hand with convulsive tenderness, and clung to him as if she would screen him with her own body.

“Your anger is awakened too late,” said he gently and sadly; for at this moment Joan seemed so lovely that he could reproach her with nothing. “You ‘do not know that his mother has left him a talisman preserving him from sword and poison?”

“He will die,” said Joan firmly: the smile that lighted up her face was so unnatural that the count was dismayed, and dropped his eyes.

The next day the young Queen of Naples, lovelier, more smiling than ever, sitting carelessly in a graceful attitude beside a window which looked out on the

magnificent view of the bay, was busy weaving a cord of silk and gold. The sun had run nearly two-thirds of his fiery course, and was gradually sinking his rays in the clear blue waters where Posilippo's head is reflected with its green and flowery crown. A warm, balmy breeze that had passed over the orange trees of Sorrento and Amalfi felt deliciously refreshing to the inhabitants of the capital, who had succumbed to torpor in the enervating softness of the day. The whole town was waking from a long siesta, breathing freely after a sleepy interval: the Molo was covered with a crowd of eager people dressed out in the brightest colours; the many cries of a festival, joyous songs, love ditties sounded from all quarters of the vast amphitheatre, which is one of the chief marvels of creation: they came to the ears of Joan, and she listened as she bent over her work, absorbed in deep thought. Suddenly, when she seemed most busily occupied, the indefinable feeling of someone near at hand, and the touch of something on her shoulder, made her start: she turned as though waked from a dream by contact with a serpent, and perceived her husband, magnificently dressed, carelessly leaning against the back of her chair. For a long time past the prince had not come to his wife in this familiar fashion, and to the queen the pretence of affection and careless behaviour augured ill. Andre did not appear to notice the look of hatred and terror that had escaped Joan in spite of herself, and assuming the best expression of gentleness as that his straight hard features could contrive to put on in such circumstances as these, he smilingly asked—

“Why are you making this pretty cord, dear dutiful wife?”

“To hang you with, my lord,” replied the queen, with a smile.

Andre shrugged his shoulders, seeing in the threat so incredibly rash nothing more than a pleasantry in rather bad taste. But when he saw that Joan resumed her work, he tried to renew the conversation.

“I admit,” he said, in a perfectly calm voice, “that my question is quite unnecessary: from your eagerness to finish this handsome piece of work, I ought to suspect that it is destined for some fine knight of yours whom you propose to send on a dangerous enterprise wearing your colours. If so, my fair queen, I claim to receive my orders from your lips: appoint the time and place for the trial, and I am sure beforehand of carrying off a prize that I shall dispute with all your adorers.”

“That is not so certain,” said Joan, “if you are as valiant in war as in love.” And

she cast on her husband a look at once seductive and scornful, beneath which the young man blushed up to his eyes.

“I hope,” said Andre, repressing his feelings, “I hope soon to give you such proofs of my affection that you will never doubt it again.”

“And what makes you fancy that, my lord?”

“I would tell you, if you would listen seriously.”

“I am listening.”

“Well, it is a dream I had last night that gives me such confidence in the future.”

“A dream! You surely ought to explain that.”

“I dreamed that there was a grand fete in the town: an immense crowd filled the streets like an overflowing torrent, and the heavens were ringing with their shouts of joy; the gloomy granite facades were hidden by hangings of silk and festoons of flowers, the churches were decorated as though for some grand ceremony. I was riding side by side with you.” Joan made a haughty movement: “Forgive me, madam, it was only a dream: I was on your right, riding a fine white horse, magnificently caparisoned, and the chief-justice of the kingdom carried before me a flag unfolded in sign of honour. After riding in triumph through the main thoroughfares of the city, we arrived, to the sound of trumpets and clarions, at the royal church of Saint Clara, where your grandfather and my uncle are buried, and there, before the high altar, the pope’s ambassador laid your hand in mine and pronounced a long discourse, and then on our two heads in turn placed the crown of Jerusalem and Sicily; after which the nobles and the people shouted in one voice, ‘Long live the King and Queen of Naples!’ And I, wishing to perpetuate the memory of so glorious a day, proceeded to create knights among the most zealous in our court.”

“And do you not remember the names of the chosen persons whom you judged worthy of your royal favours?”

“Assuredly, madam: Bertrand, Count of Artois”

“Enough, my lord; I excuse you from naming the rest: I always supposed you were loyal and generous, but you give me fresh proof of it by showing favour to

men whom I most honour and trust. I cannot tell if your wishes are likely soon to be realised, but in any case feel sure of my perpetual gratitude.”

Joan’s voice did not betray the slightest emotion; her look had become kind, and the sweetest smile was on her lips. But in her heart Andre’s death was from that moment decided upon. The prince, too much preoccupied with his own projects of vengeance, and too confident in his all-powerful talisman and his personal valour, had no suspicion that his plans could be anticipated. He conversed a long time with his wife in a chatting, friendly way, trying to spy out her secret, and exposing his own by his interrupted phrases and mysterious reserves. When he fancied that every cloud of former resentment, even the lightest, had disappeared from Joan’s brow, he begged her to go with her suite on a magnificent hunting expedition that he was organising for the 20th of August, adding that such a kindness on her part would be for him a sure pledge of their reconciliation and complete forgetfulness of the past. Joan promised with a charming grace, and the prince retired fully satisfied with the interview, carrying with him the conviction that he had only to threaten to strike a blow at the queen’s favourite to ensure her obedience, perhaps even her love.

But on the eve of the 20th of August a strange and terrible scene was being enacted in the basement storey of one of the lateral towers of Castel Nuovo. Charles of Durazzo, who had never ceased to brood secretly over his infernal plans, had been informed by the notary whom he had charged to spy upon the conspirators, that on that particular evening they were about to hold a decisive meeting, and therefore, wrapped in a black cloak, he glided into the underground corridor and hid himself behind a pillar, there to await the issue of the conference. After two dreadful hours of suspense, every second marked out by the beating of his heart, Charles fancied he heard the sound of a door very carefully opened; the feeble ray of a lantern in the vault scarcely served to dispel the darkness, but a man coining away from the wall approached him walking like a living statue. Charles gave a slight cough, the sign agreed upon. The man put out his light and hid away the dagger he had drawn in case of a surprise.

“Is it you, Master Nicholas?” asked the duke in a low voice.

“It is I, my lord.”

“What is it?”

“They have just fixed the prince’s death for tomorrow, on his way to the hunt.”

“Did you recognise every conspirator?”

“Every one, though their faces were masked; when they gave their vote for death, I knew them by their voices.”

“Could you point out to me who they are?”

“Yes, this very minute; they are going to pass along at the end of this corridor. And see, here is Tommaso Pace walking in front of them to light their way.”

Indeed, a tall spectral figure, black from head to foot, his face carefully hidden under a velvet mask, walked at the end of the corridor, lamp in hand, and stopped at the first step of a staircase which led to the upper floors. The conspirators advanced slowly, two by two, like a procession of ghosts, appeared for one moment in the circle of light made by the torch, and again disappeared into shadow.

“See, there are Charles and Bertrand of ‘Artois,” said the notary; “there are the Counts of Terlizzi and Catanzaro; the grand admiral and grand seneschal, Godfrey of Marsan, Count of Squillace, and Robert of Cabane, Count of Eboli; the two women talking in a low voice with the eager gesticulations are Catherine of Tarentum, Empress of Constantinople, and Philippa the Catanese, the queen’s governess and chief lady; there is Dona Cancha, chamberwoman and confidante of Joan; and there is the Countess of Morcone.”

The notary stopped on beholding a shadow alone, its head bowed, with arms hanging loosely, choking back her sobs beneath a hood of black.

“Who is the woman who seems to drag herself so painfully along in their train?” asked the duke, pressing his companion’s arm.

That woman,” said the notary, “is the queen.” “Ah, now I see,” thought Charles, breathing freely, with the same sort of satisfaction that Satan no doubt feels when a long coveted soul falls at length into his power.

“And now, my lord,” continued Master Nicholas, when all had returned once more into silence and darkness, “if you have bidden me spy on these conspirators with a view to saving the young prince you are protecting with love

and vigilance, you must hurry forward, for tomorrow maybe it will be too late.”

“Follow me,” cried the duke imperiously; “it is time you should know my real intention, and then carry out my orders with scrupulous exactness.”

With these words he drew him aside to a place opposite to where the conspirators had just disappeared. The notary mechanically followed through a labyrinth of dark corridors and secret staircases, quite at a loss how to account for the sudden change that had come over his master—crossing one of the antechambers in the castle, they came upon Andre, who joyfully accosted them; grasping the hand of his cousin Duras in his affectionate manner, he asked him in a pressing way that would brook no refusal, “Will you be of our hunting party tomorrow, duke?”

“Excuse me, my lord,” said Charles, bowing down to the ground; “it will be impossible for me to go tomorrow, for my wife is very unwell; but I entreat you to accept the best falcon I have.”

And here he cast upon the notary a petrifying glance.

The morning of the 20th of August was fine and calm—the irony of nature contrasting cruelly with the fate of mankind. From break of day masters and valets, pages and knights, princes and courtiers, all were on foot; cries of joy were heard on every side when the queen arrived, on a snow-white horse, at the head of the young and brilliant throng. Joan was perhaps paler than usual, but that might be because she had been obliged to rise very early. Andre, mounted on one of the most fiery of all the steeds he had tamed, galloped beside his wife, noble and proud, happy in his own powers, his youth, and the thousand gilded hopes that a brilliant future seemed to offer. Never had the court of Naples shown so brave an aspect: every feeling of distrust and hatred seemed entirely forgotten; Friar Robert himself, suspicious as he was by nature, when he saw the joyous cavalcade go by under his window, looked out with pride, and stroking his beard, laughed at his own seriousness.

Andre’s intention was to spend several days hunting between Capua and Aversa, and only to return to Naples when all was in readiness for his coronation. Thus the first day they hunted round about Melito, and went through two or three villages in the land of Labore. Towards evening the court stopped at Aversa, with a view to passing the night there, and since at that period there was no castle in

the place worthy of entertaining the queen with her husband and numerous court, the convent of St. Peter's at Majella was converted into a royal residence: this convent had been built by Charles II in the year of our Lord 1309.

While the grand seneschal was giving orders for supper and the preparation of a room for Andre and his wife, the prince, who during the whole day had abandoned himself entirely to his favourite amusement, went up on the terrace to enjoy the evening air, accompanied by the good Isolda, his beloved nurse, who loved him more even than his mother, and would not leave his side for a moment. Never had the prince appeared so animated and happy: he was in ecstasies over the beauty of the country, the clear air, the scent of the trees around; he besieged his nurse with a thousand queries, never waiting for an answer; and they were indeed long in coming, for poor Isolda was gazing upon him with that appearance of fascination which makes a mother absent-minded when her child is talking: Andre was eagerly telling her about a terrible boar he had chased that morning across the woods, how it had lain foaming at his feet, and Isolda interrupted him to say he had a grain of dust in his eye. Then Andre was full of his plans for the future, and Isolda stroked his fair hair, remarking that he must be feeling very tired. Then, heeding nothing but his own joy and excitement, the young prince hurled defiance at destiny, calling by all his gods on dangers to come forward, so that he might have the chance of quelling them, and the poor nurse exclaimed, in a flood of tears, "My child, you love me no longer."

Out of all patience with these constant interruptions, Andre scolded her kindly enough, and mocked at her childish fears. Then, paying no attention to a sort of melancholy that was coming over him, he bade her tell him old tales of his childhood, and had a long talk about his brother Louis, his absent mother, and tears were in his eyes when he recalled her last farewell. Isolda listened joyfully, and answered all he asked; but no fell presentiment shook her heart: the poor woman loved Andre with all the strength of her soul; for him she would have given up her life in this world and in the world to come; yet she was not his mother.

When all was ready, Robert of Cabane came to tell the prince that the queen awaited him; Andre cast one last look at the smiling fields beneath the starry heavens, pressed his nurse's hand to his lips and to his heart, and followed the grand seneschal slowly and, it seemed, with some regret. But soon the brilliant lights of the room, the wine that circulated freely, the gay talk, the eager recitals

of that day's exploits, served to disperse the cloud of gloom that had for a moment overspread the countenance of the prince. The queen alone, leaning on the table, with fixed eyes and lips that never moved, sat at this strange feast pale and cold as a baleful ghost summoned from the tomb to disturb the joy of the party. Andre, whose brain began to be affected by the draughts of wine from Capri and Syracuse, was annoyed at his wife's look, and attributing it to contempt, filled a goblet to the brim and presented it to the queen. Joan visibly trembled, her lips moved convulsively; but the conspirators drowned in their noisy talk the involuntary groan that escaped her. In the midst of a general uproar, Robert of Cabane proposed that they should serve generous supplies of the same wine drunk at the royal table to the Hungarian guards who were keeping watch at the approaches to the convent, and this liberality evoked frenzied applause. The shouting of the soldiers soon gave witness to their gratitude for the unexpected gift, and mingled with the hilarious toasts of the banqueters. To put the finishing touch to Andre's excitement, there were cries on every side of "Long live the Queen! Long live His Majesty the King of Naples!"

The orgy lasted far into the night: the pleasures of the next day were discussed with enthusiasm, and Bertrand of Artois protested in a loud voice that if they were so late now some would not rise early on the morrow. Andre declared that, for his part, an hour or two's rest would be enough to get over his fatigue, and he eagerly protested that it would be well for others to follow his example. The Count of Terlizzi seemed to express some doubt as to the prince's punctuality. Andre insisted, and challenging all the barons present to see who would be up first, he retired with the queen to the room that had been reserved for them, where he very soon fell into a deep and heavy sleep. About two o'clock in the morning, Tommaso Pace, the prince's valet and first usher of the royal apartments, knocked at his master's door to rouse him for the chase. At the first knock, all was silence; at the second, Joan, who had not closed her eyes all night, moved as if to rouse her husband and warn him of the threatened danger; but at the third knock the unfortunate young man suddenly awoke, and hearing in the next room sounds of laughter and whispering, fancied that they were making a joke of his laziness, and jumped out of bed bareheaded, in nothing but his shirt, his shoes half on and half off. He opened the door; and at this point we translate literally the account of Domenico Gravina, a historian of much esteem. As soon as the prince appeared, the conspirators all at once fell upon him, to strangle him with their hands; believing he could not die by poison or sword, because of the charmed ring given him by his poor mother. But Andre was so strong and active, that when he perceived the infamous treason he defended

himself with more than human strength, and with dreadful cries got free from his murderers, his face all bloody, his fair hair pulled out in handfuls. The unhappy young man tried to gain his own bedroom, so as to get some weapon and valiantly resist the assassins; but as he reached the door, Nicholas of Melazzo, putting his dagger like a bolt into the lock, stopped his entrance. The prince, calling aloud the whole time and imploring the protection of his friends, returned to the hall; but all the doors were shut, and no one held out a helping hand; for the queen was silent, showing no uneasiness about her husband's death.

But the nurse Isolda, terrified by the shouting of her beloved son and lord, leapt from her bed and went to the window, filling the house with dreadful cries. The traitors, alarmed by the mighty uproar, although the place was lonely and so far from the centre of the town that nobody could have come to see what the noise was, were on the point of letting their victim go, when Bertrand of Artois, who felt he was more guilty than the others, seized the prince with hellish fury round the waist, and after a desperate struggle got him down; then dragging him by the hair of his head to a balcony which gave upon the garden, and pressing one knee upon his chest, cried out to the others—

“Come here, barons: I have what we want to strangle him with.”

And round his neck he passed a long cord of silk and gold, while the wretched man struggled all he could. Bertrand quickly drew up the knot, and the others threw the body over the parapet of the balcony, leaving it hanging between earth and sky until death ensued. When the Count of Terlizzi averted his eyes from the horrid spectacle, Robert of Cabane cried out imperiously—

“What are you doing there? The cord is long enough for us all to hold: we want not witnesses, we want accomplices!”

As soon as the last convulsive movements of the dying man had ceased, they let the corpse drop the whole height of the three storeys, and opening the doors of the hall, departed as though nothing had happened.

Isolda, when at last she contrived to get a light, rapidly ran to the queen's chamber, and finding the door shut on the inside, began to call loudly on her Andre. There was no answer, though the queen was in the room. The poor nurse, distracted, trembling, desperate, ran down all the corridors, knocked at all the cells and woke the monks one by one, begging them to help her look for the

prince. The monks said that they had indeed heard a noise, but thinking it was a quarrel between soldiers drunken perhaps or mutinous, they had not thought it their business to interfere. Isolda eagerly, entreated: the alarm spread through the convent; the monks followed the nurse, who went on before with a torch. She entered the garden, saw something white upon the grass, advanced trembling, gave one piercing cry, and fell backward.

The wretched Andre was lying in his blood, a cord round his neck as though he were a thief, his head crushed in by the height from which he fell. Then two monks went upstairs to the queen's room, and respectfully knocking at the door, asked in sepulchral tones—

“Madam, what would you have us do with your husband's corpse?”

And when the queen made no answer, they went down again slowly to the garden, and kneeling one at the head, the other at the foot of the dead man, they began to recite penitential psalms in a low voice. When they had spent an hour in prayer, two other monks went up in the same way to Joan's chamber, repeating the same question and getting no answer, whereupon they relieved the first two, and began themselves to pray. Next a third couple went to the door of this inexorable room, and coming away perturbed by their want of success, perceived that there was a disturbance of people outside the convent, while vengeful cries were heard amongst the indignant crowd. The groups became more and more thronged, threatening voices were raised, a torrent of invaders threatened the royal dwelling, when the queen's guard appeared, lance in readiness, and a litter closely shut, surrounded by the principal barons of the court, passed through the crowd, which stood stupidly gazing. Joan, wrapped in a black veil, went back to Castel Nuovo, amid her escort; and nobody, say the historians, had the courage to say a word about this terrible deed.

CHAPTER V

The terrible part that Charles of Durazzo was to play began as soon as this crime was accomplished. The duke left the corpse two whole days exposed to the wind and the rain, unburied and dishonoured, the corpse of a man whom the pope had made King of Sicily and Jerusalem, so that the indignation of the mob might be increased by the dreadful sight. On the third he ordered it to be conveyed with the utmost pomp to the cathedral of Naples, and assembling all the Hungarians around the catafalque, he thus addressed them, in a voice of thunder:—

“Nobles and commoners, behold our king hanged like a dog by infamous traitors. God will soon make known to us the names of all the guilty: let those who desire that justice may be done hold up their hands and swear against murderers bloody persecution, implacable hatred, everlasting vengeance.”

It was this one man’s cry that brought death and desolation to the murderers’ hearts, and the people dispersed about the town, shrieking, “Vengeance, vengeance!”

Divine justice, which knows naught of privilege and respects no crown, struck Joan first of all in her love. When the two lovers first met, both were seized alike with terror and disgust; they recoiled trembling, the queen seeing in Bertrand her husband’s executioner, and he in her the cause of his crime, possibly of his speedy punishment. Bertrand’s looks were disordered, his cheeks hollow, his eyes encircled with black rings, his mouth horribly distorted; his arm and forefinger extended towards his accomplice, he seemed to behold a frightful vision rising before him. The same cord he had used when he strangled Andre, he now saw round the queen’s neck, so tight that it made its way into her flesh: an invisible force, a Satanic impulse, urged him to strangle with his own hands the woman he had loved so dearly, had at one time adored on his knees. The count rushed out of the room with gestures of desperation, muttering incoherent words; and as he shewed plain signs of mental aberration, his father, Charles of Artois, took him away, and they went that same evening to their palace of St. Agatha, and there prepared a defence in case they should be attacked.

But Joan’s punishment, which was destined to be slow as well as dreadful, to last thirty-seven years and—end in a ghastly death, was now only beginning. All the

wretched beings who were stained with Andre's death came in turn to her to demand the price of blood. The Catanese and her son, who held in their hands not only the queen's honour but her life, now became doubly greedy and exacting. Dona Cancha no longer put any bridle on her licentiousness; and the Empress of Constantinople ordered her niece to marry her eldest son, Robert, Prince of Tarentum. Joan, consumed by remorse, full of indignation and shame at the arrogant conduct of her subjects, dared scarcely lift her head, and stooped to entreaties, only stipulating for a few days' delay before giving her answer: the empress consented, on condition that her son should come to reside at Castel Nuovo, with permission to see the queen once a day. Joan bowed her head in silence, and Robert of Tarentum was installed at the castle.

Charles of Durazzo, who by the death of Andre had practically become the head of the family, and, would, by the terms of his grandfather's will, inherit the kingdom by right of his wife Marie in the case of Joan's dying without lawful issue, sent to the queen two commands: first, that she should not dream of contracting a new marriage without first consulting him in the choice of a husband; secondly, that she should invest him at once with the title of Duke of Calabria. To compel his cousin to make these two concessions, he added that if she should be so ill advised as to refuse either of them, he should hand over to justice the proofs of the crime and the names of the murderers. Joan, bending beneath the weight of this new difficulty, could think of no way to avoid it; but Catherine, who alone was stout enough to fight this nephew of hers, insisted that they must strike at the Duke of Durazzo in his ambition and hopes, and tell him, to begin with—what was the fact—that the queen was pregnant. If, in spite of this news, he persisted in his plans, she would find some means or other, she said, of causing trouble and discord in her nephew's family, and wounding him in his most intimate affections or closest interests, by publicly dishonouring him through his wife or his mother.

Charles smiled coldly when his aunt came to tell him from the queen that she was about to bring into the world an infant, Andre's posthumous child. What importance could a babe yet unborn possibly have—as a fact, it lived only a few months—in the eyes of a man who with such admirable coolness got rid of people who stood in his way, and that moreover by the hand of his own enemies? He told the empress that the happy news she had condescended to bring him in person, far from diminishing his kindness towards his cousin, inspired him rather with more interest and goodwill; that consequently he reiterated his suggestion, and renewed his promise not to seek vengeance for his

dear Andre, since in a certain sense the crime was not complete should a child be destined to survive; but in case of a refusal he declared himself inexorable. He cleverly gave Catherine to understand that, as she had some interest herself in the prince's death, she ought for her own sake to persuade the queen to stop legal proceedings.

The empress seemed to be deeply impressed by her nephew's threatening attitude, and promised to do her best to persuade the queen to grant all he asked, on condition, however, that Charles should allow the necessary time for carrying through so delicate a business. But Catherine profited by this delay to think out her own plan of revenge, and ensure the means of certain success. After starting several projects eagerly and then regretfully abandoning them, she fixed upon an infernal and unheard-of scheme, which the mind would refuse to believe but for the unanimous testimony of historians. Poor Agnes of Duras, Charles's mother, had for some few days been suffering with an inexplicable weariness, a slow painful malady with which her son's restlessness and violence may have had not a little to do. The empress resolved that the first effect of her hatred was to fall upon this unhappy mother. She summoned the Count of Terlizzi and Dona Cancha, his mistress, who by the queen's orders had been attending Agnes since her illness began. Catherine suggested to the young chamberwoman, who was at that time with child, that she should deceive the doctor by representing that certain signs of her own condition really belonged to the sick woman, so that he, deceived by the false indications, should be compelled to admit to Charles of Durazzo that his mother was guilty and dishonoured. The Count of Terlizzi, who ever since he had taken part in the regicide trembled in fear of discovery, had nothing to oppose to the empress's desire, and Dona Cancha, whose head was as light as her heart was corrupt, seized with a foolish gaiety on any chance of taking her revenge on the prudery of the only princess of the blood who led a pure life at a court that was renowned for its depravity. Once assured that her accomplices would be prudent and obedient, Catherine began to spread abroad certain vague and dubious but terribly serious rumours, only needing proof, and soon after the cruel accusation was started it was repeated again and again in confidence, until it reached the ears of Charles.

At this amazing revelation the duke was seized with a fit of trembling. He sent instantly for the doctor, and asked imperiously what was the cause of his mother's malady. The doctor turned pale and stammered; but when Charles grew threatening he admitted that he had certain grounds for suspecting that the duchess was enceinte, but as he might easily have been deceived the first time,

he would make a second investigation before pronouncing his opinion in so serious a matter. The next day, as the doctor came out of the bedroom, the duke met him, and interrogating him with an agonised gesture, could only judge by the silence that his fears were too well confirmed. But the doctor, with excess of caution, declared that he would make a third trial. Condemned criminals can suffer no worse than Charles in the long hours that passed before that fatal moment when he learned that his mother was indeed guilty. On the third day the doctor stated on his soul and conscience that Agnes of Durazzo was pregnant.

“Very good,” said Charles, dismissing the doctor with no sign of emotion.

That evening the duchess took a medicine ordered by the doctor; and when, half an hour later, she was assailed with violent pains, the duke was warned that perhaps other physicians ought to be consulted, as the prescription of the ordinary doctor, instead of bringing about an improvement in her state, had only made her worse.

Charles slowly went up to the duchess’s room, and sending away all the people who were standing round her bed, on the pretext that they were clumsy and made his mother worse, he shut the door, and they were alone. The poor Agnes, forgetting her internal agony when she saw her son, pressed his hand tenderly and smiled through her tears.

Charles, pale beneath his bronzed complexion, his forehead moist with a cold sweat, and his eyes horribly dilated, bent over the sick woman and asked her gloomily—

“Are you a little better, mother?”

“Ah, I am in pain, in frightful pain, my poor Charles. I feel as though I have molten lead in my veins. O my son, call your brothers, so that I may give you all my blessing for the last time, for I cannot hold out long against this pain. I am burning. Mercy! Call a doctor: I know I have been poisoned.”

Charles did not stir from the bedside.

“Water!” cried the dying woman in a broken voice,—“water! A doctor, a confessor! My children—I want my children!”

And as the duke paid no heed, but stood moodily silent, the poor mother,

prostrated by pain, fancied that grief had robbed her son of all power of speech or movement, and so, by a desperate effort, sat up, and seizing him by the arm, cried with all the strength she could muster—

“Charles, my son, what is it? My poor boy, courage; it is nothing, I hope. But quick, call for help, call a doctor. Ah, you have no idea of what I suffer.”

“Your doctor,” said Charles slowly and coldly, each word piercing his mother’s heart like a dagger,—“your doctor cannot come.”

“Oh why?” asked Agnes, stupefied.

“Because no one ought to live who knows the secret of our shame.”

“Unhappy man!” she cried, overwhelmed with, pain and terror, “you have murdered him! Perhaps you have poisoned your mother too! Charles, Charles, have mercy on your own soul!”

“It is your doing,” said Charles, without show of emotion: “you have driven me into crime and despair; you have caused my dishonour in this world and my damnation in the next.”

“What are you saying? My own Charles, have mercy! Do not let me die in this horrible uncertainty; what fatal delusion is blinding you? Speak, my son, speak: I am not feeling the poison now. What have I done? Of what have I been accused?”

She looked with haggard eyes at her son: her maternal love still struggled against the awful thought of matricide; at last, seeing that Charles remained speechless in spite of her entreaties, she repeated, with a piercing cry—

“Speak, in God’s name, speak before I die!”

“Mother, you are with child.”

“What!” cried Agnes, with a loud cry, which broke her very heart. “O God, forgive him! Charles, your mother forgives and blesses you in death.”

Charles fell upon her neck, desperately crying for help: he would now have gladly saved her at the cost of his life, but it was too late. He uttered one cry that

came from his heart, and was found stretched out upon his mother's corpse.

Strange comments were made at the court on the death of the Duchess of Durazzo and her doctor's disappearance; but there was no doubt at all that grief and gloom were furrowing wrinkles on Charles's brow, which was already sad enough. Catherine alone knew the terrible cause of her nephew's depression, for to her it was very plain that the duke at one blow had killed his mother and her physician. But she had never expected a reaction so sudden and violent in a man who shrank before no crime. She had thought Charles capable of everything except remorse. His gloomy, self absorbed silence seemed a bad augury for her plans. She had desired to cause trouble for him in his own family, so that he might have no time to oppose the marriage of her son with the queen; but she had shot beyond her mark, and Charles, started thus on the terrible path of crime, had now broken through the bonds of his holiest affections, and gave himself up to his bad passions with feverish ardour and a savage desire for revenge. Then Catherine had recourse to gentleness and submission. She gave her son to understand that there was only one way of obtaining the queen's hand, and that was by flattering the ambition of Charles and in some sort submitting himself to his patronage. Robert of Tarentum understood this, and ceased making court to Joan, who received his devotion with cool kindness, and attached himself closely to Charles, paying him much the same sort of respect and deference that he himself had affected for Andre, when the thought was first in his mind of causing his ruin. But the Duke of Durazzo was by no means deceived as to the devoted friendship shown towards him by the heir of the house of Tarentum, and pretending to be deeply touched by the unexpected change of feeling, he all the time kept a strict guard on Robert's actions.

An event outside all human foresight occurred to upset the calculations of the two cousins. One day while they were out together on horseback, as they often were since their pretended reconciliation, Louis of Tarentum, Robert's youngest brother, who had always felt for Joan a chivalrous, innocent love,—a love which a young man of twenty is apt to lock up in his heart as a secret treasure,—Louis, we say, who had held aloof from the infamous family conspiracy and had not soiled his hands with Andre's blood, drawn on by an irrepressible passion, all at once appeared at the gates of Castel Nuovo; and while his brother was wasting precious hours in asking for a promise of marriage, had the bridge raised and gave the soldiers strict orders to admit no one. Then, never troubling himself about Charles's anger or Robert's jealousy, he hurried to the queen's room, and there, says Domenico Gravina, without any preamble, the union was

consummated.

On returning from his ride, Robert, astonished that the bridge was not at once lowered for him, at first loudly called upon the soldiers on guard at the fortress, threatening severe punishment for their unpardonable negligence; but as the gates did not open and the soldiers made no sign of fear or regret, he fell into a violent fit of rage, and swore he would hang the wretches like dogs for hindering his return home. But the Empress of Constantinople, terrified at the bloody quarrel beginning between the two brothers, went alone and on foot to her son, and making use of her maternal authority to beg him to master his feelings, there in the presence of the crowd that had come up hastily to witness the strange scene, she related in a low voice all that had passed in his absence.

A roar as of a wounded tiger escaped from Robert's breast: all but blind with rage, he nearly trampled his mother under the feet of his horse, which seemed to feel his master's anger, and plunging violently, breathed blood from his nostrils. When the prince had poured every possible execration on his brother's head, he turned and galloped away from the accursed castle, flying to the Duke of Durazzo, whom he had only just left, to tell him of this outrage and stir him to revenge. Charles was talking carelessly with his young wife, who was but little used to such tranquil conversation and expansiveness, when the Prince of Tarentum, exhausted, out of breath, bathed in perspiration, came up with his incredible tale. Charles made him say it twice over, so impossible did Louis's audacious enterprise appear to him. Then quickly changing from doubt to fury, he struck his brow with his iron glove, saying that as the queen defied him he would make her tremble even in her castle and in her lover's arms. He threw one withering look on Marie, who interceded tearfully for her sister, and pressing Robert's hand with warmth, vowed that so long as he lived Louis should never be Joan's husband.

That same evening he shut himself up in his study, and wrote letters whose effect soon appeared. A bull, dated June 2, 1346, was addressed to Bertram de Baux, chief-justice of the kingdom of Sicily and Count of Monte Scaglioso, with orders to make the most strict inquiries concerning Andre's murderers, whom the pope likewise laid under his anathema, and to punish them with the utmost rigour of the law. But a secret note was appended to the bull which was quite at variance with the designs of Charles: the sovereign pontiff expressly bade the chief-justice not to implicate the queen in the proceedings or the princes of the blood, so as to avoid worse disturbances, reserving, as supreme head of the Church and

lord of the kingdom, the right of judging them later on, as his wisdom might dictate.

For this imposing trial Bertram de Baux made great preparations. A platform was erected in the great hall of tribunal, and all the officers of the crown and great state dignitaries, and all the chief barons, had a place behind the enclosure where the magistrates sat. Three days after Clement VI's bull had been published in the capital, the chief-justice was ready for a public examination of two accused persons. The two culprits who had first fallen into the hands of justice were, as one may easily suppose, those whose condition was least exalted, whose lives were least valuable, Tommaso Pace and Nicholas of Melazzo. They were led before the tribunal to be first of all tortured, as the custom was. As they approached the judges, the notary passing by Charles in the street had time to say in a low voice—

“My lord, the time has come to give my life for you: I will do my duty; I commend my wife and children to you.”

Encouraged by a nod from his patron, he walked on firmly and deliberately. The chief-justice, after establishing the identity of the accused, gave them over to the executioner and his men to be tortured in the public square, so that their sufferings might serve as a show and an example to the crowd. But no sooner was Tommaso Pace tied to the rope, when to the great disappointment of all he declared that he would confess everything, and asked accordingly to be taken back before his judges. At these words, the Count of Terlizzi, who was following every movement of the two men with mortal anxiety, thought it was all over now with him and his accomplices; and so, when Tommaso Pace was turning his steps towards the great hall, led by two guards, his hands tied behind his back, and followed by the notary, he contrived to take him into a secluded house, and squeezing his throat with great force, made him thus put his tongue out, whereupon he cut it off with a sharp razor.

The yells of the poor wretch so cruelly mutilated fell on the ears of the Duke of Durazzo: he found his way into the room where the barbarous act had been committed just as the Count of Terlizzi was coming out, and approached the notary, who had been present at the dreadful spectacle and had not given the least sign of fear or emotion. Master Nicholas, thinking the same fate was in store for him, turned calmly to the duke, saying with a sad smile—

“My lord, the precaution is useless; there is no need for you to cut out my tongue, as the noble count has done to my poor companion. The last scrap of my flesh may be torn off without one word being dragged from my mouth. I have promised, my lord, and you have the life of my wife and the future of my children as guarantee for my word.”

“I do not ask for silence,” said the duke solemnly; “you can free me from all my enemies at once, and I order you to denounce them at the tribunal.”

The notary bowed his head with mournful resignation; then raising it in affright, made one step up to the duke and murmured in a choking voice—

“And the queen?”

“No one would believe you if you ventured to denounce her; but when the Catanese and her son, the Count of Terlizzi and his wife and her most intimate friends, have been accused by you, when they fail to endure the torture, and when they denounce her unanimously—”

“I see, my lord. You do not only want my life; you would have my soul too. Very well; once more I commend to you my children.”

With a deep sigh he walked up to the tribunal. The chief-justice asked Tommaso Pace the usual questions, and a shudder of horror passed through the assembly when they saw the poor wretch in desperation opening his mouth, which streamed with blood. But surprise and terror reached their height when Nicholas of Melazzo slowly and firmly gave a list of Andre’s murderers, all except the queen and the princes of the blood, and went on to give all details of the assassination.

Proceedings were at once taken for the arrest of the grand seneschal, Robert of Cabane, and the Counts of Terlizzi and Morcone, who were present and had not ventured to make any movement in self-defence. An hour later, Philippa, her two daughters, and Dona Cancha joined them in prison, after vainly imploring the queen’s protection. Charles and Bertrand of Artois, shut up in their fortress of Saint Agatha, bade defiance to justice, and several others, among them the Counts of Meleto and Catanzaro, escaped by flight.

As soon as Master Nicholas said he had nothing further to confess, and that he had spoken the whole truth and nothing but the truth, the chief-justice

pronounced sentence amid a profound silence; and 1897 without delay Tommaso Pace and the notary were tied to the tails of two horses, dragged through the chief streets of the town, and hanged in the market place.

The other prisoners were thrown into a subterranean vault, to be questioned and put to the torture on the following day. In the evening, finding themselves in the same dungeon, they reproached one another, each pretending he had been dragged into the crime by someone else. Then Dona Cancha, whose strange character knew no inconsistencies, even face to face with death and torture, drowned with a great burst of laughter the lamentations of her companions, and joyously exclaimed—

“Look here, friends, why these bitter recriminations—this ill—mannered raving? We have no excuses to make, and we are all equally guilty. I am the youngest of all, and not the ugliest, by your leave, ladies, but if I am condemned, at least I will die cheerfully. For I have never denied myself any pleasure I could get in this world, and I can boast that much will be forgiven me, for I have loved much: of that you, gentlemen, know something. You, bad old man,” she continued to the Count of Terlizzi, “do you not remember lying by my side in the queen’s antechamber? Come, no blushes before your noble family; confess, my lord, that I am with child by your Excellency; and you know how we managed to make up the story of poor Agues of Durazzo and her pregnancy—God rest her soul! For my part, I never supposed the joke would take such a serious turn all at once. You know all this and much more; spare your lamentations, for, by my word, they are getting very tiresome: let us prepare to die joyously, as we have lived.”

With these words she yawned slightly, and, lying down on the straw, fell into a deep sleep, and dreamed as happy dreams as she had ever dreamed in her life.

On the morrow from break of day there was an immense crowd on the sea front. During the night an enormous palisade had been put up to keep the people away far enough for them to see the accused without hearing anything. Charles of Durazzo, at the head of a brilliant cortege of knights and pages, mounted on a magnificent horse, all in black, as a sign of mourning, waited near the enclosure. Ferocious joy shone in his eyes as the accused made their way through the crowd, two by two, their wrists tied with ropes; for the duke every minute expected to hear the queen’s name spoken. But the chief-justice, a man of experience, had prevented indiscretion of any kind by fixing a hook in the

tongue of each one. The poor creatures were tortured on a ship, so that nobody should hear the terrible confessions their sufferings dragged from them.

But Joan, in spite of the wrongs that most of the conspirators had done her, felt a renewal of pity for the woman she had once respected as a mother, for her childish companions and her friends, and possibly also some remains of love for Robert of Cabane, and sent two messengers to beg Bertram de Baux to show mercy to the culprits. But the chief-justice seized these men and had them tortured; and on their confession that they also were implicated in Andre's murder, he condemned them to the same punishment as the others. Dona Cancha alone, by reason of her situation, escaped the torture, and her sentence was deferred till the day of her confinement.

As this beautiful girl was returning to prison, with many a smile for all the handsomest cavaliers she could see in the crowd, she gave a sign to Charles of Durazzo as she neared him to come forward, and since her tongue had not been pierced (for the same reason) with an iron instrument, she said some words to him a while in a low voice.

Charles turned fearfully pale, and putting his hand to his sword, cried—

“Wretched woman!”

“You forget, my lord, I am under the protection of the law.”

“My mother!—oh, my poor mother!” murmured Charles in a choked voice, and he fell backward.

The next morning the people were beforehand with the executioner, loudly demanding their prey. All the national troops and mercenaries that the judicial authorities could command were echeloned in the streets, opposing a sort of dam to the torrent of the raging crowd. The sudden insatiable cruelty that too often degrades human nature had awaked in the populace: all heads were turned with hatred and frenzy; all imaginations inflamed with the passion for revenge; groups of men and women, roaring like wild beasts, threatened to knock down the walls of the prison, if the condemned were not handed over to them to take to the place of punishment: a great murmur arose, continuous, ever the same, like the growling of thunder: the queen's heart was petrified with terror.

But, in spite of the desire of Bertram de Baux to satisfy the popular wish, the

preparations for the solemn execution were not completed till midday, when the sun's rays fell scorchingly upon the town. There went up a mighty cry from ten thousand palpitating breasts when a report first ran through the crowd that the prisoners were about to appear. There was a moment of silence, and the prison doors rolled slowly back on their hinges with a rusty, grating noise. A triple row of horsemen, with lowered visor and lance in rest, started the procession, and amid yells and curses the condemned prisoners came out one by one, each tied upon a cart, gagged and naked to the waist, in charge of two executioners, whose orders were to torture them the whole length of their way. On the first cart was the former laundress of Catana, afterwards wife of the grand seneschal and governess to the queen, Philippa of Cabane: the two executioners at right and left of her scourged her with such fury that the blood spurting up from the wounds left a long track in all the streets passed by the cortege.

Immediately following their mother on separate carts came the Countesses of Terlizzi and Morcone, the elder no more than eighteen years of age. The two sisters were so marvellously beautiful that in the crowd a murmur of surprise was heard, and greedy eyes were fixed upon their naked trembling shoulders. But the men charged to torture them gazed with ferocious smiles upon their forms of seductive beauty, and, armed with sharp knives, cut off pieces of their flesh with a deliberate enjoyment and threw them out to the crowd, who eagerly struggled to get them, signing to the executioners to show which part of the victims' bodies they preferred.

Robert of Cabane, the grand seneschal, the Counts of Terlizzi and Morcone, Raymond Pace, brother of the old valet who had been executed the day before, and many more, were dragged on similar carts, and both scourged with ropes and slashed with knives; their flesh was torn out with red-hot pincers, and flung upon brazen chafing-dishes. No cry of pain was heard from the grand seneschal, he never stirred once in his frightful agony; yet the torturers put such fury into their work that the poor wretch was dead before the goal was reached.

In the centre of the square of Saint Eligius an immense stake was set up: there the prisoners were taken, and what was left of their mutilated bodies was thrown into the flames. The Count of Terlizzi and the grand seneschal's widow were still alive, and two tears of blood ran down the cheeks of the miserable mother as she saw her son's corpse and the palpitating remains of her two daughters cast upon the fire—they by their stifled cries showed that they had not ceased to suffer. But suddenly a fearful noise overpowered the groans of the victims; the enclosure

was broken and overturned by the mob. Like madmen, they rushed at the burning pile,—armed with sabres, axes, and knives, and snatching the bodies dead or alive from the flames, tore them to pieces, carrying off the bones to make whistles or handles for their daggers as a souvenir of this horrible day.

CHAPTER VI

The spectacle of this frightful punishment did not satisfy the revenge of Charles of Durazzo. Seconded by the chief-justice, he daily brought about fresh executions, till Andre's death came to be no more than a pretext for the legal murder of all who opposed his projects. But Louis of Tarentum, who had won Joan's heart, and was eagerly trying to get the necessary dispensation for legalising the marriage, from this time forward took as a personal insult every act of the high court of justice which was performed against his will and against the queen's prerogative: he armed all his adherents, increasing their number by all the adventurers he could get together, and so put on foot a strong enough force to support his own party and resist his cousin. Naples was thus split up into hostile camps, ready to come to blows on the smallest pretext, whose daily skirmishes, moreover, were always followed by some scene of pillage or death.

But Louis had need of money both to pay his mercenaries and to hold his own against the Duke of Durazzo and his own brother Robert, and one day he discovered that the queen's coffers were empty. Joan was wretched and desperate, and her lover, though generous and brave and anxious to reassure her so far as he could, did not very clearly see how to extricate himself from such a difficult situation. But his mother Catherine, whose ambition was satisfied in seeing one of her sons, no matter which, attain to the throne of Naples, came unexpectedly to their aid, promising solemnly that it would only take her a few days to be able to lay at her niece's feet a treasure richer than anything she had ever dreamed of, queen as she was.

The empress then took half her son's troops, made for Saint Agatha, and besieged the fortress where Charles and Bertrand of Artois had taken refuge when they fled from justice. The old count, astonished at the sight of this woman, who had been the very soul of the conspiracy, and not in the least understanding her arrival as an enemy, sent out to ask the intention of this display of military force. To which Catherine replied in words which we translate literally:

“My friends, tell Charles, our faithful friend, that we desire to speak with him privately and alone concerning a matter equally interesting to us both, and he is not to be alarmed at our arriving in the guise of an enemy, for this we have done

designedly, as we shall explain in the course of our interview. We know he is confined to bed by the gout, and therefore feel no surprise at his not coming out to meet us. Have the goodness to salute him on our part and reassure him, telling him that we desire to come in, if such is his good pleasure, with our intimate counsellor, Nicholas Acciajuoli, and ten soldiers only, to speak with him concerning an important matter that cannot be entrusted to go-betweens.”

Entirely reassured by these frank, friendly explanations, Charles of Artois sent out his son Bertrand to the empress to receive her with the respect due to her rank and high position at the court of Naples. Catherine went promptly to the castle with many signs of joy, and inquiring after the count's health and expressing her affection, as soon as they were alone, she mysteriously lowered her voice and explained that the object of her visit was to consult a man of tried experience on the affairs of Naples, and to beg his active cooperation in the queen's favour. As, however, she was not pressed for time, she could wait at Saint Agatha for the count's recovery to hear his views and tell him of the march of events since he left the court. She succeeded so well in gaining the old man's confidence and banishing his suspicions, that he begged her to honour them with her presence as long as she was able, and little by little received all her men within the walls. This was what Catherine was waiting for: on the very day when her army was installed at Saint Agatha, she suddenly entered the count's room, followed by four soldiers, and seizing the old man by the throat, exclaimed wrathfully—

“Miserable traitor, you will not escape from our hands before you have received the punishment you deserve. In the meanwhile, show me where your treasure is hidden, if you would not have me throw your body out to feed the crows that are swooping around these dungeons.”

The count, half choking, the dagger at his breast, did not even attempt to call for help; he fell on his knees, begging the empress to save at least the life of his son, who was not yet well from the terrible attack of melancholia that had shaken his reason ever since the catastrophe. Then he painfully dragged himself to the place where he had hidden his treasure, and pointing with his finger, cried—

“Take all; take my life; but spare my son.”

Catherine could not contain herself for joy when she saw spread out at her feet exquisite and incredibly valuable cups, caskets of pearls, diamonds and rubies of

marvellous value, coffers full of gold ingots, and all the wonders of Asia that surpass the wildest imagination. But when the old man, trembling, begged for the liberty of his son as the price of his fortune and his own life, the empress resumed her cold, pitiless manner, and harshly replied—

“I have already given orders for your son to be brought here; but prepare for an eternal farewell, for he is to be taken to the fortress of Melfi, and you in all probability will end your days beneath the castle of Saint Agatha.”

The grief of the poor count at this violent separation was so great, that a few days later he was found dead in his dungeon, his lips covered with a bloody froth, his hands gnawed in despair. Bertrand did not long survive him. He actually lost his reason when he heard of his father's death, and hanged himself on the prison grating. Thus did the murderers of Andre destroy one another, like venomous animals shut up in the same cage.

Catherine of Tarentum, carrying off the treasure she had so gained, arrived at the court of Naples, proud of her triumph and contemplating vast schemes. But new troubles had come about in her absence. Charles of Durazzo, for the last time desiring the queen to give him the duchy of Calabria, a title which had always belonged to the heir presumptive, and angered by her refusal, had written to Louis of Hungary, inviting him to take possession of the kingdom, and promising to help in the enterprise with all his own forces, and to give up the principal authors of his brother's death, who till now had escaped justice.

The King of Hungary eagerly accepted these offers, and got ready an army to avenge Andre's death and proceed to the conquest of Naples. The tears of his mother Elizabeth and the advice of Friar Robert, the old minister, who had fled to Buda, confirmed him in his projects of vengeance. He had already lodged a bitter complaint at the court of Avignon that, while the inferior assassins had been punished, she who was above all others guilty had been shamefully let off scot free, and though still stained with her husband's blood, continued to live a life of debauchery and adultery. The pope replied soothingly that, so far as it depended upon him, he would not be found slow to give satisfaction to a lawful grievance; but the accusation ought to be properly formulated and supported by proof; that no doubt Joan's conduct during and after her husband's death was blamable; but His Majesty must consider that the Church of Rome, which before all things seeks truth and justice, always proceeds with the utmost circumspection, and in so grave a matter more especially must not judge by

appearances only.

Joan, frightened by the preparations for war, sent ambassadors to the Florentine Republic, to assert her innocence of the crime imputed to her by public opinion, and did not hesitate to send excuses even to the Hungarian court; but Andre's brother replied in a letter laconic and threatening:—

“Your former disorderly life, the arrogation to yourself of exclusive power, your neglect to punish your husband's murderers, your marriage to another husband, moreover your own excuses, are all sufficient proofs that you were an accomplice in the murder.”

Catherine would not be put out of heart by the King of Hungary's threats, and looking at the position of the queen and her son with a coolness that was never deceived, she was convinced that there was no other means of safety except a reconciliation with Charles, their mortal foe, which could only be brought about by giving him all he wanted. It was one of two things: either he would help them to repulse the King of Hungary, and later on they would pay the cost when the dangers were less pressing, or he would be beaten himself, and thus they would at least have the pleasure of drawing him down with them in their own destruction.

The agreement was made in the gardens of Castel Nuovo, whither Charles had repaired on the invitation of the queen and her aunt. To her cousin of Durazzo Joan accorded the title so much desired of Duke of Calabria, and Charles, feeling that he was hereby made heir to the kingdom, marched at once on Aquila, which town already was flying the Hungarian colours. The wretched man did not foresee that he was going straight to his destruction.

When the Empress of Constantinople saw this man, whom she hated above all others, depart in joy, she looked contemptuously upon him, divining by a woman's instinct that mischief would befall him; then, having no further mischief to do, no further treachery on earth, no further revenge to satisfy, she all at once succumbed to some unknown malady, and died suddenly, without uttering a cry or exciting a single regret.

But the King of Hungary, who had crossed Italy with a formidable army, now entered the kingdom from the side of Aquila: on his way he had everywhere received marks of interest and sympathy; and Alberto and Mertino delta Scala,

lords of Verona, had given him three hundred horse to prove that all their goodwill was with him in his enterprise. The news of the arrival of the Hungarians threw the court into a state of confusion impossible to describe. They had hoped that the king would be stopped by the pope's legate, who had come to Foligno to forbid him, in the name of the Holy Father, and on pain of excommunication to proceed any further without his consent; but Louis of Hungary replied to the pope's legate that, once master of Naples, he should consider himself a feudatory of the Church, but till then he had no obligations except to God and his own conscience. Thus the avenging army fell like a thunderbolt upon the heart of the kingdom, before there was any thought of taking serious measures for defence. There was only one plan possible: the queen assembled the barons who were most strongly attached to her, made them swear homage and fidelity to Louis of Tarentum, whom she presented to them as her husband, and then leaving with many tears her most faithful subjects, she embarked secretly, in the middle of the night, on a ship of Provence, and made for Marseilles. Louis of Tarentum, following the prompting of his adventure-loving character, left Naples at the head of three thousand horse and a considerable number of foot, and took up his post on the banks of the Voltorno, there to contest the enemy's passage; but the King of Hungary foresaw the stratagem, and while his adversary was waiting for him at Capua, he arrived at Beneventum by the mountains of Alife and Morcone, and on the same day received Neapolitan envoys: they in a magnificent display of eloquence congratulated him on his entrance, offered the keys of the town, and swore obedience to him as being the legitimate successor of Charles of Anjou. The news of the surrender of Naples soon reached the queen's camp, and all the princes of the blood and the generals left Louis of Tarentum and took refuge in the capital. Resistance was impossible. Louis, accompanied by his counsellor, Nicholas Acciajuoli, went to Naples on the same evening on which his relatives quitted the town to get away from the enemy. Every hope of safety was vanishing as the hours passed by; his brothers and cousins begged him to go at once, so as not to draw down upon the town the king's vengeance, but unluckily there was no ship in the harbour that was ready to set sail. The terror of the princes was at its height; but Louis, trusting in his luck, started with the brave Acciajuoli in an unseaworthy boat, and ordering four sailors to row with all their might, in a few minutes disappeared, leading his family in a great state of anxiety till they learned that he had reached Pisa, whither he had gone to join the queen in Provence. Charles of Durazzo and Robert of Tarentum, who were the eldest respectively of the two branches of the royal family, after hastily consulting, decided to soften the Hungarian monarch's wrath by a complete

submission. Leaving their young brothers at Naples, they accordingly set off for Aversa, where the king was. Louis received them with every mark of friendship, and asked with much interest why their brothers were not with them. The princes replied that their young brothers had stayed at Naples to prepare a worthy reception for His Majesty. Louis thanked them for their kind intentions, but begged them to invite the young princes now, saying that it would be infinitely more pleasant to enter Naples with all his family, and that he was most anxious to see his cousins. Charles and Robert, to please the king, sent equerries to bid their brothers come to Aversa; but Louis of Durazzo, the eldest of the boys, with many tears begged the others not to obey, and sent a message that he was prevented by a violent headache from leaving Naples. So puerile an excuse could not fail to annoy Charles, and the same day he compelled the unfortunate boys to appear before the king, sending a formal order which admitted of no delay. Louis of Hungary embraced them warmly one after the other, asked them several questions in an affectionate way, kept them to supper, and only let them go quite late at night.

When the Duke of Durazzo reached his room, Lello of Aquila and the Count of Fondi slipped mysteriously to the side of his bed, and making sure that no one could hear, told him that the king in a council held that morning had decided to kill him and to imprison the other princes. Charles heard them out, but incredulously: suspecting treachery, he dryly replied that he had too much confidence in his cousin's loyalty to believe such a black calumny. Lello insisted, begging him in the name of his dearest friends to listen; but the duke was impatient, and harshly ordered him to depart.

The next day there was the same kindness on the king's part, the same affection shown to the children; the same invitation to supper. The banquet was magnificent; the room was brilliantly lighted, and the reflections were dazzling: vessels of gold shone on the table, the intoxicating perfume of flowers filled the air; wine foamed in the goblets and flowed from the flagons in ruby streams: conversation, excited and discursive, was heard on every side: all faces beamed with joy.

Charles of Durazzo sat opposite the king, at a separate table among his brothers. Little by little his look grew fixed, his brow pensive. He was fancying that Andre might have supped in this very hall on the eve of his tragic end, and he thought how all concerned in that death had either died in torment or were now languishing in prison; the queen, an exile and a fugitive, was begging pity from

strangers: he alone was free. The thought made him tremble; but admiring his own cleverness in pursuing his infernal schemes; and putting away his sad looks, he smiled again with an expression of indefinable pride. The madman at this moment was scoffing at the justice of God. But Lello of Aquila, who was waiting-at the table, bent down, whispering gloomily—

“Unhappy duke, why did you refuse to believe me? Fly, while there is yet time.”

Charles, angered by the man’s obstinacy, threatened that if he were such a fool as to say any more, he would repeat every word aloud.

“I have done my duty,” murmured Lello, bowing his head; “now it must happen as God wills.”

As he left off speaking, the king rose, and as the duke went up to take his leave, his face suddenly changed, and he cried in an awful voice—

“Traitor! At length you are in my hands, and you shall die as you deserve; but before you are handed over to the executioner, confess with your own lips your deeds of treachery towards our royal majesty: so shall we need no other witness to condemn you to a punishment proportioned to your crimes. Between our two selves, Duke of Durazzo tell me first why, by your infamous manoeuvring, you aided your uncle, the Cardinal of Perigord, to hinder the coronation of my brother, and so led him on, since he had no royal prerogative of his own, to his miserable end? Oh, make no attempt to deny it. Here is the letter sealed with your seal in secret you wrote it, but it accuses you in public. Then why, after bringing us hither to avenge our brother’s death, of which you beyond all doubt were the cause,— why did you suddenly turn to the queen’s party and march against our town of Aquila, daring to raise an army against our faithful subjects? You hoped, traitor, to make use of us as a footstool to mount the throne withal, as soon as you were free from every other rival. Then you would but have awaited our departure to kill the viceroy we should have left in our place, and so seize the kingdom. But this time your foresight has been at fault. There is yet another crime worse than all the rest, a crime of high treason, which I shall remorselessly punish. You carried off the bride that our ancestor King Robert designed for me, as you knew, by his will. Answer, wretch what excuse can you make for the rape of the Princess Marie?”

Anger had so changed Louis’s voice that the last words sounded like the roar of

a wild beast: his eyes glittered with a feverish light, his lips were pale and trembling. Charles and his brothers fell upon their knees, frozen by mortal terror, and the unhappy duke twice tried to speak, but his teeth were chattering so violently that he could not articulate a single word. At last, casting his eyes about him and seeing his poor brothers, innocent and ruined by his fault, he regained some sort of courage, and said—

“My lord, you look upon me with a terrible countenance that makes me tremble. But on my knees I entreat you, have mercy on me if I have done wrong, for God is my witness that I did not call you to this kingdom with any criminal intention: I have always desired, and still desire, your supremacy in all the sincerity of my soul. Some treacherous counsellors, I am certain, have contrived to draw down your hatred upon me. If it is true, as you say, that I went with an armed force to Aquila I was compelled by Queen Joan, and I could not do otherwise; but as soon as I heard of your arrival at Fermo I took my troops away again. I hope for the love of Christ I may obtain your mercy and pardon, by reason of my former services and constant loyalty. But as I see you are now angry with me, I say no more waiting for your fury to pass over: Once again, my lord, have pity upon us, since we are in the hands of your Majesty.”

The king turned away his head, and retired slowly, confiding the prisoners to the care of Stephen Vayvoda and the Count of Zornic, who guarded them during the night in a room adjoining the king's chamber. The next day Louis held another meeting of his council, and ordered that Charles should have his throat cut on the very spot where poor Andre had been hanged. He then sent the other princes of the blood, loaded with chains, to Hungary, where they were long kept prisoners. Charles, quite thunderstruck by such an unexpected blow, overwhelmed by the thought of his past crimes, trembled like a coward face to face with death, and seemed completely crushed. Bowed, upon his knees, his face half hidden in his hands, from time to time convulsive sobs escaped him, as he tried to fix the thoughts that chased each other through his mind like the shapes of a monstrous dream. Night was in his soul, but every now and then light flashed across the darkness, and over the gloomy background of his despair passed gilded figures fleeing from him with smiles of mockery. In his ears buzzed voices from the other world; he saw a long procession of ghosts, like the conspirators whom Nicholas of Melazzo had pointed out in the vaults of Castel Nuovo. But these phantoms each held his head in his hand, and shaking it by the hair, bespattered him with drops of blood. Some brandished whips, some knives: each threatened Charles with his instrument of torture. Pursued by the nocturnal train, the hapless

man opened his mouth for one mighty cry, but his breath was gone, and it died upon his lips. Then he beheld his mother stretching out her arms from afar, and he fancied that if he could but reach her he would be safe. But at each step the path grew more and more narrow, pieces of his flesh were torn off by the approaching walls; at last, breathless, naked and bleeding, he reached his goal; but his mother glided farther away, and it was all to begin over again. The phantoms pursued him, grinning and screaming in his ears:—

“Cursed be he who slayeth his mother!”

Charles was roused from these horrors by the cries of his brothers, who had come to embrace him for the last time before embarking. The duke in a low voice asked their pardon, and then fell back into his state of despair. The children were dragged away, begging to be allowed to share their brother’s fate, and crying for death as an alleviation of their woes. At length they were separated, but the sound of their lamentation sounded long in the heart of the condemned man. After a few moments, two soldiers and two equerries came to tell the duke that his hour had come.

Charles followed them, unresisting, to the fatal balcony where Andre had been hanged. He was there asked if he desired to confess, and when he said yes, they brought a monk from the same convent where the terrible scene had been enacted: he listened to the confession of all his sins, and granted him absolution. The duke at once rose and walked to the place where Andre had been thrown down for the cord to be put round his neck, and there, kneeling again, he asked his executioners—

“Friends, in pity tell me, is there any hope for my life?”

And when they answered no, Charles exclaimed:

“Then carry out your instructions.”

At these words, one of the equerries plunged his sword into his breast, and the other cut his head off with a knife, and his corpse was thrown over the balcony into the garden where Andre’s body had lain for three days unburied.

CHAPTER VII

The King of Hungary, his black flag ever borne before him, started for Naples, reusing all offered honours, and rejecting the canopy beneath which he was to make his entry, not even stopping to give audience to the chief citizens or to receive the acclamations of the crowd. Armed at all points, he made for Castel Nuovo, leaving behind him dismay and fear. His first act on entering the city was to order Dona Cancha to be burnt, her punishment having been deferred by reason of her pregnancy. Like the others, she was drawn on a cart to the square of St. Eligius, and there consigned to the flames. The young creature, whose suffering had not impaired her beauty, was dressed as for a festival, and laughing like a mad thing up to the last moment, mocked at her executioners and threw kisses to the crowd.

A few days later, Godfrey of Marsana, Count of Squillace and grand admiral of the kingdom, was arrested by the king's orders. His life was promised him on condition of his delivering up Conrad of Catanzaro, one of his relatives, accused of conspiring against Andre. The grand admiral committed, this act of shameless treachery, and did not shrink from sending his own son to persuade Conrad to come to the town. The poor wretch was given over to the king, and tortured alive on a wheel made with sharp knives. The sight of these barbarities, far from calming the king's rage; seemed to inflame it the more. Every day there were new accusations and new sentences. The prisons were crowded: Louis's punishments were redoubled in severity. A fear arose that the town, and indeed the whole kingdom, were to be treated as having taken part in Andre's death. Murmurs arose against this barbarous rule, and all men's thoughts turned towards their fugitive queen. The Neapolitan barons had taken the oath of fidelity with no willing hearts; and when it came to the turn of the Counts of San Severino, they feared a trick of some kind, and refused to appear all together before the Hungarian, but took refuge in the town of Salerno, and sent Archbishop Roger, their brother, to make sure of the king's intentions beforehand. Louis received him magnificently, and appointed him privy councillor and grand proto notary. Then, and not till then, did Robert of San Severino and Roger, Count of Chiaramonte, venture into the king's presence; after doing homage, they retired to their homes. The other barons followed their example of caution, and hiding their discontent under a show of respect, awaited a favourable moment for shaking off the foreign yoke. But the queen had

encountered no obstacle in her flight, and arrived at Nice five days later. Her passage through Provence was like a triumph. Her beauty, youth, and misfortunes, even certain mysterious reports as to her adventures, all contributed to arouse the interest of the Provencal people. Games and fetes were improvised to soften the hardship of exile for the proscribed princess; but amid the outbursts of joy from every town, castle, and city, Joan, always sad, lived ever in her silent grief and glowing memories.

At the gates of Aix she found the clergy, the nobility, and the chief magistrates, who received her respectfully but with no signs of enthusiasm. As the queen advanced, her astonishment increased as she saw the coldness of the people and the solemn, constrained air of the great men who escorted her. Many anxious thoughts alarmed her, and she even went so far as to fear some intrigue of the King of Hungary. Scarcely had her cortege arrived at Castle Arnaud, when the nobles, dividing into two ranks, let the queen pass with her counsellor Spinelli and two women; then closing up, they cut her off from the rest of her suite. After this, each in turn took up his station as guardian of the fortress.

There was no room for doubt: the queen was a prisoner; but the cause of the manoeuvre it was impossible to guess. She asked the high dignitaries, and they, protesting respectful devotion, refused to explain till they had news from Avignon. Meanwhile all honours that a queen could receive were lavished on Joan; but she was kept in sight and forbidden to go out. This new trouble increased her depression: she did not know what had happened to Louis of Tarentum, and her imagination, always apt at creating disasters, instantly suggested that she would soon be weeping for his loss.

But Louis, always with his faithful Acciajuoli, had after many fatiguing adventures been shipwrecked at the port of Pisa; thence he had taken route for Florence, to beg men and money; but the Florentines decided to keep an absolute neutrality, and refused to receive him. The prince, losing his last hope, was pondering gloomy plans, when Nicholas Acciajuoli thus resolutely addressed him:

“My lord, it is not given to mankind to enjoy prosperity for ever: there are misfortunes beyond all human foresight. You were once rich and powerful, and you are now a fugitive in disguise, begging the help of others. You must reserve your strength for better days. I still have a considerable fortune, and also have relations and friends whose wealth is at my disposal: let us try to make our way

to the queen, and at once decide what we can do. I myself shall always defend you and obey you as my lord and master.”

The prince received these generous offers with the utmost gratitude, and told his counsellor that he placed his person in his hands and all that remained of his future. Acciajuoli, not content with serving his master as a devoted servant, persuaded his brother Angelo, Archbishop of Florence, who was in great favour at Clement VI’s court, to join with them in persuading the pope to interest himself in the cause of Louis of Tarentum. So, without further delay, the prince, his counsellor, and the good prelate made their way to the port of Marseilles, but learning that the queen was a prisoner at Aix, they embarked at Acque-Morte, and went straight to Avignon. It soon appeared that the pope had a real affection and esteem for the character of the Archbishop of Florence, for Louis was received with paternal kindness at the court of Avignon; which was far more than he had expected: When he kneeled before the sovereign pontiff, His Holiness bent affectionately towards him and helped him to rise, saluting him by the title of king.

Two days later, another prelate, the Archbishop of Aix, came into the queen’s presence,—

“Most gracious and dearly beloved sovereign, permit the most humble and devoted of your servants to ask pardon, in the name of your subjects, for the painful but necessary measure they have thought fit to take concerning your Majesty. When you arrived on our coast, your loyal town of Aix had learned from a trustworthy source that the King of France was proposing to give our country to one of his own sons, making good this loss to you by the cession of another domain, also that the Duke of Normandy had come to Avignon to request this exchange in person. We were quite decided, madam, and had made a vow to God that we would give up everything rather than suffer the hateful tyranny of the French. But before spilling blood we thought it best to secure your august person as a sacred hostage, a sacred ark which no man dared touch but was smitten to the ground, which indeed must keep away from our walls the scourge of war. We have now read the formal annulment of this hateful plan, in a brief sent by the sovereign pontiff from Avignon; and in this brief he himself guarantees your good faith.

“We give you your full and entire liberty, and henceforth we shall only endeavour to keep you among us by prayers and protestations. Go then, madam,

if that is your pleasure, but before you leave these lands, which will be plunged into mourning by your withdrawal, leave with us some hope that you forgive the apparent violence to which we have subjected you, only in the fear that we might lose you; and remember that on the day when you cease to be our queen you sign the death-warrant of all your subjects.”

Joan reassured the archbishop and the deputation from her good town of Aix with a melancholy smile, and promised that she would always cherish the memory of their affection. For this time she could not be deceived as to the real sentiments of the nobles and people; and a fidelity so uncommon, revealed with sincere tears, touched her heart and made her reflect bitterly upon her past. But a league’s distance from Avignon a magnificent triumphal reception awaited her. Louis of Tarentum and all the cardinals present at the court had come out to meet her. Pages in dazzling dress carried above Joan’s head a canopy of scarlet velvet, ornamented with fleur-de-lys in gold and plumes. Hand some youths and lovely girls, their heads crowned with flowers, went before her singing her praise. The streets were bordered with a living hedge of people, the houses were decked out, the bells rang a triple peal, as at the great Church festivals. Clement VI first received the queen at the castle of Avignon with all the pomp he knew so well how to employ on solemn occasions, then she was lodged in the palace of Cardinal Napoleon of the Orsini, who on his return from the Conclave at Perugia had built this regal dwelling at Villeneuve, inhabited later by the popes.

No words could give an idea of the strangely disturbed condition of Avignon at this period. Since Clement V had transported the seat of the papacy to Provence, there had sprung up, in this rival to Rome, squares, churches, cardinals’ palaces, of unparalleled splendour. All the business of nations and kings was transacted at the castle of Avignon. Ambassadors from every court, merchants of every nation, adventurers of all kinds, Italians, Spaniards, Hungarians, Arabs, Jews, soldiers, Bohemians, jesters, poets, monks, courtesans, swarmed and clustered here, and hustled one another in the streets. There was confusion of tongues, customs, and costumes, an inextricable mixture of splendour and rags, riches and misery, debasement and grandeur. The austere poets of the Middle Ages stigmatised the accursed city in their writings under the name of the New Babylon.

There is one curious monument of Joan’s sojourn at Avignon and the exercise of her authority as sovereign. She was indignant at the effrontery of the women of the town, who elbowed everybody shamelessly in the streets, and published a

notable edict, the first of its kind, which has since served as a model in like cases, to compel all unfortunate women who trafficked in their honour to live shut up together in a house, that was bound to be open every day in the year except the last three days of Holy Week, the entrance to be barred to Jews at all times. An abbess, chosen once a year, had the supreme control over this strange convent. Rules were established for the maintenance of order, and severe penalties inflicted for any infringement of discipline. The lawyers of the period gained a great reputation by this salutary institution; the fair ladies of Avignon were eager in their defence of the queen in spite of the calumnious reports that strove to tarnish her reputation: with one voice the wisdom of Andre's widow was extolled. The concert of praises was disturbed, however, by murmurs from the recluses themselves, who, in their own brutal language, declared that Joan of Naples was impeding their commerce so as to get a monopoly for herself.

Meanwhile Marie of Durazzo had joined her sister. After her husband's death she had found means to take refuge in the convent of Santa Croce with her two little daughters; and while Louis of Hungary was busy burning his victims, the unhappy Marie had contrived to make her escape in the frock of an old monk, and as by a miracle to get on board a ship that was setting sail for Provence. She related to her sister the frightful details of the king's cruelty. And soon a new proof of his implacable hatred confirmed the tales of the poor princess.

Louis's ambassadors appeared at the court of Avignon to demand formally the queen's condemnation.

It was a great day when Joan of Naples pleaded her own cause before the pope, in the presence of all the cardinals then at Avignon, all the ambassadors of foreign powers, and all the eminent persons come from every quarter of Europe to be present at this trial, unique in the annals of history. We must imagine a vast enclosure, in whose midst upon a raised throne, as president of the august tribunal, sat God's vicar on earth, absolute and supreme judge, emblem of temporal and spiritual power, of authority human and divine. To right and left of the sovereign pontiff, the cardinals in their red robes sat in chairs set round in a circle, and behind these princes of the Sacred College stretched rows of bishops extending to the end of the hall, with vicars, canons, deacons, archdeacons, and the whole immense hierarchy of the Church. Facing the pontifical throne was a platform reserved for the Queen of Naples and her suite. At the pope's feet stood the ambassadors from the King of Hungary, who played the part of accusers without speaking a word, the circumstances of the crime and all the proofs

having been discussed beforehand by a committee appointed for the purpose. The rest of the hall was filled by a brilliant crowd of high dignitaries, illustrious captains, and noble envoys, all vying with one another in proud display. Everyone ceased to breathe, all eyes were fixed on the dais whence Joan was to speak her own defence. A movement of uneasy curiosity made this compact mass of humanity surge towards the centre, the cardinals above raised like proud peacocks over a golden harvest-field shaken in the breeze.

The queen appeared, hand in hand with her uncle, the old Cardinal of Perigord, and her aunt, the Countess Agnes. Her gait was so modest and proud, her countenance so melancholy and pure, her looks so open and confident, that even before she spoke every heart was hers. Joan was now twenty years of age; her magnificent beauty was fully developed, but an extreme pallor concealed the brilliance of her transparent satin skin, and her hollow cheek told the tale of expiation and suffering. Among the spectators who looked on most eagerly there was a certain young man with strongly marked features, glowing eyes, and brown hair, whom we shall meet again later on in our narrative; but we will not divert our readers' attention, but only tell them that his name was James of Aragon, that he was Prince of Majorca, and would have been ready to shed every drop of his blood only to check one single tear that hung on Joan's eyelids. The queen spoke in an agitated, trembling voice, stopping from time to time to dry her moist and shining eyes, or to breathe one of those deep sighs that go straight to the heart. She told the tale of her husband's death painfully and vividly, painted truthfully the mad terror that had seized upon her and struck her down at that frightful time, raised her hands to her brow with the gesture of despair, as though she would wrest the madness from her brain-and a shudder of pity and awe passed through the assembled crowd. It is a fact that at this moment, if her words were false, her anguish was both sincere and terrible. An angel soiled by crime, she lied like Satan himself, but like him too she suffered all the agony of remorse and pride. Thus, when at the end of her speech she burst into tears and implored help and protection against the usurper of her kingdom, a cry of general assent drowned her closing words, several hands flew to their sword-hilts, and the Hungarian ambassadors retired covered with shame and confusion.

That same evening the sentence, to the great joy of all, was proclaimed, that Joan was innocent and acquitted of all concern in the assassination of her husband. But as her conduct after the event and the indifference she had shown about pursuing the authors of the crime admitted of no valid excuse, the pope declared that there were plain traces of magic, and that the wrong-doing attributed to Joan

was the result of some baneful charm cast upon her, which she could by no possible means resist. At the same time, His Holiness confirmed her marriage with Louis of Tarentum, and bestowed on him the order of the Rose of Gold and the title of King of Sicily and Jerusalem. Joan, it is true, had on the eve of her acquittal sold the town of Avignon to the pope for the sum of 80,000 florins.

While the queen was pleading her cause at the court of Clement VI, a dreadful epidemic, called the Black Plague—the same that Boccaccio has described so wonderfully—was ravaging the kingdom of Naples, and indeed the whole of Italy. According to the calculation of Matteo Villani, Florence lost three-fifths of her population, Bologna two-thirds, and nearly all Europe was reduced in some such frightful proportion. The Neapolitans were already weary of the cruelties and greed of the Hungarians, they were only awaiting some opportunity to revolt against the stranger's oppression, and to recall their lawful sovereign, whom, for all her ill deeds, they had never ceased to love. The attraction of youth and beauty was deeply felt by this pleasure-loving people. Scarcely had the pestilence thrown confusion into the army and town, when loud cursing arose against the tyrant and his executioners. Louis of Hungary, suddenly threatened by the, wrath of Heaven and the people's vengeance, was terrified both by the plague and by the riots, and disappeared in the middle of the night. Leaving the government of Naples in the hands of Conrad Lupo, one of his captains, he embarked hastily at Berletta, and left the kingdom in very much the same way as Louis of Tarentum, fleeing from him, had left it a few months before.

This news arrived at Avignon just when the pope was about to send the queen his bull of absolution. It was at once decided to take away the kingdom from Louis's viceroy. Nicholas Aeciajuoli left for Naples with the marvellous bull that was to prove to all men the innocence of the queen, to banish all scruples and stir up a new enthusiasm. The counsellor first went to the castle of Melzi, commanded by his son Lorenzo: this was the only fortress that had always held out. The father and son embraced with the honourable pride that near relatives may justly feel when they meet after they have united in the performance of a heroic duty. From the governor of Melzi Louis of Tarentum's counsellor learned that all men were wearied of the arrogance and vexatious conduct of the queen's enemies, and that a conspiracy was in train, started in the University of Naples, but with vast ramifications all over the kingdom, and moreover that there was dissension in the enemy's army. The indefatigable counsellor went from Apulia to Naples, traversing towns and villages, collecting men everywhere, proclaiming loudly the acquittal of the queen and her marriage with Louis of Tarentum, also that the

pope was offering indulgences to such as would receive with joy their lawful sovereigns. Then seeing that the people shouted as he went by, "Long live Joan! Death to the Hungarians!" he returned and told his sovereigns in what frame of mind he had left their subjects.

Joan borrowed money wherever she could, armed galleys, and left Marseilles with her husband, her sister, and two faithful advisers, Acciajuoli and Spinelli, on the 10th of September 1348. The king and queen not being able to enter at the harbour, which was in the enemy's power, disembarked at Santa Maria del Carmine, near the river Sebeto, amid the frenzied applause of an immense crowd, and accompanied by all the Neapolitan nobles. They made their way to the palace of Messire Ajutorio, near Porta Capuana, the Hungarians having fortified themselves in all the castles; but Acciatjuoli, at the head of the queen's partisans, blockaded the fortresses so ably that half of the enemy were obliged to surrender, and the other half took to flight and were scattered about the interior of the kingdom. We shall now follow Louis of Tarentum in his arduous adventures in Apulia, the Calabrias, and the Abruzzi, where he recovered one by one the fortresses that the Hungarians had taken. By dint of unexampled valour and patience, he at last mastered nearly all the more considerable places, when suddenly everything changed, and fortune turned her back upon him for the second time. A German captain called Warner, who had deserted the Hungarian army to sell himself to the queen, had again played the traitor and sold himself once more, allowed himself to be surprised at Corneto by Conrad Lupo, the King of Hungary's vicar-general, and openly joined him, taking along with him a great party of the adventurers who fought under his orders. This unexpected defection forced Louis of Tarentum to retire to Naples. The King of Hungary soon learning that the troops had rallied round his banner, and only awaited his return to march upon the capital, disembarked with a strong reinforcement of cavalry at the port of Manfredonia, and taking Trani, Canosa, and Salerno, went forward to lay siege to Aversa.

The news fell like a thunderclap on Joan and her husband. The Hungarian army consisted of 10,000 horse and more than 7000 infantry, and Aversa had only 500 soldiers under Giacomo Pignatelli. In spite of the immense disproportion of the numbers, the Neapolitan general vigorously repelled the attack; and the King of Hungary, fighting in the front, was wounded in his foot by an arrow. Then Louis, seeing that it would be difficult to take the place by storm, determined to starve them out. For three months the besieged performed prodigies of valour, and further assistance was impossible. Their capitulation was expected at any

moment, unless indeed they decided to perish every man. Renaud des Baux, who was to come from Marseilles with a squadron of ten ships to defend the ports of the capital and secure the queen's flight, should the Hungarian army get possession of Naples, had been delayed by adverse winds and obliged to stop on the way. All things seemed to conspire in favour of the enemy. Louis of Tarentum, whose generous soul refused to shed the blood of his brave men in an unequal and desperate struggle, nobly sacrificed himself, and made an offer to the King of Hungary to settle their quarrel in single combat. We append the authentic letters that passed between Joan's husband and Andre's brother.

“Illustrious King of Hungary, who has come to invade our kingdom, we, by the grace of God King of Jerusalem and Sicily, invite you to single combat. We know that you are in no wise disturbed by the death of your lancers or the other pagans in your suite, no more indeed than if they were dogs; but we, fearing harm to our own soldiers and men-at-arms, desire to fight with you personally, to put an end to the present war and restore peace to our kingdom. He who survives shall be king. And therefore, to ensure that this duel shall take place, we definitely propose as a site either Paris, in the presence of the King of France, or one of the towns of Perugia, Avignon, or Naples. Choose one of these four places, and send us your reply.”

The King of Hungary first consulted with his council, and then replied:—

“Great King, we have read and considered your letter sent to us by the bearer of these presents, and by your invitation to a duel we are most supremely pleased; but we do not approve of any of the places you propose, since they are all suspect, and for several reasons. The King of France is your maternal grandfather, and although we are also connected by blood with him, the relationship is not so near. The town of Avignon, although nominally belonging to the sovereign pontiff, is the capital of Provence, and has always been subject to your rule. Neither have we any more confidence in Perugia, for that town is devoted to your cause.

“As to the city of Naples, there is no need to say that we refuse that rendezvous, since it is in revolt against us and you are there as king. But if you wish to fight with us, let it be in the presence of the Emperor of Germany, who is lord supreme, or the King of England, who is our common friend, or the Patriarch of Aquilea, a good Catholic. If you do not approve of any of the places we propose, we shall soon be near you with our army, and so remove all difficulties and

delays. Then you can come forth, and our duel can take place in the presence of both armies.”

After the interchange of these two letters, Louis of Tarentum proposed nothing further. The garrison at Aversa had capitulated after a heroic resistance, and it was known only too well that if the King of Hungary could get so far as the walls of Naples, he would not have to endanger his life in order to seize that city. Happily the Provençal galleys had reached port at last. The king and the queen had only just time to embark and take refuge at Gaeta. The Hungarian army arrived at Naples. The town was on the point of yielding, and had sent messengers to the king humbly demanding peace; but the speeches of the Hungarians showed such insolence that the people, irritated past endurance, took up arms, and resolved to defend their household gods with all the energy of despair.

CHAPTER VIII

While the Neapolitans were holding out against their enemy at the Porta Capuana, a strange scene was being enacted at the other side of the town, a scene that shows us in lively colours the violence and treachery of this barbarous age. The widow of Charles of Durazzo was shut up in, the castle of Ovo, and awaiting in feverish anxiety the arrival of the ship that was to take her to the queen. The poor Princess Marie, pressing her weeping children to her heart, pale, with dishevelled locks, fixed eyes, and drawn lips, was listening for every sound, distracted between hope and fear. Suddenly steps resounded along the corridor, a friendly voice was heard, Marie fell upon her knees with a cry of joy: her liberator had come.

Renaud des Baux, admiral of the Provençal squadron, respectfully advanced, followed by his eldest son Robert and his chaplain.

“God, I thank Thee!” exclaimed Marie, rising to her feet; “we are saved.”

“One moment, madam,” said Renaud, stopping her: “you are indeed saved, but upon one condition.”

“A condition?” murmured the princess in surprise.

“Listen, madam. The King of Hungary, the avenger of Andre’s murderers, the slayer of your husband, is at the gates of Naples; the people and soldiers will succumb, as soon as their last gallant effort is spent—the army of the conqueror is about to spread desolation and death throughout the city by fire and the sword. This time the Hungarian butcher will spare no victims: he will kill the mother before her children’s eyes, the children in their mother’s arms. The drawbridge of this castle is up and there are none on guard; every man who can wield a sword is now at the other end of the town. Woe to you, Marie of Durazzo, if the King of Hungary shall remember that you preferred his rival to him!”

“But have you not come here to save me?” cried Marie in a voice of anguish.

“Joan, my sister, did she not command you to take me to her?”

“Your sister is no longer in the position to give orders,” replied Renaud, with a disdainful smile. “She had nothing for me but thanks because I saved her life,

and her husband's too, when he fled like a coward before the man whom he had dared to challenge to a duel."

Marie looked fixedly at the admiral to assure herself that it was really he who thus arrogantly talked about his masters. But she was terrified at his imperturbable expression, and said gently—

"As I owe my life and my children's lives solely to your generosity, I am grateful to you beyond all measure. But we must hurry, my lord: every moment I fancy I hear cries of vengeance, and you would not leave, me now a prey to my brutal enemy?"

"God forbid, madam; I will save you at the risk of my life; but I have said already, I impose a condition."

"What is it?" said Marie, with forced calm.

"That you marry my son on the instant, in the presence of our reverend chaplain."

"Rash man!" cried Marie, recoiling, her face scarlet with indignation and shame; "you dare to speak thus to the sister of your legitimate sovereign? Give thanks to God that I will pardon an insult offered, as I know, in a moment of madness; try by your devotion to make me forget what you have said."

The count, without one word, signed to his son and a priest to follow, and prepared to depart. As he crossed the threshold Marie ran to him, and clasping her hands, prayed him in God's name never to forsake her. Renaud stopped.

"I might easily take my revenge," he said, "for your affront when you refuse my son in your pride; but that business I leave to Louis of Hungary, who will acquit himself, no doubt, with credit."

"Have mercy on my poor daughters!" cried the princess; "mercy at least for my poor babes, if my own tears cannot move you."

"If you loved your children," said the admiral, frowning, "you would have done your duty at once."

"But I do not love your son!" cried Marie, proud but trembling. "O God, must a

wretched woman's heart be thus trampled? You, father, a minister of truth and justice, tell this man that God must not be called on to witness an oath dragged from the weak and helpless!"

She turned to the admiral's son; and added, sobbing—

"You are young, perhaps you have loved: one day no doubt you will love. I appeal to your loyalty as a young man, to your courtesy as a knight, to all your noblest impulses; join me, and turn your father away from his fatal project. You have never seen me before: you do not know but that in my secret heart I love another. Your pride should be revolted at the sight of an unhappy woman casting herself at your feet and imploring your favour and protection. One word from you, Robert, and I shall bless you every moment of my life: the memory of you will be graven in my heart like the memory of a guardian angel, and my children shall name you nightly in their prayers, asking God to grant your wishes. Oh, say, will you not save me? Who knows, later on I may love you—with real love."

"I must obey my father," Robert replied, never lifting his eyes to the lovely suppliant.

The priest was silent. Two minutes passed, and these four persons, each absorbed in his own thoughts, stood motionless as statues carved at the four corners of a tomb. Marie was thrice tempted to throw herself into the sea. But a confused distant sound suddenly struck upon her ears: little by little it drew nearer, voices were more distinctly heard; women in the street were uttering cries of distress—

"Fly, fly! God has forsaken us; the Hungarians are in the town!"

The tears of Marie's children were the answer to these cries; and little Margaret, raising her hands to her mother, expressed her fear in speech that was far beyond her years. Renaud, without one look at this touching picture, drew his son towards the door.

"Stay," said the princess, extending her hand with a solemn gesture: "as God sends no other aid to my children, it is His will that the sacrifice be accomplished."

She fell on her knees before the priest, bending her head like a victim who offers her neck to the executioner. Robert des Baux took his place beside her, and the

priest pronounced the formula that united them for ever, consecrating the infamous deed by a sacrilegious blessing.

“All is over!” murmured Marie of Durazzo, looking tearfully on her little daughters.

“No, all is not yet over,” said the admiral harshly, pushing her towards another room; “before we leave, the marriage must be consummated.”

“O just God!” cried the princess, in a voice torn with anguish, and she fell swooning to the floor.

Renaud des Baux directed his ships towards Marseilles, where he hoped to get his son crowned Count of Provence, thanks to his strange marriage with Marie of Durazzo. But this cowardly act of treason was not to go unpunished. The wind rose with fury, and drove him towards Gaeta, where the queen and her husband had just arrived. Renaud bade his sailors keep in the open, threatening to throw any man into the sea who dared to disobey him. The crew at first murmured; soon cries of mutiny rose on every side. The admiral, seeing he was lost, passed from threats to prayers. But the princess, who had recovered her senses at the first thunderclap, dragged herself up to the bridge and screamed for help,

“Come to me, Louis! Come, my barons! Death to the cowardly wretches who have outraged my honour!”

Louis of Tarentum jumped into a boat, followed by some ten of his bravest men, and, rowing rapidly, reached the ship. Then Marie told him her story in a word, and he turned upon the admiral a lightning glance, as though defying him to make any defence.

“Wretch!” cried the king, transfixing the traitor with his sword.

Then he had the son loaded with chains, and also the unworthy priest who had served as accomplice to the admiral, who now expiated his odious crime by death. He took the princess and her children in his boat, and reentered the harbour.

The Hungarians, however, forcing one of the gates of Naples, marched triumphant to Castel Nuovo. But as they were crossing the Piazza delle Correggie, the Neapolitans perceived that the horses were so weak and the men

so reduced by all they had undergone during the siege of Aversa that a mere puff of wind would dispense this phantom-like army. Changing from a state of panic to real daring, the people rushed upon their conquerors, and drove them outside the walls by which they had just entered. The sudden violent reaction broke the pride of the King of Hungary, and made him more tractable when Clement VI decided that he ought at last to interfere. A truce was concluded first from the month of February 1350 to the beginning of April 1351, and the next year this was converted into a real peace, Joan paying to the King of Hungary the sum of 300,000 florins for the expenses of the war.

After the Hungarians had gone, the pope sent a legate to crown Joan and Louis of Tarentum, and the 25th of May, the day of Pentecost, was chosen for the ceremony. All contemporary historians speak enthusiastically of this magnificent fete. Its details have been immortalised by Giotto in the frescoes of the church which from this day bore the name of L'Incoronata. A general amnesty was declared for all who had taken part in the late wars on either side, and the king and queen were greeted with shouts of joy as they solemnly paraded beneath the canopy, with all the barons of the kingdom in their train.

But the day's joy was impaired by an accident which to a superstitious people seemed of evil augury. Louis of Tarentum, riding a richly caparisoned horse, had just passed the Porta Petruccia, when some ladies looking out from a high window threw such a quantity of flowers at the king that his frightened steed reared and broke his rein. Louis could not hold him, so jumped lightly to the ground; but the crown fell at his feet and was broken into three pieces. On that very day the only daughter of Joan and Louis died.

But the king not wishing to sadden the brilliant ceremony with show of mourning, kept up the jousts and tournaments for three days, and in memory of his coronation instituted the order of 'Chevaliers du Noeud'. But from that day begun with an omen so sad, his life was nothing but a series of disillusiones. After sustaining wars in Sicily and Apulia, and quelling the insurrection of Louis of Durazzo, who ended his days in the castle of Ovo, Louis of Tarentum, worn out by a life of pleasure, his health undermined by slow disease, overwhelmed with domestic trouble, succumbed to an acute fever on the 5th of June 1362, at the age of forty-two. His body had not been laid in its royal tomb at Saint Domenico before several aspirants appeared to the hand of the queen.

One was the Prince of Majorca, the handsome youth we have already spoken of:

he bore her off triumphant over all rivals, including the son of the King of France. James of Aragon had one of those faces of melancholy sweetness which no woman can resist. Great troubles nobly borne had thrown as it were a funereal veil over his youthful days: more than thirteen years he had spent shut in an iron cage; when by the aid of a false key he had escaped from his dreadful prison, he wandered from one court to another seeking aid; it is even said that he was reduced to the lowest degree of poverty and forced to beg his bread. The young stranger's beauty and his adventures combined had impressed both Joan and Marie at the court of Avignon. Marie especially had conceived a violent passion for him, all the more so for the efforts she made to conceal it in her own bosom. Ever since James of Aragon came to Naples, the unhappy princess, married with a dagger at her throat, had desired to purchase her liberty at the expense of crime. Followed by four armed men, she entered the prison where Robert des Baux was still suffering for a fault more his father's than his own. Marie stood before the prisoner, her arms crossed, her cheeks livid, her lips trembling. It was a terrible interview. This time it was she who threatened, the man who entreated pardon. Marie was deaf to his prayers, and the head of the luckless man fell bleeding at her feet, and her men threw the body into the sea. But God never allows a murder to go unpunished: James preferred the queen to her sister, and the widow of Charles of Durazzo gained nothing by her crime but the contempt of the man she loved, and a bitter remorse which brought her while yet young to the tomb.

Joan was married in turn to James of Aragon, son of the King of Majorca, and to Otho of Brunswick, of the imperial family of Saxony. We will pass rapidly over these years, and come to the denouement of this history of crime and expiation. James, parted from his wife, continued his stormy career, after a long contest in Spain with Peter the Cruel, who had usurped his kingdom: about the end of the year 1375 he died near Navarre. Otho also could not escape the Divine vengeance which hung over the court of Naples, but to the end he valiantly shared the queen's fortunes. Joan, since she had no lawful heir, adopted her nephew, Charles de la Paix (so called after the peace of Trevisa). He was the son of Louis Duras, who after rebelling against Louis of Tarentum, had died miserably in the castle of Ovo. The child would have shared his father's fate had not Joan interceded to spare his life, loaded him with kindness, and married him to Margaret, the daughter of her sister Marie and her cousin Charles, who was put to death by the King of Hungary.

Serious differences arose between the queen and one of her former subjects,

Bartolommeo Prigiani, who had become pope under the name of Urban VI. Annoyed by the queen's opposition, the pope one day angrily said he would shut her up in a convent. Joan, to avenge the insult, openly favoured Clement VII, the anti-pope, and offered him a home in her own castle, when, pursued by Pope Urban's army, he had taken refuge at Fondi. But the people rebelled against Clement, and killed the Archbishop of Naples, who had helped to elect him: they broke the cross that was carried in procession before the anti-pope, and hardly allowed him time to make his escape on shipboard to Provence. Urban declared that Joan was now dethroned, and released her subjects from their oath of fidelity to her, bestowing the crown of Sicily and Jerusalem upon Charles de la Paix, who marched on Naples with 8000 Hungarians. Joan, who could not believe in such base ingratitude, sent out his wife Margaret to meet her adopted son, though she might have kept her as a hostage, and his two children, Ladislaus and Joan, who became later the second queen of that name. But the victorious army soon arrived at the gates of Naples, and Charles blockaded the queen in her castle, forgetting in his ingratitude that she had saved his life and loved him like a mother.

Joan during the siege endured all the worst fatigues of war that any soldier has to bear. She saw her faithful friends fall around her wasted by hunger or decimated by sickness. When all food was exhausted, dead and decomposed bodies were thrown into the castle that they might pollute the air she breathed. Otho with his troops was kept at Aversa; Louis of Anjou, the brother of the King of France whom she had named as her successor when she disinherited her nephew, never appeared to help her, and the Provençal ships from Clement VII were not due to arrive until all hope must be over. Joan asked for a truce of five days, promising that, if Otho had not come to relieve her in that time, she would surrender the fortress.

On the fifth day Otho's army appeared on the side of Piedigrotta. The fight was sharp on both sides, and Joan from the top of a tower could follow with her eyes the cloud of dust raised by her husband's horse in the thickest of the battle. The victory was long uncertain: at length the prince made so bold an onset upon the royal standard, in his eagerness to meet his enemy hand to hand, that he plunged into the very middle of the army, and found himself pressed on every side. Covered with blood and sweat, his sword broken in his hand, he was forced to surrender. An hour later Charles was writing to his uncle, the King of Hungary, that Joan had fallen into his power, and he only awaited His Majesty's orders to decide her fate.

It was a fine May morning: the queen was under guard in the castle of Aversa: Otho had obtained his liberty on condition of his quitting Naples, and Louis of Anjou had at last got together an army of 50,000 men and was marching in hot haste to the conquest of the kingdom. None of this news had reached the ears of Joan, who for some days had lived in complete isolation. The spring lavished all her glory on these enchanted plains, which have earned the name of the blessed and happy country, *campagna felice*. The orange trees were covered with sweet white blossoms, the cherries laden with ruby fruit, the olives with young emerald leaves, the pomegranate feathery with red bells; the wild mulberry, the evergreen laurel, all the strong budding vegetation, needing no help from man to flourish in this spot privileged by Nature, made one great garden, here and there interrupted by little hidden runlets. It was a forgotten Eden in this corner of the world. Joan at her window was breathing in the perfumes of spring, and her eyes misty with tears rested on a bed of flowery verdure a light breeze, keen and balmy, blew upon her burning brow and offered a grateful coolness to her damp and fevered cheeks. Distant melodious voices, refrains of well-known songs, were all that disturbed the silence of the poor little room, the solitary nest where a life was passing away in tears and repentance, a life the most brilliant and eventful of a century of splendour and unrest.

The queen was slowly reviewing in her mind all her life since she ceased to be a child—fifty years of disillusionment and suffering. She thought first of her happy, peaceful childhood, her grandfather's blind affection, the pure joys of her days of innocence, the exciting games with her little sister and tall cousins. Then she shuddered at the earliest thought of marriage, the constraint, the loss of liberty, the bitter regrets; she remembered with horror the deceitful words murmured in her ear, designed to sow the seeds of corruption and vice that were to poison her whole life. Then came the burning memories of her first love, the treachery and desertion of Robert of Cabane, the moments of madness passed like a dream in the arms of Bertrand of Artois—the whole drama up to its tragic denouement showed as in letters of fire on the dark background of her sombre thoughts. Then arose cries of anguish in her soul, even as on that terrible fatal night she heard the voice of Andre asking mercy from his murderers. A long deadly silence followed his awful struggle, and the queen saw before her eyes the carts of infamy and the torture of her accomplices. All the rest of this vision was persecution, flight, exile, remorse, punishments from God and curses from the world. Around her was a frightful solitude: husbands, lovers, kindred, friends, all were dead; all she had loved or hated in the world were now no more; her joy, pain, desire, and hope had vanished for ever. The poor queen, unable to

free herself from these visions of woe, violently tore herself away from the awful reverie, and kneeling at a prie-dieu, prayed with fervour. She was still beautiful, in spite of her extreme pallor; the noble lines of her face kept their pure oval; the fire of repentance in her great black eyes lit them up with superhuman brilliance, and the hope of pardon played in a heavenly smile upon her lips.

Suddenly the door of the room where Joan was so earnestly praying opened with a dull sound: two Hungarian barons in armour entered and signed to the queen to follow them. Joan arose silently and obeyed; but a cry of pain went up from her heart when she recognised the place where both Andre and Charles of Durazzo had died a violent death. But she collected her forces, and asked calmly why she was brought hither. For all answer, one of the men showed her a cord of silk and gold....

“May the will of a just God be done!” cried Joan, and fell upon her knees. Some minutes later she had ceased to suffer.

This was the third corpse that was thrown over the balcony at Aversa.

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of “JOAN OF NAPLES” From
CELEBRATED CRIMES, VOL. 6 by Alexander Dumas, Pere

THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK [An Esssay]

By Alexandre Dumas

ETEXT EDITORS NOTE:

We place little credence in a “story”—perhaps, a bit more faith in “his-story”. Dumas (Pere) has given us some of the world’s finest “stories”, and as in this short monograph on “The Man in the Iron Mask,” some very well documented “history.” He concluded 150 years ago that these events were a mystery and now 300 years from the era of Louis XIV—they remain so. Many historians from Voltaire down through other famous authorities have given us the final answer to

this puzzle. But history students should keep always in mind the words of the revered historian Will Durant:

“If you believe history—and you must not.....”

D.W.

This is the essay entitled The Man in the Iron Mask, not the novel [The Man in the Iron Mask [The Novel] Dumas #28[nmaskxxx.xxx]2759]

THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK

For nearly one hundred years this curious problem has exercised the imagination of writers of fiction—and of drama, and the patience of the learned in history. No subject is more obscure and elusive, and none more attractive to the general mind. It is a legend to the meaning of which none can find the key and yet in which everyone believes. Involuntarily we feel pity at the thought of that long captivity surrounded by so many extraordinary precautions, and when we dwell on the mystery which enveloped the captive, that pity is not only deepened but a kind of terror takes possession of us. It is very likely that if the name of the hero of this gloomy tale had been known at the time, he would now be forgotten. To give him a name would be to relegate him at once to the ranks of those commonplace offenders who quickly exhaust our interest and our tears. But this being, cut off from the world without leaving any discoverable trace, and whose disappearance apparently caused no void—this captive, distinguished among captives by the unexampled nature of his punishment, a prison within a prison, as if the walls of a mere cell were not narrow enough, has come to typify for us the sum of all the human misery and suffering ever inflicted by unjust tyranny.

Who was the Man in the Mask? Was he rapt away into this silent seclusion from the luxury of a court, from the intrigues of diplomacy, from the scaffold of a traitor, from the clash of battle? What did he leave behind? Love, glory, or a throne? What did he regret when hope had fled? Did he pour forth imprecations and curses on his tortures and blaspheme against high Heaven, or did he with a

sigh possess his soul in patience?

The blows of fortune are differently received according to the different characters of those on whom they fall; and each one of us who in imagination threads the subterranean passages leading to the cells of Pignerol and Exilles, and incarcerates himself in the Iles Sainte-Marguerite and in the Bastille, the successive scenes of that long-protracted agony will give the prisoner a form shaped by his own fancy and a grief proportioned to his own power of suffering. How we long to pierce the thoughts and feel the heartbeats and watch the trickling tears behind that machine-like exterior, that impassible mask! Our imagination is powerfully excited by the dumbness of that fate borne by one whose words never reached the outward air, whose thoughts could never be read on the hidden features; by the isolation of forty years secured by twofold barriers of stone and iron, and she clothes the object of her contemplation in majestic splendour, connects the mystery which enveloped his existence with mighty interests, and persists in regarding the prisoner as sacrificed for the preservation of some dynastic secret involving the peace of the world and the stability of a throne.

And when we calmly reflect on the whole case, do we feel that our first impulsively adopted opinion was wrong? Do we regard our belief as a poetical illusion? I do not think so; on the contrary, it seems to me that our good sense approves our fancy's flight. For what can be more natural than the conviction that the secret of the name, age, and features of the captive, which was so perseveringly kept through long years at the cost of so much care, was of vital importance to the Government? No ordinary human passion, such as anger, hate, or vengeance, has so dogged and enduring a character; we feel that the measures taken were not the expression of a love of cruelty, for even supposing that Louis XIV were the most cruel of princes, would he not have chosen one of the thousand methods of torture ready to his hand before inventing a new and strange one? Moreover, why did he voluntarily burden himself with the obligation of surrounding a prisoner with such numberless precautions and such sleepless vigilance? Must he not have feared that in spite of it all the walls behind which he concealed the dread mystery would one day let in the light? Was it not through his entire reign a source of unceasing anxiety? And yet he respected the life of the captive whom it was so difficult to hide, and the discovery of whose identity would have been so dangerous. It would have been so easy to bury the secret in an obscure grave, and yet the order was never given. Was this an expression of hate, anger, or any other passion? Certainly not; the

conclusion we must come to in regard to the conduct of the king is that all the measures he took against the prisoner were dictated by purely political motives; that his conscience, while allowing him to do everything necessary to guard the secret, did not permit him to take the further step of putting an end to the days of an unfortunate man, who in all probability was guilty of no crime.

Courtiers are seldom obsequious to the enemies of their master, so that we may regard the respect and consideration shown to the Man in the Mask by the governor Saint-Mars, and the minister Louvois, as a testimony, not only to his high rank, but also to his innocence.

For my part, I make no pretensions to the erudition of the bookworm, and I cannot read the history of the Man in the Iron Mask without feeling my blood boil at the abominable abuse of power—the heinous crime of which he was the victim.

A few years ago, M. Fournier and I, thinking the subject suitable for representation on the stage, undertook to read, before dramatising it, all the different versions of the affair which had been published up to that time. Since our piece was successfully performed at the Odeon two other versions have appeared: one was in the form of a letter addressed to the Historical Institute by M. Billiard, who upheld the conclusions arrived at by Soulavie, on whose narrative our play was founded; the other was a work by the bibliophile Jacob, who followed a new system of inquiry, and whose book displayed the results of deep research and extensive reading. It did not, however, cause me to change my opinion. Even had it been published before I had written my drama, I should still have adhered to the idea as to the most probable solution of the problem which I had arrived at in 1831, not only because it was incontestably the most dramatic, but also because it is supported by those moral presumptions which have such weight with us when considering a dark and doubtful question like the one before us. It will, be objected, perhaps, that dramatic writers, in their love of the marvellous and the pathetic, neglect logic and strain after effect, their aim being to obtain the applause of the gallery rather than the approbation of the learned. But to this it may be replied that the learned on their part sacrifice a great deal to their love of dates, more or less exact; to their desire to elucidate some point which had hitherto been considered obscure, and which their explanations do not always clear up; to the temptation to display their proficiency in the ingenious art of manipulating facts and figures culled from a dozen musty volumes into one consistent whole.

Our interest in this strange case of imprisonment arises, not alone from its completeness and duration, but also from our uncertainty as to the motives from which it was inflicted. Where erudition alone cannot suffice; where bookworm after bookworm, disdaining the conjectures of his predecessors, comes forward with a new theory founded on some forgotten document he has hunted out, only to find himself in his turn pushed into oblivion by some follower in his track, we must turn for guidance to some other light than that of scholarship; especially if, on strict investigation, we find that not one learned solution rests on a sound basis of fact.

In the question before us, which, as we said before, is a double one, asking not only who was the Man in the Iron Mask, but why he was relentlessly subjected to this torture till the moment of his death, what we need in order to restrain our fancy is mathematical demonstration, and not philosophical induction.

While I do not go so far as to assert positively that Abbe Soulavie has once for all lifted the veil which hid the truth, I am yet persuaded that no other system of research is superior to his, and that no other suggested solution has so many presumptions in its favour. I have not reached this firm conviction on account of the great and prolonged success of our drama, but because of the ease with which all the opinions adverse to those of the abbe may be annihilated by pitting them one against the other.

The qualities that make for success being quite different in a novel and in a drama, I could easily have founded a romance on the fictitious loves of Buckingham and the queen, or on a supposed secret marriage between her and Cardinal Mazarin, calling to my aid a work by Saint-Mihiel which the bibliophile declares he has never read, although it is assuredly neither rare nor difficult of access. I might also have merely expanded my drama, restoring to the personages therein their true names and relative positions, both of which the exigencies of the stage had sometimes obliged me to alter, and while allowing them to fill the same parts, making them act more in accordance with historical fact. No fable however far-fetched, no grouping of characters however improbable, can, however, destroy the interest which the innumerable writings about the Iron Mask excite, although no two agree in details, and although each author and each witness declares himself in possession of complete knowledge. No work, however mediocre, however worthless even, which has appeared on this subject has ever failed of success, not even, for example, the strange jumble of Chevalier de Mouhy, a kind of literary braggart, who was in the pay of

Voltaire, and whose work was published anonymously in 1746 by Pierre de Hondt of The Hague. It is divided into six short parts, and bears the title, 'Le Masque de Fer, ou les Aventures admirables du Prere et du Fils'. An absurd romance by Regnault Warin, and one at least equally absurd by Madame Guenard, met with a like favourable reception. In writing for the theatre, an author must choose one view of a dramatic situation to the exclusion of all others, and in following out this central idea is obliged by the inexorable laws of logic to push aside everything that interferes with its development. A book, on the contrary, is written to be discussed; it brings under the notice of the reader all the evidence produced at a trial which has as yet not reached a definite conclusion, and which in the case before us will never reach it, unless, which is most improbable, some lucky chance should lead to some new discovery.

The first mention of the prisoner is to be found in the 'Memoires secrets pour servir a l'Histoire de Perse' in one 12mo volume, by an anonymous author, published by the 'Compagnie des Libraires Associes d'Amsterdam' in 1745.

"Not having any other purpose," says the author (page 20, 2nd edit.), "than to relate facts which are not known, or about which no one has written, or about which it is impossible to be silent, we refer at once to a fact which has hitherto almost escaped notice concerning Prince Giafer (Louis de Bourbon, Comte de Vermandois, son of Louis XIV and Mademoiselle de la Valliere), who was visited by Ali-Momajou (the Duc d'Orleans, the regent) in the fortress of Ispahan (the Bastille), in which he had been imprisoned for several years. This visit had probably no other motive than to make sure that this prince was really alive, he having been reputed dead of the plague for over thirty years, and his obsequies having been celebrated in presence of an entire army.

"Cha-Abas (Louis XIV) had a legitimate son, Sephi-Mirza (Louis, Dauphin of France), and a natural son, Giafer. These two princes, as dissimilar in character as in birth, were always rivals and always at enmity with each other. One day Giafer so far forgot himself as to strike Sephi-Mirza. Cha-Abas having heard of the insult offered to the heir to the throne, assembled his most trusted councillors, and laid the conduct of the culprit before them—conduct which, according to the law of the country, was punishable with death, an opinion in

which they all agreed. One of the councillors, however, sympathising more than the others with the distress of Cha-Abas, suggested that Giafer should be sent to the army, which was then on the frontiers of Feidrun (Flanders), and that his death from plague should be given out a few days after his arrival. Then, while the whole army was celebrating his obsequies, he should be carried off by night, in the greatest secrecy, to the stronghold on the isle of Ormus (Sainte-Marguerite), and there imprisoned for life.

“This course was adopted, and carried out by faithful and discreet agents. The prince, whose premature death was mourned by the army, being carried by unfrequented roads to the isle of Ormus, was placed in the custody of the commandant of the island, who, had received orders beforehand not to allow any person whatever to see the prisoner. A single servant who was in possession of the secret was killed by the escort on the journey, and his face so disfigured by dagger thrusts that he could not be recognised.

“The commandant treated his prisoner with the most profound respect; he waited on him at meals himself, taking the dishes from the cooks at the door of the apartment, none of whom ever looked on the face of Giafer. One day it occurred to the prince to scratch, his name on the back of a plate with his knife. One of the servants into whose hands the plate fell ran with it at once to the commandant, hoping he would be pleased and reward the bearer; but the unfortunate man was greatly mistaken, for he was at once made away with, that his knowledge of such an important secret might be buried with himself.

“Giafer remained several years in the castle Ormus, and was then transported to the fortress of Ispahan; the commandant of Ormus having received the governorship of Ispahan as a reward for faithful service.

“At Ispahan, as at Ormus, whenever it was necessary on account of illness or any other cause to allow anyone to approach the prince, he was always masked; and several trustworthy persons have asserted that they had seen the masked prisoner often, and had noticed that he used the familiar ‘tu’ when addressing the governor, while the latter showed his charge the greatest respect. “As Giafer survived Cha-Abas and Sephi-Mirza by many years, it may be asked why he was never set at liberty; but it must be remembered it would have been impossible to restore a prince to his rank and dignities whose tomb actually existed, and of whose burial there were not only living witnesses but documentary proofs, the authenticity of which it would have been useless to deny, so firm was the belief,

which has lasted down to the present day, that Giafer died of the plague in camp when with the army on the frontiers of Flanders. Ali-Homajou died shortly after the visit he paid to Giafer.”

This version of the story, which is the original source of all the controversy on the subject, was at first generally received as true. On a critical examination it fitted in very well with certain events which took place in the reign of Louis XIV.

The Comte de Vermandois had in fact left the court for the camp very soon after his reappearance there, for he had been banished by the king from his presence some time before for having, in company with several young nobles, indulged in the most reprehensible excesses.

“The king,” says Mademoiselle de Montpensier (‘Memoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier’, vol. xliii. p. 474., of ‘Memoires Relatifs d’Histoire de France’, Second Series, published by Petitot), “had not been satisfied with his conduct and refused to see him. The young prince had caused his mother much sorrow, but had been so well lectured that it was believed that he had at last turned over a new leaf.” He only remained four days at court, reached the camp before Courtrai early in November 1683, was taken ill on the evening of the 12th, and died on the 19th of the same month of a malignant fever. Mademoiselle de Montpensier says that the Comte de Vermandois “fell ill from drink.”

There are, of course, objections of all kinds to this theory.

For if, during the four days the comte was at court, he had struck the dauphin, everyone would have heard of the monstrous crime, and yet it is nowhere spoken of, except in the ‘Memoires de Perse’. What renders the story of the blow still more improbable is the difference in age between the two princes. The dauphin, who already had a son, the Duc de Bourgogne, more than a year old, was born the 1st November 1661, and was therefore six years older than the Comte de Vermandois. But the most complete answer to the tale is to be found in a letter written by Barbezieux to Saint-Mars, dated the 13th August 1691:—

“When you have any information to send me relative to the prisoner who has

been in your charge for twenty years, I most earnestly enjoin on you to take the same precautions as when you write to M. de Louvois.”

The Comte de Vermandois, the official registration of whose death bears the date 1685, cannot have been twenty years a prisoner in

1691.

Six years after the Man in the Mask had been thus delivered over to the curiosity of the public, the ‘Siccle de Louis XIV’ (2 vols. octavo, Berlin, 1751) was published by Voltaire under the pseudonym of M. de Francheville. Everyone turned to this work, which had been long expected, for details relating to the mysterious prisoner about whom everyone was talking.

Voltaire ventured at length to speak more openly of the prisoner than anyone had hitherto done, and to treat as a matter of history “an event long ignored by all historians.” (vol. ii. p. 11, 1st edition, chap. xxv.). He assigned an approximate date to the beginning of this captivity, “some months after the death of Cardinal Mazarin” (1661); he gave a description of the prisoner, who according to him was “young and dark-complexioned; his figure was above the middle height and well proportioned; his features were exceedingly handsome, and his bearing was noble. When he spoke his voice inspired interest; he never complained of his lot, and gave no hint as to his rank.” Nor was the mask forgotten: “The part which covered the chin was furnished with steel springs, which allowed the prisoner to eat without uncovering his face.” And, lastly, he fixed the date of the death of the nameless captive; who “was buried,” he says, “in 1704., by night, in the parish church of Saint-Paul.”

Voltaire’s narrative coincided with the account given in the ‘Memoires de Peyse’, save for the omission of the incident which, according to the ‘Memoires’, led in the first instance to the imprisonment of Giafer. “The prisoner,” says Voltaire, “was sent to the Iles Sainte-Marguerite, and afterwards to the Bastille, in charge of a trusty official; he wore his mask on the journey, and his escort had orders to shoot him if he took it off. The Marquis de Louvois visited him while he was on the islands, and when speaking to him stood all the time in a respectful attitude. The prisoner was removed to the Bastille in 1690,

where he was lodged as comfortably as could be managed in that building; he was supplied with everything he asked for, especially with the finest linen and the costliest lace, in both of which his taste was perfect; he had a guitar to play on, his table was excellent, and the governor rarely sat in his presence.”

Voltaire added a few further details which had been given him by M. de Bernaville, the successor of M. de Saint-Mars, and by an old physician of the Bastille who had attended the prisoner whenever his health required a doctor, but who had never seen his face, although he had “often seen his tongue and his body.” He also asserted that M. de Chamillart was the last minister who was in the secret, and that when his son-in-law, Marshal de la Feuillade, besought him on his knees, de Chamillart being on his deathbed, to tell him the name of the Man in the Iron Mask, the minister replied that he was under a solemn oath never to reveal the secret, it being an affair of state. To all these details, which the marshal acknowledges to be correct, Voltaire adds a remarkable note: “What increases our wonder is, that when the unknown captive was sent to the Iles Sainte-Marguerite no personage of note disappeared from the European stage.”

The story of the Comte de Vermandois and the blow was treated as an absurd and romantic invention, which does not even attempt to keep within the bounds of the possible, by Baron C. (according to P. Marchand, Baron Crunynge) in a letter inserted in the ‘Bibliothèque raisonnée des Ouvrages des Savants de d’Europe’, June 1745. The discussion was revived somewhat later, however, and a few Dutch scholars were supposed to be responsible for a new theory founded on history; the foundations proving somewhat shaky, however,—a quality which it shares, we must say, with all the other theories which have ever been advanced.

According to this new theory, the masked prisoner was a young foreign nobleman, groom of the chambers to Anne of Austria, and the real father of Louis XIV. This anecdote appears first in a duodecimo volume printed by Pierre Marteau at Cologne in 1692, and which bears the title, ‘The Loves of Anne of Austria, Consort of Louis XIII, with M. le C. D. R., the Real Father of Louis XIV, King of France; being a Minute Account of the Measures taken to give an Heir to the Throne of France, the Influences at Work to bring this to pass, and the Denouement of the Comedy’.

This libel ran through five editions, bearing date successively, 1692, 1693, 1696, 1722, and 1738. In the title of the edition of 1696 the words “Cardinal de

Richelieu” are inserted in place of the initials “C. D. R.,” but that this is only a printer’s error everyone who reads the work will perceive. Some have thought the three letters stood for Comte de Riviere, others for Comte de Rochefort, whose ‘Memoires’ compiled by Sandras de Courtilz supply these initials. The author of the book was an Orange writer in the pay of William III, and its object was, he says, “to unveil the great mystery of iniquity which hid the true origin of Louis XIV.” He goes on to remark that “the knowledge of this fraud, although comparatively rare outside France, was widely spread within her borders. The well-known coldness of Louis XIII; the extraordinary birth of Louis-Dieudonne, so called because he was born in the twenty-third year of a childless marriage, and several other remarkable circumstances connected with the birth, all point clearly to a father other than the prince, who with great effrontery is passed off by his adherents as such. The famous barricades of Paris, and the organised revolt led by distinguished men against Louis XIV on his accession to the throne, proclaimed aloud the king’s illegitimacy, so that it rang through the country; and as the accusation had reason on its side, hardly anyone doubted its truth.”

We give below a short abstract of the narrative, the plot of which is rather skilfully constructed:—

“Cardinal Richelieu, looking with satisfied pride at the love of Gaston, Duc d’Orleans, brother of the king, for his niece Parisiatis (Madame de Combalet), formed the plan of uniting the young couple in marriage. Gaston taking the suggestion as an insult, struck the cardinal. Pere Joseph then tried to gain the cardinal’s consent and that of his niece to an attempt to deprive Gaston of the throne, which the childless marriage of Louis XIII seemed to assure him. A young man, the C. D. R. of the book, was introduced into Anne of Austria’s room, who though a wife in name had long been a widow in reality. She defended herself but feebly, and on seeing the cardinal next day said to him, “Well, you have had your wicked will; but take good care, sir cardinal, that I may find above the mercy and goodness which you have tried by many pious sophistries to convince me is awaiting me. Watch over my soul, I charge you, for I have yielded!” The queen having given herself up to love for some time, the joyful news that she would soon become a mother began to spread over the kingdom. In this manner was born Louis XIV, the putative son of Louis XIII. If this instalment of the tale be favourably received, says the pamphleteer, the

sequel will soon follow, in which the sad fate of C. D. R. will be related, who was made to pay dearly for his short-lived pleasure.”

Although the first part was a great success, the promised sequel never appeared. It must be admitted that such a story, though it never convinced a single person of the illegitimacy of Louis XIV, was an excellent prologue to the tale of the unfortunate lot of the Man in the Iron Mask, and increased the interest and curiosity with which that singular historical mystery was regarded. But the views of the Dutch scholars thus set forth met with little credence, and were soon forgotten in a new solution.

The third historian to write about the prisoner of the Iles Sainte-Marguerite was Lagrange-Chancel. He was just twenty-nine years of age when, excited by Freron's hatred of Voltaire, he addressed a letter from his country place, Antoniat, in Perigord, to the 'Annee Litteraire' (vol. iii. p. 188), demolishing the theory advanced in the 'Siecle de Louis XIV', and giving facts which he had collected whilst himself imprisoned in the same place as the unknown prisoner twenty years later.

“My detention in the Iles-Saint-Marguerite,” says Lagrange-Chancel,” brought many things to my knowledge which a more painstaking historian than M. de Voltaire would have taken the trouble to find out; for at the time when I was taken to the islands the imprisonment of the Man in the Iron Mask was no longer regarded as a state secret. This extraordinary event, which M. de Voltaire places in 1662, a few months after the death of Cardinal Mazarin, did not take place till 1669, eight years after the death of His Eminence. M. de La Motte-Guerin, commandant of the islands in my time, assured me that the prisoner was the Duc de Beaufort, who was reported killed at the siege of Candia, but whose body had never been recovered, as all the narratives of that event agree in stating. He also told me that M. de Saint-Mars, who succeeded Pignerol as governor of the islands, showed great consideration for the prisoner, that he waited on him at table, that the service was of silver, and that the clothes supplied to the prisoner were as costly as he desired; that when he was ill and in need of a physician or surgeon, he was obliged under pain of death to wear his mask in their presence, but that when he was alone he was permitted to pull out the hairs of his beard

with steel tweezers, which were kept bright and polished. I saw a pair of these which had been actually used for this purpose in the possession of M. de Formanoir, nephew of Saint-Mars, and lieutenant of a Free Company raised for the purpose of guarding the prisoners. Several persons told me that when Saint-Mars, who had been placed over the Bastille, conducted his charge thither, the latter was heard to say behind his iron mask, ‘Has the king designs on my life?’ To which Saint-Mars replied, ‘No, my prince; your life is safe: you must only let yourself be guided.’

“I also learned from a man called Dubuisson, cashier to the well-known Samuel Bernard, who, having been imprisoned for some years in the Bastille, was removed to the Iles Sainte-Marguerite, where he was confined along with some others in a room exactly over the one occupied by the unknown prisoner. He told me that they were able to communicate with him by means of the flue of the chimney, but on asking him why he persisted in not revealing his name and the cause of his imprisonment, he replied that such an avowal would be fatal not only to him but to those to whom he made it.

“Whether it were so or not, to-day the name and rank of this political victim are secrets the preservation of which is no longer necessary to the State; and I have thought that to tell the public what I know would cut short the long chain of circumstances which everyone was forging according to his fancy, instigated thereto by an author whose gift of relating the most impossible events in such a manner as to make them seem true has won for all his writings such success—even for his *Vie de Charles XII*”

This theory, according to Jacob, is more probable than any of the others.

“Beginning with the year 1664.,” he says, “the Duc de Beaufort had by his insubordination and levity endangered the success of several maritime expeditions. In October 1666 Louis XIV remonstrated with him with much tact, begging him to try to make himself more and more capable in the service of his king by cultivating the talents with which he was endowed, and ridding himself of the faults which spoilt his conduct. ‘I do not doubt,’ he concludes, ‘that you will be all the more grateful to me for this mark of my benevolence towards you, when you reflect how few kings have ever shown their goodwill in a similar manner.’” (‘*Oeuvres de Louis XIV*’, vol. v. p. 388). Several calamities in the

royal navy are known to have been brought about by the Duc de Beaufort. M. Eugene Sue, in his 'Histoire de la Marine', which is full of new and curious information, has drawn a very good picture of the position of the "roi des halles," the "king of the markets," in regard to Colbert and Louis XIV. Colbert wished to direct all the manoeuvres of the fleet from his study, while it was commanded by the naval grandmaster in the capricious manner which might be expected from his factious character and love of bluster (Eugene Sue, vol. i., 'Pieces Justificatives'). In 1699 Louis XIV sent the Duc de Beaufort to the relief of Candia, which the Turks were besieging. Seven hours after his arrival Beaufort was killed in a sortie. The Duc de Navailles, who shared with him the command of the French squadron, simply reported his death as follows: "He met a body of Turks who were pressing our troops hard: placing himself at the head of the latter, he fought valiantly, but at length his soldiers abandoned him, and we have not been able to learn his fate" ('Memoires du Duc de Navailles', book iv. P. 243)

The report of his death spread rapidly through France and Italy; magnificent funeral services were held in Paris, Rome, and Venice, and funeral orations delivered. Nevertheless, many believed that he would one day reappear, as his body had never been recovered.

Guy Patin mentions this belief, which he did not share, in two of his letters:—

"Several wagers have been laid that M. de Beaufort is not dead! 'O utinam!'" (Guy Patin, September 26, 1669).

"It is said that M. de Vivonne has been granted by commission the post of vice-admiral of France for twenty years; but there are many who believe that the Duc de Beaufort is not dead, but imprisoned in some Turkish island. Believe this who may, I don't; he is really dead, and the last thing I should desire would be to be as dead as he", (Ibid., January 14, 1670).

The following are the objections to this theory:

"In several narratives written by eye-witnesses of the siege of Candia," says Jacob, "it is related that the Turks, according to their custom, despoiled the body

and cut off the head of the Duc de Beaufort on the field of battle, and that the latter was afterwards exhibited at Constantinople; and this may account for some of the details given by Sandras de Courtilz in his 'Memoires du Marquis de Montbrun' and his 'Memoires d'Artagnan', for one can easily imagine that the naked, headless body might escape recognition. M. Eugene Sue, in his 'Histoire de la Marine' (vol. ii, chap. 6), had adopted this view, which coincides with the accounts left by Philibert de Jarry and the Marquis de Ville, the MSS. of whose letters and 'Memoires' are to be found in the Bibliotheque du Roi.

"In the first volume of the 'Histoire de la Detention des Philosophes et des Gens de Lettres a la Bastille, etc.', we find the following passage:—

"Without dwelling on the difficulty and danger of an abduction, which an Ottoman scimitar might any day during this memorable siege render unnecessary, we shall restrict ourselves to declaring positively that the correspondence of Saint-Mars from 1669 to 1680 gives us no ground for supposing that the governor of Pignerol had any great prisoner of state in his charge during that period of time, except Fouquet and Lauzun."

While we profess no blind faith in the conclusions arrived at by the learned critic, we would yet add to the considerations on which he relies another, viz. that it is most improbable that Louis XIV should ever have considered it necessary to take such rigorous measures against the Duc de Beaufort. Truculent and self-confident as he was, he never acted against the royal authority in such a manner as to oblige the king to strike him down in secret; and it is difficult to believe that Louis XIV, peaceably seated on his throne, with all the enemies of his minority under his feet, should have revenged himself on the duke as an old Frondeur.

The critic calls our attention to another fact also adverse to the theory under consideration. The Man in the Iron Mask loved fine linen and rich lace, he was reserved in character and possessed of extreme refinement, and none of this suits the portraits of the 'roi des halles' which contemporary historians have drawn.

Regarding the anagram of the name Marchiali (the name under which the death of the prisoner was registered), 'hic amiral', as a proof, we cannot think that the gaolers of Pignerol amused themselves in propounding conundrums to exercise the keen intellect of their contemporaries; and moreover the same anagram would apply equally well to the Count of Vermandois, who was made admiral

when only twenty-two months old. Abbe Papon, in his roamings through Provence, paid a visit to the prison in which the Iron Mask was confined, and thus speaks:—

“It was to the Iles Sainte-Marguerite that the famous prisoner with the iron mask whose name has never been discovered, was transported at the end of the last century; very few of those attached to his service were allowed to speak to him. One day, as M. de Saint-Mars was conversing with him, standing outside his door, in a kind of corridor, so as to be able to see from a distance everyone who approached, the son of one of the governor’s friends, hearing the voices, came up; Saint-Mars quickly closed the door of the room, and, rushing to meet the young man, asked him with an air of great anxiety if he had overheard anything that was said. Having convinced himself that he had heard nothing, the governor sent the young man away the same day, and wrote to the father that the adventure was like to have cost the son dear, and that he had sent him back to his home to prevent any further imprudence.

“I was curious enough to visit the room in which the unfortunate man was imprisoned, on the 2nd of February 1778. It is lighted by one window to the north, overlooking the sea, about fifteen feet above the terrace where the sentries paced to and fro. This window was pierced through a very thick wall and the embrasure barricaded by three iron bars, thus separating the prisoner from the sentries by a distance of over two fathoms. I found an officer of the Free Company in the fortress who was nigh on fourscore years old; he told me that his father, who had belonged to the same Company, had often related to him how a friar had seen something white floating on the water under the prisoner’s window. On being fished out and carried to M. de Saint-Mars, it proved to be a shirt of very fine material, loosely folded together, and covered with writing from end to end. M. de Saint-Mars spread it out and read a few words, then turning to the friar who had brought it he asked him in an embarrassed manner if he had been led by curiosity to read any of the, writing. The friar protested repeatedly that he had not read a line, but nevertheless he was found dead in bed two days later. This incident was told so often to my informant by his father and by the chaplain of the fort of that time that he regarded it as incontestably true. The following fact also appears to me to be equally well established by the testimony of many witnesses. I collected all the evidence I could on the spot, and also in the Lerins monastery, where the tradition is preserved.

“A female attendant being wanted for the prisoner, a woman of the village of

Mongin offered herself for the place, being under the impression that she would thus be able to make her children's fortune; but on being told that she would not only never be allowed to see her children again, but would be cut off from the rest of the world as well, she refused to be shut up with a prisoner whom it cost so much to serve. I may mention here that at the two outer angles of the wall of the fort which faced the sea two sentries were placed, with orders to fire on any boat which approached within a certain distance.

“The prisoner's personal attendant died in the Iles Sainte-Marguerite. The brother of the officer whom I mentioned above was partly in the confidence of M. de Saint-Mars, and he often told how he was summoned to the prison once at midnight and ordered to remove a corpse, and that he carried it on his shoulders to the burial-place, feeling certain it was the prisoner who was dead; but it was only his servant, and it was then that an effort was made to supply his place by a female attendant.”

Abbe Papon gives some curious details, hitherto unknown to the public, but as he mentions no names his narrative cannot be considered as evidence. Voltaire never replied to Lagrange-Chancel, who died the same year in which his letter was published. Freron desiring to revenge himself for the scathing portrait which Voltaire had drawn of him in the 'Ecoissaise', called to his assistance a more redoubtable adversary than Lagrange-Chancel. Sainte-Foix had brought to the front a brand new theory, founded on a passage by Hume in an article in the 'Annee Litteraire (1768, vol. iv.), in which he maintained that the Man in the Iron Mask was the Duke of Monmouth, a natural son of Charles II, who was found guilty of high treason and beheaded in London on the 15th July 1685.

This is what the English historian says:

“It was commonly reported in London that the Duke of Monmouth's life had been saved, one of his adherents who bore a striking resemblance to the duke having consented to die in his stead, while the real culprit was secretly carried off to France, there to undergo a lifelong imprisonment.”

The great affection which the English felt for the Duke of Monmouth, and his own conviction that the people only needed a leader to induce them to shake off

the yoke of James II, led him to undertake an enterprise which might possibly have succeeded had it been carried out with prudence. He landed at Lyme, in Dorset, with only one hundred and twenty men; six thousand soon gathered round his standard; a few towns declared in his favour; he caused himself to be proclaimed king, affirming that he was born in wedlock, and that he possessed the proofs of the secret marriage of Charles II and Lucy Walters, his mother. He met the Royalists on the battlefield, and victory seemed to be on his side, when just at the decisive moment his ammunition ran short. Lord Gray, who commanded the cavalry, beat a cowardly retreat, the unfortunate Monmouth was taken prisoner, brought to London, and beheaded.

The details published in the 'Siccle de Louis XIV' as to the personal appearance of the masked prisoner might have been taken as a description of Monmouth, who possessed great physical beauty. Sainte-Foix had collected every scrap of evidence in favour of his solution of the mystery, making use even of the following passage from an anonymous romance called 'The Loves of Charles II and James II, Kings of England':—

“The night of the pretended execution of the Duke of Monmouth, the king, attended by three men, came to the Tower and summoned the duke to his presence. A kind of loose cowl was thrown over his head, and he was put into a carriage, into which the king and his attendants also got, and was driven away.”

Sainte-Foix also referred to the alleged visit of Saunders, confessor to James II, paid to the Duchess of Portsmouth after the death of that monarch, when the duchess took occasion to say that she could never forgive King James for consenting to Monmouth's execution, in spite of the oath he had taken on the sacred elements at the deathbed of Charles II that he would never take his natural brother's life, even in case of rebellion. To this the priest replied quickly, “The king kept his oath.”

Hume also records this solemn oath, but we cannot say that all the historians agree on this point. 'The Universal History' by Guthrie and Gray, and the 'Histoire d'Angleterre' by Rapin, Thoyras and de Barrow, do not mention it.

“Further,” wrote Sainte-Foix, “an English surgeon called Nelaton, who frequented the Cafe Procopie, much affected by men of letters, often related that

during the time he was senior apprentice to a surgeon who lived near the Porte Saint-Antoine, he was once taken to the Bastille to bleed a prisoner. He was conducted to this prisoner's room by the governor himself, and found the patient suffering from violent headache. He spoke with an English accent, wore a gold-flowered dressing-gown of black and orange, and had his face covered by a napkin knotted behind his head."

This story does not hold water: it would be difficult to form a mask out of a napkin; the Bastille had a resident surgeon of its own as well as a physician and apothecary; no one could gain access to a prisoner without a written order from a minister, even the Viaticum could only be introduced by the express permission of the lieutenant of police.

This theory met at first with no objections, and seemed to be going to oust all the others, thanks, perhaps, to the combative and restive character of its promulgator, who bore criticism badly, and whom no one cared to incense, his sword being even more redoubtable than his pen.

It was known that when Saint-Mars journeyed with his prisoner to the Bastille, they had put up on the way at Palteau, in Champagne, a property belonging to the governor. Freron therefore addressed himself to a grand-nephew of Saint-Mars, who had inherited this estate, asking if he could give him any information about this visit. The following reply appeared in the 'Annee Litteraire (June 1768):—

"As it appears from the letter of M. de Sainte-Foix from which you quote that the Man in the Iron Mask still exercises the fancy of your journalists, I am willing to tell you all I know about the prisoner. He was known in the islands of Sainte-Marguerite and at the Bastille as 'La Tour.' The governor and all the other officials showed him great respect, and supplied him with everything he asked for that could be granted to a prisoner. He often took exercise in the yard of the prison, but never without his mask on. It was not till the 'Siecle' of M. de Voltaire appeared that I learned that the mask was of iron and furnished with springs; it may be that the circumstance was overlooked, but he never wore it except when taking the air, or when he had to appear before a stranger.

"M. de Blainvilliers, an infantry officer who was acquainted with M. de Saint-

Mars both at Pignerol and Sainte-Marguerite, has often told me that the lot of 'La Tour' greatly excited his curiosity, and that he had once borrowed the clothes and arms of a soldier whose turn it was to be sentry on the terrace under the prisoner's window at Sainte-Marguerite, and undertaken the duty himself; that he had seen the prisoner distinctly, without his mask; that his face was white, that he was tall and well proportioned, except that his ankles were too thick, and that his hair was white, although he appeared to be still in the prime of life. He passed the whole of the night in question pacing to and fro in his room. Blainvilliers added that he was always dressed in brown, that he had plenty of fine linen and books, that the governor and the other officers always stood uncovered in his presence till he gave them leave to cover and sit down, and that they often bore him company at table.

"In 1698 M. de Saint-Mars was promoted from the governorship of the Iles Sainte-Marguerite to that of the Bastille. In moving thither, accompanied by his prisoner, he made his estate of Palteau a halting-place. The masked man arrived in a litter which preceded that of M. de Saint-Mars, and several mounted men rode beside it. The peasants were assembled to greet their liege lord. M. de Saint-Mars dined with his prisoner, who sat with his back to the diningroom windows, which looked out on the court. None of the peasants whom I have questioned were able to see whether the man kept his mask on while eating, but they all noticed that M. de Saint-Mars, who sat opposite to his charge, laid two pistols beside his plate; that only one footman waited at table, who went into the antechamber to change the plates and dishes, always carefully closing the diningroom door behind him. When the prisoner crossed the courtyard his face was covered with a black mask, but the peasants could see his lips and teeth, and remarked that he was tall, and had white hair. M. de Saint-Mars slept in a bed placed beside the prisoner's. M. de Blainvilliers told me also that 'as soon as he was dead, which happened in 1704, he was buried at Saint-Paul's,' and that 'the coffin was filled with substances which would rapidly consume the body.' He added, 'I never heard that the masked man spoke with an English accent.'"

Sainte-Foix proved the story related by M. de Blainvilliers to be little worthy of belief, showing by a circumstance mentioned in the letter that the imprisoned man could not be the Duc de Beaufort; witness the epigram of Madame de Choisy, "M. de Beaufort longs to bite and can't," whereas the peasants had seen the prisoner's teeth through his mask. It appeared as if the theory of Sainte-Foix were going to stand, when a Jesuit father, named Griffet, who was confessor at the Bastille, devoted chapter xiii, of his 'Traite des differentes Sortes de Preuves

qui servent a etablis la Verite dans l'Histoire' (12mo, Liege, 1769) to the consideration of the Iron Mask. He was the first to quote an authentic document which certifies that the Man in the Iron Mask about whom there was so much disputing really existed. This was the written journal of M. du Jonca, King's Lieutenant in the Bastille in 1698, from which Pere Griffet took the following passage:—

“On Thursday, September the 8th, 1698, at three o'clock in the afternoon, M. de Saint-Mars, the new governor of the Bastille, entered upon his duties. He arrived from the islands of Sainte-Marguerite, bringing with him in a litter a prisoner whose name is a secret, and whom he had had under his charge there, and at Pignerol. This prisoner, who was always masked, was at first placed in the Bassiniere tower, where he remained until the evening. At nine o'clock p.m. I took him to the third room of the Bertaudiere tower, which I had had already furnished before his arrival with all needful articles, having received orders to do so from M. de Saint-Mars. While I was showing him the way to his room, I was accompanied by M. Rosarges, who had also arrived along with M. de Saint-Mars, and whose office it was to wait on the said prisoner, whose table is to be supplied by the governor.”

Du Jonca's diary records the death of the prisoner in the following terms:—

“Monday, 19th November 1703. The unknown prisoner, who always wore a black velvet mask, and whom M. de Saint-Mars brought with him from the Iles Sainte-Marguerite, and whom he had so long in charge, felt slightly unwell yesterday on coming back from mass. He died to-day at 10 p.m. without having a serious illness, indeed it could not have been slighter. M. Guiraut, our chaplain, confessed him yesterday, but as his death was quite unexpected he did not receive the last sacraments, although the chaplain was able to exhort him up to the moment of his death. He was buried on Tuesday the 20th November at 4 P.M. in the burial-ground of St. Paul's, our parish church. The funeral expenses amounted to 40 livres.”

His name and age were withheld from the priests of the parish. The entry made in the parish register, which Pere Griffet also gives, is in the following words:—

“On the 19th November 1703, Marchiali, aged about forty-five, died in the

Bastille, whose body was buried in the graveyard of Saint-Paul's, his parish, on the 20th instant, in the presence of M. Rosarges and of M. Reilh, Surgeon-Major of the Bastille.

“(Signed) ROSARGES. “REILH.”

As soon as he was dead everything belonging to him, without exception, was burned; such as his linen, clothes, bed and bedding, rugs, chairs, and even the doors of the room he occupied. His service of plate was melted down, the walls of his room were scoured and whitewashed, the very floor was renewed, from fear of his having hidden a note under it, or left some mark by which he could be recognised.

Pere Griffet did not agree with the opinions of either Lagrange-Chancel or Sainte-Foix, but seemed to incline towards the theory set forth in the ‘Memoires de Perse’, against which no irrefutable objections had been advanced. He concluded by saying that before arriving at any decision as to who the prisoner really was, it would be necessary to ascertain the exact date of his arrival at Pignerol.

Sainte-Foix hastened to reply, upholding the soundness of the views he had advanced. He procured from Arras a copy of an entry in the registers of the Cathedral Chapter, stating that Louis XIV had written with his own hand to the said Chapter that they were to admit to burial the body of the Comte de Vermandois, who had died in the city of Courtrai; that he desired that the deceased should be interred in the centre of the choir, in the vault in which lay the remains of Elisabeth, Comtesse de Vermandois, wife of Philip of Alsace, Comte de Flanders, who had died in 1182. It is not to be supposed that Louis XIV would have chosen a family vault in which to bury a log of wood.

Sainte-Foix was, however, not acquainted with the letter of Barbezieux, dated the 13th August 1691, to which we have already referred, as a proof that the prisoner was not the Comte de Vermandois; it is equally a proof that he was not the Duke of Monmouth, as Sainte-Foix maintained; for sentence was passed on the Duke of Monmouth in 1685, so that it could not be of him either that Barbezieux wrote in 1691, “The prisoner whom you have had in charge for twenty years.”

In the very year in which Sainte-Foix began to flatter himself that his theory was successfully established, Baron Heiss brought a new one forward, in a letter dated "Phalsburg, 28th June 1770," and addressed to the 'Journal Encyclopedique'. It was accompanied by a letter translated from the Italian which appeared in the 'Histoire Abregee de l'Europe' by Jacques Bernard, published by Claude Jordan, Leyden, 1685-87, in detached sheets. This letter stated (August 1687, article 'Mantoue') that the Duke of Mantua being desirous to sell his capital, Casale, to the King of France, had been dissuaded therefrom by his secretary, and induced to join the other princes of Italy in their endeavours to thwart the ambitious schemes of Louis XVI. The Marquis d'Arcy, French ambassador to the court of Savoy, having been informed of the secretary's influence, distinguished him by all kinds of civilities, asked him frequently to table, and at last invited him to join a large hunting party two or three leagues outside Turin. They set out together, but at a short distance from the city were surrounded by a dozen horsemen, who carried off the secretary, 'disguised him, put a mask on him, and took him to Pignerol.' He was not kept long in this fortress, as it was 'too near the Italian frontier, and although he was carefully guarded it was feared that the walls would speak'; so he was transferred to the Iles Sainte-Marguerite, where he is at present in the custody of M. de Saint-Mars.

This theory, of which much was heard later, did not at first excite much attention. What is certain is that the Duke of Mantua's secretary, by name Matthioli, was arrested in 1679 through the agency of Abbe d'Estrade and M. de Catinat, and taken with the utmost secrecy to Pignerol, where he was imprisoned and placed in charge of M. de Saint-Mars. He must not, however, be confounded with the Man in the Iron Mask.

Catinat says of Matthioli in a letter to Louvois "No one knows the name of this knave."

Louvois writes to Saint-Mars: "I admire your patience in waiting for an order to treat such a rogue as he deserves, when he treats you with disrespect."

Saint-Mars replies to the minister: "I have charged Blainvilliers to show him a cudgel and tell him that with its aid we can make the froward meek."

Again Louvois writes: "The clothes of such people must be made to last three or four years."

This cannot have been the nameless prisoner who was treated with such consideration, before whom Louvois stood bareheaded, who was supplied with fine linen and lace, and so on.

Altogether, we gather from the correspondence of Saint-Mars that the unhappy man alluded to above was confined along with a mad Jacobin, and at last became mad himself, and succumbed to his misery in 1686.

Voltaire, who was probably the first to supply such inexhaustible food for controversy, kept silence and took no part in the discussions. But when all the theories had been presented to the public, he set about refuting them. He made himself very merry, in the seventh edition of 'Questions sur l'Encyclopedie distibuees en forme de Dictionnaire (Geneva, 1791), over the complaisance attributed to Louis XIV in acting as police-sergeant and gaoler for James II, William III, and Anne, with all of whom he was at war. Persisting still in taking 1661 or 1662 as the date when the incarceration of the masked prisoner began, he attacks the opinions advanced by Lagrange-Chancel and Pere Griffet, which they had drawn from the anonymous 'Memoires secrets pour servir a l'Histoire de Perse'. "Having thus dissipated all these illusions," he says, "let us now consider who the masked prisoner was, and how old he was when he died. It is evident that if he was never allowed to walk in the courtyard of the Bastille or to see a physician without his mask, it must have been lest his too striking resemblance to someone should be remarked; he could show his tongue but not his face. As regards his age, he himself told the apothecary at the Bastille, a few days before his death, that he thought he was about sixty; this I have often heard from a son-in-law to this apothecary, M. Marsoban, surgeon to Marshal Richelieu, and afterwards to the regent, the Duc d'Orleans. The writer of this article knows perhaps more on this subject than Pere Griffet. But he has said his say."

This article in the 'Questions on the Encyclopaedia' was followed by some remarks from the pen of the publisher, which are also, however, attributed by the publishers of Kelh to Voltaire himself. The publisher, who sometimes calls himself the author, puts aside without refutation all the theories advanced, including that of Baron Heiss, and says he has come to the conclusion that the Iron Mask was, without doubt, a brother and an elder brother of Louis XIV, by a lover of the queen. Anne of Austria had come to persuade herself that hers alone was the fault which had deprived Louis XIII [the publisher of this edition overlooked the obvious typographical error of "XIV" here when he meant, and it

only makes sense, that it was XIII. D.W.] of an heir, but the birth of the Iron Mask undeceived her. The cardinal, to whom she confided her secret, cleverly arranged to bring the king and queen, who had long lived apart, together again. A second son was the result of this reconciliation; and the first child being removed in secret, Louis XIV remained in ignorance of the existence of his half-brother till after his majority. It was the policy of Louis XIV to affect a great respect for the royal house, so he avoided much embarrassment to himself and a scandal affecting the memory of Anne of Austria by adopting the wise and just measure of burying alive the pledge of an adulterous love. He was thus enabled to avoid committing an act of cruelty, which a sovereign less conscientious and less magnanimous would have considered a necessity.

After this declaration Voltaire made no further reference to the Iron Mask. This last version of the story upset that of Sainte-Foix. Voltaire having been initiated into the state secret by the Marquis de Richelieu, we may be permitted to suspect that being naturally indiscreet he published the truth from behind the shelter of a pseudonym, or at least gave a version which approached the truth, but later on realising the dangerous significance of his words, he preserved for the future complete silence.

We now approach the question whether the prince who thus became the Iron Mask was an illegitimate brother or a twin-brother of Louis XIV. The first was maintained by M. Quentin-Crawford; the second by Abbe Soulavie in his 'Memoires du Marechal Duc de Richelieu' (London, 1790). In 1783 the Marquis de Luchet, in the 'Journal des Gens du Monde' (vol. iv. No. 23, p. 282, et seq.), awarded to Buckingham the honour of the paternity in dispute. In support of this, he quoted the testimony of a lady of the house of Saint-Quentin who had been a mistress of the minister Barbezieux, and who died at Chartres about the middle of the eighteenth century. She had declared publicly that Louis XIV had consigned his elder brother to perpetual imprisonment, and that the mask was necessitated by the close resemblance of the two brothers to each other.

The Duke of Buckingham, who came to France in 1625, in order to escort Henrietta Maria, sister of Louis XIII, to England, where she was to marry the Prince of Wales, made no secret of his ardent love for the queen, and it is almost certain that she was not insensible to his passion. An anonymous pamphlet, 'La Conference du Cardinal Mazarin avec le Gazetier' (Brussels, 1649), says that she was infatuated about him, and allowed him to visit her in her room. She even permitted him to take off and keep one of her gloves, and his vanity leading him

to show his spoil, the king heard of it, and was vastly offended. An anecdote, the truth of which no one has ever denied, relates that one day Buckingham spoke to the queen with such passion in the presence of her lady-in-waiting, the Marquise de Senecey, that the latter exclaimed, "Be silent, sir, you cannot speak thus to the Queen of France!" According to this version, the Man in the Iron Mask must have been born at latest in 1637, but the mention of any such date would destroy the possibility of Buckingham's paternity; for he was assassinated at Portsmouth on September 2nd,

1628.

After the taking of the Bastille the masked prisoner became the fashionable topic of discussion, and one heard of nothing else. On the 13th of August 1789 it was announced in an article in a journal called 'Loisirs d'un Patriote francais', which was afterwards published anonymously as a pamphlet, that the publisher had seen, among other documents found in the Bastille, a card bearing the unintelligible number "64389000," and the following note: "Fouquet, arriving from Les Iles Sainte-Marguerite in an iron mask." To this there was, it was said, a double signature, viz. "XXX," superimposed on the name "Kersadion." The journalist was of opinion that Fouquet had succeeded in making his escape, but had been retaken and condemned to pass for dead, and to wear a mask henceforward, as a punishment for his attempted evasion. This tale made some impression, for it was remembered that in the Supplement to the 'Siecle de Louis XIV' it was stated that Chamillart had said that "the Iron Mask was a man who knew all the secrets of M. Fouquet." But the existence of this card was never proved, and we cannot accept the story on the unsupported word of an anonymous writer.

>From the time that restrictions on the press were removed, hardly a day passed without the appearance of some new pamphlet on the Iron Mask. Louis Dutens, in 'Correspondence interceptee' (12mo, 1789), revived the theory of Baron Heiss, supporting it by new and curious facts. He proved that Louis XIV had really ordered one of the Duke of Mantua's ministers to be carried off and imprisoned in Pignerol. Dutens gave the name of the victim as Girolamo Magni. He also quoted from a memorandum which by the wish of the Marquis de Castellane was drawn up by a certain Souchon, probably the man whom Papon questioned in 1778. This Souchon was the son of a man who had belonged to the

Free Company maintained in the islands in the time of Saint-Mars, and was seventy-nine years old. This memorandum gives a detailed account of the abduction of a minister in 1679, who is styled a “minister of the Empire,” and his arrival as a masked prisoner at the islands, and states that he died there in captivity nine years after he was carried off.

Dutens thus divests the episode of the element of the marvellous with which Voltaire had surrounded it. He called to his aid the testimony of the Duc de Choiseul, who, having in vain attempted to worm the secret of the Iron Mask out of Louis XV, begged Madame de Pompadour to try her hand, and was told by her that the prisoner was the minister of an Italian prince. At the same time that Dutens wrote, “There is no fact in history better established than the fact that the Man in the Iron Mask was a minister of the Duke of Mantua who was carried off from Turin,” M. Quentin-Crawford was maintaining that the prisoner was a son of Anne of Austria; while a few years earlier Bouche, a lawyer, in his ‘Essai sur l’Histoire de Provence’ (2 vols. 4to, 1785), had regarded this story as a fable invented by Voltaire, and had convinced himself that the prisoner was a woman. As we see, discussion threw no light on the subject, and instead of being dissipated, the confusion became ever “worse confounded.”

In 1790 the ‘Memoires du Marechal de Richelieu’ appeared. He had left his note-books, his library, and his correspondence to Soulavie. The ‘Memoires’ are undoubtedly authentic, and have, if not certainty, at least a strong moral presumption in their favour, and gained the belief of men holding diverse opinions. But before placing under the eyes of our readers extracts from them relating to the Iron Mask, let us refresh our memory by recalling two theories which had not stood the test of thorough investigation.

According to some MS. notes left by M. de Bonac, French ambassador at Constantinople in 1724, the Armenian Patriarch Arwedicks, a mortal enemy of our Church and the instigator of the terrible persecutions to which the Roman Catholics were subjected, was carried off into exile at the request of the Jesuits by a French vessel, and confined in a prison whence there was no escape. This prison was the fortress of Sainte-Marguerite, and from there he was taken to the Bastille, where he died. The Turkish Government continually clamoured for his release till 1723, but the French Government persistently denied having taken any part in the abduction.

Even if it were not a matter of history that Arwedicks went over to the Roman

Catholic Church and died a free man in Paris, as may be seen by an inspection of the certificate of his death preserved among the archives in the Foreign Office, one sentence from the note-book of M. de Bonac would be sufficient to annihilate this theory. M. de Bonac says that the Patriarch was carried off, while M. de Feriol, who succeeded M. de Chateauneuf in 1699, was ambassador at Constantinople. Now it was in 1698 that Saint-Mars arrived at the Bastille with his masked prisoner.

Several English scholars have sided with Gibbon in thinking that the Man in the Iron Mask might possibly have been Henry, the second son of Oliver Cromwell, who was held as a hostage by Louis XIV.

By an odd coincidence the second son of the Lord Protector does entirely disappear from the page of history in 1659; we know nothing of where he afterwards lived nor when he died. But why should he be a prisoner of state in France, while his elder brother Richard was permitted to live there quite openly? In the absence of all proof, we cannot attach the least importance to this explanation of the mystery.

We now come to the promised extracts from the 'Memoires du Marechal de Richelieu':

“Under the late king there was a time when every class of society was asking who the famous personage really was who went by the name of the Iron Mask, but I noticed that this curiosity abated somewhat after his arrival at the Bastille with Saint-Mars, when it began to be reported that orders had been given to kill him should he let his name be known. Saint-Mars also let it be understood that whoever found out the secret would share the same fate. This threat to murder both the prisoner and those who showed too much curiosity about him made such an impression, that during the lifetime of the late king people only spoke of the mystery below their breath. The anonymous author of 'Les Memoires de Perse', which were published in Holland fifteen years after the death of Louis XIV, was the first who dared to speak publicly of the prisoner and relate some anecdotes about him.

“Since the publication of that work, liberty of speech and the freedom of the press have made great strides, and the shade of Louis XIV having lost its terrors,

the case of the Iron Mask is freely discussed, and yet even now, at the end of my life and seventy years after the death of the king, people are still asking who the Man in the Iron Mask really was.

“This question was one I put to the adorable princess, beloved of the regent, who inspired in return only aversion and respect, all her love being given to me. As everyone was persuaded that the regent knew the name, the course of life, and the cause of the imprisonment of the masked prisoner, I, being more venturesome in my curiosity than others, tried through my princess to fathom the secret. She had hitherto constantly repulsed the advances of the Duc d’ Orleans, but as the ardour of his passion was thereby in no wise abated, the least glimpse of hope would be sufficient to induce him to grant her everything she asked; I persuaded her, therefore, to let him understand that if he would allow her to read the ‘Memoires du Masque’ which were in his possession his dearest desires would be fulfilled.

“The Duc d’ Orleans had never been known to reveal any secret of state, being unspeakably circumspect, and having been trained to keep every confidence inviolable by his preceptor Dubois, so I felt quite certain that even the princess would fail in her efforts to get a sight of the memoranda in his possession relative to the birth and rank of the masked prisoner; but what cannot love, and such an ardent love, induce a man to do?

“To reward her goodness the regent gave the documents into her hands, and she forwarded them to me next day, enclosed in a note written in cipher, which, according to the laws of historical writing, I reproduce in its entirety, vouching for its authenticity; for the princess always employed a cipher when she used the language of gallantry, and this note told me what treaty she had had to sign in order that she might obtain the documents, and the duke the desire of his heart. The details are not admissible in serious history, but, borrowing the modest language of the patriarchal time, I may say that if Jacob, before he obtained possession of the best beloved of Laban’s daughters, was obliged to pay the price twice over, the regent drove a better bargain than the patriarch. The note and the memorandum were as follows:

“2. 1. 17. 12. 9. 2. 20. 2. 1. 7. 14

20. 10. 3. 21. 1. 11. 14. 1. 15. 16. 12.

17. 14. 2. 1. 21. 11. 20. 17. 12. 9. 14.

9. 2. 8. 20. 5. 20. 2. 2. 17. 8. 1. 2. 20.

9. 21. 21. 1. 5. 12. 17. 15. 00. 14. 1. 15.

14. 12. 9. 21. 5. 12. 9. 21. 16. 20. 14.

8. 3.

“NARRATIVE OF THE BIRTH AND EDUCATION OF THE UNFORTUNATE PRINCE WHO WAS SEPARATED FROM THE WORLD BY CARDINALS RICHELIEU AND MAZARIN AND IMPRISONED BY ORDER OF LOUIS XIV.

“Drawn up by the Governor of this Prince on his deathbed.

“The unfortunate prince whom I brought up and had in charge till almost the end of my life was born on the 5th September 1638 at 8.30 o’clock in the evening, while the king was at supper. His brother, who is now on the throne, was born at noon while the king was at dinner, but whereas his birth was splendid and public, that of his brother was sad and secret; for the king being informed by the midwife that the queen was about to give birth to a second child, ordered the chancellor, the midwife, the chief almoner, the queen’s confessor, and myself to stay in her room to be witnesses of whatever happened, and of his course of action should a second child be born.

“For a long time already it had been foretold to the king that his wife would give birth to two sons, and some days before, certain shepherds had arrived in Paris, saying they were divinely inspired, so that it was said in Paris that if two dauphins were born it would be the greatest misfortune which could happen to the State. The Archbishop of Paris summoned these soothsayers before him, and ordered them to be imprisoned in Saint-Lazare, because the populace was becoming excited about them—a circumstance which filled the king with care, as he foresaw much trouble to his kingdom. What had been predicted by the soothsayers happened, whether they had really been warned by the

constellations, or whether Providence by whom His Majesty had been warned of the calamities which might happen to France interposed. The king had sent a messenger to the cardinal to tell him of this prophecy, and the cardinal had replied that the matter, must be considered, that the birth of two dauphins was not impossible, and should such a case arrive, the second must be carefully hidden away, lest in the future desiring to be king he should fight against his brother in support of a new branch of the royal house, and come at last to reign.

“The king in his suspense felt very uncomfortable, and as the queen began to utter cries we feared a second confinement. We sent to inform the king, who was almost overcome by the thought that he was about to become the father of two dauphins. He said to the Bishop of Meaux, whom he had sent for to minister to the queen, “Do not quit my wife till she is safe; I am in mortal terror.”

Immediately after he summoned us all, the Bishop of Meaux, the chancellor M. Honorat, Dame Peronete the midwife, and myself, and said to us in presence of the queen, so that she could hear, that we would answer to him with our heads if we made known the birth of a second dauphin; that it was his will that the fact should remain a state secret, to prevent the misfortunes which would else happen, the Salic Law not having declared to whom the inheritance of the kingdom should come in case two eldest sons were born to any of the kings.

“What had been foretold happened: the queen, while the king was at supper, gave birth to a second dauphin, more dainty and more beautiful than the first, but who wept and wailed unceasingly, as if he regretted to take up that life in which he was afterwards to endure such suffering. The chancellor drew up the report of this wonderful birth, without parallel in our history; but His Majesty not being pleased with its form, burned it in our presence, and the chancellor had to write and rewrite till His Majesty was satisfied. The almoner remonstrated, saying it would be impossible to hide the birth of a prince, but the king returned that he had reasons of state for all he did.

“Afterwards the king made us register our oath, the chancellor signing it first, then the queen’s confessor, and I last. The oath was also signed by the surgeon and midwife who attended on the queen, and the king attached this document to the report, taking both away with him, and I never heard any more of either. I remember that His Majesty consulted with the chancellor as to the form of the oath, and that he spoke for a long time in an undertone to the cardinal: after which the last-born child was given into the charge of the midwife, and as they were always afraid she would babble about his birth, she has told me that they

often threatened her with death should she ever mention it: we were also forbidden to speak, even to each other, of the child whose birth we had witnessed.

“Not one of us has as yet violated his oath; for His Majesty dreaded nothing so much as a civil war brought about by the two children born together, and the cardinal, who afterwards got the care of the second child into his hands, kept that fear alive. The king also commanded us to examine the unfortunate prince minutely; he had a wart above the left elbow, a mole on the right side of his neck, and a tiny wart on his right thigh; for His Majesty was determined, and rightly so, that in case of the decease of the firstborn, the royal infant whom he was entrusting to our care should take his place; wherefore he required our signmanual to the report of the birth, to which a small royal seal was attached in our presence, and we all signed it after His Majesty, according as he commanded. As to the shepherds who had foretold the double birth, never did I hear another word of them, but neither did I inquire. The cardinal who took the mysterious infant in charge probably got them out of the country.

“All through the infancy of the second prince Dame Peronete treated him as if he were her own child, giving out that his father was a great nobleman; for everyone saw by the care she lavished on him and the expense she went to, that although unacknowledged he was the cherished son of rich parents, and well cared for.

“When the prince began to grow up, Cardinal Mazarin, who succeeded Cardinal Richelieu in the charge of the prince’s education, gave him into my hands to bring up in a manner worthy of a king’s son, but in secret. Dame Peronete continued in his service till her death, and was very much attached to him, and he still more to her. The prince was instructed in my house in Burgundy, with all the care due to the son and brother of a king.

“I had several conversations with the queen mother during the troubles in France, and Her Majesty always seemed to fear that if the existence of the prince should be discovered during the lifetime of his brother, the young king, malcontents would make it a pretext for rebellion, because many medical men hold that the last-born of twins is in reality the elder, and if so, he was king by right, while many others have a different opinion.

“In spite of this dread, the queen could never bring herself to destroy the written

evidence of his birth, because in case of the death of the young king she intended to have his twin-brother proclaimed. She told me often that the written proofs were in her strong box.

“I gave the ill-starred prince such an education as I should have liked to receive myself, and no acknowledged son of a king ever had a better. The only thing for which I have to reproach myself is that, without intending it, I caused him great unhappiness; for when he was nineteen years old he had a burning desire to know who he was, and as he saw that I was determined to be silent, growing more firm the more he tormented me with questions, he made up his mind henceforward to disguise his curiosity and to make me think that he believed himself a love-child of my own. He began to call me ‘father,’ although when we were alone I often assured him that he was mistaken; but at length I gave up combating this belief, which he perhaps only feigned to make me speak, and allowed him to think he was my son, contradicting him no more; but while he continued to dwell on this subject he was meantime making every effort to find out who he really was. Two years passed thus, when, through an unfortunate piece of forgetfulness on my part, for which I greatly blame myself, he became acquainted with the truth. He knew that the king had lately sent me several messengers, and once having carelessly forgotten to lock up a casket containing letters from the queen and the cardinals, he read part and divined the rest through his natural intelligence; and later confessed to me that he had carried off the letter which told most explicitly of his birth.

“I can recall that from this time on, his manner to me showed no longer that respect for me in which I had brought him up, but became hectoring and rude, and that I could not imagine the reason of the change, for I never found out that he had searched my papers, and he never revealed to me how he got at the casket, whether he was aided by some workmen whom he did not wish to betray, or had employed other means,

“One day, however, he unguardedly asked me to show him the portraits of the late and the present king. I answered that those that existed were so poor that I was waiting till better ones were taken before having them in my house.

“This answer, which did not satisfy him, called forth the request to be allowed to go to Dijon. I found out afterwards that he wanted to see a portrait of the king which was there, and to get to the court, which was just then at Saint-Jean-de-Luz, because of the approaching marriage with the infanta; so that he might

compare himself with his brother and see if there were any resemblance between them. Having knowledge of his plan, I never let him out of my sight.

“The young prince was at this time as beautiful as Cupid, and through the intervention of Cupid himself he succeeded in getting hold of a portrait of his brother. One of the upper servants of the house, a young girl, had taken his fancy, and he lavished such caresses on her and inspired her with so much love, that although the whole household was strictly forbidden to give him anything without my permission, she procured him a portrait of the king. The unhappy prince saw the likeness at once, indeed no one could help seeing it, for the one portrait would serve equally well for either brother, and the sight produced such a fit of fury that he came to me crying out, “There is my brother, and this tells me who I am!” holding out a letter from Cardinal Mazarin which he had stolen from me, and making a great commotion in my house.

“The dread lest the prince should escape and succeed in appearing at the marriage of his brother made me so uneasy, that I sent off a messenger to the king to tell him that my casket had been opened, and asking for instructions. The king sent back word through the cardinal that we were both to be shut up till further orders, and that the prince was to be made to understand that the cause of our common misfortune was his absurd claim. I have since shared his prison, but I believe that a decree of release has arrived from my heavenly judge, and for my soul’s health and for my ward’s sake I make this declaration, that he may know what measures to take in order to put an end to his ignominious estate should the king die without children. Can any oath imposed under threats oblige one to be silent about such incredible events, which it is nevertheless necessary that posterity should know?”

Such were the contents of the historical document given by the regent to the princess, and it suggests a crowd of questions. Who was the prince’s governor? Was he a Burgundian? Was he simply a landed proprietor, with some property and a country house in Burgundy? How far was his estate from Dijon? He must have been a man of note, for he enjoyed the most intimate confidence at the court of Louis XIII, either by virtue of his office or because he was a favourite of the king, the queen, and Cardinal Richelieu. Can we learn from the list of the nobles of Burgundy what member of their body disappeared from public life along with a young ward whom he had brought up in his own house just after the

marriage of Louis XIV? Why did he not attach his signature to the declaration, which appears to be a hundred years old? Did he dictate it when so near death that he had not strength to sign it? How did it find its way out of prison? And so forth.

There is no answer to all these questions, and I, for my part, cannot undertake to affirm that the document is genuine. Abbe Soulavie relates that he one day “pressed the marshal for an answer to some questions on the matter, asking, amongst other things, if it were not true that the prisoner was an elder brother of Louis XIV born without the knowledge of Louis XIII. The marshal appeared very much embarrassed, and although he did not entirely refuse to answer, what he said was not very explanatory. He averred that this important personage was neither the illegitimate brother of Louis XIV, nor the Duke of Monmouth, nor the Comte de Vermandois, nor the Duc de Beaufort, and so on, as so many writers had asserted.” He called all their writings mere inventions, but added that almost every one of them had got hold of some true incidents, as for instance the order to kill the prisoner should he make himself known. Finally he acknowledged that he knew the state secret, and used the following words: “All that I can tell you, abbe, is, that when the prisoner died at the beginning of the century, at a very advanced age, he had ceased to be of such importance as when, at the beginning of his reign, Louis XIV shut him up for weighty reasons of state.”

The above was written down under the eyes of the marshal, and when Abbe Soulavie entreated him to say something further which, while not actually revealing the secret, would yet satisfy his questioner’s curiosity, the marshal answered, “Read M. de Voltaire’s latest writings on the subject, especially his concluding words, and reflect on them.”

With the exception of Dulaure, all the critics have treated Soulavie’s narrative with the most profound contempt, and we must confess that if it was an invention it was a monstrous one, and that the concoction of the famous note in cipher was abominable. “Such was the great secret; in order to find it out, I had to allow myself 5, 12, 17, 15, 14, 1, three times by 8, 3.” But unfortunately for those who would defend the morals of Mademoiselle de Valois, it would be difficult to traduce the character of herself, her lover, and her father, for what one knows of the trio justifies one in believing that the more infamous the conduct imputed to them, the more likely it is to be true. We cannot see the force of the objection that Louvois would not have written in the following terms to Saint-Mars in 1687 about a bastard son of Anne of Austria: “I see no objection to your

removing Chevalier de Thezut from the prison in which he is confined, and putting your prisoner there till the one you are preparing for him is ready to receive him.” And we cannot understand those who ask if Saint-Mars, following the example of the minister, would have said of a prince “Until he is installed in the prison which is being prepared for him here, which has a chapel adjoining”? Why should he have expressed himself otherwise? Does it evidence an abatement of consideration to call a prisoner a prisoner, and his prison a prison?

A certain M. de Saint-Mihiel published an 8vo volume in 1791, at Strasbourg and Paris, entitled ‘Le veritable homme, dit au MASQUE DE FER, ouvrage dans lequel on fait connaitre, sur preuves incontestables, a qui le celebre infortune dut le jour, quand et ou il naquit’. The wording of the title will give an idea of the bizarre and barbarous jargon in which the whole book is written. It would be difficult to imagine the vanity and self-satisfaction which inspire this new reader of riddles. If he had found the philosopher’s stone, or made a discovery which would transform the world, he could not exhibit more pride and pleasure. All things considered, the “incontestable proofs” of his theory do not decide the question definitely, or place it above all attempts at refutation, any more than does the evidence on which the other theories which preceded and followed his rest. But what he lacks before all other things is the talent for arranging and using his materials. With the most ordinary skill he might have evolved a theory which would have defied criticism at least as successfully, as the others, and he might have supported it by proofs, which if not incontestable (for no one has produced such), had at least moral presumption in their favour, which has great weight in such a mysterious and obscure affair, in trying to explain, which one can never leave on one side, the respect shown by Louvois to the prisoner, to whom he always spoke standing and with uncovered head.

According to M. de Saint-Mihiel, the ‘Man in the Iron Mask was a legitimate son of Anne of Austria and Mazarin’.

He avers that Mazarin was only a deacon, and not a priest, when he became cardinal, having never taken priest’s orders, according to the testimony of the Princess Palatine, consort of Philip I, Duc d’Orleans, and that it was therefore possible for him to marry, and that he did marry, Anne of Austria in secret.

“Old Madame Beauvais, principal woman of the bedchamber to the queen mother, knew of this ridiculous marriage, and as the price of her secrecy obliged the queen to comply with all her whims. To this circumstance the principal

bedchamber women owe the extensive privileges accorded them ever since in this country” (Letter of the Duchesse d’Orleans, 13th September 1713).

“The queen mother, consort of Louis XIII, had done worse than simply to fall in love with Mazarin, she had married him, for he had never been an ordained priest, he had only taken deacon’s orders. If he had been a priest his marriage would have been impossible. He grew terribly tired of the good queen mother, and did not live happily with her, which was only what he deserved for making such a marriage” (Letter of the Duchesse d’Orleans, 2nd November 1717).

“She (the queen mother) was quite easy in her conscience about Cardinal Mazarin; he was not in priest’s orders, and so could marry. The secret passage by which he reached the queen’s rooms every evening still exists in the Palais Royal” (Letter of the Duchesse d’Orleans, 2nd July 1719)

“The queen’s, manner of conducting affairs is influenced by the passion which dominates her. When she and the cardinal converse together, their ardent love for each other is betrayed by their looks and gestures; it is plain to see that when obliged to part for a time they do it with great reluctance. If what people say is true, that they are properly married, and that their union has been blessed by Pere Vincent the missioner, there is no harm in all that goes on between them, either in public or in private” (‘Requete civile contre la Conclusion de la Paix, 1649).

The Man in the Iron Mask told the apothecary in the Bastille that he thought he was about sixty years of age (‘Questions sur d’Encyclopedie’). Thus he must have been born in 1644, just at the time when Anne of Austria was invested with the royal power, though it was really exercised by Mazarin.

Can we find any incident recorded in history which lends support to the supposition that Anne of Austria had a son whose birth was kept as secret as her marriage to Mazarin?

“In 1644, Anne of Austria being dissatisfied with her apartments in the Louvre, moved to the Palais Royal, which had been left to the king by Richelieu. Shortly after taking up residence there she was very ill with a severe attack of jaundice, which was caused, in the opinion of the doctors, by worry, anxiety, and overwork, and which pulled her down greatly” (‘Memoire de Madame de Motteville, 4 vols. 12mo, Vol i. p. 194).

“This anxiety, caused by the pressure of public business, was most probably only

dwelt on as a pretext for a pretended attack of illness. Anne of Austria had no cause for worry and anxiety till 1649. She did not begin to complain of the despotism of Mazarin till towards the end of 1645” (Ibid., vol. i. pp. 272, 273).

“She went frequently to the theatre during her first year of widowhood, but took care to hide herself from view in her box.” (Ibid., vol. i. p. 342).

Abbe Soulavie, in vol. vi. of the ‘Memoires de Richelieu’, published in 1793, controverted the opinions of M. de Saint-Mihiel, and again advanced those which he had published some time before, supporting them by a new array of reasons.

The fruitlessness of research in the archives of the Bastille, and the importance of the political events which were happening, diverted the attention of the public for some years from this subject. In the year 1800, however, the ‘Magazin encyclopedique’ published (vol. vi. p. 472) an article entitled ‘Memoires sur les Problemes historiques, et la methode de les resoudre appliquee a celui qui concerne l’Homme au Masque de Fer’, signed C. D. O., in which the author maintained that the prisoner was the first minister of the Duke of Mantua, and says his name was Girolamo Magni.

In the same year an octavo volume of 142 pages was produced by M. Roux-Fazillac. It bore the title ‘Recherches historiques et critiques sur l’Homme au Masque de Fer, d’ou resultent des Notions certaines sur ce prisonnier’. These researches brought to light a secret correspondence relative to certain negotiations and intrigues, and to the abduction of a secretary of the Duke of Mantua whose name was Matthioli, and not Girolamo Magni.

In 1802 an octavo pamphlet containing 11 pages, of which the author was perhaps Baron Lerviere, but which was signed Reth, was published. It took the form of a letter to General Jourdan, and was dated from Turin, and gave many details about Matthioli and his family. It was entitled ‘Veritable Clef de l’Histoire de l’Homme au Masque de Fer’. It proved that the secretary of the Duke of Mantua was carried off, masked, and imprisoned, by order of Louis XIV in 1679, but it did not succeed in establishing as an undoubted fact that the secretary and the Man in the Iron Mask were one and the same person.

It may be remembered that M. Crawford writing in 1798 had said in his ‘Histoire de la Bastille’ (8vo, 474 pages), “I cannot doubt that the Man in the Iron Mask

was the son of Anne of Austria, but am unable to decide whether he was a twin-brother of Louis XIV or was born while the king and queen lived apart, or during her widowhood.” M. Crawford, in his ‘*Melanges d’Histoire et de Litterature tires dun Portefeuille*’ (quarto 1809, octavo 1817), demolished the theory advanced by Roux-Fazillac.

In 1825, M. Delort discovered in the archives several letters relating to Matthioli, and published his *Histoire de l’Homme au Masque de Fer* (8vo). This work was translated into English by George Agar-Ellis, and retranslated into French in 1830, under the title ‘*Histoire authentique du Prisonnier d’Etat, connu sous le Nom de Masque de Fer*’. It is in this work that the suggestion is made that the captive was the second son of Oliver Cromwell.

In 1826, M. de Taules wrote that, in his opinion, the masked prisoner was none other than the Armenian Patriarch. But six years later the great success of my drama at the Odeon converted nearly everyone to the version of which Soulavie was the chief exponent. The bibliophile Jacob is mistaken in asserting that I followed a tradition preserved in the family of the Duc de Choiseul; M. le Duc de Bassano sent me a copy made under his personal supervision of a document drawn up for Napoleon, containing the results of some researches made by his orders on the subject of the Man in the Iron Mask. The original MS., as well as that of the *Memoires du Duc de Richelieu*, were, the duke told me, kept at the Foreign Office. In 1834 the journal of the Institut historique published a letter from M. Auguste Billiard, who stated that he had also made a copy of this document for the late Comte de Montalivet, Home Secretary under the Empire.

M. Dufey (de l’Yonne) gave his ‘*Histoire de la Bastille*’ to the world in the same year, and was inclined to believe that the prisoner was a son of Buckingham.

Besides the many important personages on whom the famous mask had been placed, there was one whom everyone had forgotten, although his name had been put forward by the minister Chamillart: this was the celebrated Superintendent of Finance, Nicolas Fouquet. In 1837, Jacob, armed with documents and extracts, once more occupied himself with this Chinese puzzle on which so much ingenuity had been lavished, but of which no one had as yet got all the pieces into their places. Let us see if he succeeded better than his forerunners.

The first feeling he awakes is one of surprise. It seems odd that he should again

bring up the case of Fouquet, who was condemned to imprisonment for life in 1664, confined in Pignerol under the care of Saint-Mars, and whose death was announced (falsely according to Jacob) on March 23rd, 1680. The first thing to look for in trying to get at the true history of the Mask is a sufficient reason of state to account for the persistent concealment of the prisoner's features till his death; and next, an explanation of the respect shown him by Louvois, whose attitude towards him would have been extraordinary in any age, but was doubly so during the reign of Louis XIV, whose courtiers would have been the last persons in the world to render homage to the misfortunes of a man in disgrace with their master. Whatever the real motive of the king's anger against Fouquet may have been, whether Louis thought he arrogated to himself too much power, or aspired to rival his master in the hearts of some of the king's mistresses, or even presumed to raise his eyes higher still, was not the utter ruin, the lifelong captivity, of his enemy enough to satiate the vengeance of the king? What could he desire more? Why should his anger, which seemed slaked in 1664, burst forth into hotter flames seventeen years later, and lead him to inflict a new punishment? According to the bibliophile, the king being wearied by the continual petitions for pardon addressed to him by the superintendent's family, ordered them to be told that he was dead, to rid himself of their supplications. Colbert's hatred, says he, was the immediate cause of Fouquet's fall; but even if this hatred hastened the catastrophe, are we to suppose that it pursued the delinquent beyond the sentence, through the long years of captivity, and, renewing its energy, infected the minds of the king and his councillors? If that were so, how shall we explain the respect shown by Louvois? Colbert would not have stood uncovered before Fouquet in prison. Why should Colbert's colleague have done so?

It must, however, be confessed that of all existing theories, this one, thanks to the unlimited learning and research of the bibliophile, has the greatest number of documents with the various interpretations thereof, the greatest profusion of dates, on its side.

For it is certain—

1st, that the precautions taken when Fouquet was sent to Pignerol resembled in every respect those employed later by the custodians of the Iron Mask, both at the Iles Sainte-Marguerite and at the Bastille;

2nd, that the majority of the traditions relative to the masked prisoner might

apply to Fouquet;

3rd, that the Iron Mask was first heard of immediately after the announcement of the death of Fouquet in 1680;

4th, that there exists no irrefragable proof that Fouquet's death really occurred in the above year.

The decree of the Court of justice, dated 20th December 1664, banished Fouquet from the kingdom for life. "But the king was of the opinion that it would be dangerous to let the said Fouquet leave the country, in consideration of his intimate knowledge of the most important matters of state. Consequently the sentence of perpetual banishment was commuted into that of perpetual imprisonment." ('Receuil des defenses de M. Fouquet'). The instructions signed by the king and remitted to Saint-Mars forbid him to permit Fouquet to hold any spoken or written communication with anyone whatsoever, or to leave his apartments for any cause, not even for exercise. The great mistrust felt by Louvois pervades all his letters to Saint-Mars. The precautions which he ordered to be kept up were quite as stringent as in the case of the Iron Mask.

The report of the discovery of a shirt covered with writing, by a friar, which Abbe Papon mentions, may perhaps be traced to the following extracts from two letters written by Louvois to Saint-Mars: "Your letter has come to hand with the new handkerchief on which M. Fouquet has written" (18th Dec. 1665); "You can tell him that if he continues too employ his table-linen as note-paper he must not be surprised if you refuse to supply him with any more" (21st Nov.

1667).

Pere Papon asserts that a valet who served the masked prisoner died in his master's room. Now the man who waited on Fouquet, and who like him was sentenced to lifelong imprisonment, died in February 1680 (see letter of Louvois to Saint-Mars, 12th March 1680). Echoes of incidents which took place at Pignerol might have reached the Iles Sainte-Marguerite when Saint-Mars transferred his "former prisoner" from one fortress to the other. The fine clothes and linen, the books, all those luxuries in fact that were lavished on the masked

prisoner, were not withheld from Fouquet. The furniture of a second room at Pignerol cost over 1200 livres (see letters of Louvois, 12th Dec. 1665, and 22nd Feb, 1666).

It is also known that until the year 1680 Saint-Mars had only two important prisoners at Pignerol, Fouquet and Lauzun. However, his “former prisoner of Pignerol,” according to Du Junca’s diary, must have reached the latter fortress before the end of August 1681, when Saint-Mars went to Exilles as governor. So that it was in the interval between the 23rd March 1680, the alleged date of Fouquet’s death, and the 1st September 1681, that the Iron Mask appeared at Pignerol, and yet Saint-Mars took only two prisoners to Exilles. One of these was probably the Man in the Iron Mask; the other, who must have been Matthioli, died before the year 1687, for when Saint-Mars took over the governorship in the month of January of that year of the Iles Sainte-Marguerite he brought only ONE prisoner thither with him. “I have taken such good measures to guard my prisoner that I can answer to you for his safety” (‘Lettres de Saint-Mars a Louvois’, 20th January 1687).

In the correspondence of Louvois with Saint-Mars we find, it is true, mention of the death of Fouquet on March 23rd, 1680, but in his later correspondence Louvois never says “the late M. Fouquet,” but speaks of him, as usual, as “M. Fouquet” simply. Most historians have given as a fact that Fouquet was interred in the same vault as his father in the chapel of Saint-Francois de Sales in the convent church belonging to the Sisters of the Order of the Visitation-Sainte-Marie, founded in the beginning of the seventeenth century by Madame de Chantal. But proof to the contrary exists; for the subterranean portion of St. Francis’s chapel was closed in 1786, the last person interred there being Adelaide Felicite Brulard, with whom ended the house of Sillery. The convent was shut up in 1790, and the church given over to the Protestants in 1802; who continued to respect the tombs. In 1836 the Cathedral chapter of Bourges claimed the remains of one of their archbishops buried there in the time of the Sisters of Sainte-Marie. On this occasion all the coffins were examined and all the inscriptions carefully copied, but the name of Nicolas Fouquet is absent.

Voltaire says in his ‘Dictionnaire philosophique’, article “Ana,” “It is most remarkable that no one knows where the celebrated Fouquet was buried.”

But in spite of all these coincidences, this carefully constructed theory was wrecked on the same point on which the theory that the prisoner was either the

Duke of Monmouth or the Comte de Vermandois came to grief, viz. a letter from Barbezieux, dated 13th August 1691, in which occur the words, "THE PRISONER WHOM YOU HAVE HAD IN CHARGE FOR TWENTY YEARS." According to this testimony, which Jacob had successfully used against his predecessors, the prisoner referred to could not have been Fouquet, who completed his twenty-seventh year of captivity in 1691, if still alive.

We have now impartially set before our readers all the opinions which have been held in regard to the solution of this formidable enigma. For ourselves, we hold the belief that the Man in the Iron Mask stood on the steps of the throne. Although the mystery cannot be said to be definitely cleared up, one thing stands out firmly established among the mass of conjecture we have collected together, and that is, that wherever the prisoner appeared he was ordered to wear a mask on pain of death. His features, therefore, might during half a century have brought about his recognition from one end of France to the other; consequently, during the same space of time there existed in France a face resembling the prisoner's known through all her provinces, even to her most secluded isle.

Whose face could this be, if not that of Louis XVI, twin-brother of the Man in the Iron Mask?

To nullify this simple and natural conclusion strong evidence will be required.

Our task has been limited to that of an examining judge at a trial, and we feel sure that our readers will not be sorry that we have left them to choose amid all the conflicting explanations of the puzzle. No consistent narrative that we might have concocted would, it seems to us, have been half as interesting to them as to allow them to follow the devious paths opened up by those who entered on the search for the heart of the mystery. Everything connected with the masked prisoner arouses the most vivid curiosity. And what end had we in view? Was it not to denounce a crime and to brand the perpetrator thereof? The facts as they stand are sufficient for our object, and speak more eloquently than if used to adorn a tale or to prove an ingenious theory.

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Dumas, Pere

CELEBRATED CRIMES VOLUME 6 (of 8), Part 3

MARTIN GUERRE

We are sometimes astonished at the striking resemblance existing between two persons who are absolute strangers to each other, but in fact it is the opposite which ought to surprise us. Indeed, why should we not rather admire a Creative Power so infinite in its variety that it never ceases to produce entirely different combinations with precisely the same elements? The more one considers this prodigious versatility of form, the more overwhelming it appears.

To begin with, each nation has its own distinct and characteristic type, separating it from other races of men. Thus there are the English, Spanish, German, or Slavonic types; again, in each nation we find families distinguished from each other by less general but still well-pronounced features; and lastly, the individuals of each family, differing again in more or less marked gradations. What a multitude of physiognomies! What variety of impression from the innumerable stamps of the human countenance! What millions of models and no copies! Considering this ever changing spectacle, which ought to inspire us with most astonishment—the perpetual difference of faces or the accidental resemblance of a few individuals? Is it impossible that in the whole wide world there should be found by chance two people whose features are cast in one and the same mould? Certainly not; therefore that which ought to surprise us is not that these duplicates exist here and there upon the earth, but that they are to be met with in the same place, and appear together before our eyes, little accustomed to see such resemblances. From *Amphitryon* down to our own days, many fables have owed their origin to this fact, and history also has provided a few examples, such as the false Demetrius in Russia, the English Perkin Warbeck, and several other celebrated impostors, whilst the story we now present to our readers is no less curious and strange.

On the 10th of, August 1557, an inauspicious day in the history of France, the roar of cannon was still heard at six in the evening in the plains of St. Quentin; where the French army had just been destroyed by the united troops of England and Spain, commanded by the famous Captain Emanuel Philibert, Duke of

Savoy. An utterly beaten infantry, the Constable Montmorency and several generals taken prisoner, the Duke d'Enghien mortally wounded, the flower of the nobility cut down like grass,—such were the terrible results of a battle which plunged France into mourning, and which would have been a blot on the reign of Henry II, had not the Duke of Guise obtained a brilliant revenge the following year.

In a little village less than a mile from the field of battle were to be heard the groans of the wounded and dying, who had been carried thither from the field of battle. The inhabitants had given up their houses to be used as hospitals, and two or three barber surgeons went hither and thither, hastily ordering operations which they left to their assistants, and driving out fugitives who had contrived to accompany the wounded under pretence of assisting friends or near relations. They had already expelled a good number of these poor fellows, when, opening the door of a small room, they found a soldier soaked in blood lying on a rough mat, and another soldier apparently attending on him with the utmost care.

“Who are you?” said one of the surgeons to the sufferer. “I don't think you belong to our French troops.”

“Help!” cried the soldier, “only help me! and may God bless you for it!”

“From the colour of that tunic,” remarked the other surgeon, “I should wager the rascal belongs to some Spanish gentleman. By what blunder was he brought here?”

“For pity's sake! murmured the poor fellow, “I am in such pain.”

“Die, wretch!” responded the last speaker, pushing him with his foot. “Die, like the dog you are!”

But this brutality, answered as it was by an agonised groan, disgusted the other surgeon.

“After all, he is a man, and a wounded man who implores help. Leave him to me, Rene.”

Rene went out grumbling, and the one who remained proceeded to examine the wound. A terrible arquebus-shot had passed through the leg, shattering the bone: amputation was absolutely necessary.

Before proceeding to the operation, the surgeon turned to the other soldier, who had retired into the darkest corner of the room.

“And you, who may you be?” he asked.

The man replied by coming forward into the light: no other answer was needed. He resembled his companion so closely that no one could doubt they were brothers-twin brothers, probably. Both were above middle height; both had olive-brown complexions, black eyes, hooked noses, pointed chins, a slightly projecting lower lip; both were round-shouldered, though this defect did not amount to disfigurement: the whole personality suggested strength, and was not destitute of masculine beauty. So strong a likeness is hardly ever seen; even their ages appeared to agree, for one would not have supposed either to be more than thirty-two; and the only difference noticeable, besides the pale countenance of the wounded man, was that he was thin as compared with the moderate fleshiness of the other, also that he had a large scar over the right eyebrow.

“Look well after your brother’s soul,” said the surgeon to the soldier, who remained standing; “if it is in no better case than his body, it is much to be pitied.”

“Is there no hope?” inquired the Sosia of the wounded man.

“The wound is too large and too deep,” replied the man of science, “to be cauterised with boiling oil, according to the ancient method. ‘Delenda est causa mali,’ the source of evil must be destroyed, as says the learned Ambrose Pare; I ought therefore ‘secareferro,’—that is to say, take off the leg. May God grant that he survive the operation!”

While seeking his instruments, he looked the supposed brother full in the face, and added—

“But how is it that you are carrying muskets in opposing armies, for I see that you belong to us, while this poor fellow wears Spanish uniform?”

“Oh, that would be a long story to tell,” replied the soldier, shaking his head. “As for me, I followed the career which was open to me, and took service of my own free will under the banner of our lord king, Henry II. This man, whom you rightly suppose to be my brother, was born in Biscay, and became attached to the household of the Cardinal of Burgos, and afterwards to the cardinal’s brother,

whom he was obliged to follow to the war. I recognised him on the battlefield just as he fell; I dragged him out of a heap of dead, and brought him here.”

During his recital this individual’s features betrayed considerable agitation, but the surgeon did not heed it. Not finding some necessary instruments, “My colleague,” he exclaimed, “must have carried them off. He constantly does this, out of jealousy of my reputation; but I will be even with him yet! Such splendid instruments! They will almost work of themselves, and are capable of imparting some skill even to him, dunce as he is!... I shall be back in an hour or two; he must rest, sleep, have nothing to excite him, nothing to inflame the wound; and when the operation is well over, we shall see! May the Lord be gracious to him!”

Then he went to the door, leaving the poor wretch to the care of his supposed brother.

“My God!” he added, shaking his head, “if he survive, it will be by the help of a miracle.”

Scarcely had he left the room, when the unwounded soldier carefully examined the features of the wounded one.

“Yes,” he murmured between his teeth, “they were right in saying that my exact double was to be found in the hostile army Truly one would not know us apart! ... I might be surveying myself in a mirror. I did well to look for him in the rear of the Spanish army, and, thanks to the fellow who rolled him over so conveniently with that arquebus-shot; I was able to escape the dangers of the melee by carrying him out of it.”

“But that’s not all,” he thought, still carefully studying the tortured face of the unhappy sufferer; “it is not enough to have got out of that. I have absolutely nothing in the world, no home, no resources. Beggar by birth, adventurer by fortune, I have enlisted, and have consumed my pay; I hoped for plunder, and here we are in full flight! What am I to do? Go and drown myself? No, certainly a cannon-ball would be as good as that. But can’t I profit by this chance, and obtain a decent position by turning to my own advantage this curious resemblance, and making some use of this man whom Fate has thrown in my way, and who has but a short time to live?”

Arguing thus, he bent over the prostrate man with a cynical laugh: one might have thought he was Satan watching the departure of a soul too utterly lost to

escape him.

“Alas! alas!” cried the sufferer; “may God have mercy on me! I feel my end is near.”

“Bah! comrade, drive away these dismal thoughts. Your leg pains you —well they will cut it off! Think only of the other one, and trust in Providence!”

“Water, a drop of water, for Heaven’s sake!” The sufferer was in a high fever. The would-be nurse looked round and saw a jug of water, towards which the dying man extended a trembling hand. A truly infernal idea entered his mind. He poured some water into a gourd which hung from his belt, held it to the lips of the wounded man, and then withdrew it.

“Oh! I thirst-that water! ... For pity’s sake, give me some!”

“Yes, but on one condition you must tell me your whole history.”

“Yes ... but give me water!”

His tormentor allowed him to swallow a mouthful, then overwhelmed him with questions as to his family, his friends and fortune, and compelled him to answer by keeping before his eyes the water which alone could relieve the fever which devoured him. After this often interrupted interrogation, the sufferer sank back exhausted, and almost insensible. But, not yet satisfied, his companion conceived the idea of reviving him with a few drops of brandy, which quickly brought back the fever, and excited his brain sufficiently to enable him to answer fresh questions. The doses of spirit were doubled several times, at the risk of ending the unhappy man’s days then and there: Almost delirious, his head feeling as if on fire, his sufferings gave way to a feverish excitement, which took him back to other places and other times: he began to recall the days of his youth and the country where he lived. But his tongue was still fettered by a kind of reserve: his secret thoughts, the private details of his past life were not yet told, and it seemed as though he might die at any moment. Time was passing, night already coming on, and it occurred to the merciless questioner to profit by the gathering darkness. By a few solemn words he aroused the religious feelings of the sufferer, terrified him by speaking of the punishments of another life and the flames of hell, until to the delirious fancy of the sick man he took the form of a judge who could either deliver him to eternal damnation or open the gates of heaven to him. At length, overwhelmed by a voice which resounded in his ear

like that of a minister of God, the dying man laid bare his inmost soul before his tormentor, and made his last confession to him.

Yet a few moments, and the executioner—he deserves no other name—hangs over his victim, opens his tunic, seizes some papers and a few coins, half draws his dagger, but thinks better of it; then, contemptuously spurning the victim, as the other surgeon had done—

“I might kill you,” he says, “but it would be a useless murder; it would only be hastening your last Sigh by an hour or two, and advancing my claims to your inheritance by the same space of time.”

And he adds mockingly:—

“Farewell, my brother!”

The wounded soldier utters a feeble groan; the adventurer leaves the room.

Four months later, a woman sat at the door of a house at one end of the village of Artigues, near Rieux, and played with a child about nine or ten years of age. Still young, she had the brown complexion of Southern women, and her beautiful black hair fell in curls about her face. Her flashing eyes occasionally betrayed hidden passions, concealed, however, beneath an apparent indifference and lassitude, and her wasted form seemed to acknowledge the existence of some secret grief. An observer would have divined a shattered life, a withered happiness, a soul grievously wounded.

Her dress was that of a wealthy peasant; and she wore one of the long gowns with hanging sleeves which were in fashion in the sixteenth century. The house in front of which she sat belonged to her, so also the immense field which adjoined the garden. Her attention was divided between the play of her son and the orders she was giving to an old servant, when an exclamation from the child startled her.

“Mother!” he cried, “mother, there he is!”

She looked where the child pointed, and saw a young boy turning the corner of the street.

“Yes,” continued the child, “that is the lad who, when I was playing with the other boys yesterday, called me all sorts of bad names.”

“What sort of names, my child?”

“There was one I did not understand, but it must have been a very bad one, for the other boys all pointed at me, and left me alone. He called me—and he said it was only what his mother had told him—he called me a wicked bastard!”

His mother’s face became purple with indignation. “What!” she cried, “they dared! ... What an insult!”

“What does this bad word mean, mother?” asked the child, half frightened by her anger. “Is that what they call poor children who have no father?”

His mother folded him in her arms. “Oh!” she continued, “it is an infamous slander! These people never saw your father, they have only been here six years, and this is the eighth since he went away, but this is abominable! We were married in that church, we came at once to live in this house, which was my marriage portion, and my poor Martin has relations and friends here who will not allow his wife to be insulted—”

“Say rather, his widow,” interrupted a solemn voice.

“Ah! uncle!” exclaimed the woman, turning towards an old man who had just emerged from the house.

“Yes, Bertrande,” continued the newcomer, “you must get reconciled to the idea that my nephew has ceased to exist. I am sure he was not such a fool as to have remained all this time without letting us hear from him. He was not the fellow to go off at a tangent, on account of a domestic quarrel which you have never vouchsafed to explain to me, and to retain his anger during all these eight years! Where did he go? What did he do? We none of us know, neither you nor I, nor anybody else. He is assuredly dead, and lies in some graveyard far enough from here. May God have mercy on his soul!”

Bertrande, weeping, made the sign of the cross, and bowed her head upon her hands.

“Goodbye, Sanxi,” said the uncle, tapping the child’s, cheek. Sanxi turned

sulkily away.

There was certainly nothing specially attractive about the uncle: he belonged to a type which children instinctively dislike, false, crafty, with squinting eyes which continually appeared to contradict his honeyed tongue.

“Bertrande,” he said, “your boy is like his father before him, and only answers my kindness with rudeness.”

“Forgive him,” answered the mother; “he is very young, and does not understand the respect due to his father’s uncle. I will teach him better things; he will soon learn that he ought to be grateful for the care you have taken of his little property.”

“No doubt, no doubt,” said the uncle, trying hard to smile. “I will give you a good account of it, for I shall only have to reckon with you two in future. Come, my dear, believe me, your husband is really dead, and you have sorrowed quite enough for a good-for-nothing fellow. Think no more of him.”

So saying, he departed, leaving the poor young woman a prey to the saddest thoughts.

Bertrande de Rolls, naturally gifted with extreme sensibility, on which a careful education had imposed due restraint, had barely completed her twelfth year when she was married to Martin Guerre, a boy of about the same age, such precocious unions being then not uncommon, especially in the Southern provinces. They were generally settled by considerations of family interest, assisted by the extremely early development habitual to the climate. The young couple lived for a long time as brother and sister, and Bertrande, thus early familiar with the idea of domestic happiness, bestowed her whole affection on the youth whom she had been taught to regard as her life’s companion. He was the Alpha and Omega of her existence; all her love, all her thoughts, were given to him, and when their marriage was at length completed, the birth of a son seemed only another link in the already long existing bond of union. But, as many wise men have remarked, a uniform happiness, which only attaches women more and more, has often upon men a precisely contrary effect, and so it was with Martin Guerre. Of a lively and excitable temperament, he wearied of a yoke which had been imposed so early, and, anxious to see the world and enjoy some freedom, he one day took advantage of a domestic difference, in which

Bertrande owned herself to have been wrong, and left his house and family. He was sought and awaited in vain. Bertrande spent the first month in vainly expecting his return, then she betook herself to prayer; but Heaven appeared deaf to her supplications, the truant returned not. She wished to go in search of him, but the world is wide, and no single trace remained to guide her. What torture for a tender heart! What suffering for a soul thirsting for love! What sleepless nights! What restless vigils! Years passed thus; her son was growing up, yet not a word reached her from the man she loved so much. She spoke often of him to the uncomprehending child, she sought to discover his features in those of her boy, but though she endeavoured to concentrate her whole affection on her son, she realised that there is suffering which maternal love cannot console, and tears which it cannot dry. Consumed by the strength of the sorrow which ever dwelt in her heart, the poor woman was slowly wasting, worn out by the regrets of the past, the vain desires of the present, and the dreary prospect of the future. And now she had been openly insulted, her feelings as a mother wounded to the quirk; and her husband's uncle, instead of defending and consoling her, could give only cold counsel and unsympathetic words!

Pierre Guerre, indeed, was simply a thorough egotist. In his youth he had been charged with usury; no one knew by what means he had become rich, for the little drapery trade which he called his profession did not appear to be very profitable.

After his nephew's departure it seemed only natural that he should pose as the family guardian, and he applied himself to the task of increasing the little income, but without considering himself bound to give any account to Bertrande. So, once persuaded that Martin was no more, he was apparently not unwilling to prolong a situation so much to his own advantage.

Night was fast coming on; in the dim twilight distant objects became confused and indistinct. It was the end of autumn, that melancholy season which suggests so many gloomy thoughts and recalls so many blighted hopes. The child had gone into the house. Bertrande, still sitting at the door, resting her forehead on her hand, thought sadly of her uncle's words; recalling in imagination the past scenes which they suggested, the time of their childhood, when, married so young, they were as yet only playmates, prefacing the graver duties of life by innocent pleasures; then of the love which grew with their increasing age; then of how this love became altered, changing on her side into passion, on his into indifference. She tried to recollect him as he had been on the eve of his

departure, young and handsome, carrying his head high, coming home from a fatiguing hunt and sitting by his son's cradle; and then also she remembered bitterly the jealous suspicions she had conceived, the anger with which she had allowed them to escape her, the consequent quarrel, followed by the disappearance of her offended husband, and the eight succeeding years of solitude and mourning. She wept over his desertion; over the desolation of her life, seeing around her only indifferent or selfish people, and caring only to live for her child's sake, who gave her at least a shadowy reflection of the husband she had lost. "Lost—yes, lost for ever!" she said to herself, sighing, and looking again at the fields whence she had so often seen him coming at this same twilight hour, returning to his home for the evening meal. She cast a wandering eye on the distant hills, which showed a black outline against a yet fiery western sky, then let it fall on a little grove of olive trees planted on the farther side of the brook which skirted her dwelling. Everything was calm; approaching night brought silence along with darkness: it was exactly what she saw every evening, but to leave which required always an effort.

She rose to reenter the house, when her attention was caught by a movement amongst the trees. For a moment she thought she was mistaken, but the branches again rustled, then parted asunder, and the form of a man appeared on the other side of the brook. Terrified, Bertrande tried to scream, but not a sound escaped her lips; her voice seemed paralyzed by terror, as in an evil dream. And she almost thought it was a dream, for notwithstanding the dark shadows cast around this indistinct semblance, she seemed to recognise features once dear to her. Had her bitter reveries ended by making her the victim of a hallucination? She thought her brain was giving way, and sank on her knees to pray for help. But the figure remained; it stood motionless, with folded arms, silently gazing at her! Then she thought of witchcraft, of evil demons, and superstitious as every one was in those days, she kissed a crucifix which hung from her neck, and fell fainting on the ground. With one spring the phantom crossed the brook and stood beside her.

"Bertrande!" it said in a voice of emotion. She raised her head, uttered a piercing cry, and was clasped in her husband's arms.

The whole village became aware of this event that same evening. The neighbours crowded round Bertrande's door, Martin's friends and relations naturally wishing to see him after this miraculous reappearance, while those who had never known him desired no less to gratify their curiosity; so that the hero of

the little drama, instead of remaining quietly at home with his wife, was obliged to exhibit himself publicly in a neighbouring barn. His four sisters burst through the crowd and fell on his neck weeping; his uncle examined him doubtfully at first, then extended his arms. Everybody recognised him, beginning with the old servant Margherite, who had been with the young couple ever since their wedding-day. People observed only that a riper age had strengthened his features, and given more character to his countenance and more development to his powerful figure; also that he had a scar over the right eyebrow, and that he limped slightly. These were the marks of wounds he had received, he said; which now no longer troubled him. He appeared anxious to return to his wife and child, but the crowd insisted on hearing the story of his adventures during his voluntary absence, and he was obliged to satisfy them. Eight years ago, he said, the desire to see more of the world had gained an irresistible mastery over him; he yielded to it, and departed secretly. A natural longing took him to his birthplace in Biscay, where he had seen his surviving relatives. There he met the Cardinal of Burgos, who took him into his service, promising him profit, hard knocks to give and take, and plenty of adventure. Some time after, he left the cardinal's household for that of his brother, who, much against his will, compelled him to follow him to the war and bear arms against the French. Thus he found himself on the Spanish side on the day of St. Quentin, and received a terrible gunshot wound in the leg. Being carried into a house in an adjoining village, he fell into the hands of a surgeon, who insisted that the leg must be amputated immediately, but who left him for a moment, and never returned. Then he encountered a good old woman, who dressed his wound and nursed him night and day. So that in a few weeks he recovered, and was able to set out for Artigues, too thankful to return to his house and land, still more to his wife and child, and fully resolved never to leave them again.

Having ended his story, he shook hands with his still wondering neighbours, addressing by name some who had been very young when he left, and who, hearing their names, came forward now as grown men, hardly recognisable, but much pleased at being remembered. He returned his sisters' carresses, begged his uncle's forgiveness for the trouble he had given in his boyhood, recalling with mirth the various corrections received. He mentioned also an Augustinian monk who had taught him to read, and another reverend father, a Capuchin, whose irregular conduct had caused much scandal in the neighbourhood. In short, notwithstanding his prolonged absence, he seemed to have a perfect recollection of places, persons, and things. The good people overwhelmed him with congratulations, vying with one another in praising him for having the good

sense to come home, and in describing the grief and the perfect virtue of his Bertrande. Emotion was excited, many wept, and several bottles from Martin Guerre's cellar were emptied. At length the assembly dispersed, uttering many exclamations about the extraordinary chances of Fate, and retired to their own homes, excited, astonished, and gratified, with the one exception of old Pierre Guerre, who had been struck by an unsatisfactory remark made by his nephew, and who dreamed all night about the chances of pecuniary loss augured by the latter's return.

It was midnight before the husband and wife were alone and able to give vent to their feelings. Bertrande still felt half stupefied; she could not believe her own eyes and ears, nor realise that she saw again in her marriage chamber her husband of eight years ago, him for whom she had wept; whose death she had deplored only a few hours previously. In the sudden shock caused by so much joy succeeding so much grief, she had not been able to express what she felt; her confused ideas were difficult to explain, and she seemed deprived of the powers of speech and reflection. When she became calmer and more capable of analysing her feelings, she was astonished not to feel towards her husband the same affection which had moved her so strongly a few hours before. It was certainly himself, those were the same features, that was the man to whom she had willingly given her hand, her heart, herself, and yet now that she saw him again a cold barrier of shyness, of modesty, seemed to have risen between them. His first kiss, even, had not made her happy: she blushed and felt saddened—a curious result of the long absence! She could not define the changes wrought by years in his appearance: his countenance seemed harsher, yet the lines of his face, his outer man, his whole personality, did not seem altered, but his soul had changed its nature, a different mind looked forth from those eyes. Bertrande knew him for her husband, and yet she hesitated. Even so Penelope, on the return of Ulysses, required a certain proof to confirm the evidence of her eyes, and her long absent husband had to remind her of secrets known only to herself.

Martin, however, as if he understood Bertrande's feeling and divined some secret mistrust, used the most tender and affectionate phrases, and even the very pet names which close intimacy had formerly endeared to them.

“My queen,” he said, “my beautiful dove, can you not lay aside your resentment? Is it still so strong that no submission can soften it? Cannot my repentance find grace in your eyes? My Bertrande, my Bertha, my Bertranilla, as I used to call you.”

She tried to smile, but stopped short, puzzled; the names were the very same, but the inflexion of voice quite different.

Martin took her hands in his. "What pretty hands! Do you still wear my ring? Yes, here it is, and with it the sapphire ring I gave you the day Sanxi was born."

Bertrande did not answer, but she took the child and placed him in his father's arms.

Martin showered caresses on his son, and spoke of the time when he carried him as a baby in the garden, lifting him up to the fruit trees, so that he could reach and try to bite the fruit. He recollected one day when the poor child got his leg terribly torn by thorns, and convinced himself, not without emotion, that the scar could still be seen.

Bertrande was touched by this display of affectionate recollections, and felt vexed at her own coldness. She came up to Martin and laid her hand in his. He said gently—

"My departure caused you great grief: I now repent what I did. But I was young, I was proud, and your reproaches were unjust."

"Ah," said she, "you have not forgotten the cause of our quarrel?"

"It was little Rose, our neighbour, whom you said I was making love to, because you found us together at the spring in the little wood. I explained that we met only by chance,—besides, she was only a child,—but you would not listen, and in your anger—"

"Ah! forgive me, Martin, forgive me!" she interrupted, in confusion.

"In your blind anger you took up, I know not what, something which lay handy, and flung it at me. And here is the mark," he continued, smiling, "this scar, which is still to be seen."

"Oh, Martin! Bertrande exclaimed, "can you ever forgive me?"

"As you see," Martin replied, kissing her tenderly.

Much moved, Bertrande swept aside his hair, and looked at the scar visible on

his forehead.

“But,” she said, with surprise not free from alarm, “this scar seems to me like a fresh one.”

“Ah!” Martin explained, with a little embarrassment; “it reopened lately. But I had thought no more about it. Let us forget it, Bertrande; I should not like a recollection which might make you think yourself less dear to me than you once were.”

And he drew her upon his knee. She repelled him gently.

“Send the child to bed,” said Martin. “Tomorrow shall be for him; tonight you have the first place, Bertrande, you only.”

The boy kissed his father and went.

Bertrande came and knelt beside her husband, regarding him attentively with an uneasy smile, which did not appear to please him by any means.

“What is the matter?” said he. “Why do you examine me thus?”

“I do not know—forgive me, oh! forgive me! ... But the happiness of seeing you was so great and unexpected, it is all like a dream. I must try to become accustomed to it; give me some time to collect myself; let me spend this night in prayer. I ought to offer my joy and my thanksgiving to Almighty God—”

“Not so,” interrupted her husband, passing his arms round her neck and stroking her beautiful hair. “No; ‘tis to me that your first thoughts are due. After so much weariness, my rest is in again beholding you, and my happiness after so many trials will be found in your love. That hope has supported me throughout, and I long to be assured that it is no illusion.” So saying, he endeavoured to raise her.

“Oh,” she murmured, “I pray you leave me.”

“What!” he exclaimed angrily. “Bertrande, is this your love? Is it thus you keep faith with me? You will make me doubt the evidence of your friends; you will make me think that indifference, or even another love—”

“You insult me,” said Bertrande, rising to her feet.

He caught her in his arms. "No, no; I think nothing which could wound you, my queen, and I believe your fidelity, even as before, you know, on that first journey, when you wrote me these loving letters which I have treasured ever since. Here they are." And he drew forth some papers, on which Bertrande recognised her own handwriting. "Yes," he continued, "I have read and -re-read them.... See, you spoke then of your love and the sorrows of absence. But why all this trouble and terror? You tremble, just as you did when I first received you from your father's hands.... It was here, in this very room.... You begged me then to leave you, to let you spend the night in prayer; but I insisted, do you remember? and pressed you to my heart, as I do now."

"Oh," she murmured weakly, "have pity!"

But the words were intercepted by a kiss, and the remembrance of the past, the happiness of the present, resumed their sway; the imaginary terrors were forgotten, and the curtains closed around the marriage-bed.

The next day was a festival in the village of Artigues. Martin returned the visits of all who had come to welcome him the previous night, and there were endless recognitions and embracings. The young men remembered that he had played with them when they were little; the old men, that they had been at his wedding when he was only twelve.

The women remembered having envied Bertrande, especially the pretty Rose, daughter of Marcel, the apothecary, she who had roused the demon of jealousy in, the poor wife's heart. And Rose knew quite well that the jealousy was not without some cause; for Martin had indeed shown her attention, and she was unable to see him again without emotion. She was now the wife of a rich peasant, ugly, old, and jealous, and she compared, sighing, her unhappy lot with that of her more fortunate neighbour. Martin's sisters detained him amongst them, and spoke of their childish games and of their parents, both dead in Biscay. Martin dried the tears which flowed at these recollections of the past, and turned their thoughts to rejoicing. Banquets were given and received. Martin invited all his relations and former friends; an easy gaiety prevailed. It was remarked that the hero of the feast refrained from wine; he was thereupon reproached, but answered that on account of the wounds he had received he was obliged to avoid excess. The excuse was admitted, the result of Martin's precautions being that he kept a clear head on his shoulders, while all the rest had their tongues loosed by drunkenness.

“Ah!” exclaimed one of the guests, who had studied a little medicine, “Martin is quite right to be afraid of drink. Wounds which have thoroughly healed may be reopened and inflamed by intemperance, and wine in the case of recent wounds is deadly poison. Men have died on the field of battle in an hour or two merely because they had swallowed a little brandy.”

Martin Guerre grew pale, and began a conversation with the pretty Rose, his neighbour. Bertrande observed this, but without uneasiness; she had suffered too much from her former suspicions, besides her husband showed her so much affection that she was now quite happy.

When the first few days were over, Martin began to look into his affairs. His property had suffered by his long absence, and he was obliged to go to Biscay to claim his little estate there, the law having already laid hands upon it. It was several months before, by dint of making judicious sacrifices, he could regain possession of the house and fields which had belonged to his father. This at last accomplished, he returned to Artigues, in order to resume the management of his wife’s property, and with this end in view, about eleven months after his return, he paid a visit to his uncle Pierre.

Pierre was expecting him; he was extremely polite, desired Martin, to sit down, overwhelmed him with compliments, knitting his brows as he discovered that his nephew decidedly meant business. Martin broke silence.

“Uncle,” he said, “I come to thank you for the care you have taken of my wife’s property; she could never have managed it alone. You have received the income in the family interest: as a good guardian, I expected no less from your affection. But now that I have returned, and am free from other cares, we will go over the accounts, if you please.”

His uncle coughed and cleared his voice before replying, then said slowly, as if counting his words—

“It is all accounted for, my dear nephew; Heaven be praised! I don’t owe you anything.”

“What!” exclaimed the astonished Martin, “but the whole income?”

“Was well and properly employed in the maintenance of your wife and child.”

“What! a thousand livres for that? And Bertrande lived alone, so quietly and simply! Nonsense! it is impossible.”

“Any surplus,” resumed the old man, quite unmoved,—” any surplus went to pay the expenses of seed-time and harvest.”

“What! at a time when labour costs next to nothing?”

“Here is the account,” said Pierre.

“Then the account is a false one,” returned his nephew.

Pierre thought it advisable to appear extremely offended and angry, and Martin, exasperated at his evident dishonesty, took still higher ground, and threatened to bring an action against him. Pierre ordered him to leave the house, and suiting actions to words, took hold of his arm to enforce his departure. Martin, furious, turned and raised his fist to strike.

“What! strike your uncle, wretched boy!” exclaimed the old man.

Martin’s hand dropped, but he left the house uttering reproaches and insults, among which Pierre distinguished—

“Cheat that you are!”

“That is a word I shall remember,” cried the angry old man, slamming his door violently.

Martin brought an action before the judge at Rieux, and in course of time obtained a decree, which, reviewing the accounts presented by Pierre, disallowed them, and condemned the dishonest guardian to pay his nephew four hundred livres for each year of his administration. The day on which this sum had to be disbursed from his strong box the old usurer vowed vengeance, but until he could gratify his hatred he was forced to conceal it, and to receive attempts at reconciliation with a friendly smile. It was not until six months later, on the occasion of a joyous festivity, that Martin again set foot in his uncle’s house. The bells were ringing for the birth of a child, there was great gaiety at Bertrande’s house, where all the guests were waiting on the threshold for the godfather in order to take the infant to church, and when Martin appeared, escorting his uncle, who was adorned with a huge bouquet for the occasion, and who now

came forward and took the hand of Rose, the pretty godmother, there were cries of joy on all sides. Bertrande was delighted at this reconciliation, and dreamed only of happiness. She was so happy now, her long sorrow was atoned for, her regret was at an end, her prayers seemed to have been heard, the long interval between the former delights and the present seemed wiped out as if the bond of union had never been broken, and if she remembered her grief at all, it was only to intensify the new joys by comparison. She loved her husband more than ever; he was full of affection for her, and she was grateful for his love. The past had now no shadow, the future no cloud, and the birth of a daughter, drawing still closer the links which united them, seemed a new pledge of felicity. Alas! the horizon which appeared so bright and clear to the poor woman was doomed soon again to be overcast.

The very evening of the christening party, a band of musicians and jugglers happened to pass through the village, and the inhabitants showed themselves liberal. Pierre asked questions, and found that the leader of the band was a Spaniard. He invited the man to his own house, and remained closeted with him for nearly an hour, dismissing him at length with a refilled purse. Two days later the old man announced to the family that he was going to Picardy to see a former partner on a matter of business, and he departed accordingly, saying he should return before long.

The day on which Bertrande again saw her uncle was, indeed, a terrible one. She was sitting by the cradle of the lately-born infant, watching for its awakening, when the door opened, and Pierre Guerre strode in. Bertrande drew back with an instinct of terror as soon as she saw him, for his expression was at once wicked and joyful—an expression of gratified hate, of mingled rage and triumph, and his smile was terrible to behold. She did not venture to speak, but motioned him to a seat. He came straight up to her, and raising his head, said loudly—

“Kneel down at once, madame—kneel down, and ask pardon from Almighty God!”

“Are you mad, Pierre?” she replied, gazing at him in astonishment.

“You, at least, ought to know that I am not.”

“Pray for forgiveness—I—! and what for, in Heaven’s name?”

“For the crime in which you are an accomplice.”

“Please explain yourself.”

“Oh!” said Pierre, with bitter irony, “a woman always thinks herself innocent as long as her sin is hidden; she thinks the truth will never be known, and her conscience goes quietly to sleep, forgetting her faults. Here is a woman who thought her sins nicely concealed; chance favoured her: an absent husband, probably no more; another man so exactly like him in height, face, and manner that everyone else is deceived! Is it strange that a weak, sensitive woman, wearied of widowhood, should willingly allow herself to be imposed on?”

Bertrande listened without understanding; she tried to interrupt, but Pierre went on—

“It was easy to accept this stranger without having to blush for it, easy to give him the name and the rights of a husband! She could even appear faithful while really guilty; she could seem constant, though really fickle; and she could, under a veil of mystery, at once reconcile her honour, her duty—perhaps even her love.”

“What on earth do you mean?” cried Bertrande, wringing her hands in terror.

“That you are countenancing an impostor who is not your husband.”

Feeling as if the ground were passing from beneath her, Bertrande staggered, and caught at the nearest piece of furniture to save herself from falling; then, collecting all her strength to meet this extraordinary attack, she faced the old man.

“What! my husband, your nephew, an impostor!”

“Don’t you know it?”

“I!!”

This cry, which came from her heart, convinced Pierre that she did not know, and that she had sustained a terrible shock. He continued more quietly—

“What, Bertrande, is it possible you were really deceived?”

“Pierre, you are killing me; your words are torture. No more mystery, I entreat.

What do you know? What do you suspect? Tell me plainly at once.”

“Have you courage to hear it?”

“I must,” said the trembling woman.

“God is my witness that I would willingly have kept it from you, but you must know; if only for the safety of your soul entangled in so deadly a snare,... there is yet time, if you follow my advice. Listen: the man with whom you are living, who dares to call himself Martin Guerre, is a cheat, an impostor—”

“How dare you say so?”

“Because I have discovered it. Yes, I had always a vague suspicion, an uneasy feeling, and in spite of the marvellous resemblance I could never feel as if he were really my sister’s child. The day he raised his hand to strike me—yes, that day I condemned him utterly.... Chance has justified me! A wandering Spaniard, an old soldier, who spent a night in the village here, was also present at the battle of St. Quentin, and saw Martin Guerre receive a terrible gunshot wound in the leg. After the battle, being wounded, he betook himself to the neighbouring village, and distinctly heard a surgeon in the next room say that a wounded man must have his leg amputated, and would very likely not survive the operation. The door opened, he saw the sufferer, and knew him for Martin Guerre. So much the Spaniard told me. Acting on this information, I went on pretence of business to the village he named, I questioned the inhabitants, and this is what I learned.”

“Well?” said Bertrande, pale, and gasping with emotion.

“I learned that the wounded man had his leg taken off, and, as the surgeon predicted, he must have died in a few hours, for he was never seen again.”

Bertrande remained a few moments as if annihilated by this appalling revelation; then, endeavoring to repel the horrible thought—

“No,” she cried, “no, it is impossible! It is a lie intended to ruin him—to ruin us all.”

“What! you do not believe me?”

“No, never, never!”

“Say rather you pretend to disbelieve me: the truth has pierced your heart, but you wish to deny it. Think, however, of the danger to your immortal soul.”

“Silence, wretched man!... No, God would not send me so terrible a trial. What proof can you show of the truth of your words?”

“The witnesses I have mentioned.”

“Nothing more?”

“No, not as yet.”

“Fine proofs indeed! The story of a vagabond who flattered your hatred in hope of a reward, the gossip of a distant village, the recollections of ten years back, and finally, your own word, the word of a man who seeks only revenge, the word of a man who swore to make Martin pay dearly for the results of his own avarice, a man of furious passions such as yours! No, Pierre, no, I do not believe you, and I never will!”

“Other people may perhaps be less incredulous, and if I accuse him publicly—”

“Then I shall contradict you publicly! “And coming quickly forward, her eyes shining with virtuous anger—

“Leave this house, go,” she said; “it is you yourself who are the impostor—go!”

“I shall yet know how to convince everyone, and will make you acknowledge it,” cried the furious old man.

He went out, and Bertrande sank exhausted into a chair. All the strength which had supported her against Pierre vanished as soon as she was alone, and in spite of her resistance to suspicion, the terrible light of doubt penetrated her heart, and extinguished the pure torch of trustfulness which had guided her hitherto—a doubt, alas! which attacked at once her honour and her love, for she loved with all a woman’s tender affection. Just as actual poison gradually penetrates and circulates through the whole system, corrupting the blood and affecting the very sources of life until it causes the destruction of the whole body, so does that mental poison, suspicion, extend its ravages in the soul which has received it. Bertrande remembered with terror her first feelings at the sight of the returned Martin Guerre, her involuntary repugnance, her astonishment at not feeling more

in touch with the husband whom she had so sincerely regretted. She remembered also, as if she saw it for the first time, that Martin, formerly quick, lively, and hasty tempered, now seemed thoughtful, and fully master of himself.

This change of character she had supposed due to the natural development of age, she now trembled at the idea of another possible cause. Some other little details began to occur to her mind—the forgetfulness or abstraction of her husband as to a few insignificant things; thus it sometimes happened that he did not answer to his name of Martin, also that he mistook the road to a hermitage, formerly well known to them both, and again that he could not answer when addressed in Basque, although he himself had taught her the little she knew of this language. Besides, since his return, he would never write in her presence, did he fear that she would notice some difference? She had paid little or no attention to these trifles; now, pieced together, they assumed an alarming importance. An appalling terror seized Bertrande: was she to remain in this uncertainty, or should she seek an explanation which might prove her destruction? And how discover the truth—by questioning the guilty man, by noting his confusion, his change of colour, by forcing a confession from him? But she had lived with him for two years, he was the father of her child, she could not ruin him without ruining herself, and, an explanation once sought, she could neither punish him and escape disgrace, nor pardon him without sharing his guilt. To reproach him with his conduct and then keep silence would destroy her peace for ever; to cause a scandal by denouncing him would bring dishonour upon herself and her child. Night found her involved in these hideous perplexities, too weak to surmount them; an icy chill came over her, she went to bed, and awoke in a high fever. For several days she hovered between life and death, and Martin Guerre bestowed the most tender care upon her. She was greatly moved thereby, having one of those impressionable minds which recognise kindness fully as much as injury. When she was a little recovered and her mental power began to return, she had only a vague recollection of what had occurred, and thought she had had a frightful dream. She asked if Pierre Guerre had been to see her, and found he had not been near the house. This could only be explained by the scene which had taken place, and she then recollected all the accusation Pierre had made, her own observations which had confirmed it, all her grief and trouble. She inquired about the village news. Pierre, evidently, had kept silence why? Had he seen that his suspicions were unjust, or was he only seeking further evidence? She sank back into her cruel uncertainty, and resolved to watch Martin closely, before deciding as to his guilt or innocence.

How was she to suppose that God had created two faces so exactly alike, two beings precisely similar, and then sent them together into the world, and on the same track, merely to compass the ruin of an unhappy woman! A terrible idea took possession of her mind, an idea not uncommon in an age of superstition, namely, that the Enemy himself could assume human form, and could borrow the semblance of a dead man in order to capture another soul for his infernal kingdom. Acting on this idea, she hastened to the church, paid for masses to be said, and prayed fervently. She expected every day to see the demon forsake the body he had animated, but her vows, offerings, and prayers had no result. But Heaven sent her an idea which she wondered had not occurred to her sooner. “If the Tempter,” she said to herself, “has taken the form of my beloved husband, his power being supreme for evil, the resemblance would be exact, and no difference, however slight, would exist. If, however, it is only another man who resembles him, God must have made them with some slight distinguishing marks.”

She then remembered, what she had not thought of before, having been quite unsuspecting before her uncle’s accusation, and nearly out of her mind between mental and bodily suffering since. She remembered that on her husband’s left shoulder, almost on the neck, there used to be one of those small, almost imperceptible, but ineffaceable birthmarks. Martin wore his hair very long, it was difficult to see if the mark were there or not. One night, while he slept, Bertrande cut away a lock of hair from the place where this sign ought to be—it was not there!

Convinced at length of the deception, Bertrande suffered inexpressible anguish. This man whom she had loved and respected for two whole years, whom she had taken to her heart as a husband bitterly mourned for—this man was a cheat, an infamous impostor, and she, all unknowing, was yet a guilty woman! Her child was illegitimate, and the curse of Heaven was due to this sacrilegious union. To complete the misfortune, she was already expecting another infant. She would have killed herself, but her religion and the love of her children forbade it. Kneeling before her child’s cradle, she entreated pardon from the father of the one for the father of the other. She would not bring herself to proclaim aloud their infamy.

“Oh!” she said, “thou whom I loved, thou who art no more, thou knowest no guilty thought ever entered my mind! When I saw this man, I thought I beheld thee; when I was happy, I thought I owed it to thee; it was thee whom I loved in

him. Surely thou dost not desire that by a public avowal I should bring shame and disgrace on these children and on myself.”

She rose calm and strengthened: it seemed as if a heavenly inspiration had marked out her duty. To suffer in silence, such was the course she adopted,—a life of sacrifice and self-denial which she offered to God as an expiation for her involuntary sin. But who can understand the workings of the human heart? This man whom she ought to have loathed, this man who had made her an innocent partner in his crime, this unmasked impostor whom she should have beheld only with disgust, she-loved him! The force of habit, the ascendancy he had obtained over her, the love he had shown her, a thousand sympathies felt in her inmost heart, all these had so much influence, that, instead of accusing and cursing him, she sought to excuse him on the plea of a passion to which, doubtless, he had yielded when usurping the name and place of another. She feared punishment for him yet more than disgrace for herself, and though resolved to no longer allow him the rights purchased by crime, she yet trembled at the idea of losing his love. It was this above all which decided her to keep eternal silence about her discovery; one single word which proved that his imposture was known would raise an insurmountable barrier between them.

To conceal her trouble entirely was, however, beyond her power; her eyes frequently showed traces of her secret tears. Martin several times asked the cause of her sorrow; she tried to smile and excuse herself, only immediately sinking back into her gloomy thoughts. Martin thought it mere caprice; he observed her loss of colour, her hollow cheeks, and concluded that age was impairing her beauty, and became less attentive to her. His absences became longer and more frequent, and he did not conceal his impatience and annoyance at being watched; for her looks hung upon his, and she observed his coldness and change with much grief. Having sacrificed all in order to retain his love, she now saw it slowly slipping away from her.

Another person also observed attentively. Pierre Guerre since his explanation with Bertrande had apparently discovered no more evidence, and did not dare to bring an accusation without some positive proofs. Consequently he lost no chance of watching the proceedings of his supposed nephew, silently hoping that chance might put him on the track of a discovery. He also concluded from Bertrande’s state of melancholy that she had convinced herself of the fraud, but had resolved to conceal it.

Martin was then endeavoring to sell a part of his property, and this necessitated frequent interviews with the lawyers of the neighbouring town. Twice in the week he went to Rieux, and to make the journey easier, used to start horseback about seven in the evening, sleep at Rieux, and return the following afternoon. This arrangement did not escape his enemy's notice, who was not long in convincing himself that part of the time ostensibly spent on this journey was otherwise employed.

Towards ten o'clock on the evening of a dark night, the door of a small house lying about half a gunshot from the village opened gently for the exit of a man wrapped in a large cloak, followed by a young woman, who accompanied him some distance. Arrived at the parting point, they separated with a tender kiss and a few murmured words of adieu; the lover took his horse, which was fastened to a tree, mounted, and rode off towards Rieux. When the sounds died away, the woman turned slowly and sadly towards her home, but as she approached the door a man suddenly turned the corner of the house and barred her away. Terrified, she was on the point of crying for help, when he seized her arm and ordered her to be silent.

"Rose," he whispered, "I know everything: that man is your lover. In order to receive him safely, you send your old husband to sleep by means of a drug stolen from your father's shop. This intrigue has been going on for a month; twice a week, at seven o'clock, your door is opened to this man, who does not proceed on his way to the town until ten. I know your lover: he is my nephew."

Petrified with terror, Rose fell on her knees and implored mercy.

"Yes," replied Pierre, "you may well be frightened: I have your secret. I have only to publish it and you are ruined for ever:"

You will not do it! "entreated the guilty woman, clasping her hands.

"I have only to tell your husband," continued Pierre, "that his wife has dishonoured him, and to explain the reason of his unnaturally heavy sleep."

"He will kill me!"

"No doubt: he is jealous, he is an Italian, he will know how to avenge himself—even as I do."

“But I never did you any harm,” Rose cried in despair. “Oh! have pity, have mercy, and spare me!”

“On one condition.”

“What is it?”

“Come with me.”

Terrified almost out of her mind, Rose allowed him to lead her away.

Bertrande had just finished her evening prayer, and was preparing for bed, when she was startled by several knocks at her door. Thinking that perhaps some neighbour was in need of help, she opened it immediately, and to her astonishment beheld a dishevelled woman whom Pierre grasped by the arm. He exclaimed vehemently—

“Here is thy judge! Now, confess all to Bertrande!”

Bertrande did not at once recognise the woman, who fell at her feet, overcome by Pierre’s threats.

“Tell the truth here,” he continued, “or I go and tell it to your husband, at your own home!”—“Ah! madame, kill me,” said the unhappy creature, hiding her face; “let me rather die by your hand than his!”

Bertrande, bewildered, did not understand the position in the least, but she recognised Rose—

“But what is the matter, madame? Why are you here at this hour, pale and weeping? Why has my uncle dragged you hither? I am to judge you, does he say? Of what crime are you guilty?”

“Martin might answer that, if he were here,” remarked Pierre.

A lightning flash of jealousy shot through Bertrande’s soul at these words, all her former suspicions revived.

“What!” she said, “my husband! What do you mean?”

“That he left this woman’s house only a little while ago, that for a month they have been meeting secretly. You are betrayed: I have seen them and she does not dare to deny it.”

“Have mercy!” cried Rose, still kneeling.

The cry was a confession. Bertrande became pale as death. “O God!” she murmured, “deceived, betrayed—and by him!”

“For a month past,” repeated the old man.

“Oh! the wretch,” she continued, with increasing passion; “then his whole life is a lie! He has abused my credulity, he now abuses my love! He does not know me! He thinks he can trample on me—me, in whose power are his fortune, his honour, his very life itself!”

Then, turning to Rose—

“And you, miserable woman! by what unworthy artifice did you gain his love? Was it by witchcraft? or some poisonous philtre learned from your worthy father?”

“Alas! no, madame; my weakness is my only crime, and also my only excuse. I loved him, long ago, when I was only a young girl, and these memories have been my ruin.”

“Memories? What! did you also think you were loving the same man? Are you also his dupe? Or are you only pretending, in order to find a rag of excuse to cover your wickedness?”

It was now Rose who failed to understand; Bertrande continued, with growing excitement—

“Yes, it was not enough to usurp the rights of a husband and father, he thought to play his part still better by deceiving the mistress also Ah! it is amusing, is it not? You also, Rose, you thought he was your old lover! Well, I at least am excusable, I the wife, who only thought she was faithful to her husband!”

“What does it all mean?” asked the terrified Rose.

“It means that this man is an impostor and that I will unmask him. Revenge! revenge!”

Pierre came forward. “Bertrande,” he said, “so long as I thought you were happy, when I feared to disturb your peace, I was silent, I repressed my just indignation, and I spared the usurper of the name and rights of my nephew. Do you now give me leave to speak?”

“Yes,” she replied in a hollow voice.

“You will not contradict me?”

By way of answer she sat down by the table and wrote a few hasty lines with a trembling hand, then gave them to Pierre, whose eyes sparkled with joy.

“Yes,” he said, “vengeance for him, but for her pity. Let this humiliation be her only punishment. I promised silence in return for confession, will you grant it?”

Bertrande assented with a contemptuous gesture.

“Go, fear not,” said the old man, and Rose went out. Pierre also left the house.

Left to herself, Bertrande felt utterly worn out by so much emotion; indignation gave way to depression. She began to realise what she had done, and the scandal which would fall on her own head. Just then her baby awoke, and held out its arms, smiling, and calling for its father. Its father, was he not a criminal? Yes! but was it for her to ruin him, to invoke the law, to send him to death, after having taken him to her heart, to deliver him to infamy which would recoil on her own head and her child’s and on the infant which was yet unborn? If he had sinned before God, was it not for God to punish him? If against herself, ought she not rather to overwhelm him with contempt? But to invoke the help, of strangers to expiate this offence; to lay bare the troubles of her life, to unveil the sanctuary of the nuptial couch—in short, to summon the whole world to behold this fatal scandal, was not that what in her imprudent anger she had really done? She repented bitterly of her haste, she sought to avert the consequences, and notwithstanding the night and the bad weather, she hurried at once to Pierre’s dwelling, hoping at all costs to withdraw her denunciation. He was not there: he had at once taken a horse and started for Rieux. Her accusation was already on its way to the magistrates!

At break of day the house where Martin Guerre lodged when at Rieux was surrounded by soldiers. He came forward with confidence and inquired what was wanted. On hearing the accusation, he changed colour slightly, then collected himself, and made no resistance. When he came before the judge, Bertrande's petition was read to him, declaring him to be "an impostor, who falsely, audaciously, and treacherously had deceived her by taking the name and assuming the person of Martin Guerre," and demanding that he should be required to entreat pardon from God, the king, and herself.

The prisoner listened calmly to the charge, and met it courageously, only evincing profound surprise at such a step being taken by a wife who had lived with him for two years since his return, and who only now thought of disputing the rights he had so long enjoyed. As he was ignorant both of Bertrande's suspicions and their confirmation, and also of the jealousy which had inspired her accusation, his astonishment was perfectly natural, and did not at all appear to be assumed. He attributed the whole charge to the machinations of his uncle, Pierre Guerre; an old man, he said, who, being governed entirely by avarice and the desire of revenge, now disputed his name and rights, in order the better to deprive him of his property, which might be worth from sixteen to eighteen hundred livres. In order to attain his end, this wicked man had not hesitated to pervert his wife's mind, and at the risk of her own dishonour had instigated this calumnious charge—a horrible and unheard-of thing in the mouth of a lawful wife. "Ah! I do not blame her," he cried; "she must suffer more than I do, if she really entertains doubts such as these; but I deplore her readiness to listen to these extraordinary calumnies originated by my enemy."

The judge was a good deal impressed by so much assurance. The accused was relegated to prison, whence he was brought two days later to encounter a formal examination.

He began by explaining the cause of his long absence, originating, he said, in a domestic quarrel, as his wife well remembered. He there related his life during these eight years. At first he wandered over the country, wherever his curiosity and the love of travel led him. He then had crossed the frontier, revisited Biscay, where he was born, and having entered the service of the Cardinal of Burgos, he passed thence into the army of the King of Spain. He was wounded at the battle of St. Quentin, conveyed to a neighbouring village, where he recovered, although threatened with amputation. Anxious to again behold his wife and child, his other relations and the land of his adoption, he returned to Artigues,

where he was immediately recognised by everyone, including the identical Pierre Guerre, his uncle, who now had the cruelty to disavow him. In fact, the latter had shown him special affection up to the day when Martin required an account of his stewardship. Had he only had the cowardice to sacrifice his money and thereby defraud his children, he would not to-day be charged as an impostor. "But," continued Martin, "I resisted, and a violent quarrel ensued, in which anger perhaps carried me too far; Pierre Guerre, cunning and revengeful, has waited in silence. He has taken his time and his measures to organise this plot, hoping thereby to obtain his ends, to bring justice to the help of his avarice, and to acquire the spoils he coveted, and revenge for his defeat, by means of a sentence obtained from the scruples of the judges." Besides these explanations, which did not appear wanting in probability, Martin vehemently protested his innocence, demanding that his wife should be confronted with him, and declaring that in his presence she would not sustain the charge of personation brought against him, and that her mind not being animated by the blind hatred which dominated his persecutor, the truth would undoubtedly prevail.

He now, in his turn, demanded that the judge should acknowledge his innocence, and prove it by condemning his calumniators to the punishment invoked against himself; that his wife, Bertrande de Rolls, should be secluded in some house where her mind could no longer be perverted, and, finally, that his innocence should be declared, and expenses and compensations awarded him.

After this speech, delivered with warmth, and with every token of sincerity, he answered without difficulty all the interrogations of the judge. The following are some of the questions and answers, just as they have come down to us:—

"In what part of Biscay were you born?"

"In the village of Aymes, province of Guipuscoa."

"What were the names of your parents?"

"Antonio Guerre and Marie Toreada."

"Are they still living?"

"My father died June 15th, 1530; my mother survived him three years and twelve days."

“Have you any brothers and sisters?”

“I had one brother, who only lived three months. My four sisters, Inez, Dorothea, Marietta, and Pedrina, all came to live at Artigues when I did; they are there still, and they all recognised me.”

“What is the date of your marriage?”

“January 10, 1539.”

“Who were present at the ceremony?”

“My father-in-law, my mother-in-law, my uncle, my two sisters, Maitre Marcel and his daughter Rose; a neighbour called Claude Perrin, who got drunk at the wedding feast; also Giraud, the poet, who composed verses in our honour.”

“Who was the priest who married you?”

“The old cure, Pascal Guerin, whom I did not find alive when I returned.”

“What special circumstances occurred on the wedding-day?”

“At midnight exactly, our neighbour, Catherine Boere, brought us the repast which is known as ‘medianoche.’ This woman has recognised me, as also our old Marguerite, who has remained with us ever since the wedding.”

“What is the date of your son’s birth?”

“February 10, 1548, nine years after our marriage. I was only twelve when the ceremony took place, and did not arrive at manhood till several years later.”

“Give the date of your leaving Artigues.”

“It was in August 1549. As I left the village, I met Claude Perrin and the cure Pascal, and took leave of them. I went towards Beauvais, and I passed through Orleans, Bourges, Limoges, Bordeaux, and Toulouse. If you want the names of people whom I saw and to whom I spoke, you can have them. What more can I say?”

Never, indeed, was there a more apparently veracious statement! All the doings

of Martin Guerre seemed to be most faithfully described, and surely only himself could thus narrate his own actions. As the historian remarks, alluding to the story of Amphitryon, Mercury himself could not better reproduce all Sosia's actions, gestures, and words, than did the false Martin Guerre those of the real one.

In accordance with the demand of the accused, Bertrande de Rolls was detained in seclusion, in order to remove her from the influence of Pierre Guerre. The latter, however, did not waste time, and during the month spent in examining the witnesses cited by Martin, his diligent enemy, guided by some vague traces, departed on a journey, from which he did not return alone.

All the witnesses bore out the statement of the accused; the latter heard this in prison, and rejoiced, hoping for a speedy release. Before long he was again brought before the judge, who told him that his deposition had been confirmed by all the witnesses examined.

“Do you know of no others?” continued the magistrate. “Have you no relatives except those you have mentioned?”

“I have no others,” answered the prisoner.

“Then what do you say to this man?” said the judge, opening a door.

An old man issued forth, who fell on the prisoner's neck, exclaiming, “My nephew!”

Martin trembled in every limb, but only for a moment. Promptly recovering himself, and gazing calmly at the newcomer, he asked coolly—

“And who may you be?”

“What!” said the old man, “do you not know me? Dare you deny me?— me, your mother's brother, Carbon Barreau, the old soldier! Me, who dandled you on my knee in your infancy; me, who taught you later to carry a musket; me, who met you during the war at an inn in Picardy, when you fled secretly. Since then I have sought you everywhere; I have spoken of you, and described your face and person, until a worthy inhabitant of this country offered to bring me hither, where indeed I did not expect to find my sister's son imprisoned and fettered as a malefactor. What is his crime, may it please your honour?”

“You shall hear,” replied the magistrate. “Then you identify the prisoner as your nephew? You affirm his name to be—?”

“Arnauld du Thill, also called ‘Pansette,’ after his father, Jacques Pansa. His mother was Therese Barreau, my sister, and he was born in the village of Sagias.”

“What have you to say?” demanded the judge, turning to the accused.

“Three things,” replied the latter, unabashed, “this man is either mad, or he has been suborned to tell lies, or he is simply mistaken.”

The old man was struck dumb with astonishment. But his supposed nephew’s start of terror had not been lost upon the judge, also much impressed by the straightforward frankness of Carbon Barreau. He caused fresh investigations to be made, and other inhabitants of Sagias were summoned to Rieux, who one and all agreed in identifying the accused as the same Arnauld du Thill who had been born and had grown up under their very eyes. Several deposed that as he grew up he had taken to evil courses, and become an adept in theft and lying, not fearing even to take the sacred name of God in vain, in order to cover the untruth of his daring assertions. From such testimony the judge naturally concluded that Arnauld du Thill was quite capable of carrying on, an imposture, and that the impudence which he displayed was natural to his character. Moreover, he noted that the prisoner, who averred that he was born in Biscay, knew only a few words of the Basque language, and used these quite wrongly. He heard later another witness who deposed that the original Martin Guerre was a good wrestler and skilled in the art of fence, whereas the prisoner, having wished to try what he could do, showed no skill whatever. Finally, a shoemaker was interrogated, and his evidence was not the least damning. Martin Guerre, he declared, required twelve holes to lace his boots, and his surprise had been great when he found those of the prisoner had only nine. Considering all these points, and the cumulative evidence, the judge of Rieux set aside the favourable testimony, which he concluded had been the outcome of general credulity, imposed on by an extraordinary resemblance. He gave due weight also to Bertrande’s accusation, although she had never confirmed it, and now maintained an obstinate silence; and he pronounced a judgment by which Arnauld du Thill was declared “attainted and convicted of imposture, and was therefore condemned to be beheaded; after which his body should be divided into four quarters, and exposed at the four corners of the town.”

This sentence, as soon as it was known, caused much diversity of opinion in the town. The prisoner's enemies praised the wisdom of the judge, and those less prejudiced condemned his decision; as such conflicting testimony left room for doubt. Besides, it was thought that the possession of property and the future of the children required much consideration, also that the most absolute certainty was demanded before annulling a past of two whole years, untroubled by any counter claim whatever.

The condemned man appealed from this sentence to the Parliament of Toulouse. This court decided that the case required more careful consideration than had yet been given to it, and began by ordering Arnauld du Thill to be confronted with Pierre Guerre and Bertrande de Rolls.

Who can say what feelings animate a man who, already once condemned, finds himself subjected to a second trial? The torture scarcely ended begins again, and Hope, though reduced to a shadow, regains her sway over his imagination, which clings to her skirts, as it were, with desperation. The exhausting efforts must be recommenced; it is the last struggle—a struggle which is more desperate in proportion as there is less strength to maintain it. In this case the defendant was not one of those who are easily cast down; he collected all his energy, all his courage, hoping to come victoriously out of the new combat which lay before him.

The magistrates assembled in the great hall of the Parliament, and the prisoner appeared before them. He had first to deal with Pierre, and confronted him calmly, letting him speak, without showing any emotion. He then replied with indignant reproaches, dwelling on Pierre's greed and avarice, his vows of vengeance, the means employed to work upon Bertrande, his secret manoeuvres in order to gain his ends, and the unheard-of animosity displayed in hunting up accusers, witnesses, and calumniators. He defied Pierre to prove that he was not Martin Guerre, his nephew, inasmuch as Pierre had publicly acknowledged and embraced him, and his tardy suspicions only dated from the time of their violent quarrel. His language was so strong and vehement, that Pierre became confused and was unable to answer, and the encounter turned entirely in Arnauld's favour, who seemed to overawe his adversary from a height of injured innocence, while the latter appeared as a disconcerted slanderer.

The scene of his confrontation with Bertrande took a wholly different character. The poor woman, pale, cast down, worn by sorrow, came staggering before the

tribunal, in an almost fainting condition. She endeavoured to collect herself, but as soon as she saw the prisoner she hung her head and covered her face with her hands. He approached her and besought her in the gentlest accents not to persist in an accusation which might send him to the scaffold, not thus to avenge any sins he might have committed against her, although he could not reproach himself with any really serious fault.

Bertrande started, and murmured in a whisper, "And Rose?"

"Ah!" Arnauld exclaimed, astonished at this revelation.

His part was instantly taken. Turning to the judges—

"Gentlemen," he said, "my wife is a jealous woman! Ten years ago, when I left her, she had formed these suspicions; they were the cause of my voluntary exile. To-day she again accuses me of, guilty relations with the same person; I neither deny nor acknowledge them, but I affirm that it is the blind passion of jealousy which, aided by my uncle's suggestions, guided my wife's hand when she signed this denunciation."

Bertrande remained silent.

"Do you dare," he continued, turning towards her,— "do you dare to swear before God that jealousy did not inspire you with the wish to ruin me?"

"And you," she replied, "dare you swear that I was deceived in my suspicions?"

"You see, gentlemen," exclaimed the prisoner triumphantly, "her jealousy breaks forth before your eyes. Whether I am, or am not, guilty of the sin she attributes to me, is not the question for you to decide. Can you conscientiously admit the testimony of a woman who, after publicly acknowledging me, after receiving me in her house, after living two years in perfect amity with me, has, in a fit of angry vengeance, thought she could give the lie to all her words and actions? Ah! Bertrande," he continued, "if it only concerned my life I think I could forgive a madness of which your love is both the cause and the excuse, but you are a mother, think of that! My punishment will recoil on the head of my daughter, who is unhappy enough to have been born since our reunion, and also on our unborn child, which you condemn beforehand to curse the union which gave it being. Think of this, Bertrande, you will have to answer before God for what you are now doing!"

The unhappy woman fell on her knees, weeping.

“I adjure you,” he continued solemnly, “you, my wife, Bertrande de Rolls, to swear now, here, on the crucifix, that I am an impostor and a cheat.”

A crucifix was placed before Bertrande; she made a sign as if to push it away, endeavoured to speak, and feebly exclaimed, “No,” then fell to the ground, and was carried out insensible.

This scene considerably shook the opinion of the magistrates. They could not believe that an impostor, whatever he might be, would have sufficient daring and presence of mind thus to turn into mockery all that was most sacred. They set a new inquiry on foot, which, instead of producing enlightenment, only plunged them into still greater obscurity. Out of thirty witnesses heard, more than three-quarters agreed in identifying as Martin Guerre the man who claimed his name. Never was greater perplexity caused by more extraordinary appearances. The remarkable resemblance upset all reasoning: some recognised him as Arnould du Thill, and others asserted the exact contrary. He could hardly understand Basque, some said, though born in Biscay, was that astonishing, seeing he was only three when he left the country? He could neither wrestle nor fence well, but having no occasion to practise these exercises he might well have forgotten them. The shoemaker—who made his shoes aforetime, thought he took another measure, but he might have made a mistake before or be mistaken now. The prisoner further defended himself by recapitulating the circumstances of his first meeting with Bertrande, on his return, the thousand and one little details he had mentioned which he only could have known, also the letters in his possession, all of which could only be explained by the assumption that he was the veritable Martin Guerre. Was it likely that he would be wounded over the left eye and leg as the missing man was supposed to be? Was it likely that the old servant, that the four sisters, his uncle Pierre, many persons to whom he had related facts known only to himself, that all the community in short, would have recognised him? And even the very intrigue suspected by Bertrande, which had aroused her jealous anger, this very intrigue, if it really existed, was it not another proof of the verity of his claim, since the person concerned, as interested and as penetrating as the legitimate wife; had also accepted him as her former lover? Surely here was a mass of evidence sufficient to cast light on the case. Imagine an impostor arriving for the first time in a place where all the inhabitants are unknown to him, and attempting to personate a man who had dwelt there, who would have connections of all kinds, who would have played his part in a

thousand different scenes, who would have confided his secrets, his opinions, to relations, friends, acquaintances, to all sorts of people; who had also a wife—that is to say, a person under whose eyes nearly his whole life would be passed, a person would study him perpetually, with whom he would be continually conversing on every sort of subject. Could such an impostor sustain his impersonation for a single day, without his memory playing him false? From the physical and moral impossibility of playing such a part, was it not reasonable to conclude that the accused, who had maintained it for more than two years, was the true Martin Guerre?

There seemed, in fact, to be nothing which could account for such an attempt being successfully made unless recourse was had to an accusation of sorcery. The idea of handing him over to the ecclesiastical authorities was briefly discussed, but proofs were necessary, and the judges hesitated. It is a principle of justice, which has become a precept in law, that in cases of uncertainty the accused has the benefit of the doubt; but at the period of which we are writing, these truths were far from being acknowledged; guilt was presumed rather than innocence; and torture, instituted to force confession from those who could not otherwise be convicted, is only explicable by supposing the judges convinced of the actual guilt of the accused; for no one would have thought of subjecting a possibly innocent person to this suffering. However, notwithstanding this prejudice, which has been handed down to us by some organs of the public ministry always disposed to assume the guilt of a suspected person,—notwithstanding this prejudice, the judges in this case neither ventured to condemn Martin Guerre themselves as an impostor, nor to demand the intervention of the Church. In this conflict of contrary testimony, which seemed to reveal the truth only to immediately obscure it again, in this chaos of arguments and conjectures which showed flashes of light only to extinguish them in greater darkness, consideration for the family prevailed. The sincerity of Bertrande, the future of the children, seemed reasons for proceeding with extreme caution, and this once admitted, could only yield to conclusive evidence. Consequently the Parliament adjourned the case, matters remaining in ‘statu quo’, pending a more exhaustive inquiry. Meanwhile, the accused, for whom several relations and friends gave surety, was allowed to be at liberty at Artigues, though remaining under careful surveillance.

Bertrande therefore again saw him an inmate of the house, as if no doubts had ever been cast on the legitimacy of their union. What thoughts passed through her mind during the long ‘tete-a-tete’? She had accused this man of imposture,

and now, notwithstanding her secret conviction, she was obliged to appear as if she had no suspicion, as if she had been mistaken, to humiliate herself before the impostor, and ask forgiveness for the insanity of her conduct; for, having publicly renounced her accusation by refusing to swear to it, she had no alternative left. In order to sustain her part and to save the honour of her children, she must treat this man as her husband and appear submissive and repentant; she must show him entire confidence, as the only means of rehabilitating him and lulling the vigilance of justice. What the widow of Martin Guerre must have suffered in this life of effort was a secret between God and herself, but she looked at her little daughter, she thought of her fast approaching confinement, and took courage.

One evening, towards nightfall, she was sitting near him in the most private corner of the garden, with her little child on her knee, whilst the adventurer, sunk in gloomy thoughts, absently stroked Sanxi's fair head. Both were silent, for at the bottom of their hearts each knew the other's thoughts, and, no longer able to talk familiarly, nor daring to appear estranged, they spent, when alone together, long hours of silent dreariness.

All at once a loud uproar broke the silence of their retreat; they heard the exclamations of many persons, cries of surprise mixed with angry tones, hasty footsteps, then the garden gate was flung violently open, and old Marguerite appeared, pale, gasping, almost breathless. Bertrande hastened towards her in astonishment, followed by her husband, but when near enough to speak she could only answer with inarticulate sounds, pointing with terror to the courtyard of the house. They looked in this direction, and saw a man standing at the threshold; they approached him. He stepped forward, as if to place himself between them. He was tall, dark; his clothes were torn; he had a wooden leg; his countenance was stern. He surveyed Bertrande with a gloomy look: she cried aloud, and fell back insensible; ... she recognised her real husband!

Arnauld du Thill stood petrified. While Marguerite, distracted herself, endeavoured to revive her mistress, the neighbours, attracted by the noise, invaded the house, and stopped, gazing with stupefaction at this astonishing resemblance. The two men had the same features, the same height, the same bearing, and suggested one being in two persons. They gazed at each other in terror, and in that superstitious age the idea of sorcery and of infernal intervention naturally occurred to those present. All crossed themselves, expecting every moment to see fire from heaven strike one or other of the two

men, or that the earth would engulf one of them. Nothing happened, however, except that both were promptly arrested, in order that the strange mystery might be cleared up.

The wearer of the wooden leg, interrogated by the judges, related that he came from Spain, where first the healing of his wound, and then the want of money, had detained him hitherto. He had travelled on foot, almost a beggar. He gave exactly the same reasons for leaving Artigues as had been given by the other Martin Guerre, namely, a domestic quarrel caused by jealous suspicion, the desire of seeing other countries, and an adventurous disposition. He had gone back to his birthplace, in Biscay; thence he entered the service of the Cardinal of Burgos; then the cardinal's brother had taken him to the war, and he had served with the Spanish troops; at the battle of St. Quentiny—his leg had been shattered by an arquebus ball. So far his recital was the counterpart of the one already heard by the judges from the other man. Now, they began to differ. Martin Guerre stated that he had been conveyed to a house by a man whose features he did not distinguish, that he thought he was dying, and that several hours elapsed of which he could give no account, being probably delirious; that he suffered later intolerable pain, and on coming to himself, found that his leg had been amputated. He remained long between life and death, but he was cared for by peasants who probably saved his life; his recovery was very slow. He discovered that in the interval between being struck down in the battle and recovering his senses, his papers had disappeared, but it was impossible to suspect the people who had nursed him with such generous kindness of theft. After his recovery, being absolutely destitute, he sought to return to France and again see his wife and child: he had endured all sorts of privations and fatigues, and at length, exhausted, but rejoicing at being near the end of his troubles, he arrived, suspecting nothing, at his own door. Then the terror of the old servant, a few broken words, made him guess at some misfortune, and the appearance of his wife and of a man so exactly like himself stupefied him. Matters had now been explained, and he only regretted that his wound had not at once ended his existence.

The whole story bore the impress of truth, but when the other prisoner was asked what he had to say he adhered to his first answers, maintaining their correctness, and again asserted that he was the real Martin Guerre, and that the new claimant could only be Arnauld du Thill, the clever impostor, who was said to resemble himself so much that the inhabitants of Sagias had agreed in mistaking him for the said Arnauld.

The two Martin Guerres were then confronted without changing the situation in the least; the first showing the same assurance, the same bold and confident bearing; while the second, calling on God and men to bear witness to his sincerity, deplored his misfortune in the most pathetic terms.

The judge's perplexity was great: the affair became more and more complicated, the question remained as difficult, as uncertain as ever. All the appearances and evidences were at variance; probability seemed to incline towards one, sympathy was more in favour of the other, but actual proof was still wanting.

At length a member of the Parliament, M. de Coras, proposed as a last chance before resorting to torture, that final means of examination in a barbarous age, that Bertrande should be placed between the two rivals, trusting, he said, that in such a case a woman's instinct would divine the truth. Consequently the two Martin Guerres were brought before the Parliament, and a few moments after Bertrande was led in, weak, pale, hardly able to stand, being worn out by suffering and advanced pregnancy. Her appearance excited compassion, and all watched anxiously to see what she would do. She looked at the two men, who had been placed at different ends of the hall, and turning from him who was nearest to her, went and knelt silently before the man with the wooden leg; then, joining her hands as if praying for mercy, she wept bitterly. So simple and touching an action roused the sympathy of all present; Arnauld du Thill grew pale, and everyone expected that Martin Guerre, rejoiced at being vindicated by this public acknowledgment, would raise his wife and embrace her. But he remained cold and stern, and in a contemptuous tone—

“Your tears, madame,” he said; “they do not move me in the least, neither can you seek to excuse your credulity by the examples of my sisters and my uncle. A wife knows her husband more intimately than his other relations, as you prove by your present action, and if she is deceived it is because she consents to the deception. You are the sole cause of the misfortunes of my house, and to you only shall I ever impute them.”

Thunderstruck by this reproach, the poor woman had no strength to reply, and was taken home more dead than alive.

The dignified language of this injured husband made another point in his favour. Much pity was felt for Bertrande, as being the victim of an audacious deception; but everybody agreed that thus it beseeemed the real Martin Guerre to have

spoken. After the ordeal gone through by the wife had been also essayed by the sisters and other relatives, who one and all followed Bertrande's example and accepted the newcomer, the court, having fully deliberated, passed the following sentence, which we transcribe literally:

“Having reviewed the trial of Arnould du Thill or Pansette, calling himself Martin Guerre, a prisoner in the Conciergerie, who appeals from the decision of the judge of Rieux, etc.,

“We declare that this court negatives the appeal and defence of the said Arnould du Thill; and as punishment and amends for the imposture, deception, assumption of name and of person, adultery, rape, sacrilege, theft, larceny, and other deeds committed by the aforesaid du Thill, and causing the above-mentioned trial; this court has condemned and condemns him to do penance before the church of Artigue, kneeling, clad in his shirt only, bareheaded and barefoot, a halter on his neck, and a burning torch in his hand, and there he shall ask pardon from God, from the King, and from justice, from the said Martin Guerre and Bertrande de Rolls, husband and wife: and this done, the aforesaid du Thill shall be delivered into the hands of the executioners of the King's justice, who shall lead him through the customary streets and crossroads of the aforesaid place of Artigues, and, the halter on his neck, shall bring him before the house of the aforesaid Martin Guerre, where he shall be hung and strangled upon a gibbet erected for this purpose, after which his body shall be burnt: and for various reasons and considerations thereunto moving the court, it has awarded and awards the goods of the aforesaid Arnould du Thill, apart from the expenses of justice, to the daughter born unto him by the aforesaid Bertrande de Rolls, under pretence of marriage falsely asserted by him, having thereto assumed the name and person of the aforesaid Martin Guerre, by this mans deceiving the aforesaid de Rolls; and moreover the court has exempted and exempts from this trial the aforesaid Martin Guerre and Bertrande de Rolls, also the said Pierre Guerre, uncle of the aforesaid Martin, and has remitted and remits the aforesaid Arnould du Thill to the aforesaid judge of Rieux, in order that the present sentence may be executed according to its form and tenor. Pronounced judicially this 12th day of September 1560.”

This sentence substituted the gallows for the decapitation decreed by the first judge, inasmuch as the latter punishment was reserved for criminals of noble birth, while hanging was inflicted on meaner persons.

When once his fate was decided, Arnauld du Thill lost all his audacity. Sent back to Artigues, he was interrogated in prison by the judge of Rieux, and confessed his imposture at great length. He said the idea first occurred to him when, having returned from the camp in Picardy, he was addressed as Martin Guerre by several intimate friends of the latter. He then inquired as to the sort of life, the habits and relations of, this man, and having contrived to be near him, had watched him closely during the battle. He saw him fall, carried him away, and then, as the reader has already seen, excited his delirium to the utmost in order to obtain possession of his secrets. Having thus explained his successful imposture by natural causes, which excluded any idea of magic or sorcery, he protested his penitence, implored the mercy of God, and prepared himself for execution as became a Christian.

The next day, while the populace, collecting from the whole neighbourhood, had assembled before the parish church of Artigues in order to behold the penance of the criminal, who, barefoot, attired in a shirt, and holding a lighted torch in his hand, knelt at the entrance of the church, another scene, no less painful, took place in the house of Martin Guerre. Exhausted by her suffering, which had caused a premature confinement, Bertrande lay on her couch of pain, and besought pardon from him whom she had innocently wronged, entreating him also to pray for her soul. Martin Guerre, sitting at her bedside, extended his hand and blessed her. She took his hand and held it to her lips; she could no longer speak. All at once a loud noise was heard outside: the guilty man had just been executed in front of the house. When finally attached to the gallows, he uttered a terrible cry, which was answered by another from inside the house. The same evening, while the body of the malefactor was being consumed by fire, the remains of a mother and child were laid to rest in consecrated ground.

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CELEBRATED CRIMES VOLUME 7 (of 8) Part 1 By Alexander Dumas, pere

ALI PACHA

CHAPTER I

The beginning of the nineteenth century was a time of audacious enterprises and strange vicissitudes of fortune. Whilst Western Europe in turn submitted and struggled against a sublieutenant who made himself an emperor, who at his pleasure made kings and destroyed kingdoms, the ancient eastern part of the Continent; like mummies which preserve but the semblance of life, was gradually tumbling to pieces, and getting parcelled out amongst bold adventurers who skirmished over its ruins. Without mentioning local revolts which produced only short-lived struggles and trifling changes, of administration, such as that of Djezzar Pacha, who refused to pay tribute because he thought himself impregnable in his citadel of Saint-Jean-d'Acre, or that of Passevend-Oglou Pacha, who planted himself on the walls of Widdin as defender of the Janissaries against the institution of the regular militia decreed by Sultan Selim at Stamboul, there were wider spread rebellions which attacked the constitution of the Turkish Empire and diminished its extent; amongst them that of Czerni-Georges, which raised Servia to the position of a free state; of Mahomet Ali, who made his pachalik of Egypt into a kingdom; and finally that of the man whose, history we are about to narrate, Ali Tepeleni, Pacha of Janina, whose long resistance to the suzerain power preceded and brought about the regeneration of Greece.

Ali's own will counted for nothing in this important movement. He foresaw it, but without ever seeking to aid it, and was powerless to arrest it. He was not one of those men who place their lives and services at the disposal of any cause indiscriminately; and his sole aim was to acquire and increase a power of which he was both the guiding influence, and the end and object. His nature contained the seeds of every human passion, and he devoted all his long life to their development and gratification. This explains his whole temperament; his actions were merely the natural outcome of his character confronted with circumstances. Few men have understood themselves better or been on better terms with the orbit of their existence, and as the personality of an individual is all the more striking, in proportion as it reflects the manners and ideas of the time and country in which he has lived, so the figure of Ali Pacha stands out, if not one of the most brilliant, at least one of the most singular in contemporary history.

From the middle of the eighteenth century Turkey had been a prey to the political gangrene of which she is vainly trying to cure herself to-day, and which,

before long, will dismember her in the sight of all Europe. Anarchy and disorder reigned from one end of the empire to the other. The Osmanli race, bred on conquest alone, proved good for nothing when conquest failed. It naturally therefore came to pass when Sobieski, who saved Christianity under the walls of Vienna, as before his time Charles Martel had saved it on the plains of Poitiers, had set bounds to the wave of Mussulman westward invasion, and definitely fixed a limit which it should not pass, that the Osmanli warlike instincts recoiled upon themselves. The haughty descendants of Ortogrul, who considered themselves born to command, seeing victory forsake them, fell back upon tyranny. Vainly did reason expostulate that oppression could not long be exercised by hands which had lost their strength, and that peace imposed new and different labours on those who no longer triumphed in war; they would listen to nothing; and, as fatalistic when condemned to a state of peace as when they marched forth conquering and to conquer, they cowered down in magnificent listlessness, leaving the whole burden of their support on conquered peoples. Like ignorant farmers, who exhaust fertile fields by forcing crops; they rapidly ruined their vast and rich empire by exorbitant exactions. Inexorable conquerors and insatiable masters, with one hand they flogged their slaves and with the other plundered them. Nothing was superior to their insolence, nothing on a level with their greed. They were never glutted, and never relaxed their extortions. But in proportion as their needs increased on the one hand, so did their resources diminish on the other. Their oppressed subjects soon found that they must escape at any cost from oppressors whom they could neither appease nor satisfy. Each population took the steps best suited to its position and character; some chose inertia, others violence. The inhabitants of the plains, powerless and shelterless, bent like reeds before the storm and evaded the shock against which they were unable to stand. The mountaineers planted themselves like rocks in a torrent, and dammed its course with all their might. On both sides arose a determined resistance, different in method, similar in result. In the case of the peasants labour came to a stand-still; in that of the hill folk open war broke out. The grasping exactions of the tyrant dominant body produced nothing from waste lands and armed mountaineers; destitution and revolt were equally beyond their power to cope with; and all that was left for tyranny to govern was a desert enclosed by a wall.

But, all the same, the wants of a magnificent sultan, descendant of the Prophet and distributor of crowns, must be supplied; and to do this, the Sublime Porte needed money. Unconsciously imitating the Roman Senate, the Turkish Divan put up the empire for sale by public auction. All employments were sold to the

highest bidder; pachas, beys, cadis, ministers of every rank, and clerks of every class had to buy their posts from their sovereign and get the money back out of his subjects. They spent their money in the capital, and recuperated themselves in the provinces. And as there was no other law than their master's pleasure, so there, was no other guarantee than his caprice. They had therefore to set quickly to work; the post might be lost before its cost had been recovered. Thus all the science of administration resolved itself into plundering as much and as quickly as possible. To this end, the delegate of imperial power delegated in his turn, on similar conditions, other agents to seize for him and for themselves all they could lay their hands on; so that the inhabitants of the empire might be divided into three classes—those who were striving to seize everything; those who were trying to save a little; and those who, having nothing and hoping for nothing, took no interest in affairs at all.

Albania was one of the most difficult provinces to manage. Its inhabitants were poor, brave, and, the nature of the country was mountainous and inaccessible. The pachas had great difficulty in collecting tribute, because the people were given to fighting for their bread. Whether Mahomedans or Christians, the Albanians were above all soldiers. Descended on the one side from the unconquerable Scythians, on the other from the ancient Macedonians, not long since masters of the world; crossed with Norman adventurers brought eastwards by the great movement of the Crusades; they felt the blood of warriors flow in their veins, and that war was their element. Sometimes at feud with one another, canton against canton, village against village, often even house against house; sometimes rebelling against the government their sanjaks; sometimes in league with these against the sultan; they never rested from combat except in an armed peace. Each tribe had its military organisation, each family its fortified stronghold, each man his gun on his shoulder. When they had nothing better to do, they tilled their fields, or mowed their neighbours', carrying off, it should be noted, the crop; or pastured their flocks, watching the opportunity to trespass over pasture limits. This was the normal and regular life of the population of Epirus, Thesprotia, Thessaly, and Upper Albania. Lower Albania, less strong, was also less active and bold; and there, as in many other parts of Turkey, the dalesman was often the prey of the mountaineer. It was in the mountain districts where were preserved the recollections of Scander Beg, and where the manners of ancient Laconia prevailed; the deeds of the brave soldier were sung on the lyre, and the skilful robber quoted as an example to the children by the father of the family. Village feasts were held on the booty taken from strangers; and the favourite dish was always a stolen sheep. Every man was esteemed in proportion

to his skill and courage, and a man's chances of making a good match were greatly enhanced when he acquired the reputation of being an agile mountaineer and a good bandit.

The Albanians proudly called this anarchy liberty, and religiously guarded a state of disorder bequeathed by their ancestors, which always assured the first place to the most valiant.

It was amidst men and manners such as these that Ali Tepeleni was born. He boasted that he belonged to the conquering race, and that he descended from an ancient Anatolian family which had crossed into Albania with the troops of Bajazet Ilderim. But it is made certain by the learned researches of M. de Pouqueville that he sprang from a native stock, and not an Asiatic one, as he pretended. His ancestors were Christian Skipetars, who became Mussulmans after the Turkish invasion, and his ancestry certainly cannot be traced farther back than the end of the sixteenth century.

Mouktar Tepeleni, his grandfather, perished in the Turkish expedition against Corfu, in 1716. Marshal Schullemburg, who defended the island, having repulsed the enemy with loss, took Mouktar prisoner on Mount San Salvador, where he was in charge of a signalling party, and with a barbarity worthy of his adversaries, hung him without trial. It must be admitted that the memory of this murder must have had the effect of rendering Ali badly disposed towards Christians.

Mouktar left three sons, two of whom, Salik and Mahomet, were born of the same mother, a lawful wife, but the mother of the youngest, Veli, was a slave. His origin was no legal bar to his succeeding like his brothers. The family was one of the richest in the town of Tepelen, whose name it bore, it enjoyed an income of six thousand piastres, equal to twenty thousand francs. This was a large fortune in a poor country, where, all commodities were cheap. But the Tepeleni family, holding the rank of beys, had to maintain a state like that of the great financiers of feudal Europe. They had to keep a large stud of horses, with a great retinue of servants and men-at-arms, and consequently to incur heavy expenses; thus they constantly found their revenue inadequate. The most natural means of raising it which occurred to them was to diminish the number of those who shared it; therefore the two elder brothers, sons of the wife, combined against Veli, the son of the slave, and drove him out of the house. The latter, forced to leave home, bore his fate like a brave man, and determined to levy

exactions on others to compensate him for the losses incurred through his brothers. He became a freebooter, patrolling highroads and lanes, with his gun on his shoulder and his yataghan in his belt, attacking, holding for ransom, or plundering all whom he encountered.

After some years of this profitable business, he found himself a wealthy man and chief of a warlike band. Judging that the moment for vengeance had arrived, he marched for Tepelen, which he reached unsuspected, crossed the river Vojutza, the ancient Aous, penetrated the streets unresisted, and presented himself before the paternal house, in which his brothers, forewarned, had barricaded themselves. He at once besieged them, soon forced the gates, and pursued them to a tent, in which they took a final refuge. He surrounded this tent, waited till they were inside it, and then set fire to the four corners. "See," said he to those around him, "they cannot accuse me of vindictive reprisals; my brothers drove me out of doors, and I retaliate by keeping them at home for ever."

In a few moments he was his father's sole heir and master of Tepelen. Arrived at the summit of his ambition, he gave up freebooting, and established himself in the town, of which he became chief ago. He had already a son by a slave, who soon presented him with another son, and afterwards with a daughter, so that he had no reason to fear dying without an heir. But finding himself rich enough to maintain more wives and bring up many children, he desired to increase his credit by allying himself to some great family of the country. He therefore solicited and obtained the hand of Kamco, daughter of a bey of Conitza. This marriage attached him by the ties of relationship to the principal families of the province, among others to Kourd Pacha, Vizier of Serat, who was descended from the illustrious race of Scander Beg. After a few years, Veli had by his new wife a son named Ali, the subject of this history, and a daughter named Chainitza.

In spite of his intentions to reform, Veli could not entirely give up his old habits. Although his fortune placed him altogether above small gains and losses, he continued to amuse himself by raiding from time to time sheep, goats, and other perquisites, probably to keep his hand in. This innocent exercise of his taste was not to the fancy of his neighbours, and brawls and fights recommenced in fine style. Fortune did not always favour him, and the old mountaineer lost in the town part of what he had made on the hills. Vexations soured his temper and injured his health. Notwithstanding the injunctions of Mahomet, he sought consolation in wine, which soon closed his career. He died in 1754.

CHAPTER II

Ali thus at thirteen years of age was free to indulge in the impetuosity of his character. From his early youth he had manifested a mettle and activity rare in young Turks, haughty by nature and self-restrained by education. Scarcely out of the nursery, he spent his time in climbing mountains, wandering through forests, scaling precipices, rolling in snow, inhaling the wind, defying the tempests, breathing out his nervous energy through every pore. Possibly he learnt in the midst of every kind of danger to brave everything and subdue everything; possibly in sympathy with the majesty of nature, he felt aroused in him a need of personal grandeur which nothing could satiate. In vain his father sought to calm his savage temper; and restrain his vagabond spirit; nothing was of, any use. As obstinate as intractable, he set at defiance all efforts and all precautions. If they shut him up, he broke the door or jumped out of the window; if they threatened him, he pretended to comply, conquered by fear, and promised everything that was required, but only to break his word the first opportunity. He had a tutor specially attached to his person and charged to supervise all his actions. He constantly deluded him by fresh tricks, and when he thought himself free from the consequences, he maltreated him with gross violence. It was only in his youth, after his father's death, that he became more manageable; he even consented to learn to read, to please his mother, whose idol he was, and to whom in return he gave all his affection.

If Kamco had so strong a liking for Ali, it was because she found in him, not only her blood, but also her character. During the lifetime of her husband, whom she feared, she seemed only an ordinary woman; but as soon as his eyes were closed, she gave free scope to the violent passions which agitated her bosom. Ambitious, bold, vindictive; she assiduously cultivated the germs of ambition, hardihood, and vengeance which already strongly showed themselves in the young Ali. "My son," she was never tired of telling him, "he who cannot defend his patrimony richly deserves to lose it. Remember that the property of others is only theirs so long as they are strong enough to keep it, and that when you find yourself strong enough to take it from them, it is yours. Success justifies everything, and everything is permissible to him who has the power to do it."

Ali, when he reached the zenith of his greatness, used to declare that his success was entirely his mother's work. "I owe everything to my mother," he said one

day to the French Consul; “for my father, when he died, left me nothing but a den of wild beasts and a few fields. My imagination, inflamed by the counsels of her who has given me life twice over, since she has made me both a man and a vizier, revealed to me the secret of my destiny. Thenceforward I saw nothing in Tepelen but the natal air from which I was to spring on the prey which I devoured mentally. I dreamt of nothing else but power, treasures, palaces, in short what time has realised and still promises; for the point I have now reached is not the limit of my hopes.”

Kamco did not confine herself to words; she employed every means to increase the fortune of her beloved son and to make him a power. Her first care was to poison the children of Veli’s favourite slave, who had died before him. Then, at ease about the interior of her family, she directed her attention to the exterior. Renouncing all the habit of her sex, she abandoned the veil and the distaff, and took up arms, under pretext of maintaining the rights of her children. She collected round her her husband’s old partisans, whom she attached to her, service, some by presents, others by various favours, and she gradually enlisted all the lawless and adventurous men in Toscaria. With their aid, she made herself all powerful in Tepelen, and inflicted the most rigorous persecutions on such as remained hostile to her.

But the inhabitants of the two adjacent villages of Kormovo and Kardiki, fearing lest this terrible woman, aided by her son, now grown into a man, should strike a blow against their independence; made a secret alliance against her, with the object of putting her out of the way the first convenient opportunity. Learning one day that Ali had started on a distant expedition with his best soldiers; they surprised Tepelen under cover of night, and carried off Kamco and her daughter Chainitza captives to Kardiki. It was proposed to put them to death; and sufficient evidence to justify their execution was not wanting; but their beauty saved their lives; their captors preferred to revenge themselves by licentiousness rather than by murder. Shut up all day in prison, they only emerged at night to pass into the arms of the men who had won them by lot the previous morning. This state of things lasted for a month, at the end of which a Greek of Argyro-Castron, named G. Malicovo, moved by compassion for their horrible fate, ransomed them for twenty thousand piastres, and took them back to Tepelen.

Ali had just returned. He was accosted by his mother and sister, pale with fatigue, shame, and rage. They told him what had taken place, with cries and tears, and Kamco added, fixing her distracted eyes upon him, “My son! my son!

my soul will enjoy no peace till Kormovo and Kardikil destroyed by thy scimitar, will no longer exist to bear witness to my dishonour.”

Ali, in whom this sight and this story had aroused, sanguinary passions, promised a vengeance proportioned to the outrage, and worked with all his might to place himself in a position to keep his word. A worthy son of his father, he had commenced life in the fashion of the heroes of ancient Greece, stealing sheep and goats, and from the age of fourteen years he had acquired an equal reputation to that earned by the son of Jupiter and Maia. When he grew to manhood, he extended his operations. At the time of which we are speaking, he had long practised open pillage. His plundering expeditions added to his mother's savings, who since her return from Kardiki had altogether withdrawn from public life, and devoted herself to household duties, enabled him to collect a considerable force for an expedition against Kormovo, one of the two towns he had sworn to destroy. He marched against it at the head of his banditti, but found himself vigorously opposed, lost part of his force, and was obliged to save himself and the rest by flight. He did not stop till he reached Tepelen, where he had a warm reception from Kamco, whose thirst for vengeance had been disappointed by his defeat. “Go!” said she, “go, coward! go spin with the women in the harem! The distaff is a better weapon for you than the scimitar!” “The young man answered not a word, but, deeply wounded by these reproaches, retired to hide his humiliation in the bosom of his old friend the mountain. The popular legend, always thirsting for the marvellous in the adventures of heroes, has it that he found in the ruins of a church a treasure which enabled him to reconstitute his party. But he himself has contradicted this story, stating that it was by the ordinary methods of rapine and plunder that he replenished his finances. He selected from his old band of brigands thirty palikars, and entered, as their bouloubachi, or leader of the group, into the service of the Pacha of Negropont. But he soon tired of the methodical life he was obliged to lead, and passed into Thessaly, where, following the example of his father Veli, he employed his time in brigandage on the highways. Thence he raided the Pindus chain of mountains, plundered a great number of villages, and returned to Tepelen, richer and consequently more esteemed than ever.

He employed his fortune and influence in collecting a formidable guerilla force, and resumed his plundering operations. Kurd Pacha soon found himself compelled, by the universal outcry of the province, to take active measures against this young brigand. He sent against him a division of troops, which defeated him and brought him prisoner with his men to Berat, the capital of

Central Albania and residence of the governor. The country flattered itself that at length it was freed from its scourge. The whole body of bandits was condemned to death; but Ali was not the man to surrender his life so easily. Whilst they were hanging his comrades, he threw himself at the feet of the pacha and begged for mercy in the name of his parents, excusing himself on account of his youth, and promising a lasting reform. The pacha, seeing at his feet a comely youth, with fair hair and blue eyes, a persuasive voice, and eloquent tongue, and in whose veins flowed the same blood as his own, was moved with pity and pardoned him. Ali got off with a mild captivity in the palace of his powerful relative, who heaped benefits upon him, and did all he could to lead him into the paths of probity. He appeared amenable to these good influences, and bitterly to repent his past errors. After some years, believing in his reformation, and moved by the prayers of Kamco, who incessantly implored the restitution of her dear son, the generous pacha restored him his liberty, only giving him to understand that he had no more mercy to expect if he again disturbed the public peace. Ali taking the threat seriously; did not run the risk of braving it, and, on the contrary, did all he could to conciliate the man whose anger he dared not kindle. Not only did he keep the promise he had made to live quietly, but by his good conduct he caused his, former escapades to be forgotten, putting under obligation all his neighbours, and attaching to himself, through the services he rendered them, a great number of friendly disposed persons. In this manner he soon assumed a distinguished and honourable rank among the beys of the country, and being of marriageable age, he sought and formed an alliance with the daughter of Capelan Tigre, Pacha of Delvino, who resided at Argyro-Castron. This union, happy on both sides, gave him, with one of the most accomplished women in Epirus, a high position and great influence.

It seemed as if this marriage were destined to wean Ali forever from his former turbulent habits and wild adventures. But the family into which he had married afforded violent contrasts and equal elements of good and mischief. If Emineh, his wife, was a model of virtue, his father-in-law, Capelan, was a composition of every vice—selfish, ambitious, turbulent, fierce. Confident in his courage, and further emboldened by his remoteness from the capital, the Pacha of Delvino gloried in setting law and authority at defiance.

Ali's disposition was too much like that of his father-in-law to prevent him from taking his measure very quickly. He soon got on good terms with him, and entered into his schemes, waiting for an opportunity to denounce him and become his successor. For this opportunity he had not long to wait.

Capelan's object in giving his daughter to Tepeleni was to enlist him among the beys of the province to gain independence, the ruling passion of viziers. The cunning young man pretended to enter into the views of his father-in-law, and did all he could to urge him into the path of rebellion.

An adventurer named Stephano Piccolo, an emissary of Russia, had just raised in Albania the standard of the Cross and called to arms all the Christians of the Acroceraunian Mountains. The Divan sent orders to all the pachas of Northern Turkey in Europe to instantly march against the insurgents and quell the rising in blood.

Instead of obeying the orders of the Divan and joining Kurd Pacha, who had summoned him, Capelan, at the instigation of his son-in-law, did all he could to embarrass the movement of the imperial troops, and without openly making common cause with the insurgents, he rendered them substantial aid in their resistance. They were, notwithstanding, conquered and dispersed; and their chief, Stephano Piccolo, had to take refuge in the unexplored caves of Montenegro.

When the struggle was over, Capelan, as Ali had foreseen, was summoned to give an account of his conduct before the roumeli-valicy, supreme judge over Turkey in Europe. He was not only accused of the gravest offences, but proofs of them were forwarded to the Divan by the very man who had instigated them. There could be no doubt as to the result of the inquiry; therefore, the pacha, who had no suspicions of his son-in-law's duplicity, determined not to leave his pachalik. That was not in accordance with the plans of Ali, who wished to succeed to both the government and the wealth of his father-in-law. He accordingly made the most plausible remonstrances against the inefficacy and danger of such a resistance. To refuse to plead was tantamount to a confession of guilt, and was certain to bring on his head a storm against which he was powerless to cope, whilst if he obeyed the orders of the roumeli-valicy he would find it easy to excuse himself. To give more effect to his perfidious advice, Ali further employed the innocent Emineh, who was easily alarmed on her father's account. Overcome by the reasoning of his son-in-law and the tears of his daughter, the unfortunate pacha consented to go to Monastir, where he had been summoned to appear, and where he was immediately arrested and beheaded.

Ali's schemes had succeeded, but both his ambition and his cupidity were frustrated. Ali, Bey of Argyro-Castron, who had throughout shown himself

devoted to the sultan, was nominated Pacha of Delvino in place of Capelan. He sequestered all the property of his predecessor, as confiscated to the sultan, and thus deprived Ali Tepeleni of all the fruits of his crime.

This disappointment kindled the wrath of the ambitious Ali. He swore vengeance for the spoliation of which he considered himself the victim. But the moment was not favourable for putting his projects in train. The murder of Capelan, which its perpetrator intended for a mere crime, proved a huge blunder. The numerous enemies of Tepeleni, silent under the administration of the late pacha, whose resentment they had cause to fear, soon made common cause under the new one, for whose support they had hopes. Ali saw the danger, sought and found the means to obviate it. He succeeded in making a match between Ali of Argyro-Castron, who was unmarried, and Chainitza, his own sister. This alliance secured to him the government of Tigre, which he held under Capelan. But that was not sufficient. He must put himself in a state of security against the dangers he had lately, experienced, and establish himself on a firm footing' against possible accidents. He soon formed a plan, which he himself described to the French Consul in the following words:—

“Years were elapsing,” said he, “and brought no important change in my position. I was an important partisan, it is true, and strongly supported, but I held no title or Government employment of my own. I recognised the necessity of establishing myself firmly in my birthplace. I had devoted friends, and formidable foes, bent on my destruction, whom I must put out of the way, for my own safety. I set about a plan for destroying them at one blow, and ended by devising one with which I ought to have commenced my career. Had I done so, I should have saved much time and pains.

“I was in the habit of going every day, after hunting, for a siesta in a neighbouring wood. A confidential servant of mine suggested to my enemies the idea of surprising me and assassinating one there. I myself supplied the plan of the conspiracy, which was adopted. On the day agreed upon, I preceded my adversaries to the place where I was accustomed to repose, and caused a goat to be pinioned and muzzled, and fastened under the tree, covered with my cape; I then returned home by a roundabout path. Soon after I had left, the conspirators arrived, and fired a volley at the goat.

“They ran up to make certain of my death, but were interrupted by a piquet of my men, who unexpectedly emerged from a copse where I had posted them, and

they were obliged to return to Tepelen, which they entered, riotous with joy, crying 'Ali Bey is dead, now we are free!' This news reached my harem, and I heard the cries of my mother and my wife mingled with the shouts of my enemies. I allowed the commotion to run its course and reach its height, so as to indicate which were my friends and which my foes. But when the former were at the depth of their distress and the latter at the height of their joy, and, exulting in their supposed victory, had drowned their prudence and their courage in floods of wine, then, strong in the justice of my cause, I appeared upon the scene. Now was the time for my friends to triumph and for my foes to tremble. I set to work at the head of my partisans, and before sunrise had exterminated the last of my enemies. I distributed their lands, their houses, and their goods amongst my followers, and from that moment I could call the town of Tepelen my own."

A less ambitious man might perhaps have remained satisfied with such a result. But Ali did not look upon the suzerainty of a canton as a final object, but only as a means to an end; and he had not made himself master of Tepelen to limit himself to a petty state, but to employ it as a base of operations.

He had allied himself to Ali of Argyro-Castron to get rid of his enemies; once free from them, he began to plot against his supplanter. He forgot neither his vindictive projects nor his ambitious schemes. As prudent in execution as bold in design, he took good care not to openly attack a man stronger than himself, and gained by stratagem what he could not obtain by violence. The honest and straightforward character of his brother-in-law afforded an easy success to his perfidy. He began by endeavouring to suborn his sister Chainitza, and several times proposed to her to poison her husband; but she, who dearly loved the pacha, who was a kind husband and to whom she had borne two children, repulsed his suggestions with horror, and threatened, if he persisted, to denounce him. Ali, fearing the consequences if she carried out her threat, begged forgiveness for his wicked plans, pretended deep repentance, and spoke of his brother-in-law in terms of the warmest affection. His acting was so consummate that even Chainitza, who well knew her brother's subtle character, was deceived by it. When he saw that she was his dupe, knowing that he had nothing more either to fear or to hope for from that side, he directed his attention to another.

The pacha had a brother named Soliman, whose character nearly resembled that of Tepeleni. The latter, after having for some time quietly studied him, thought he discerned in him the man he wanted; he tempted him to kill the pacha, offering him, as the price of this crime, his whole inheritance and the hand of

Chainitza, only reserving for himself the long coveted sanjak. Soliman accepted the proposals, and the fratricidal bargain was concluded. The two conspirators, sole masters of the secret, the horrible nature of which guaranteed their mutual fidelity, and having free access to the person of their victim; could not fail in their object.

One day, when they were both received by the pacha in private audience, Soliman, taking advantage of a moment when he was unobserved, drew a pistol from his belt and blew out his brother's brains. Chainitza ran at the sound, and saw her husband lying dead between her brother and her brother-in-law. Her cries for help were stopped by threats of death if she moved or uttered a sound. As she lay, fainting with grief and terror, Ali made, a sign to Soliman, who covered her with his cloak, and declared her his wife. Ali pronounced the marriage concluded, and retired for it to be consummated. Thus was celebrated this frightful wedding, in the scene of an awful crime; beside the corpse of a man who a moment before had been the husband of the bride and the brother of the bridegroom.

The assassins published the death of the pacha, attributing it, as is usual in Turkey, to a fit of cerebral apoplexy. But the truth soon leaked out from the lying shrouds in which it had been wrapped. Reports even exceeded the truth, and public opinion implicated Chainitza in a crime of which she had been but the witness. Appearances certainly justified these suspicions. The young wife had soon consoled herself in the arms of her second husband for the loss of the first, and her son by him presently died suddenly, thus leaving Soliman in lawful and peaceful possession of all his brother's wealth. As for the little girl, as she had no rights and could hurt no one, her life was spared; and she was eventually married to a bey of Cleisoura, destined in the sequel to cut a tragic figure in the history of the Tepeleni family.

But Ali was once more deprived of the fruit of his bloody schemes. Notwithstanding all his intrigues, the sanjak of Delvino was conferred, not upon him, but upon a bey of one of the first families of Zapouria. But, far from being discouraged, he recommenced with new boldness and still greater confidence the work of his elevation, so often begun and so often interrupted. He took advantage of his increasing influence to ingratiate himself with the new pasha, and was so successful in insinuating himself into his confidence, that he was received into the palace and treated like the pacha's son. There he acquired complete knowledge of the details of the pachalik and the affairs of the pacha,

preparing himself to govern the one when he had got rid of the other.

The sanjak of Delvino was bounded from Venetian territory by the district of Buthrotum. Selim, a better neighbour and an abler politician than his predecessors, sought to renew and preserve friendly commercial relations with the purveyors of the Magnificent Republic. This wise conduct, equally advantageous for both the bordering provinces, instead of gaining for the pacha the praise and favours which he deserved, rendered him suspected at a court whose sole political idea was hatred of the name of Christian, and whose sole means of government was terror. Ali immediately perceived the pacha's error, and the advantage which he himself could derive from it. Selim, as one of his commercial transactions with the Venetians, had sold them, for a number of years, the right of felling timber in a forest near Lake Reloda. Ali immediately took advantage of this to denounce the pasha as guilty of having alienated the territory of the Sublime Porte, and of a desire to deliver to the infidels all the province of Delvino. Masking his ambitious designs under the veil of religion and patriotism, he lamented, in his denunciatory report, the necessity under which he found himself, as a loyal subject and faithful Mussulman, of accusing a man who had been his benefactor, and thus at the same time gained the benefit of crime and the credit of virtue.

Under the gloomy despotism of the Turks, a man in any position of responsibility is condemned almost as soon as accused; and if he is not strong enough to inspire terror, his ruin is certain. Ali received at Tepelen, where he had retired to more conveniently weave his perfidious plots, an order to get rid of the pacha. At the receipt of the firman of execution he leaped with joy, and flew to Delvino to seize the prey which was abandoned to him.

The noble Selim, little suspecting that his protege had become his accuser and was preparing to become his executioner, received him with more tenderness than ever, and lodged him, as heretofore, in his palace. Under the shadow of this hospitable roof, Ali skilfully prepared the consummation of the crime which was for ever to draw him out of obscurity. He went every morning to pay his court to the pacha, whose confidence he doubted; then, one day, feigning illness, he sent excuses for inability to pay his respects to a man whom he was accustomed to regard as his father, and begged him to come for a moment into his apartment. The invitation being accepted, he concealed assassins in one of the cupboards without shelves, so common in the East, which contain by day the mattresses spread by night on the floor for the slaves to sleep upon. At the hour fixed, the

old man arrived. Ali rose from his sofa with a depressed air, met him, kissed the hem of his robe, and, after seating him in his place, himself offered him a pipe and coffee, which were accepted. But instead of putting the cup in the hand stretched to receive it, he let it fall on the floor, where it broke into a thousand pieces. This was the signal. The assassins sprang from their retreat and darted upon Selim, who fell, exclaiming, like Caesar, "And it is thou, my son, who takest my life!"

At the sound of the tumult which followed the assassination, Selim's bodyguard, running up, found Ali erect, covered with blood, surrounded by assassins, holding in his hand the firman displayed, and crying with a menacing voice, "I have killed the traitor Selim by the order of our glorious sultan; here is his imperial command." At these words, and the sight of the fatal diploma, all prostrated themselves terror-stricken. Ali, after ordering the decapitation of Selim, whose head he seized as a trophy, ordered the *cadi*, the *beys*, and the Greek archons to meet at the palace, to prepare the official account of the execution of the sentence. They assembled, trembling; the sacred hymn of the *Fatahat* was sung, and the murder declared legal, in the name of the merciful and compassionate God, Lord of the world.

When they had sealed up the effects of the victim, the murderer left the palace, taking with him, as a hostage, Mustapha, son of Selim, destined to be even more unfortunate than his father.

A few days afterwards, the *Divan* awarded to Ali *Tepeleni*, as a reward for his zeal for the State and religion, the *sanjak* of *Thessaly*, with the title of *Dervendgi-pacha*, or *Provost Marshal* of the roads. This latter dignity was conferred on the condition of his levying a body of four thousand men to clear the valley of the *Peneus* of a multitude of Christian chiefs who exercised more power than the officers of the *Grand Seigneur*. The new *pacha* took advantage of this to enlist a numerous body of Albanians ready for any enterprise, and completely devoted to him. With two important commands, and with this strong force at his back, he repaired to *Trikala*, the seat of his government, where he speedily acquired great influence.

His first act of authority was to exterminate the bands of *Armatolis*, or Christian militia, which infested the plain. He laid violent hands on all whom he caught, and drove the rest back into their mountains, splitting them up into small bands whom he could deal with at his pleasure. At the same time he sent a few heads to

Constantinople, to amuse the sultan and the mob, and some money to the ministers to gain their support. "For," said he, "water sleeps, but envy never does." These steps were prudent, and whilst his credit increased at court, order was reestablished from the defiles of the Perrebia of Pindus to the vale of Tempe and to the pass of Thermopylae.

These exploits of the provost-marshal, amplified by Oriental exaggeration, justified the ideas which were entertained of the capacity of Ali Pacha. Impatient of celebrity, he took good care himself to spread his fame, relating his prowess to all comers, making presents to the sultan's officers who came into his government, and showing travellers his palace courtyard festooned with decapitated heads. But what chiefly tended to consolidate his power was the treasure which he ceaselessly amassed by every means. He never struck for the mere pleasure of striking, and the numerous victims of his proscriptions only perished to enrich him. His death sentences always fell on beys and wealthy persons whom he wished to plunder. In his eyes the axe was but an instrument of fortune, and the executioner a tax-gatherer.

CHAPTER III

Having governed Thessaly in this manner during several years, Ali found himself in a position to acquire the province of Janina, the possession of which, by making him master of Epirus, would enable him to crush all his enemies and to reign supreme over the three divisions of Albania.

But before he could succeed in this, it was necessary to dispose of the pacha already in possession. Fortunately for Ali, the latter was a weak and indolent man, quite incapable of struggling against so formidable a rival; and his enemy speedily conceived and put into execution a plan intended to bring about the fulfilment of his desires. He came to terms with the same Armatolians whom he had formerly treated so harshly, and let them loose, provided with arms and ammunition, on the country which he wished to obtain. Soon the whole region echoed with stories of devastation and pillage. The pacha, unable to repel the incursions of these mountaineers, employed the few troops he had in oppressing the inhabitants of the plains, who, groaning under both extortion and rapine, vainly filled the air with their despairing cries. Ali hoped that the Divan, which usually judged only after the event, seeing that Epirus lay desolate, while Thessaly flourished under his own administration, would, before long, entrust himself with the government of both provinces, when a family incident occurred, which for a time diverted the course of his political manoeuvres.

For a long time his mother Kamco had suffered from an internal cancer, the result of a life of depravity. Feeling that her end drew near, she despatched messenger after messenger, summoning her son to her bedside. He started, but arrived too late, and found only his sister Chainitza mourning over the body of their mother, who had expired in her arms an hour previously. Breathing unutterable rage and pronouncing horrible imprecations against Heaven, Kamco had commanded her children, under pain of her dying curse, to carry out her last wishes faithfully. After having long given way to their grief, Ali and Chainitza read together the document which contained these commands. It ordained some special assassinations, mentioned sundry villages which, some day; were to be given to the flames, but ordered them most especially, as soon as possible, to exterminate the inhabitants of Kormovo and Kardiki, from whom she had endured the last horrors of slavery.

Then, after advising her children to remain united, to enrich their soldiers, and to count as nothing people who were useless to them, Kamco ended by commanding them to send in her name a pilgrim to Mecca, who should deposit an offering on the tomb of the Prophet for the repose of her soul. Having perused these last injunctions, Ali and Chainitza joined hands, and over the inanimate remains of their departed mother swore to accomplish her dying behests.

The pilgrimage came first under consideration. Now a pilgrim can only be sent as proxy to Mecca, or offerings be made at the tomb of Medina, at the expense of legitimately acquired property duly sold for the purpose. The brother and sister made a careful examination of the family estates, and after long hunting, thought they had found the correct thing in a small property of about fifteen hundred francs income, inherited from their great-grandfather, founder of the Tepel-Enian dynasty. But further investigations disclosed that even this last resource had been forcibly taken from a Christian, and the idea of a pious pilgrimage and a sacred offering had to be given up. They then agreed to atone for the impossibility of expiation by the grandeur of their vengeance, and swore to pursue without ceasing and to destroy without mercy all enemies of their family.

The best mode of carrying out this terrible and self-given pledge was that Ali should resume his plans of aggrandizement exactly where he had left them. He succeeded in acquiring the pachalik of Janina, which was granted him by the Porte under the title of "arpalik," or conquest. It was an old custom, natural to the warlike habits of the Turks, to bestow the Government provinces or towns affecting to despise the authority of the Grand Seigneur on whomsoever succeeded in controlling them, and Janina occupied this position. It was principally inhabited by Albanians, who had an enthusiastic admiration for anarchy, dignified by them with the name of "Liberty," and who thought themselves independent in proportion to the disturbance they succeeded in making. Each lived retired as if in a mountain castle, and only went out in order to participate in the quarrels of his faction in the forum. As for the pachas, they were relegated to the old castle on the lake, and there was no difficulty in obtaining their recall.

Consequently there was a general outcry at the news of Ali Pacha's nomination, and it was unanimously agreed that a man whose character and power were alike dreaded must not be admitted within the walls of Janina. Ali, not choosing to risk his forces in an open battle with a warlike population, and preferring a

slower and safer way to a short and dangerous one, began by pillaging the villages and farms belonging to his most powerful opponents. His tactics succeeded, and the very persons who had been foremost in vowing hatred to the son of Kamco and who had sworn most loudly that they would die rather than submit to the tyrant, seeing their property daily ravaged, and impending ruin if hostilities continued, applied themselves to procure peace. Messengers were sent secretly to Ali, offering to admit him into Janina if he would undertake to respect the lives and property of his new allies. Ali promised whatever they asked, and entered the town by night. His first proceeding was to appear before the *cadi*, whom he compelled to register and proclaim his *firman*s of investiture.

In the same year in which he arrived at this dignity, really the desire and object of Ali's whole life, occurred also the death of the Sultan Abdul Hamid, whose two sons, Mustapha and Mahmoud, were confined in the Old Seraglio. This change of rulers, however, made no difference to Ali; the peaceful Selim, exchanging the prison to which his nephews were now relegated, for the throne of their father, confirmed the Pacha of Janina in the titles, offices, and privileges which had been conferred on him.

Established in his position by this double investiture, Ali applied himself to the definite settlement of his claims. He was now fifty years of age, and was at the height of his intellectual development: experience had been his teacher, and the lesson of no single event had been lost upon him. An uncultivated but just and penetrating mind enabled him to comprehend facts, analyse causes, and anticipate results; and as his heart never interfered with the deductions of his rough intelligence, he had by a sort of logical sequence formulated an inflexible plan of action. This man, wholly ignorant, not only of the ideas of history but also of the great names of Europe, had succeeded in divining, and as a natural consequence of his active and practical character, in also realising Macchiavelli, as is amply shown in the expansion of his greatness and the exercise of his power. Without faith in God, despising men, loving and thinking only of himself, distrusting all around him, audacious in design, immovable in resolution, inexorable in execution, merciless in vengeance, by turns insolent, humble, violent, or supple according to circumstances, always and entirely logical in his egotism, he is Cesar Borgia reborn as a Mussulman; he is the incarnate ideal of Florentine policy, the Italian prince converted into a satrap.

Age had as yet in no way impaired Ali's strength and activity, and nothing prevented his profiting by the advantages of his position. Already possessing

great riches, which every day saw increasing under his management, he maintained a large body of warlike and devoted troops, he united the offices of Pacha of two tails of Janina, of Toparch of Thessaly, and of Provost Marshal of the Highway. As influential aids both to his reputation for general ability and the terror of his' arms, and his authority as ruler, there stood by his side two sons, Mouktar and Veli, offspring of his wife Emineh, both fully grown and carefully educated in the principles of their father.

Ali's first care, once master of Janina, was to annihilate the beys forming the aristocracy of the place, whose hatred he was well aware of, and whose plots he dreaded. He ruined them all, banishing many and putting others to death. Knowing that he must make friends to supply the vacancy caused by the destruction of his foes, he enriched with the spoil the Albanian mountaineers in his pay, known by the name of Skipetars, on whom he conferred most of the vacant employments. But much too prudent to allow all the power to fall into the hands of a single caste, although a foreign one to the capital, he, by a singular innovation, added to and mixed with them an infusion of Orthodox Greeks, a skilful but despised race, whose talents he could use without having to dread their influence. While thus endeavouring on one side to destroy the power of his enemies by depriving them of both authority and wealth, and on the other to consolidate his own by establishing a firm administration, he neglected no means of acquiring popularity. A fervent disciple of Mahomet when among fanatic Mussulmans, a materialist with the Bektagis who professed a rude pantheism, a Christian among the Greeks, with whom he drank to the health of the Holy Virgin, he made everywhere partisans by flattering the idea most in vogue. But if he constantly changed both opinions and language when dealing with subordinates whom it was desirable to win over, Ali towards his superiors had one only line of conduct which he never transgressed. Obsequious towards the Sublime Porte, so long as it did not interfere with his private authority, he not only paid with exactitude all dues to the sultan, to whom he even often advanced money, but he also pensioned the most influential ministers. He was bent on having no enemies who could really injure his power, and he knew that in an absolute government no conviction can hold its own against the power of gold.

Having thus annihilated the nobles, deceived the multitude with plausible words and lulled to sleep the watchfulness of the Divan, Ali resolved to turn his arms against Kormovo. At the foot of its rocks he had, in youth, experienced the disgrace of defeat, and during thirty nights Kamco and Chainitza had endured all horrors of outrage at the hands of its warriors. Thus the implacable pacha had a

twofold wrong to punish, a double vengeance to exact.

This time, profiting by experience, he called in the aid of treachery. Arrived at the citadel, he negotiated, promised an amnesty, forgiveness for all, actual rewards for some. The inhabitants, only too happy to make peace with so formidable an adversary, demanded and obtained a truce to settle the conditions. This was exactly what Ali expected, and Kormovo, sleeping on the faith of the treaty, was suddenly attacked and taken. All who did not escape by flight perished by the sword in the darkness, or by the hand of the executioner the next morning. Those who had offered violence aforesaid to Ali's mother and sister were carefully sought for, and whether convicted or merely accused, were impaled on spits, torn with red-hot pincers, and slowly roasted between two fires; the women were shaved and publicly scourged, and then sold as slaves.

This vengeance, in which all the nobles of the province not yet entirely ruined were compelled to assist, was worth a decisive victory to Ali. Towns, cantons, whole districts, overwhelmed with terror, submitted without striking a blow, and his name, joined to the recital of a massacre which ranked as a glorious exploit in the eyes of this savage people, echoed like thunder from valley to valley and mountain to mountain. In order that all surrounding him might participate in the joy of his success Ali gave his army a splendid festival. Of unrivalled activity, and, Mohammedan only in name, he himself led the chorus in the Pyrrhic and Klephtic dances, the ceremonials of warriors and of robbers. There was no lack of wine, of sheep, goats, and lambs roasted before enormous fires; made of the debris of the ruined city; antique games of archery and wrestling were celebrated, and the victors received their prizes from the hand of their chief. The plunder, slaves, and cattle were then shared, and the Tapygae, considered as the lowest of the four tribes composing the race of Skipetars, and ranking as the refuse of the army, carried off into the mountains of Acroceraunia, doors, windows, nails, and even the tiles of the houses, which were then all surrendered to the flames.

However, Ibrahim, the successor and son-in-law of Kurd Pacha, could not see with indifference part of his province invaded by his ambitious neighbour. He complained and negotiated, but obtaining no satisfaction, called out an army composed of Skipetars of Toxid, all Islamites, and gave the command to his brother Sepher, Bey of Avlone. Ali, who had adopted the policy of opposing alternately the Cross to the Crescent and the Crescent to the Cross, summoned to his aid the Christian chiefs of the mountains, who descended into the plains at

the head of their unconquered troops. As is generally the case in Albania, where war is merely an excuse for brigandage, instead of deciding matters by a pitched battle, both sides contented themselves with burning villages, hanging peasants, and carrying off cattle.

Also, in accordance with the custom of the country, the women interposed between the combatants, and the good and gentle Emineh laid proposals of peace before Ibrahim Pacha, to whose apathetic disposition a state of war was disagreeable, and who was only too happy to conclude a fairly satisfactory negotiation. A family alliance was arranged, in virtue of which Ali retained his conquests, which were considered as the marriage portion of Ibrahim's eldest daughter, who became the wife of Ali's eldest son, Mouktar.

It was hoped that this peace might prove permanent, but the marriage which sealed the treaty was barely concluded before a fresh quarrel broke out between the pachas. Ali, having wrung such important concessions from the weakness of his neighbour, desired to obtain yet more. But closely allied to Ibrahim were two persons gifted with great firmness of character and unusual ability, whose position gave them great influence. They were his wife Zaidee, and his brother Sepher, who had been in command during the war just terminated. As both were inimical to Ali, who could not hope to corrupt them, the latter resolved to get rid of them.

Having in the days of his youth been intimate with Kurd Pacha, Ali had endeavoured to seduce his daughter, already the wife of Ibrahim. Being discovered by the latter in the act of scaling the wall of his harem, he had been obliged to fly the country. Wishing now to ruin the woman whom he had formerly tried to corrupt, Ali sought to turn his former crime to the success of a new one. Anonymous letters, secretly sent to Ibrahim, warned him that his wife intended to poison him, in order to be able later to marry Ali Pacha, whom she had always loved. In a country like Turkey, where to suspect a woman is to accuse her, and accusation is synonymous with condemnation, such a calumny might easily cause the death of the innocent Zaidee. But if Ibrahim was weak and indolent, he was also confiding and generous. He took the letters; to his wife, who had no difficulty in clearing herself, and who warned him against the writer, whose object and plots she easily divined, so that this odious conspiracy turned only to Ali's discredit. But the latter was not likely either to concern himself as to what others said or thought about him or to be disconcerted by a failure. He simply turned his machinations against his other enemy, and arranged

matters this time so as to avoid a failure.

He sent to Zagori, a district noted for its doctors, for a quack who undertook to poison Sepher Bey on condition of receiving forty purses. When all was settled, the miscreant set out for Berat, and was immediately accused by Ali of evasion, and his wife and children were arrested as accomplices and detained, apparently as hostages for the good behaviour of their husband and father, but really as pledges for his silence when the crime should have been accomplished. Sepher Bey, informed of this by letters which Ali wrote to the Pacha of Berat demanding the fugitive, thought that a man persecuted by his enemy would be faithful to himself, and took the supposed runaway into his service. The traitor made skilful use of the kindness of his too credulous protector, insinuated himself into his confidence, became his trusted physician and apothecary, and gave him poison instead of medicine on the very first appearance of indisposition. As soon as symptoms of death appeared, the poisoner fled, aided by the emissaries of Ali, with whom the court of Berat was packed, and presented himself at Janina to receive the reward of his crime. Ali thanked him for his zeal, commended his skill, and referred him to the treasurer. But the instant the wretch left the seraglio in order to receive his recompense, he was seized by the executioners and hurried to the gallows. In thus punishing the assassin, Ali at one blow discharged the debt he owed him, disposed of the single witness to be dreaded, and displayed his own friendship for the victim! Not content with this, he endeavoured to again throw suspicion on the wife of Ibrahim Pacha, whom he accused of being jealous of the influence which Sepher Pacha had exercised in the family. This he mentioned regularly in conversation, writing in the same style to his agents at Constantinople, and everywhere where there was any profit in slandering a family whose ruin he desired for the sake of their possessions. Before long he made a pretext out of the scandal started by himself, and prepared to take up arms in order, he said, to avenge his friend Sepher Bey, when he was anticipated by Ibrahim Pacha, who roused against him the allied Christians of Thesprotia, foremost among whom ranked the Suliots famed through Albania for their courage and their love of independence.

After several battles, in which his enemies had the advantage, Ali began negotiations with Ibrahim, and finally concluded a treaty offensive and defensive. This fresh alliance was, like the first, to be cemented by a marriage. The virtuous Emineh, seeing her son Veli united to the second daughter of Ibrahim, trusted that the feud between the two families was now quenched, and thought herself at the summit of happiness. But her joy was not of long duration;

the death-groan was again to be heard amidst the songs of the marriage-feast.

The daughter of Chainitza, by her first husband, Ali, had married a certain Murad, the Bey of Clerisoura. This nobleman, attached to Ibrahim Pacha by both blood and affection, since the death of Sepher Bey, had become the special object of Ali's hatred, caused by the devotion of Murad to his patron, over whom he had great influence, and from whom nothing could detach him. Skilful in concealing truth under special pretexts, Ali gave out that the cause of his known dislike to this young man was that the latter, although his nephew by marriage, had several times fought in hostile ranks against him. Therefore the amiable Ibrahim made use of the marriage treaty to arrange an honourable reconciliation between Murad Bey and his uncle, and appointed the former "Ruler of the Marriage Feast," in which capacity he was charged to conduct the bride to Janina and deliver her to her husband, the young Veli Bey. He had accomplished his mission satisfactorily, and was received by Ali with all apparent hospitality. The festival began on his arrival towards the end of November 1791, and had already continued several days, when suddenly it was announced that a shot had been fired upon Ali, who had only escaped by a miracle, and that the assassin was still at large. This news spread terror through the city and the palace, and everyone dreaded being seized as the guilty person. Spies were everywhere employed, but they declared search was useless, and that there must be an extensive conspiracy against Ali's life. The latter complained of being surrounded by enemies, and announced that henceforth he would receive only one person at a time, who should lay down his arms before entering the hall now set apart for public audience. It was a chamber built over a vault, and entered by a sort of trap-door, only reached by a ladder.

After having for several days received his couriers in this sort of dovecot, Ali summoned his nephew in order to entrust with him the wedding gifts. Murad took this as a sign of favour, and joyfully acknowledged the congratulations of his friends. He presented himself at the time arranged, the guards at the foot of the ladder demanded his arms, which he gave up readily, and ascended the ladder full of hope. Scarcely had the trap-door closed behind him when a pistol ball, fired from a dark corner, broke his shoulder blade, and he fell, but sprang up and attempted to fly. Ali issued from his hiding place and sprang upon him, but notwithstanding his wound the young bey defended himself vigorously, uttering terrible cries. The pacha, eager to finish, and finding his hands insufficient, caught a burning log from the hearth, struck his nephew in the face with it, felled him to the ground, and completed his bloody task. This accomplished, Ali called

for help with loud cries, and when his guards entered he showed the bruises he had received and the blood with which he was covered, declaring that he had killed in self-defence a villain who endeavoured to assassinate him. He ordered the body to be searched, and a letter was found in a pocket which Ali had himself just placed there, which purported to give the details of the pretended conspiracy.

As Murad's brother was seriously compromised by this letter, he also was immediately seized, and strangled without any pretence of trial. The whole palace rejoiced, thanks were rendered to Heaven by one of those sacrifices of animals still occasionally made in the East to celebrate an escape from great danger, and Ali released some prisoners in order to show his gratitude to Providence for having protected him from so horrible a crime. He received congratulatory visits, and composed an apology attested by a judicial declaration by the *cadi*, in which the memory of Murad and his brother was declared accursed. Finally, commissioners, escorted by a strong body of soldiers, were sent to seize the property of the two brothers, because, said the decree, it was just that the injured should inherit the possessions of his would-be assassins.

Thus was exterminated the only family capable of opposing the Pacha of Janina, or which could counterbalance his influence over the weak Ibrahim of Berat. The latter, abandoned by his brave defenders, and finding himself at the mercy of his enemy, was compelled to submit to what he could not prevent, and protested only by tears against these crimes, which seemed to herald a terrible future for himself.

As for Emineh, it is said that from the date of this catastrophe she separated herself almost entirely from her bloodstained husband, and spent her life in the recesses of the harem, praying as a Christian both for the murderer and his victims. It is a relief, in the midst of this atrocious saturnalia to encounter this noble and gentle character, which like a desert oasis, affords a rest to eyes wearied with the contemplation of so much wickedness and treachery.

Ali lost in her the guardian angel who alone could in any way restrain his violent passions. Grieved at first by the withdrawal of the wife whom hitherto he had loved exclusively, he endeavoured in vain to regain her affection; and then sought in new vices compensation for the happiness he had lost, and gave himself up to sensuality. Ardent in everything, he carried debauchery to a monstrous extent, and as if his palaces were not large enough for his desires, he

assumed various disguises; sometimes in order to traverse the streets by night in search of the lowest pleasures; sometimes penetrating by day into churches and private houses seeking for young men and maidens remarkable for their beauty, who were then carried off to his harem.

His sons, following in his footsteps, kept also scandalous households, and seemed to dispute preeminence in evil with their father, each in his own manner. Drunkenness was the speciality of the eldest, Mouktar, who was without rival among the hard drinkers of Albania, and who was reputed to have emptied a whole wine-skin in one evening after a plentiful meal. Gifted with the hereditary violence of his family, he had, in his drunken fury, slain several persons, among others his sword-bearer, the companion of his childhood and confidential friend of his whole life. Veli chose a different course. Realising the Marquis de Sade as his father had realised Macchiavelli, he delighted in mingling together debauchery and cruelty, and his amusement consisted in biting the lips he had kissed, and tearing with his nails the forms he had caressed. The people of Janina saw with horror more than one woman in their midst whose nose and ears he had caused to be cut off, and had then turned into the streets.

It was indeed a reign of terror; neither fortune, life, honour, nor family were safe. Mothers cursed their fruitfulness, and women their beauty. Fear soon engenders corruption, and subjects are speedily tainted by the depravity of their masters. Ali, considering a demoralised race as easier to govern, looked on with satisfaction.

While he strengthened by every means his authority from within, he missed no opportunity of extending his rule without. In 1803 he declared war against the Suliots, whose independence he had frequently endeavoured either to purchase or to overthrow. The army sent against them, although ten thousand strong, was at first beaten everywhere. Ali then, as usual, brought treason to his aid, and regained the advantage. It became evident that, sooner or later, the unhappy Suliots must succumb.

Foreseeing the horrors which their defeat would entail, Emineh, touched with compassion, issued from her seclusion and cast herself at Ali's feet. He raised her, seated her beside him, and inquired as to her wishes. She spoke of generosity, of mercy; he listened as if touched and wavering, until she named the Suliots. Then, filled with fury, he seized a pistol and fired at her. She was not hurt, but fell to the ground overcome with terror, and her women hastily

intervened and carried her away. For the first time in his life, perhaps, Ali shuddered before the dread of a murder.

It was his wife, the mother of his children, whom he saw lying at his feet, and the recollection afflicted and tormented him. He rose in the night and went to Emineh's apartment; he knocked and called, but being refused admittance, in his anger he broke open the door. Terrified by the noise; and at the sight of her infuriated husband, Emineh fell into violent convulsions, and shortly expired. Thus perished the daughter of Capelan Pacha, wife of Ali Tepeleni, and mother of Mouktar and Veli, who, doomed to live surrounded by evil, yet remained virtuous and good.

Her death caused universal mourning throughout Albania, and produced a not less deep impression on the mind of her murderer. Emineh's spectre pursued him in his pleasures, in the council chamber, in the hours of night. He saw her, he heard her, and would awake, exclaiming, "my wife! my wife!—It is my wife!—Her eyes are angry; she threatens me!—Save me! Mercy!" For more than ten years Ali never dared to sleep alone.

CHAPTER IV

In December, the Suliots, decimated by battle, worn by famine, discouraged by treachery, were obliged to capitulate. The treaty gave them leave to go where they would, their own mountains excepted. The unfortunate tribe divided into two parts, the one going towards Parga, the other towards Prevesa. Ali gave orders for the destruction of both, notwithstanding the treaty.

The Parga division was attacked in its march, and charged by a numerous body of Skipetars. Its destruction seemed imminent, but instinct suddenly revealed to the ignorant mountaineers the one manoeuvre which might save them. They formed a square, placing old men, women, children, and cattle in the midst, and, protected by this military formation, entered Parga in full view of the cutthroats sent to pursue them.

Less fortunate was the Prevesa division, which, terrified by a sudden and unexpected attack, fled in disorder to a Greek convent called Zalongos. But the gate was soon broken down, and the unhappy Suliots massacred to the last man.

The women, whose tents had been pitched on the summit of a lofty rock, beheld the terrible carnage which destroyed their defenders. Henceforth their only prospect was that of becoming the slaves of those who had just slaughtered their husbands and brothers. An heroic resolution spared them this infamy; they joined hands, and chanting their national songs, moved in a solemn dance round the rocky platform. As the song ended, they uttered a prolonged and piercing cry, and cast themselves and their children down into the profound abyss beneath.

There were still some Suliots left in their country when Ali Pacha took possession of it. These were all taken and brought to Janina, and their sufferings were the first adornments of the festival made for the army. Every soldier's imagination was racked for the discovery of new tortures, and the most original among them had the privilege of themselves carrying out their inventions.

There were some who, having had their noses and ears cut off, were compelled to eat them raw, dressed as a salad. One young man was scalped until the skin fell back upon his shoulders, then beaten round the court of the seraglio for the pacha's entertainment, until at length a lance was run through his body and he was cast on the funeral pile. Many were boiled alive and their flesh then thrown

to the dogs.

From this time the Cross has disappeared from the Selleid mountains, and the gentle prayer of Christ no longer wakes the echoes of Suli.

During the course of this war, and shortly after the death of Emineh, another dismal drama was enacted in the pacha's family, whose active wickedness nothing seemed to weary. The scandalous libertinism of both father and sons had corrupted all around as well as themselves. This demoralisation brought bitter fruits for all alike: the subjects endured a terrible tyranny; the masters sowed among themselves distrust, discord, and hatred. The father wounded his two sons by turns in their tenderest affections, and the sons avenged themselves by abandoning their father in the hour of danger.

There was in Janina a woman named Euphrosyne, a niece of the archbishop, married to one of the richest Greek merchants, and noted for wit and beauty. She was already the mother of two children, when Mouktar became enamoured of her, and ordered her to come to his palace. The unhappy Euphrosyne, at once guessing his object, summoned a family council to decide what should be done. All agreed that there was no escape, and that her husband's life was in danger, on account of the jealousy of his terrible rival. He fled the city that same night, and his wife surrendered herself to Mouktar, who, softened by her charms, soon sincerely loved her, and overwhelmed her with presents and favours. Things were in this position when Mouktar was obliged to depart on an important expedition.

Scarcely had he started before his wives complained to Ali that Euphrosyne usurped their rights and caused their husband to neglect them. Ali, who complained greatly of his sons' extravagance, and regretted the money they squandered, at once struck a blow which was both to enrich himself and increase the terror of his name.

One night he appeared by torchlight, accompanied by his guards, at Euphrosyne's house. Knowing his cruelty and avarice, she sought to disarm one by gratifying the other: she collected her money and jewels and laid them at Ali's feet with a look of supplication.

"These things are only my own property, which you restore," said he, taking possession of the rich offering. "Can you give back the heart of Mouktar, which

you have stolen?”

Euphrosyne besought him by his paternal feelings, for the sake of his son whose love had been her misfortune and was now her only crime, to spare a mother whose conduct had been otherwise irreproachable. But her tears and pleadings produced no effect on Ali, who ordered her to be taken, loaded with fetters and covered with a piece of sackcloth, to the prison of the seraglio.

If it were certain that there was no hope for the unhappy Euphrosyne, one trusted that she might at least be the only victim. But Ali, professing to follow the advice of some severe reformers who wished to restore decent morality, arrested at the same time fifteen ladies belonging to the best Christian families in Janina. A Wallachian, named Nicholas Janco, took the opportunity to denounce his own wife, who was on the point of becoming a mother, as guilty of adultery, and handed her also over to the pacha. These unfortunate women were brought before Ali to undergo a trial of which a sentence of death was the foregone conclusion. They were then confined in a dungeon, where they spent two days of misery. The third night, the executioners appeared to conduct them to the lake where they were to perish. Euphrosyne, too exhausted to endure to the end, expired by the way, and when she was flung with the rest into the dark waters, her soul had already escaped from its earthly tenement. Her body was found the next day, and was buried in the cemetery of the monastery of Saints-Anargyres, where her tomb, covered with white iris and sheltered by a wild olive tree, is yet shown.

Mouktar was returning from his expedition when a courier from his brother Veli brought him a letter informing him of these events. He opened it. “Euphrosyne!” he cried, and, seizing one of his pistols, fired it at the messenger, who fell dead at his feet,—“Euphrosyne, behold thy first victim!” Springing on his horse, he galloped towards Janina. His guards followed at a distance, and the inhabitants of all the villages he passed fled at his approach. He paid no attention to them, but rode till his horse fell dead by the lake which had engulfed Euphrosyne, and then, taking a boat, he went to hide his grief and rage in his own palace.

Ali, caring little for passion which evaporated in tears and cries, sent an order to Mouktar to appear before him at once. “He will not kill you,” he remarked to his messenger, with a bitter smile. And, in fact, the man who a moment before was furiously raging and storming against his father, as if overwhelmed by this imperious message, calmed down, and obeyed.

“Come hither, Mouktar, “said the pacha, extending his murderous hand to be kissed as soon as his son appeared. “I shall take no notice of your anger, but in future never forget that a man who braves public opinion as I do fears nothing in the world. You can go now; when your troops have rested from their march, you can come and ask for orders. Go, remember what I have said.”

Mouktar retired as submissively as if he had just received pardon for some serious crime, and found no better consolation than to spend the night with Veli in drinking and debauchery. But a day was to come when the brothers, alike outraged by their father, would plot and carry out a terrible vengeance.

However, the Porte began to take umbrage at the continual aggrandisement of the Pacha of Janina. Not daring openly to attack so formidable a vassal, the sultan sought by underhand means to diminish his power, and under the pretext that Ali was becoming too old for the labour of so many offices, the government of Thessaly was withdrawn from him, but, to show that this was not done in enmity, the province was entrusted to his nephew, Elmas Bey, son of Suleiman and Chainitza.

Chainitza, fully as ambitious as her brother, could not contain her delight at the idea of governing in the name of her son, who was weak and gentle in character and accustomed to obey her implicitly. She asked her brother’s permission to go to Trikala to be present at the installation, and obtained it, to everybody’s astonishment; for no one could imagine that Ali would peacefully renounce so important a government as that of Thessaly. However, he dissembled so skilfully that everyone was deceived by his apparent resignation, and applauded his magnanimity, when he provided his sister with a brilliant escort to conduct her to the capital of the province of which he had just been deprived in favour of his nephew. He sent letters of congratulation to the latter as well as magnificent presents, among them a splendid pelisse of black fox, which had cost more than a hundred thousand francs of Western money. He requested Elmas Bey to honour him by wearing this robe on the day when the sultan’s envoy should present him with the firman of investiture, and Chainitza herself was charged to deliver both gifts and messages.

Chainitza arrived safely at Trikala, and faithfully delivered the messages with which she had been entrusted. When the ceremony she so ardently desired took place, she herself took charge of all the arrangements. Elmas, wearing the black fox pelisse, was proclaimed, and acknowledged as Governor of Thessaly in her

presence. "My son is pacha!" she cried in the delirium of joy. "My son is pacha! and my nephews will die of envy! "But her triumph was not to be of long duration. A few days after his installation, Elmas began to feel strangely languid. Continual lethargy, convulsive sneezing, feverish eyes, soon betokened a serious illness. Ali's gift had accomplished its purpose. The pelisse, carefully impregnated with smallpox germs taken from a young girl suffering from this malady, had conveyed the dreaded disease to the new pacha, who, not having been inoculated, died in a few days.

The grief of Chainitza at her son's death displayed itself in sobs, threats, and curses, but, not knowing whom to blame for her misfortune, she hastened to leave the scene of it, and returned to Janina, to mingle her tears with those of her brother. She found Ali apparently in such depths of grief, that instead of suspecting, she was actually tempted to pity him, and this seeming sympathy soothed her distress, aided by the caresses of her second son, Aden Bey. Ali, thoughtful of his own interests, took care to send one of his own officers to Trikala, to administer justice in the place of his deceased nephew, and the Porte, seeing that all attempts against him only caused misfortune, consented to his resuming the government of Thessaly.

This climax roused the suspicions of many persons. But the public voice, already discussing the causes of the death of Elinas, was stifled by the thunder of the cannon, which, from the ramparts of Janina, announced to Epirus the birth of another son to Ali, Salik Bey, whose mother was a Georgian slave.

Fortune, seemingly always ready both to crown Ali's crimes with success and to fulfil his wishes, had yet in reserve a more precious gift than any of the others, that of a good and beautiful wife; who should replace, and even efface the memory of the beloved Emineh.

The Porte, while sending to Ali the firman which restored to him the government of Thessaly, ordered him to seek out and destroy a society of coiners who dwelt within his jurisdiction. Ali, delighted to, prove his zeal by a service which cost nothing but bloodshed; at once set his spies to work, and having discovered the abode of the gang, set out for the place attended by a strong escort. It was a village called Plikivitza.

Having arrived in the evening, he spent the night in taking measures to prevent escape, and at break of day attacked the village suddenly with his whole force.

The coiners were seized in the act. Ali immediately ordered the chief to be hung at his own door and the whole population to be massacred. Suddenly a young girl of great beauty made her way through the tumult and sought refuge at his feet. Ali, astonished, asked who she was. She answered with a look of mingled innocence and terror, kissing his hands, which she bathed with tears, and said:

“O my lord! I implore thee to intercede with the terrible vizier Ali for my mother and brothers. My father is dead, behold where he hangs at the door of our cottage! But we have done nothing to rouse the anger of our dreadful master. My mother is a poor woman who never offended anyone, and we are only weak children. Save us from him!”

Touched in spite of himself, the pacha took the girl in his arms, and answered her with a gentle smile.

“Thou hast come to the wrong man, child: I am this terrible vizier.”

“Oh no, no! you are good, you will be our good lord.”

“Well, be comforted, my child, and show me thy mother and thy brothers; they shall be spared. Thou hast saved their lives.”

And as she knelt at his feet, overcome with joy, he raised her and asked her name.

“Basilessa,” she replied.

“Basilessa, Queen! it is a name of good augury. Basilessa, thou shalt dwell with me henceforth.”

And he collected the members of her family, and gave orders for them to be sent to Janina in company with the maiden, who repaid his mercy with boundless love and devotion.

Let us mention one trait of gratitude shown by Ali at the end of this expedition, and his record of good deeds is then closed. Compelled by a storm to take refuge in a miserable hamlet, he inquired its name, and on hearing it appeared surprised and thoughtful, as if trying to recall lost memories. Suddenly he asked if a woman named Nouza dwelt in the village, and was told there was an old infirm woman of that name in great poverty. He ordered her to be brought before him.

She came and prostrated herself in terror. Ali raised her kindly.

“Dost thou not know me?” he asked.

“Have mercy, great Vizier,” answered the poor woman, who, having nothing to lose but her life, imagined that even that would be taken from her.

“I see,” said the pacha, “that if thou knowest me, thou dost not really recognise me.”

The woman looked at him wonderingly, not understanding his words in the least.

“Dost thou remember,” continued Ali, “that forty years ago a young man asked for shelter from the foes who pursued him? Without inquiring his name or standing, thou didst hide him in thy humble house, and dressed his wounds, and shared thy scanty food with him, and when he was able to go forward thou didst stand on thy threshold to wish him good luck and success. Thy wishes were heard, for the young man was Ali Tepeleni, and I who speak am he!”

The old woman stood overwhelmed with astonishment. She departed calling down blessings on the pasha, who assured her a pension of fifteen hundred francs for the rest of her days.

But these two good actions are only flashes of light illuminating the dark horizon of Ali's life for a brief moment. Returned to Janina, he resumed his tyranny, his intrigues, and cruelty. Not content with the vast territory which owned his sway, he again invaded that of his neighbours on every pretext. Phocis, Mtolia, Acarnania, were by turns occupied by his troops, the country ravaged, and the inhabitants decimated. At the same time he compelled Ibrahim Pacha to surrender his last remaining daughter, and give her in marriage to his nephew, Aden Bey, the son of Chaititza. This new alliance with a family he had so often attacked and despoiled gave him fresh arms against it, whether by being enabled better to watch the pasha's sons, or to entice them into some snare with greater ease.

Whilst he thus married his nephew, he did not neglect the advancement of his sons. By the aid of the French Ambassador, whom he had convinced of his devotion to the Emperor Napoleon, he succeeded in getting the pachalik of Morea bestowed on Veli, and that of Lepanto on Mouktar. But as in placing his sons in these exalted positions his only aim was to aggrandise and consolidate

his own power, he himself ordered their retinues, giving them officers of his own choosing. When they departed to their governments, he kept their wives, their children, and even their furniture as pledges, saying that they ought not to be encumbered with domestic establishments in time of war, Turkey just then being at open war with England. He also made use of this opportunity to get rid of people who displeased him, among others, of a certain Ismail Pacho Bey, who had been alternately both tool and enemy, whom he made secretary to his son Veli, professedly as a pledge of reconciliation and favour, but really in order to despoil him more easily of the considerable property which he possessed at Janina. Pacho was not deceived, and showed his resentment openly. "The wretch banishes me," he cried, pointing out Ali, who was sitting at a window in the palace, "he sends me away in order to rob me; but I will avenge myself whatever happens, and I shall die content if I can procure his destruction at the price of my own."

Continually increasing his power, Ali endeavoured to consolidate it permanently. He had entered by degrees into secret negotiations with all the great powers of Europe, hoping in the end to make himself independent, and to obtain recognition as Prince of Greece. A mysterious and unforeseen incident betrayed this to the Porte, and furnished actual proofs of his treason in letters confirmed by Ali's own seal. The Sultan Selim immediately, sent to Janina a "kapidgi-bachi," or plenipotentiary, to examine into the case and try the delinquent.

Arrived at Janina, this officer placed before Ali the proofs of his understanding with the enemies of the State. Ali was not strong enough to throw off the mask, and yet could not deny such overwhelming evidence. He determined to obtain time.

"No wonder," said he, "that I appear guilty in the eyes of His Highness. This seal is, certainly mine, I cannot deny it; but the writing is not that of my secretaries, and the seal must have been obtained and used to sign these guilty letters in order to ruin me. I pray you to grant me a few days in order to clear up this iniquitous mystery, which compromises me in the eyes of my master the sultan and of all good Mahommedans. May Allah grant me the means of proving my innocence, which is as pure as the rays of the sun, although everything seems against me!"

After this conference, Ali, pretending to be engaged in a secret inquiry, considered how he could legally escape from this predicament. He spent some

days in making plans which were given up as soon as formed, until his fertile genius at length suggested a means of getting clear of one of the greatest difficulties in which he had ever found himself. Sending for a Greek whom he had often employed, he addressed him thus:

“Thou knowest I have always shown thee favour, and the day is arrived when thy fortune shall be made. Henceforth thou shalt be as my son, thy children shall be as mine, my house shall be thy home, and in return for my benefits I require one small service. This accursed kapidgi-bachi has come hither bringing certain papers signed with my seal, intending to use them to my discredit, and thus to extort money from me. Of money I have already given too much, and I intend this time to escape without being plundered except for the sake of a good servant like thee. Therefore, my son, thou shalt go before the tribunal when I tell thee, and declare before this kapidgi-bachi and the cadi that thou hast written these letters attributed to me, and that thou didst seal them with my seal, in order to give them due weight and importance.”

The unhappy Greek grew pale and strove to answer.

“What fearest thou, my son?” resumed Ali. “Speak, am I not thy good master? Thou wilt be sure of my lasting favour, and who is there to dread when I protect thee? Is it the kapidgi-bachi? he has no authority here. I have thrown twenty as good as he into the lake! If more is required to reassure thee, I swear by the Prophet, by my own and my sons’ heads, that no harm shall come to thee from him. Be ready, then, to do as I tell thee, and beware of mentioning this matter to anyone, in order that all may be accomplished according to our mutual wishes.”

More terrified by dread of the pacha, from whose wrath in case of refusal there was no chance of escape, than tempted by his promises, the Greek undertook the false swearing required. Ali, delighted, dismissed him with a thousand assurances of protection, and then requested the presence of the sultan’s envoy, to whom he said, with much emotion:

“I have at length unravelled the infernal plot laid against me; it is the work of a man in the pay of the implacable enemies of the Sublime Porte, and who is a Russian agent. He is in my power, and I have given him hopes of pardon on condition of full confession. Will you then summon the cadi, the judges and ecclesiastics of the town, in order that they may hear the guilty man’s deposition, and that the light of truth may purify their minds?”

The tribunal was soon assembled, and the trembling Greek appeared in the midst of a solemn silence. "Knowest thou this writing?" demanded the *cadi*.—"It is mine."—"And this seal?"—"It is that of my master, Ali Pacha."—"How does it come to be placed at the foot of these letters?"—"I did this by order of my chief, abusing the confidence of my master, who occasionally allowed me to use it to sign his orders."—"It is enough: thou canst withdraw."

Uneasy as to the success of his intrigue, Ali was approaching the Hall of Justice. As he entered the court, the Greek, who had just finished his examination, threw himself at his feet, assuring him that all had gone well. "It is good," said Ali; "thou shalt have thy reward." Turning round, he made a sign to his guards, who had their orders, and who instantly seized the unhappy Greek, and, drowning his voice with their shouts, hung him in the courtyard. This execution finished, the pacha presented himself before the judges and inquired the result of their investigation. He was answered by a burst of congratulation. "Well," said he, "the guilty author of this plot aimed at me is no more; I ordered him to be hung without waiting to hear your decision. May all enemies of our glorious sultan perish even as he!"

A report of what had occurred was immediately drawn up, and, to assist matters still further, Ali sent the *kapidgi-bachi* a gift of fifty purses, which he accepted without difficulty, and also secured the favour of the *Divan* by considerable presents. The sultan, yielding to the advice of his councillors, appeared to have again received him into favour.

But Ali knew well that this appearance of sunshine was entirely deceptive, and that Selim only professed to believe in his innocence until the day should arrive when the sultan could safely punish his treason. He sought therefore to compass the latter's downfall, and made common cause with his enemies, both internal and external. A conspiracy, hatched between the discontented pachas and the English agents, shortly broke out, and one day, when Ali was presiding at the artillery practice of some French gunners sent to Albania by the Governor of Illyria, a Tartar brought him news of the deposition of Selim, who was succeeded by his nephew Mustapha. Ali sprang up in delight, and publicly thanked Allah for this great good fortune. He really did profit by this change of rulers, but he profited yet more by a second revolution which caused the deaths both of Selim, whom the promoters wished to reestablish on the throne, and of Mustapha whose downfall they intended. Mahmoud II, who was next invested with the scimitar of Othman, came to the throne in troublous times, after much bloodshed, in the

midst of great political upheavals, and had neither the will nor the power to attack one of his most powerful vassals. He received with evident satisfaction the million piastres which, at, his installation, Ali hastened to send as a proof of his devotion, assured the pacha of his favour, and confirmed both him and his sons in their offices and dignities. This fortunate change in his position brought Ali's pride and audacity to a climax. Free from pressing anxiety, he determined to carry out a project which had been the dream of his life.

CHAPTER V

After taking possession of Argyro-Castron, which he had long coveted, Ali led his victorious army against the town of Kardiki, whose inhabitants had formerly joined with those of Kormovo in the outrage inflicted on his mother and sister. The besieged, knowing they had no mercy to hope for, defended themselves bravely, but were obliged to yield to famine. After a month's blockade, the common people, having no food for themselves or their cattle, began to cry for mercy in the open streets, and their chiefs, intimidated by the general misery and unable to stand alone, consented to capitulate. Ali, whose intentions as to the fate of this unhappy town were irrevocably decided, agreed to all that they asked. A treaty was signed by both parties, and solemnly sworn to on the Koran, in virtue of which seventy-two beys, heads of the principal Albanian families, were to go to Janina as free men, and fully armed. They were to be received with the honours due to their rank as free tenants of the sultan, their lives and their families were to be spared, and also their possessions. The other inhabitants of Kardiki, being Mohammedans, and therefore brothers of Ali, were to be treated as friends and retain their lives and property. On these conditions a quarter of the town; was to be occupied by the victorious troops.

One of the principal chiefs, Saleh Bey, and his wife, foreseeing the fate which awaited their friends, committed suicide at the moment when, in pursuance of the treaty, Ali's soldiers took possession of the quarter assigned to them.

Ali received the seventy-two beys with all marks of friendship when they arrived at Janina. He lodged them in a palace on the lake, and treated them magnificently for some days. But soon, having contrived on some pretext to disarm them, he had them conveyed, loaded with chains, to a Greek convent on an island in the lake, which was converted into a prison. The day of vengeance not having fully arrived, he explained this breach of faith by declaring that the hostages had attempted to escape.

The popular credulity was satisfied by this explanation, and no one doubted the good faith of the pacha when he announced that he was going to Kardiki to establish a police and fulfil the promises he had made to the inhabitants. Even the number of soldiers he took excited no surprise, as Ali was accustomed to travel with a very numerous suite.

After three days' journey, he stopped at Libokhovo, where his sister had resided since the death of Aden Bey, her second son, cut off recently by wickness. What passed in the long interview they had no one knew, but it was observed that Chaititza's tears, which till then had flowed incessantly, stopped as if by magic, and her women, who were wearing mourning, received an order to attire themselves as for a festival. Feasting and dancing, begun in Ali's honour, did not cease after his departure.

He spent the night at Chenderia, a castle built on a rock, whence the town of Kardiki was plainly visible. Next day at daybreak Ali despatched an usher to summon all the male inhabitants of Kardiki to appear before Chenderia, in order to receive assurances of the pacha's pardon and friendship.

The Kardikiotes at once divined that this injunction was the precursor of a terrible vengeance: the whole town echoed with cries and groans, the mosques were filled with people praying for deliverance. The appointed time arrived, they embraced each other as if parting for ever, and then the men, unarmed, in number six hundred and seventy, started for Chenderia. At the gate of the town they encountered a troop of Albanians, who followed as if to escort them, and which increased in number as they proceeded. Soon they arrived in the dread presence of Ali Pacha. Grouped in formidable masses around him stood several thousand of his fierce soldiery.

The unhappy Kardikiotes realised their utter helplessness, and saw that they, their wives and children, were completely at the mercy of their implacable enemy. They fell prostrate before the pacha, and with all the fervour which the utmost terror could inspire, implored him to grant them a generous pardon.

Ali for some time silently enjoyed the pleasure of seeing his ancient enemies lying before him prostrate in the dust. He then desired them to rise, reassured them, called them brothers, sons, friends of his heart. Distinguishing some of his old acquaintances, he called them to him, spoke familiarly of the days of their youth, of their games, their early friendships, and pointing to the young men, said, with tears in his eyes.

“The discord which has divided us for so many years has allowed children not born at the time of our dissension to grow into men. I have lost the pleasure of watching the development of the offspring of my neighbours and the early friends of my youth, and of bestowing benefits on them, but I hope shortly to

repair the natural results of our melancholy divisions.”

He then made them splendid promises, and ordered them to assemble in a neighbouring caravanserai, where he wished to give them a banquet in proof of reconciliation. Passing from the depths of despair to transports of joy, the Kardikiotes repaired gaily to the caravanserai, heaping blessings on the pacha, and blaming each other for having ever doubted his good faith.

Ali was carried down from Chenderia in a litter, attended by his courtiers, who celebrated his clemency in pompous speeches, to which he replied with gracious smiles. At the foot of the steep descent he mounted his horse, and, followed by his troops, rode towards the caravanserai. Alone, and in silence, he rode twice round it, then, returning to the gate, which had just been closed by his order, he pulled up his horse, and, signing to his own bodyguard to attack the building, “Slay them!” he cried in a voice of thunder.

The guards remained motionless in surprise and horror, then as the pacha, with a roar, repeated his order, they indignantly flung down their arms. In vain he harangued, flattered, or threatened them; some preserved a sullen silence, others ventured to demand mercy. Then he ordered them away, and, calling on the Christian Mirdites who served under his banner.

“To you, brave Latins,” he cried, “I will now entrust the duty of exterminating the foes of my race. Avenge me, and I will reward you magnificently.”

A confused murmur rose from the ranks. Ali imagined they were consulting as to what recompense should be required as the price of such deed.

“Speak,” said he; “I am ready to listen to your demands and to satisfy them.”

Then the Mirdite leader came forward and threw back the hood of his black cloak.

“O Pacha!” said he, looking Ali boldly in the face, “thy words are an insult; the Mirdites do not slaughter unarmed prisoners in cold blood. Release the Kardikiotes, give them arms, and we will fight them to the death; but we serve thee as soldiers and not as executioners.”

At these words; which the black-cloaked battalion received with applause, Ali thought himself betrayed, and looked around with doubt and mistrust. Fear was

nearly taking the place of mercy, words of pardon were on his lips, when a certain Athanasius Vaya, a Greek schismatic, and a favourite of the pacha's, whose illegitimate son he was supposed to be, advanced at the head of the scum of the army, and offered to carry out the death sentence. Ali applauded his zeal, gave him full authority to act, and spurred his horse to the top of a neighbouring hill, the better to enjoy the spectacle. The Christian Mirdites and the Mohammedan guards knelt together to pray for the miserable Kardikiotes, whose last hour had come.

The caravanserai where they were shut in was square enclosure, open to the sky, and intended to shelter herds of buffaloes. The prisoners having heard nothing of what passed outside, were astonished to behold Athanasius Vaya and his troop appearing on the top of the wall. They did not long remain in doubt. Ali gave the signal by a pistol-shot, and a general fusillade followed. Terrible cries echoed from the court; the prisoners, terrified, wounded, crowded one upon another for shelter. Some ran frantically hither and thither in this enclosure with no shelter and no exit, until they fell, struck down by bullets. Some tried to climb the walls, in hope of either escape or vengeance, only to be flung back by either scimitars or muskets. It was a terrible scene of despair and death.

After an hour of firing, a gloomy silence descended on the place, now occupied solely by a heap of corpses. Ali forbade any burial rites on pain of death, and placed over the gate an inscription in letters of gold, informing posterity that six hundred Kardikiotes had there been sacrificed to the memory of his mother Kamco.

When the shrieks of death ceased in the enclosure, they began to be heard in the town. The assassins spread themselves through it, and having violated the women and children, gathered them into a crowd to be driven to Libokovo. At every halt in this frightful journey fresh marauders fell on the wretched victims, claiming their share in cruelty and debauchery. At length they arrived at their destination, where the triumphant and implacable Chaintza awaited them. As after the taking of Kormovo, she compelled the women to cut off their hair and to stuff with it a mattress on which she lay. She then stripped them, and joyfully narrated to them the massacre of their husbands, fathers, brothers and sons, and when she had sufficiently enjoyed their misery they were again handed over to the insults of the soldiery. Chaintza finally published an edict forbidding either clothes, shelter, or food to be given to the women and children of Kardiki, who were then driven forth into the woods either to die of hunger or to be devoured

by wild beasts. As to the seventy-two hostages, Ali put them all to death when he returned to Janina. His vengeance was indeed complete.

But as, filled with a horrible satisfaction, the pacha was enjoying the repose of a satiated tiger, an indignant and threatening voice reached him even in the recesses of his palace. The Sheik Yussuf, governor of the castle of Janina, venerated as a saint by the Mohammedans on account of his piety, and universally beloved and respected for his many virtues, entered Ali's sumptuous dwelling for the first time. The guards on beholding him remained stupefied and motionless, then the most devout prostrated themselves, while others went to inform the pacha; but no one dared hinder the venerable man, who walked calmly and solemnly through the astonished attendants. For him there existed no antechamber, no delay; disdainful of the ordinary forms of etiquette, he paced slowly through the various apartments, until, with no usher to announce him, he reached that of Ali. The latter, whose impiety by no means saved him from superstitious terrors, rose hastily from the divan and advanced to meet the holy sheik, who was followed by a crowd of silent courtiers. Ali addressed him with the utmost respect, and endeavoured even to kiss his right hand. Yussuf hastily withdrew it, covered it with his mantle, and signed to the pacha to seat himself. Ali mechanically obeyed, and waited in solemn silence to hear the reason of this unexpected visit.

Yussuf desired him to listen with all attention, and then reproached him for his injustice and rapine, his treachery and cruelty, with such vivid eloquence that his hearers dissolved in tears. Ali, though much dejected, alone preserved his equanimity, until at length the sheik accused him of having caused the death of Emineh. He then grew pale, and rising, cried with terror:

“Alas! my father, whose name do you now pronounce? Pray for me, or at least do not sink me to Gehenna with your curses!”

“There is no need to curse thee,” answered Yussuf. “Thine own crimes bear witness against thee. Allah has heard their cry. He will summon thee, judge thee, and punish thee eternally. Tremble, for the time is at hand! Thine hour is coming—is coming—is coming!”

Casting a terrible glance at the pacha, the holy man turned his back on him, and stalked out of the apartment without another word.

Ali, in terror, demanded a thousand pieces of gold, put them in a white satin purse, and himself hastened with them to overtake the sheik, imploring him to recall his threats. But Yussuf deigned no answer, and arrived at the threshold of the palace, shook off the dust of his feet against it.

Ali returned to his apartment sad and downcast, and many days elapsed before he could shake off the depression caused by this scene. But soon he felt more ashamed of his inaction than of the reproaches which had caused it, and on the first opportunity resumed his usual mode of life.

The occasion was the marriage of Moustai, Pacha of Scodra, with the eldest daughter of Veli Pacha, called the Princess of Aulis, because she had for dowry whole villages in that district. Immediately after the announcement of this marriage Ali set on foot a sort of saturnalia, about the details of which there seemed to be as much mystery as if he had been preparing an assassination.

All at once, as if by a sudden inundation, the very scum of the earth appeared to spread over Janina. The populace, as if trying to drown their misery, plunged into a drunkenness which simulated pleasure. Disorderly bands of mountebanks from the depths of Roumelia traversed the streets, the bazaars and public places; flocks and herds, with fleeces dyed scarlet, and gilded horns, were seen on all the roads driven to the court by peasants under the guidance of their priests. Bishops, abbots, ecclesiastics generally, were compelled to drink, and to take part in ridiculous and indecent dances, Ali apparently thinking to raise himself by degrading his more respectable subjects. Day and night these spectacles succeeded each other with increasing rapidity, the air resounded with firing, songs, cries, music, and the roaring of wild beasts in shows. Enormous spits, loaded with meat, smoked before huge braziers, and wine ran in floods at tables prepared in the palace courts. Troops of brutal soldiers drove workmen from their labour with whips, and compelled them to join in the entertainments; dirty and impudent jugglers invaded private houses, and pretending that they had orders from the pacha to display their skill, carried boldly off whatever they could lay their hands upon. Ali saw the general demoralization with pleasure, especially as it tended to the gratification of his avarice, Every guest was expected to bring to the palace gate a gift in proportion to his means, and foot officers watched to see that no one forgot this obligation. At length, on the nineteenth day, Ali resolved to crown the feast by an orgy worthy of himself. He caused the galleries and halls of his castle by the lake to be decorated with unheard-of splendour, and fifteen hundred guests assembled for a solemn

banquet. The pacha appeared in all his glory, surrounded by his noble attendants and courtiers, and seating himself on a dais raised above this base crowd which trembled at his glance, gave the signal to begin. At his voice, vice plunged into its most shameless diversions, and the wine-steeped wings of debauchery outspread themselves over the feast. All tongues were at their freest, all imaginations ran wild, all evil passions were at their height, when suddenly the noise ceased, and the guests clung together in terror. A man stood at the entrance of the hall, pale, disordered, and wild-eyed, clothed in torn and bloodstained garments. As everyone made way at his approach, he easily reached the pacha, and prostrating himself at his feet, presented a letter. Ali opened and rapidly perused it; his lips trembled, his eyebrows met in a terrible frown, the muscles of his forehead contracted alarmingly. He vainly endeavoured to smile and to look as if nothing had happened, his agitation betrayed him, and he was obliged to retire, after desiring a herald to announce that he wished the banquet to continue.

Now for the subject of the message, and the cause of the dismay it produced.

CHAPTER VI

Ali had long cherished a violent passion for Zobeide, the wife of his son Veli Pacha: Having vainly attempted to gratify it after his son's departure, and being indignantly repulsed, he had recourse to drugs, and the unhappy Zobeide remained in ignorance of her misfortune until she found she was pregnant. Then, half-avowals from her women, compelled to obey the pacha from fear of death, mixed with confused memories of her own, revealed the whole terrible truth. Not knowing in her despair which way to turn, she wrote to Ali, entreating him to visit the harem. As head of the family, he had a right to enter, being supposed responsible for the conduct of his sons' families, no-law-giver having hitherto contemplated the possibility of so disgraceful a crime. When he appeared, Zobeide flung herself at his feet, speechless with grief. Ali acknowledged his guilt, pleaded the violence of his passion, wept with his victim, and entreating her to control herself and keep silence, promised that all should be made right. Neither the prayers nor tears of Zobeide could induce him to give up the intention of effacing the traces of his first crime by a second even more horrible.

But the story was already whispered abroad, and Pacho Bey learnt all its details from the spies he kept in Janina. Delighted at the prospect of avenging himself on the father, he hastened with his news to the son. Veli Pacha, furious, vowed vengeance, and demanded Pacho Bey's help, which was readily promised. But Ali had been warned, and was not a man to be taken unawares. Pacho Bey, whom Veli had just promoted to the office of sword-bearer, was attacked in broad daylight by six emissaries sent from Janina. He obtained timely help, however, and five of the assassins, taken red-handed, were at once hung without ceremony in the marketplace. The sixth was the messenger whose arrival with the news had caused such dismay at Ali's banquet.

As Ali reflected how the storm he had raised could best be laid, he was informed that the ruler of the marriage feast sent by Moustai, Pacha of Scodra, to receive the young bride who should reign in his harem, had just arrived in the plain of Janina. He was Yussuf Bey of the Delres, an old enemy of Ali's, and had encamped with his escort of eight hundred warriors at the foot of Tomoros of Dodona. Dreading some treachery, he absolutely refused all entreaties to enter the town, and Ali seeing that it was useless to insist, and that his adversary for the present was safe, at once sent his granddaughter, the Princess of Aulis, out to

him.

This matter disposed of, Ali was able to attend to his hideous family tragedy. He began by effecting the disappearance of the women whom he had been compelled to make his accomplices; they were simply sewn up in sacks by gipsies and thrown into the lake. This done, he himself led the executioners into a subterranean part of the castle, where they were beheaded by black mutes as a reward for their obedience. He then sent a doctor to Zobeide; who succeeded in causing a miscarriage, and who, his work done, was seized and strangled by the black mutes who had just beheaded the gipsies. Having thus got rid of all who could bear witness to his crime, he wrote to Veli that he might now send for his wife and two of his children, hitherto detained as hostages, and that the innocence of Zobeide would confound a calumniator who had dared to assail him with such injurious suspicions.

When this letter arrived, Pacho Bey, distrusting equally the treachery of the father and the weakness of the son, and content with having sown the seeds of dissension in his enemy's family, had sufficient wisdom to seek safety in flight. Ali, furious, vowed, on hearing this, that his vengeance should overtake him even at the ends of the earth. Meanwhile he fell back on Yussuf Bey of the Debres, whose escape when lately at Janina still rankled in his mind. As Yussuf was dangerous both from character and influence, Ali feared to attack him openly, and sought to assassinate him. This was not precisely easy; for, exposed to a thousand dangers of this kind, the nobles of that day were on their guard. Steel and poison were used up, and another way had to be sought. Ali found it.

One of the many adventurers with whom Janina was filled penetrated to the pacha's presence, and offered to sell the secret of a powder whereof three grains would suffice to kill a man with a terrible explosion—explosive powder, in short. Ali heard with delight, but replied that he must see it in action before purchasing.

In the dungeons of the castle by the lake, a poor monk of the order of St. Basil was slowly dying, for having boldly refused a sacrilegious simony proposed to him by Ali. He was a fit subject for the experiment, and was successfully blown to pieces, to the great satisfaction of Ali, who concluded his bargain, and hastened to make use of it. He prepared a false firman, which, according to custom, was enclosed and sealed in a cylindrical case, and sent to Yussuf Bey by a Greek, wholly ignorant of the real object of his mission. Opening it without

suspicion, Yussuf had his arm blown off, and died in consequence, but found time to despatch a message to Moustai Pacha of Scodra, informing him of the catastrophe, and warning him to keep good guard.

Yussuf's letter was received by Moustai just as a similar infernal machine was placed in his hands under cover to his young wife. The packet was seized, and a careful examination disclosed its nature. The mother of Moustai, a jealous and cruel woman, accused her daughter-in-law of complicity, and the unfortunate Ayesha, though shortly to become a mother, expired in agony from the effects of poison, only guilty of being the innocent instrument of her grandfather's treachery.

Fortune having frustrated Ali's schemes concerning Moustai Pacha, offered him as consolation a chance of invading the territory of Parga, the only place in Epirus which had hitherto escaped his rule, and which he greedily coveted. Agia, a small Christian town on the coast, had rebelled against him and allied itself to Parga. It provided an excuse for hostilities, and Ali's troops, under his son Mouktar, first seized Agia, where they only found a few old men to massacre, and then marched on Parga, where the rebels had taken refuge. After a few skirmishes, Mouktar entered the town, and though the Parganiotes fought bravely, they must inevitably have surrendered had they been left to themselves. But they had sought protection from the French, who had garrisoned the citadel, and the French grenadiers descending rapidly from the height, charged the Turks with so much fury that they fled in all directions, leaving on the field four "bimbashis," or captains of a thousand, and a considerable number of killed and wounded.

The pacha's fleet succeeded no better than his army. Issuing from the Gulf of Ambracia, it was intended to attack Parga from the sea, joining in the massacre, and cutting off all hope of escape from that side, Ali meaning to spare neither the garrison nor any male inhabitants over twelve years of age. But a few shots fired from a small fort dispersed the ships, and a barque manned by sailors from Paxos pursued them, a shot from which killed Ali's admiral on his quarterdeck. He was a Greek of Galaxidi, Athanasius Macrys by name.

Filled with anxiety, Ali awaited news at Prevesa, where a courier, sent off at the beginning of the action, had brought him oranges gathered in the orchards of Parga. Ali gave him a purse of gold, and publicly proclaimed his success. His joy was redoubled when a second messenger presented two heads of French soldiers,

and announced that his troops were in possession of the lower part of Parga. Without further delay he ordered his attendants to mount, entered his carriage, and started triumphantly on the Roman road to Nicopolis. He sent messengers to his generals, ordering them to spare the women and children of Parga, intended for his harem, and above all to take strict charge of the plunder. He was approaching the arena of Nicopolis when a third Tartar messenger informed him of the defeat of his army. Ali changed countenance, and could scarcely articulate the order to return to Prevesa. Once in his palace, he gave way to such fury that all around him trembled, demanding frequently if it could be true that his troops were beaten. "May your misfortune be upon us!" his attendants answered, prostrating themselves. All at once, looking out on the calm blue sea which lay before his windows, he perceived his fleet doubling Cape Pancrator and reentering the Ambracian Gulf under full sail; it anchored close by the palace, and on hailing the leading ship a speaking trumpet announced to Ali the death of his admiral, Athanasius Macryst.

"But Parga, Parga!" cried Ali.

"May Allah grant the pacha long life! The Parganiotes have escaped the sword of His Highness."

"It is the will of Allah!" murmured the pacha; whose head sank upon his breast in dejection.

Arms having failed, Ali, as usual, took refuge in plots and treachery, but this time, instead of corrupting his enemies with gold, he sought to weaken them by division.

CHAPTER VII

The French commander Nicole, surnamed the “Pilgrim,” on account of a journey he had once made to Mecca, had spent six months at Janina with a brigade of artillery which General Marmont, then commanding in the Illyrian provinces, had for a time placed at Ali’s disposal. The old officer had acquired the esteem and friendship of the pacha, whose leisure he had often amused by stories of his campaigns and various adventures, and although it was now long since they had met, he still had the reputation of being Ali’s friend. Ali prepared his plans accordingly. He wrote a letter to Colonel Nicole, apparently in continuation of a regular correspondence between them, in which he thanked the colonel for his continued affection, and besought him by various powerful motives to surrender Parga, of which he promised him the governorship during the rest of his life. He took good care to complete his treason by allowing the letter to fall into the hands of the chief ecclesiastics of Parga, who fell head-foremost into the trap. Seeing that the tone of the letter was in perfect accordance with the former friendly relations between their French governor and the pacha, they were convinced of the former’s treachery. But the result was not as Ali had hoped: the Parganiotes resumed their former negotiations with the English, preferring to place their freedom in the hands of a Christian nation rather than to fall under the rule of a Mohammedan satrap.... The English immediately sent a messenger to Colonel Nicole, offering honourable conditions of capitulation. The colonel returned a decided refusal, and threatened to blow up the place if the inhabitants, whose intentions he guessed, made the slightest hostile movement. However, a few days later, the citadel was taken at night, owing to the treachery of a woman who admitted an English detachment; and the next day, to the general astonishment, the British standard floated over the Acropolis of Parga.

All Greece was then profoundly stirred by a faint gleam of the dawn of liberty, and shaken by a suppressed agitation. The Bourbons again reigned in France, and the Greeks built a thousand hopes on an event which changed the basis of the whole European policy. Above all, they reckoned on powerful assistance from Russia. But England had already begun to dread anything which could increase either the possessions or the influence of this formidable power. Above all, she was determined that the Ottoman Empire should remain intact, and that the Greek navy, beginning to be formidable, must be destroyed. With these objects in view, negotiations with Ali Pacha were resumed. The latter was still

smarting under his recent disappointment, and to all overtures answered only, "Parga! I must have Parga."—And the English were compelled to yield it!

Trusting to the word of General Campbell, who had formally promised, on its surrender, that Parga should be classed along with the seven Ionian Isles; its grateful inhabitants were enjoying a delicious rest after the storm, when a letter from the Lord High Commissioner, addressed to Lieutenant-Colonel de Bosset, undeceived them, and gave warning of the evils which were to burst on the unhappy town.

On the 25th of March, 1817, notwithstanding the solemn promise made to the Parganiotes, when they admitted the British troops, that they should always be on the same footing as the Ionian Isles, a treaty was signed at Constantinople by the British Plenipotentiary, which stipulated the complete and stipulated cession of Parga and all its territory to, the Ottoman Empire. Soon there arrived at Janine Sir John Cartwright, the English Consul at Patras, to arrange for the sale of the lands of the Parganiotes and discuss the conditions of their emigration. Never before had any such compact disgraced European diplomacy, accustomed hitherto to regard Turkish encroachments as simple sacrilege. But Ali Pacha fascinated the English agents, overwhelming them with favours, honours, and feasts, carefully watching them all the while. Their correspondence was intercepted, and he endeavoured by means of his agents to rouse the Parganiotes against them. The latter lamented bitterly, and appealed to Christian Europe, which remained deaf to their cries. In the name of their ancestors, they demanded the rights which had been guaranteed them. "They will buy our lands," they said; "have we asked to sell them? And even if we received their value, can gold give us a country and the tombs of our ancestors?"

Ali Pacha invited the Lord High Commissioner of Great Britain, Sir Thomas Maitland, to a conference at Prevesa, and complained of the exorbitant price of 1,500,000, at which the commissioners had estimated Parga and its territory, including private property and church furniture. It had been hoped that Ali's avarice would hesitate at this high price, but he was not so easily discouraged. He gave a banquet for the Lord High Commissioner, which degenerated into a shameless orgy. In the midst of this drunken hilarity the Turk and the Englishman disposed of the territory of Parga; agreeing that a fresh estimate should be made on the spot by experts chosen by both English and Turks. The result of this valuation was that the indemnity granted to the Christians was reduced by the English to the sum of 276,075 sterling, instead of the original

500,000. And as Ali's agents only arrived at the sum of 56,750, a final conference was held at Buthrotum between Ali and the Lord High Commissioner. The latter then informed the Parganiotes that the indemnity allowed them was irrevocably fixed at 150,000! The transaction is a disgrace to the egotistical and venal nation which thus allowed the life and liberty of a people to be trifled with, a lasting blot on the honour of England!

The Parganiotes at first could believe neither in the infamy of their protectors nor in their own misfortune; but both were soon confirmed by a proclamation of the Lord High Commissioner, informing them that the pacha's army was marching to take possession of the territory which, by May 10th, must be abandoned for ever.

The fields were then in full bearing. In the midst of plains ripening for a rich harvest were 80,000 square feet of olive trees, alone estimated at two hundred thousand guineas. The sun shone in cloudless azure, the air was balmy with the scent of orange trees, of pomegranates and citrons. But the lovely country might have been inhabited by phantoms; only hands raised to heaven and brows bent to the dust met one's eye. Even the very dust belonged no more to the wretched inhabitants; they were forbidden to take a fruit or a flower, the priests might not remove either relics or sacred images. Church, ornaments, torches, tapers, pyxes, had by this treaty all become Mahomedan property. The English had sold everything, even to the Host! Two days more, and all must be left. Each was silently marking the door of the dwelling destined so soon to shelter an enemy, with a red cross, when suddenly a terrible cry echoed from street to street, for the Turks had been perceived on the heights overlooking the town. Terrified and despairing, the whole population hastened to fall prostrate before the Virgin of Parga, the ancient guardian of their citadel. A mysterious voice, proceeding from the sanctuary, reminded them that the English had, in their iniquitous treaty, forgotten to include the ashes of those whom a happier fate had spared the sight of the ruin of Parga. Instantly they rushed to the graveyards, tore open the tombs, and collected the bones and putrefying corpses. The beautiful olive trees were felled, an enormous funeral pyre arose, and in the general excitement the orders of the English chief were defied. With naked daggers in their hands, standing in the crimson light of the flames which were consuming the bones of their ancestors, the people of Parga vowed to slay their wives and children, and to kill themselves to the last man, if the infidels dared to set foot in the town before the appointed hour. Xenocles, the last of the Greek poets, inspired by this sublime manifestation of despair, even as Jeremiah by the fall of Jerusalem, improvised a

hymn which expresses all the grief of the exiles, and which the exiles interrupted by their tears and sobs.

A messenger, crossing the sea in all haste, informed the Lord High Commissioner of the terrible threat of the Parganiotes. He started at once, accompanied by General Sir Frederic Adams, and landed at Parga by the light of the funeral pyre. He was received with ill-concealed indignation, and with assurances that the sacrifice would be at once consummated unless Ali's troops were held back. The general endeavoured to console and to reassure the unhappy people, and then proceeded to the outposts, traversing silent streets in which armed men stood at each door only waiting a signal before slaying their families, and then turning their weapons against the English and themselves. He implored them to have patience, and they answered by pointing to the approaching Turkish army and bidding him hasten. He arrived at last and commenced negotiations, and the Turkish officers, no less uneasy than the English garrison, promised to wait till the appointed hour. The next day passed in mournful silence, quiet as death, At sunset on the following day, May 9, 1819, the English standard on the castle of Parga was hauled down, and after a night spent in prayer and weeping, the Christians demanded the signal of departure.

They had left their dwellings at break of day, and scattering on the shore, endeavoured to collect some relics of their country. Some filled little bags with ashes withdrawn from the funeral pile; others took handfuls of earth, while the women and children picked up pebbles which they hid in their clothing and pressed to their bosoms, as if fearing to be deprived of them. Meanwhile, the ships intended to transport them arrived, and armed English soldiers superintended the embarkation, which the Turks hailed from afar with, ferocious cries. The Parganiotes were landed in Corfu, where they suffered yet more injustice. Under various pretexts the money promised them was reduced and withheld, until destitution compelled them to accept the little that was offered. Thus closed one of the most odious transactions which modern history has been compelled to record.

The satrap of Janina had arrived at the fulfilment of his wishes. In the retirement of his fairy-like palace by the lake he could enjoy voluptuous pleasures to the full. But already seventy-eight years had passed over his head, and old age had laid the burden of infirmity upon him. His dreams were dreams of blood, and vainly he sought refuge in chambers glittering with gold, adorned with arabesques, decorated with costly armour and covered with the richest of

Oriental carpets, remorse stood ever beside him. Through the magnificence which surrounded him there constantly passed the gale spectre of Emineh, leading onwards a vast procession of mournful phantoms, and the guilty pasha buried his face in his hands and shrieked aloud for help. Sometimes, ashamed of his weakness, he endeavoured to defy both the reproaches of his conscience and the opinion of the multitude, and sought to encounter criticism with bravado. If, by chance, he overheard some blind singer chanting in the streets the satirical verses which, faithful to the poetical and mocking genius of them ancestors, the Greeks frequently composed about him, he would order the singer to be brought, would bid him repeat his verses, and, applauding him, would relate some fresh anecdote of cruelty, saying, "Go, add that to thy tale; let thy hearers know what I can do; let them understand that I stop at nothing in order to overcome my foes! If I reproach myself with anything, it is only with the deeds I have sometimes failed to carry out."

Sometimes it was the terrors of the life after death which assailed him. The thought of eternity brought terrible visions in its train, and Ali shuddered at the prospect of Al-Sirat, that awful bridge, narrow as a spider's thread and hanging over the furnaces of Hell; which a Mussulman must cross in order to arrive at the gate of Paradise. He ceased to joke about Eblis, the Prince of Evil, and sank by degrees into profound superstition. He was surrounded by magicians and soothsayers; he consulted omens, and demanded talismans and charms from the dervishes, which he had either sewn into his garments, or suspended in the most secret parts of his palace, in order to avert evil influences. A Koran was hung about his neck as a defence against the evil eye, and frequently he removed it and knelt before it, as did Louis XI before the leaden figures of saints which adorned his hat. He ordered a complete chemical laboratory from Venice, and engaged alchemists to distill the water of immortality, by the help of which he hoped to ascend to the planets and discover the Philosopher's Stone. Not perceiving any practical result of their labours, he ordered, the laboratory to be burnt and the alchemists to be hung.

Ali hated his fellow-men. He would have liked to leave no survivors, and often regretted his inability to destroy all those who would have cause to rejoice at his death, Consequently he sought to accomplish as much harm as he could during the time which remained to him, and for no possible reason but that of hatred, he caused the arrest of both Ibrahim Pasha, who had already suffered so much at his hands, and his son, and confined them both in a dungeon purposely constructed under the grand staircase of the castle by the lake, in order that he might have the

pleasure of passing over their heads each time he left his apartments or returned to them.

It was not enough for Ali merely to put to death those who displeased him, the form of punishment must be constantly varied in order to produce a fresh mode of suffering, therefore new tortures had to be constantly invented. Now it was a servant, guilty of absence without leave, who was bound to a stake in the presence of his sister, and destroyed by a cannon placed six paces off, but only loaded with powder, in order to prolong the agony; now, a Christian accused of having tried to blow up Janina by introducing mice with tinder fastened to their tails into the powder magazine, who was shut up in the cage of Ali's favourite tiger and devoured by it.

The pasha despised the human race as much as he hated it. A European having reproached him with the cruelty shown to his subjects, Ali replied:—

“You do not understand the race with which I have to deal. Were I to hang a criminal on yonder tree, the sight would not deter even his own brother from stealing in the crowd at its foot. If I had an old man burnt alive, his son would steal the ashes and sell them. The rabble can be governed by fear only, and I am the one man who does it successfully.”

His conduct perfectly corresponded to his ideas. One great feast-day, two gipsies devoted their lives in order to avert the evil destiny of the pasha; and, solemnly convoking on their own heads all misfortunes which might possibly befall him, cast themselves down from the palace roof. One arose with difficulty, stunned and suffering, the other remained on the ground with a broken leg. Ali gave them each forty francs and an annuity of two pounds of maize daily, and considering this sufficient, took no further trouble about them.

Every year, at Ramadan, a large sum was distributed in alms among poor women without distinction of sect. But Ali contrived to change this act of benevolence into a barbarous form of amusement.

As he possessed several palaces in Janina at a considerable distance from each other, the one at which a distribution was to take place was each day publicly announced, and when the women had waited there for an hour or two, exposed to sun, rain or cold, as the case might be, they were suddenly informed that they must go to some other palace, at the opposite end of the town. When they got

there, they usually had to wait for another hour, fortunate if they were not sent off to a third place of meeting. When the time at length arrived, an eunuch appeared, followed by Albanian soldiers armed with staves, carrying a bag of money, which he threw by handfuls right into the midst of the assembly. Then began a terrible uproar. The women rushed to catch it, upsetting each other, quarreling, fighting, and uttering cries of terror and pain, while the Albanians, pretending to enforce order, pushed into the crowd, striking right and left with their batons. The pacha meanwhile sat at a window enjoying the spectacle, and impartially applauding all well delivered blows, no matter whence they came. During these distributions, which really benefitted no one, many women were always severely hurt, and some died from the blows they had received.

Ali maintained several carriages for himself and his family, but allowed no one else to share in this prerogative. To avoid being jolted, he simply took up the pavement in Janina and the neighbouring towns, with the result that in summer one was choked by dust, and in winter could hardly get through the mud. He rejoiced in the public inconvenience, and one day having to go out in heavy rain, he remarked to one of the officers of his escort, "How delightful to be driven through this in a carriage, while you will have the pleasure of following on horseback! You will be wet and dirty, whilst I smoke my pipe and laugh at your condition."

He could not understand why Western sovereigns should permit their subjects to enjoy the same conveniences and amusements as themselves. "If I had a theatre," he said, "I would allow no one to be present at performances except my own children; but these idiotic Christians do not know how to uphold their own dignity."

There was no end to the mystifications which it amused the pacha to carry out with those who approached him.

One day he chose to speak Turkish to a Maltese merchant who came to display some jewels. He was informed that the merchant understood only Greek and Italian. He none the less continued his discourse without allowing anyone to translate what he said into Greek. The Maltese at length lost patience, shut up his cases, and departed. Ali watched him with the utmost calm, and as he went out told him, still in Turkish, to come again the next day.

An unexpected occurrence seemed, like the warning finger of Destiny, to

indicate an evil omen for the pacha's future. "Misfortunes arrive in troops," says the forcible Turkish proverb, and a forerunner of disasters came to Ali Dacha.

One morning he was suddenly roused by the Sheik Yussuf, who had forced his way in, in spite of the guards. "Behold!" said he, handing Ali a letter, "Allah, who punishes the guilty, has permitted thy seraglio of Tepelen to be burnt. Thy splendid palace, thy beautiful furniture, costly stuffs, cashmeers, furs, arms, all are destroyed! And it is thy youngest and best beloved son, Salik Bey himself, whose hand kindled the flames!" So saying; Yussuf turned and departed, crying with a triumphant voice, "Fire! fire! fire!"

Ali instantly ordered his horse, and, followed by his guards, rode without drawing rein to Tepelen. As soon as he arrived at the place where his palace had formerly insulted the public misery, he hastened to examine the cellars where his treasures were deposited. All was intact, silver plate, jewels, and fifty millions of francs in gold, enclosed in a well over which he had caused a tower to be built. After this examination he ordered all the ashes to be carefully sifted in hopes of recovering the gold in the tassels and fringes of the sofas, and the silver from the plate and the armour. He next proclaimed through the length and breadth of the land, that, being by the hand of Allah deprived of his house, and no longer possessing anything in his native town, he requested all who loved him to prove their affection by bringing help in proportion. He fixed the day of reception for each commune, and for almost each individual of any rank, however small, according to their distance from Tepelen, whither these evidences of loyalty were to be brought.

During five days Ali received these forced benevolences from all parts. He sat, covered with rags, on a shabby palm-leaf mat placed at the outer gate of his ruined palace, holding in his left hand a villainous pipe of the kind used by the lowest people, and in his right an old red cap, which he extended for the donations of the passers-by. Behind stood a Jew from Janina, charged with the office of testing each piece of gold and valuing jewels which were offered instead of money; for, in terror, each endeavoured to appear generous. No means of obtaining a rich harvest were neglected; for instance, Ali distributed secretly large sums among poor and obscure people, such as servants, mechanics, and soldiers, in order that by returning them in public they might appear to be making great sacrifices, so that richer and more distinguished persons could not, without appearing ill-disposed towards the pacha, offer only the same amount as did the poor, but were obliged to present gifts of enormous value.

After this charity extorted from their fears, the pacha's subjects hoped to be at peace. But a new decree proclaimed throughout Albania required them to rebuild and refurnish the formidable palace of Tepelen entirely at the public expense. Ali then returned to Janina, followed by his treasure and a few women who had escaped from the flames, and whom he disposed of amongst his friends, saying that he was no longer sufficiently wealthy to maintain so many slaves.

Fate soon provided him with a second opportunity for amassing wealth. Arta, a wealthy town with a Christian population, was ravaged by the plague, and out of eight thousand inhabitants, seven thousand were swept away. Hearing this, Ali hastened to send commissioners to prepare an account of furniture and lands which the pacha claimed as being heir to his subjects. A few livid and emaciated spectres were yet to be found in the streets of Arta. In order that the inventory might be more complete, these unhappy beings were compelled to wash in the Inachus blankets, sheets, and clothes steeped in bubonic infection, while the collectors were hunting everywhere for imaginary hidden treasure. Hollow trees were sounded, walls pulled down, the most unlikely corners examined, and a skeleton which was discovered still girt with a belt containing Venetian sequins was gathered up with the utmost care. The archons of the town were arrested and tortured in the hope of discovering buried treasure, the clue to which had disappeared along with the owners. One of these magistrates, accused of having hidden some valuable objects, was plunged up to his shoulders in a boiler full of melted lead and boiling oil. Old men, women, children, rich and poor alike, were interrogated, beaten, and compelled to abandon the last remains of their property in order to save their lives.

Having thus decimated the few inhabitants remaining to the town, it became necessary to repeople it. With this object in view, Ali's emissaries overran the villages of Thessaly, driving before them all the people they met in flocks, and compelling them to settle in Arta. These unfortunate colonists were also obliged to find money to pay the pacha for the houses they were forced to occupy.

This business being settled, Ali turned to another which had long been on his mind. We have seen how Ismail Pacho Bey escaped the assassins sent to murder him. A ship, despatched secretly from Prevesa, arrived at the place of his retreat. The captain, posing as a merchant, invited Ismail to come on board and inspect his goods. But the latter, guessing a trap, fled promptly, and for some time all trace of him was lost. Ali, in revenge, turned his wife out of the palace at Janina which she still occupied, and placed her in a cottage, where she was obliged to

earn a living by spinning. But he did not stop there, and learning after some time that Pacho Bey had sought refuge with the Nazir of Drama, who had taken him into favour, he resolved to strike a last blow, more sure and more terrible than the others. Again Ismail's lucky star saved him from the plots of his enemy. During a hunting party he encountered a kapidgi-bachi, or messenger from the sultan, who asked him where he could find the Nazir, to whom he was charged with an important communication. As kapidgi-bachis are frequently bearers of evil tidings, which it is well to ascertain at once, and as the Nazir was at some distance, Pacho Bey assumed the latter's part, and the sultan's confidential messenger informed him that he was the bearer of a firman granted at the request of Ali Pacha of Janina,

“Ali of Tepelenir. He is my friend. How can I serve him?”

“By executing the present order, sent you by the Divan, desiring you to behead a traitor, named Pacho Bey, who crept into your service a short time ago.

“Willingly I but he is not an easy man to seize being brave, vigorous, clever, and cunning. Craft will be necessary in this case. He may appear at any moment, and it is advisable that he should not see you. Let no one suspect who you are, but go to Drama, which is only two hours distant, and await me there. I shall return this evening, and you can consider your errand as accomplished.”

The kapidgi-bachi made a sign of comprehension, and directed his course towards Drama; while Ismail, fearing that the Nazir, who had only known him a short time, would sacrifice him with the usual Turkish indifference, fled in the opposite direction. At the end of an hour he encountered a Bulgarian monk, with whom he exchanged clothes—a disguise which enabled him to traverse Upper Macedonia in safety. Arriving at the great Servian convent in the mountains whence the Axios takes its rise, he obtained admission under an assumed name. But feeling sure of the discretion of the monks, after a few days he explained his situation to them.

Ali, learning the ill-success of his latest stratagem, accused the Nazir of conniving at Pacho Bey's escape. But the latter easily justified himself with the Divan by giving precise information of what had really occurred. This was what Ali wanted, who profited thereby in having the fugitive's track followed up, and soon got wind of his retreat. As Pacho Bey's innocence had been proved in the explanations given to the Porte, the death firman obtained against him became

useless, and Ali affected to abandon him to his fate, in order the better to conceal the new plot he was conceiving against him.

Athanasius Vaya, chief assassin of the Kardikiotes, to whom Ali imparted his present plan for the destruction of Ismail, begged for the honour of putting it into execution, swearing that this time Ismail should not escape. The master and the instrument disguised their scheme under the appearance of a quarrel, which astonished the whole town. At the end of a terrible scene which took place in public, Ali drove the confidant of his crimes from the palace, overwhelming him with insults, and declaring that were Athanasius not the son of his children's foster-mother, he would have sent him to the gibbet. He enforced his words by the application of a stick, and Vaya, apparently overwhelmed by terror and affliction, went round to all the nobles of the town, vainly entreating them to intercede for him. The only favour which Mouktar Pacha could obtain for him was a sentence of exile allowing him to retreat to Macedonia.

Athanasius departed from Janina with all the demonstrations of utter despair, and continued his route with the haste of one who fears pursuit. Arrived in Macedonia, he assumed the habit of a monk, and undertook a pilgrimage to Mount Athos, saying that both the disguise and the journey were necessary to his safety. On the way he encountered one of the itinerant friars of the great Servian convent, to whom he described his disgrace in energetic terms, begging him to obtain his admission among the lay brethren of his monastery.

Delighted at the prospect of bringing back to the fold of the Church a man so notorious for his crimes, the friar hastened to inform his superior, who in his turn lost no time in announcing to Pacho Bey that his compatriot and companion in misfortune was to be received among the lay brethren, and in relating the history of Athanasius as he himself had heard it. Pacho Bey, however, was not easily deceived, and at once guessing that Vaya's real object was his own assassination, told his doubts to the superior, who had already received him as a friend. The latter retarded the reception of Vaya so as to give Pacho time to escape and take the road to Constantinople. Once arrived there, he determined to brave the storm and encounter Ali openly.

Endowed by nature with a noble presence and with masculine firmness, Pacho Bey possessed also the valuable gift of speaking all the various tongues of the Ottoman Empire. He could not fail to distinguish himself in the capital and to find an opening for his great talents. But his inclination drove him at first to seek

his fellow-exiles from Epirus, who were either his old companions in arms, friends, of relations, for he was allied to all the principal families, and was even, through his wife, nearly connected with his enemy, Ali Pacha himself.

He had learnt what this unfortunate lady had already endured on his account, and feared that she would suffer yet more if he took active measures against the pacha. While he yet hesitated between affection and revenge, he heard that she had died of grief and misery. Now that despair had put an end to uncertainty, he set his hand to the work.

At this precise moment Heaven sent him a friend to console and aid him in his vengeance, a Christian from OEtolia, Paleopoulo by name. This man was on the point of establishing himself in Russian Bessarabia, when he met Pacho Bey and joined with him in the singular coalition which was to change the fate of the Tepelenian dynasty.

Paleopoulo reminded his companion in misfortune of a memorial presented to the Divan in 1812, which had brought upon Ali a disgrace from which he only escaped in consequence of the overwhelming political events which just then absorbed the attention of the Ottoman Government. The Grand Seigneur had sworn by the tombs of his ancestors to attend to the matter as soon as he was able, and it was only requisite to remind him of his vow. Pacho Hey and his friend drew up a new memorial, and knowing the sultan's avarice, took care to dwell on the immense wealth possessed by Ali, on his scandalous exactions, and on the enormous sums diverted from the Imperial Treasury. By overhauling the accounts of his administration, millions might be recovered. To these financial considerations Pacho Bey added some practical ones. Speaking as a man sure of his facts and well acquainted with the ground, he pledged his head that with twenty thousand men he would, in spite of Ali's troops and strongholds, arrive before Janina without firing a musket.

However good these plans appeared, they were by no means to the taste of the sultan's ministers, who were each and all in receipt of large pensions from the man at whom they struck. Besides, as in Turkey it is customary for the great fortunes of Government officials to be absorbed on their death by the Imperial Treasury, it of course appeared easier to await the natural inheritance of Ali's treasures than to attempt to seize them by a war which would certainly absorb part of them. Therefore, while Pacho Bey's zeal was commended, he obtained only dilatory answers, followed at length by a formal refusal.

Meanwhile, the old OEtolian, Paleopoulo, died, having prophesied the approaching Greek insurrection among his friends, and pledged Pacho Bey to persevere in his plans of vengeance, assuring him that before long Ali would certainly fall a victim to them. Thus left alone, Pacho, before taking any active steps in his work of vengeance, affected to give himself up to the strictest observances of the Mohammedan religion. Ali, who had established a most minute surveillance over his actions, finding that his time was spent with ulemas and dervishes, imagined that he had ceased to be dangerous, and took no further trouble about him.

CHAPTER VIII

A career of successful crime had established Ali's rule over a population equal to that of the two kingdoms of Sweden and Norway. But his ambition was not yet satisfied. The occupation of Parga did not crown his desires, and the delight which it caused him was much tempered by the escape of the Parganiotes, who found in exile a safe refuge from his persecution. Scarcely had he finished the conquest of Middle Albania before he was exciting a faction against the young Moustai Pacha in Scodra, a new object of greed. He also kept an army of spies in Wallachia, Moldavia, Thrace, and Macedonia, and, thanks to them, he appeared to be everywhere present, and was mixed up in every intrigue, private or political, throughout the empire. He had paid the English agents the price agreed on for Parga, but he repaid himself five times over, by gifts extorted from his vassals, and by the value of the Parga lands, now become his property. His palace of Tepelen had been rebuilt at the public expense, and was larger and more magnificent than before; Janina was embellished with new buildings; elegant pavilions rose on the shores of the lake; in short, Ali's luxury was on a level with his vast riches. His sons and grandsons were provided for by important positions, and Ali himself was sovereign prince in everything but the name.

There was no lack of flattery, even from literary persons. At Vienna a poem was pointed in his honour, and a French-Greek Grammar was dedicated to him, and such titles as "Most Illustrious," "Most Powerful," and "Most Clement," were showered upon him, as upon a man whose lofty virtues and great exploits echoed through the world. A native of Bergamo, learned in heraldry, provided him with a coat of arms, representing, on a field gules, a lion, embracing three cubs, emblematic of the Tepelenian dynasty. Already he had a consul at Leucadia accepted by the English, who, it is said, encouraged him to declare himself hereditary Prince of Greece, under the nominal suzerainty of the sultan; their real intention being to use him as a tool in return for their protection, and to employ him as a political counterbalance to the hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia, who for the last twenty years had been simply Russian agents in disguise. This was not all; many of the adventurers with whom the Levant swarms, outlaws from every country, had found a refuge in Albania, and helped not a little to excite Ali's ambition by their suggestions. Some of these men frequently saluted him as King, a title which he affected to reject with indignation; and he

disdained to imitate other states by raising a private standard of his own, preferring not to compromise his real power by puerile displays of dignity; and he lamented the foolish ambition of his children, who would ruin him, he said, by aiming, each, at becoming a vizier. Therefore he did not place his hope or confidence in them, but in the adventurers of every sort and kind, pirates, coiners, renegades, assassins, whom he kept in his pay and regarded as his best support. These he sought to attach to his person as men who might some day be found useful, for he did not allow the many favours of fortune to blind him to the real danger of his position. A vizier," he was answered, "resembles a man wrapped in costly furs, but he sits on a barrel of powder, which only requires a spark to explode it." The Divan granted all the concessions which Ali demanded, affecting ignorance of his projects of revolt and his intelligence with the enemies of the State; but then apparent weakness was merely prudent temporising. It was considered that Ali, already advanced in years, could not live much longer, and it was hoped that, at his death, Continental Greece, now in some measure detached from the Ottoman rule, would again fall under the sultan's sway.

Meanwhile, Pacho Bey, bent on silently undermining Ali's influence; had established himself as an intermediary for all those who came to demand justice on account of the pacha's exactions, and he contrived that both his own complaints and those of his clients, should penetrate to the ears of the sultan; who, pitying his misfortunes, made him a *kapidgi-bachi*, as a commencement of better things. About this time the sultan also admitted to the Council a certain Abdi Effendi of Larissa, one of the richest nobles of Thessaly, who had been compelled by the tyranny of Veli Pacha to fly from his country. The two new dignitaries, having secured Khalid Effendi as a partisan, resolved to profit by his influence to carry out their plans of vengeance on the Tepelenian family. The news of Pacho Bey's promotion roused Ali from the security in which he was plunged, and he fell a prey to the most lively anxiety. Comprehending at once the evil which this man,—trained in his own school, might cause him, he exclaimed, "Ah! if Heaven would only restore me the strength of my youth, I would plunge my sword into his heart even in the midst of the Divan."

It was not long before Ali's enemies found an extremely suitable opportunity for opening their attack. Veli Pacha, who had for his own profit increased the Thessalian taxation fivefold, had in doing so caused so much oppression that many of the inhabitants preferred the griefs and dangers of emigration rather than remain under so tyrannical a rule. A great number of Greeks sought refuge at Odessa, and the great Turkish families assembled round Pacho Bey and Abdi

Effendi at Constantinople, who lost no opportunity of interceding in their favour. The sultan, who as yet did not dare to act openly against the Tepelenian family, was at least able to relegate Veli to the obscure post of Lepanto, and Veli, much disgusted, was obliged to obey. He quitted the new palace he had just built at Rapehani, and betook himself to the place of exile, accompanied by actors, Bohemian dancers, bear leaders, and a crowd of prostitutes.

Thus attacked in the person of his most powerful son, Ali thought to terrify his enemies by a daring blow. He sent three Albanians to Constantinople to assassinate Pacho Bey. They fell upon him as he was proceeding to the Mosque of Saint-Sophia, on the day on which the sultan also went in order to be present at the Friday ceremonial prayer, and fired several shots at him. He was wounded, but not mortally.

The assassins, caught red-handed, were hung at the gate of the Imperial Seraglio, but not before confessing that they were sent by the Pacha of Janina. The Divan, comprehending at last that so dangerous a man must be dealt with at any cost, recapitulated all Ali's crimes, and pronounced a sentence against him which was confirmed by a decree of the Grand Mufti. It set forth that Ali Tepelen, having many times obtained pardon for his crimes, was now guilty of high treason in the first degree, and that he would, as recalcitrant, be placed under the ban of the Empire if he did not within forty days appear at the Gilded Threshold of the Felicitous Gate of the Monarch who dispenses crowns to the princes who reign in this world, in order to justify himself. As may be supposed, submission to such an order was about the last thing Ali contemplated. As he failed to appear, the Divan caused the Grand Mufti to launch the thunder of excommunication against him.

Ali had just arrived at Parga, which he now saw for the third time since he had obtained it, when his secretaries informed him that only the rod of Moses could save him from the anger of Pharaoh—a figurative mode of warning him that he had nothing to hope for. But Ali, counting on his usual luck, persisted in imagining that he could, once again, escape from his difficulty by the help of gold and intrigue. Without discontinuing the pleasures in which he was immersed, he contented himself with sending presents and humble petitions to Constantinople. But both were alike useless, for no one even ventured to transmit them to the sultan, who had sworn to cut off the head of anyone who dared mention the name of Ali Tepelen in his presence.

Receiving no answer to his overtures, Ali became a prey to terrible anxiety. As he one day opened the Koran to consult it as to his future, his divining rod stopped at verse 82, chap. xix., which says, "He doth flatter himself in vain. He shall appear before our tribunal naked and bare." Ali closed the book and spat three times into his bosom. He was yielding to the most dire presentiments, when a courier, arriving from the capital, informed him that all hope of pardon was lost.

He ordered his galley to be immediately prepared, and left his seraglio, casting a look of sadness on the beautiful gardens where only yesterday he had received the homage of his prostrate slaves. He bade farewell to his wives, saying that he hoped soon to return, and descended to the shore, where the rowers received him with acclamations. The sail was set to a favourable breeze, and Ali, leaving the shore he was never to see again, sailed towards Erevesa, where he hoped to meet the Lord High Commissioner Maitland. But the time of prosperity had gone by, and the regard which had once been shown him changed with his fortunes. The interview he sought was not granted.

The sultan now ordered a fleet to be equipped, which, after Ramadan, was to disembark troops on the coast of Epirus, while all the neighbouring pashas received orders to hold themselves in readiness to march with all the troops of their respective Governments against Ali, whose name was struck out of the list of viziers. Pacho Bey was named Pasha of Janina and Delvino on condition of subduing them, and was placed in command of the whole expedition.

However, notwithstanding these orders, there was not at the beginning of April, two months after the attempted assassination of Pacho Bey, a single soldier ready to march on Albania. Ramadan, that year, did not close until the new moon of July. Had Ali put himself boldly at the head of the movement which was beginning to stir throughout Greece, he might have baffled these vacillating projects, and possibly dealt a fatal blow to the Ottoman Empire. As far back as 1808, the Hydriotes had offered to recognise his son Veli, then Vizier of the Morea, as their Prince, and to support him in every way, if he would proclaim the independence of the Archipelago. The Moreans bore him no enmity until he refused to help them to freedom, and would have returned to him had he consented.

On the other side, the sultan, though anxious for war, would not spend a penny in order to wage it; and it was not easy to corrupt some of the great vassals

ordered to march at their own expense against a man in whose downfall they had no special interest. Nor were the means of seduction wanting to Ali, whose wealth was enormous; but he preferred to keep it in order to carry on the war which he thought he could no longer escape. He made, therefore, a general appeal to all Albanian warriors, whatever their religion. Mussulmans and Christians, alike attracted by the prospect of booty and good pay, flocked to his standard in crowds.

He organised all these adventurers on the plan of the Armatous, by companies, placing a captain of his own choice at the head of each, and giving each company a special post to defend. Of all possible plans this was the best adapted to his country, where only a guerilla warfare can be carried on, and where a large army could not subsist.

In repairing to the posts assigned to them, these troops committed such terrible depredations that the provinces sent to Constantinople demanding their suppression. The Divan answered the petitioners that it was their own business to suppress these disorders, and to induce the Klephotes to turn their arms against Ali, who had nothing to hope from the clemency of the Grand Seigneur. At the same time circular letters were addressed to the Epirotes, warning them to abandon the cause of a rebel, and to consider the best means of freeing themselves from a traitor, who, having long oppressed them, now sought to draw down on their country all the terrors of war. Ali, who every where maintained numerous and active spies, now redoubled his watchfulness, and not a single letter entered Epirus without being opened and read by his agents. As an extra precaution, the guardians of the passes were enjoined to slay without mercy any despatch-bearer not provided with an order signed by Ali himself; and to send to Janina under escort any travellers wishing to enter Epirus. These measures were specially aimed against Suleyman Pacha, who had succeeded Veli in the government of Thessaly, and replaced Ali himself in the office of Grand Provost of the Highways. Suleyman's secretary was a Greek called Anagnorto, a native of Macedonia, whose estates Ali had seized, and who had fled with his family to escape further persecution. He had become attached to the court party, less for the sake of vengeance on Ali than to aid the cause of the Greeks, for whose freedom he worked by underhand methods. He persuaded Suleyman Pacha that the Greeks would help him to dethrone Ali, for whom they cherished the deepest hatred, and he was determined that they should learn the sentence of deprivation and excommunication fulminated against the rebel pacha. He introduced into the Greek translation which he was commissioned to make, ambiguous phrases

which were read by the Christians as a call to take up arms in the cause of liberty. In an instant, all Hellas was up in arms. The Mohammedans were alarmed, but the Greeks gave out that it was in order to protect themselves and their property against the bands of brigands which had appeared on all sides. This was the beginning of the Greek insurrection, and occurred in May 1820, extending from Mount Pindus to Thermopylae. However, the Greeks, satisfied with having vindicated their right to bear arms in their own defence, continued to pay their taxes, and abstained from all hostility.

At the news of this great movement, Ali's friends advised him to turn it to his own advantage. "The Greeks in arms," said they, "want a chief: offer yourself as their leader. They hate you, it is true, but this feeling may change. It is only necessary to make them believe, which is easily done, that if they will support your cause you will embrace Christianity and give them freedom."

There was no time to lose, for matters became daily more serious. Ali hastened to summon what he called a Grand Divan, composed of the chiefs of both sects, Mussulmans and Christians. There were assembled men of widely different types, much astonished at finding themselves in company: the venerable Gabriel, Archbishop of Janina, and uncle of the unfortunate Euphrosyne, who had been dragged thither by force; Abbas, the old head of the police, who had presided at the execution of the Christian martyr; the holy bishop of Velas, still bearing the marks of the chains with which Ali had loaded him; and Porphyro, Archbishop of Arta, to whom the turban would have been more becoming than the mitre.

Ashamed of the part he was obliged to play, Ali, after long hesitation, decided on speaking, and, addressing the Christians, "O Greeks!" he said, "examine my conduct with unprejudiced minds, and you will see manifest proofs of the confidence and consideration which I have ever shown you. What pacha has ever treated you as I have done? Who would have treated your priests and the objects of your worship with as much respect? Who else would have conceded the privileges which you enjoy? for you hold rank in my councils, and both the police and the administration of my States are in your hands. I do not, however, seek to deny the evils with which I have afflicted you; but, alas! these evils have been the result of my enforced obedience to the cruel and perfidious orders of the Sublime Porte. It is to the Porte that these wrongs must be attributed, for if my actions be attentively regarded it will be seen that I only did harm when compelled thereto by the course of events. Interrogate my actions, they will speak more fully than a detailed apology.

“My position with regard to the Suliotes allowed no half-and-half measures. Having once broken with them, I was obliged either to drive them from my country or to exterminate them. I understood the political hatred of the Ottoman Cabinet too well not to know that it would declare war against me sooner or later, and I knew that resistance would be impossible, if on one side I had to repel the Ottoman aggression, and on the other to fight against the formidable Suliotes.

“I might say the same of the Parganiotes. You know that their town was the haunt of my enemies, and each time that I appealed to them to change their ways they answered only with insults and threats. They constantly aided the Suliotes with whom I was at war; and if at this moment they still were occupying Parga, you would see them throw open the gates of Epirus to the forces of the sultan. But all this does not prevent my being aware that my enemies blame me severely, and indeed I also blame myself, and deplore the faults which the difficulty of my position has entailed upon me. Strong in my repentance, I do not hesitate to address myself to those whom I have most grievously wounded. Thus I have long since recalled to my service a great number of Suliotes, and those who have responded to my invitation are occupying important posts near my person. To complete the reconciliation, I have written to those who are still in exile, desiring them to return fearlessly to their country, and I have certain information that this proposal has been everywhere accepted with enthusiasm. The Suliotes will soon return to their ancestral houses, and, reunited under my standard, will join me in combating the Osmanlis, our common enemies.

“As to the avarice of which I am accused, it seems easily justified by the constant necessity I was under of satisfying the inordinate cupidity of the Ottoman ministry, which incessantly made me pay dearly for tranquillity. This was a personal affair, I acknowledge, and so also is the accumulation of treasure made in order to support the war, which the Divan has at length declared.”

Here Ali ceased, then having caused a barrel full of gold pieces to be emptied on the floor, he continued:

“Behold a part of the treasure I have preserved with so much care, and which has been specially obtained from the Turks, our common enemies: it is yours. I am now more than ever delighted at being the friend of the Greeks. Their bravery is a sure earnest of victory, and we will shortly reestablish the Greek Empire, and drive the Osmanlis across the Bosphorus. O bishops and priests of Issa the

prophet! bless the arms of the Christians, your children. O primates! I call upon you to defend your rights, and to rule justly the brave nation associated with my interests.”

This discourse produced very different impressions on the Christian priests and archons. Some replied only by raising looks of despair to Heaven, others murmured their adhesion. A great number remained uncertain, not knowing what to decide. The Mirdite chief, he who had refused to slaughter the Kardikiotes, declared that neither he nor any Skipetar of the Latin communion would bear arms against their legitimate sovereign the sultan. But his words were drowned by cries of “Long live Ali Pasha! Long live the restorer of liberty!” uttered by some chiefs of adventurers and brigands.

CHAPTER IX

Yet next day, May 24th, 1820, Ali addressed a circular letter to his brothers the Christians, announcing that in future he would consider them as his most faithful subjects, and that henceforth he remitted the taxes paid to his own family. He wound up by asking for soldiers, but the Greeks having learnt the instability of his promises, remained deaf to his invitations. At the same time he sent messengers to the Montenegrins and the Servians, inciting them to revolt, and organised insurrections in Wallachia and Moldavia to the very environs of Constantinople.

Whilst the Ottoman vassals assembled only in small numbers and very slowly under their respective standards, every day there collected round the castle of Janina whole companies of Toxidae, of Tapazetae, and of Chamidae; so that Ali, knowing that Ismail Pacho Bey had boasted that he could arrive in sight of Janina without firing a gun, said in his turn that he would not treat with the Porte until he and his troops should be within eight leagues of Constantinople.

He had fortified and supplied with munitions of war Ochrida, Avlone, Cannia, Berat, Cleisoura, Premiti, the port of Panormus, Santi-Quaranta, Buthrotum, Delvino, Argyro-Castron, Tepelen, Parga, Prevesa, Sderli, Paramythia, Arta, the post of the Five Wells, Janina and its castles. These places contained four hundred and twenty cannons of all sizes, for the most part in bronze, mounted on siege-carriages, and seventy mortars. Besides these, there were in the castle by the lake, independently of the guns in position, forty field-pieces, sixty mountain guns, a number of Congreve rockets, formerly given him by the English, and an enormous quantity of munitions of war. Finally, he endeavoured to establish a line of semaphores between Janina and Prevesa, in order to have prompt news of the Turkish fleet, which was expected to appear on this coast.

Ali, whose strength seemed to increase with age, saw to everything and appeared everywhere; sometimes in a litter borne by his Albanians, sometimes in a carriage raised into a kind of platform, but it was more frequently on horseback that he appeared among his labourers. Often he sat on the bastions in the midst of the batteries, and conversed familiarly with those who surrounded him. He narrated the successes formerly obtained against the sultan by Kara Bazaklia, Vizier of Scodra, who, like himself, had been attained with the sentence of

deprivation and excommunication; recounting how the rebel pacha, shut up in his citadel with seventy-two warriors, had seen collapse at his feet the united forces of four great provinces of the Ottoman Empire, commanded by twenty-two pachas, who were almost entirely annihilated in one day by the Guegues. He reminded them also, of the brilliant victory gained by Passevend Oglon, Pacha of Widdin, of quite recent memory, which is celebrated in the warlike songs of the Klephts of Roumelia.

Almost simultaneously, Ali's sons, Mouktar and Veli, arrived at Janina. Veli had been obliged, or thought himself obliged, to evacuate Lepanto by superior forces, and brought only discouraging news, especially as to the wavering fidelity of the Turks. Mouktar, on the contrary, who had just made a tour of inspection in the Musache, had only noticed favourable dispositions, and deluded himself with the idea that the Chaonians, who had taken up arms, had done so in order to aid his father. He was curiously mistaken, for these tribes hated Ali with a hatred all the deeper for being compelled to conceal it, and were only in arms in order to repel aggression.

The advice given by the sons to their father as to the manner of treating the Mohammedans differed widely in accordance with their respective opinions. Consequently a violent quarrel arose between them, ostensibly on account of this dispute, but in reality on the subject of their father's inheritance, which both equally coveted. Ali had brought all his treasure to Janina, and thenceforth neither son would leave the neighbourhood of so excellent a father. They overwhelmed him with marks of affection, and vowed that the one had left Lepanto, and the other Berat, only in order to share his danger. Ali was by no means duped by these protestations, of which he divined the motive only too well, and though he had never loved his sons, he suffered cruelly in discovering that he was not beloved by them.

Soon he had other troubles to endure. One of his gunners assassinated a servant of Vela's, and Ali ordered the murderer to be punished, but when the sentence was to be carried out the whole corps of artillery mutinied. In order to save appearances, the pacha was compelled to allow them to ask for the pardon of the criminal whom he dared not punish. This incident showed him that his authority was no longer paramount, and he began to doubt the fidelity of his soldiers. The arrival of the Ottoman fleet further enlightened him to his true position. Mussulman and Christian alike, all the inhabitants of Northern Albania, who had hitherto concealed their disaffection under an exaggerated semblance of

devotion, now hastened to make their submission to the sultan. The Turks, continuing their success, laid siege to Parga, which was held by Mehemet, Veli's eldest son. He was prepared to make a good defence, but was betrayed by his troops, who opened the gates of the town, and he was compelled to surrender at discretion. He was handed over to the commander of the naval forces, by whom he was well treated, being assigned the best cabin in the admiral's ship and given a brilliant suite. He was assured that the sultan, whose only quarrel was with his grandfather, would show him favour, and would even deal mercifully with Ali, who, with his treasures, would merely be sent to an important province in Asia Minor. He was induced to write in this strain to his family and friends in order to induce them to lay down their arms.

The fall of Parga made a great impression on the Epirotes, who valued its possession far above its real importance. Ali rent his garments and cursed the days of his former good fortune, during which he had neither known how to moderate his resentment nor to foresee the possibility of any change of fortune.

The fall of Parga was succeeded by that of Arta of Mongliana, where was situated Ali's country house, and of the post of the Five Wells. Then came a yet more overwhelming piece of news Omar Brionis, whom Ali, having formerly despoiled of its wealth, had none the less, recently appointed general-in-chief, had gone over to the enemy with all his troops!

Ali then decided on carrying out a project he had formed in case of necessity, namely, on destroying the town of Janina, which would afford shelter to the enemy and a point of attack against the fortresses in which he was entrenched. When this resolution was known, the inhabitants thought only of saving themselves and their property from the ruin from which nothing could save their country. But most of them were only preparing to depart, when Ali gave leave to the Albanian soldiers yet faithful to him to sack the town.

The place was immediately invaded by an unbridled soldiery. The Metropolitan church, where Greeks and Turks alike deposited their gold, jewels, and merchandise, even as did the Greeks of old in the temples of the gods, became the first object of pillage. Nothing was respected. The cupboards containing sacred vestments were broken open, so were the tombs of the archbishops, in which were interred reliquaries adorned with precious stones; and the altar itself was defiled with the blood of ruffians who fought for chalices and silver crosses.

The town presented an equally terrible spectacle; neither Christians nor Mussulmans were spared, and the women's apartments, forcibly entered, were given up to violence. Some of the more courageous citizens endeavoured to defend their houses and families against these bandits, and the clash of arms mingled with cries and groans. All at once the roar of a terrible explosion rose above the other sounds, and a hail of bombs, shells, grenades, and rockets carried devastation and fire into the different quarters of the town, which soon presented the spectacle of an immense conflagration. Ali, seated on the great platform of the castle by the lake, which seemed to vomit fire like a volcano, directed the bombardment, pointing out the places which must be burnt. Churches, mosques, libraries, bazaars, houses, all were destroyed, and the only thing spared by the flames was the gallows, which remained standing in the midst of the ruins.

Of the thirty thousand persons who inhabited Janina a few hours previously, perhaps one half had escaped. But these had not fled many leagues before they encountered the outposts of the Ottoman army, which, instead of helping or protecting them, fell upon them, plundered them, and drove them towards the camp, where slavery awaited them. The unhappy fugitives, taken thus between fire and sword, death behind and slavery before, uttered a terrible cry, and fled in all directions. Those who escaped the Turks were stopped in the hill passes by the mountaineers rushing down to the valley; only large numbers who held together could force a passage.

In some cases terror bestows extraordinary strength, there were mothers who, with infants at the breast, covered on foot in one day the fourteen leagues which separate Janina from Arta. But others, seized with the pangs of travail in the midst of their flight, expired in the woods, after giving birth to babes, who, destitute of succour, did not survive their mothers. And young girls, having disfigured themselves by gashes, hid themselves in caves, where they died of terror and hunger.

The Albanians, intoxicated with plunder and debauchery, refused to return to the castle, and only thought of regaining their country and enjoying the fruit of their rapine. But they were assailed on the way by peasants covetous of their booty, and by those of Janina who had sought refuge with them. The roads and passes were strewn with corpses, and the trees by the roadside converted into gibbets. The murderers did not long survive their victims.

The ruins of Janina were still smoking when, on the 19th August, Pacho Bey made his entry. Having pitched his tent out of range of Ali's cannon, he proclaimed aloud the firman which inaugurated him as Pacha of Janina and Delvino, and then raised the tails, emblem of his dignity. Ali heard on the summit of his keep the acclamations of the Turks who saluted Pacho Bey, his former servant with the titles of Vali of Epirus, and Ghazi, of Victorius. After this ceremony, the cadî read the sentence, confirmed by the Mufti, which declared Tepelen Veli-Zade to have forfeited his dignities and to be excommunicated, adding an injunction to all the faithful that henceforth his name was not to be pronounced except with the addition of "Kara," or "black," which is bestowed on those cut off from the congregation of Sunnites, or Orthodox Mohammedans. A Marabout then cast a stone towards the castle, and the anathema upon "Kara Ali" was repeated by the whole Turkish army, ending with the cry of "Long live the sultan! So be it!"

But it was not by ecclesiastical thunders that three fortresses could be reduced, which were defended by artillerymen drawn from different European armies, who had established an excellent school for gunners and bombardiers. The besieged, having replied with hootings of contempt to the acclamations of the besiegers, proceeded to enforce their scorn with well-aimed cannon shots, while the rebel flotilla, dressed as if for a fete-day, passed slowly before the Turks, saluting them with cannon-shot if they ventured near the edge of the lake.

This noisy rhodomontade did not prevent Ali from being consumed with grief and anxiety. The sight of his own troops, now in the camp of Pacho Bey, the fear of being for ever separated from his sons, the thought of his grandson in the enemy's hands, all threw him into the deepest melancholy, and his sleepless eyes were constantly drowned in tears. He refused his food, and sat for seven days with untrimmed beard, clad in mourning, on a mat at the door of his antechamber, extending his hands to his soldiers, and imploring them to slay him rather than abandon him. His wives, seeing him in this state, and concluding all was lost, filled the air with their lamentations. All began to think that grief would bring Ali to the grave; but his soldiers, to whose protestations he at first refused any credit, represented to him that their fate was indissolubly linked with his. Pacho Bey having proclaimed that all taken in arms for Ali would be shot as sharers in rebellion, it was therefore their interest to support his resistance with all their power. They also pointed out that the campaign was already advanced, and that the Turkish army, which had forgotten its siege artillery at Constantinople, could not possibly procure any before the end of October, by

which time the rains would begin, and the enemy would probably be short of food. Moreover, in any case, it being impossible to winter in a ruined town, the foe would be driven to seek shelter at a distance.

These representations, made with warmth conviction, and supported by evidence, began to soothe the restless fever which was wasting Ali, and the gentle caresses and persuasions of Basillisa, the beautiful Christian captive, who had now been his wife for some time, completed the cure.

At the same time his sister Chainitza gave him an astonishing example of courage. She had persisted, in spite of all that could be said, in residing in her castle of Libokovo. The population, whom she had cruelly oppressed, demanded her death, but no one dared attack her. Superstition declared that the spirit of her mother, with whom she kept up a mysterious communication even beyond the portals of the grave, watched over her safety. The menacing form of Kamco had, it was said, appeared to several inhabitants of Tepelen, brandishing bones of the wretched Kardikiotes, and demanding fresh victims with loud cries. The desire of vengeance had urged some to brave these unknown dangers, and twice, a warrior, clothed in black, had warned them back, forbidding them to lay hands on a sacrilegious woman; whose punishment Heaven reserved to itself, and twice they had returned upon their footsteps.

But soon, ashamed of their terror, they attempted another attack, and came attired in the colour of the Prophet. This time no mysterious stranger speared to forbid their passage and with a cry they climbed the mountain, listening for any supernatural warning. Nothing disturbed the silence and solitude save the bleating of flocks and the cries of birds of prey. Arrived on the platform of Libokovo, they prepared in silence to surprise the guards, believing the castle full of them. They approached crawling, like hunters who stalk a deer, already they had reached the gate of the enclosure, and prepared to burst it open, when lo! it opened of itself, and they beheld Chainitza standing before them, a carbine in her hand, pistols in her belt, and, for all guard, two large dogs.

“Halt! ye daring ones,” she cried; “neither my life nor my treasure will ever be at your mercy. Let one of you move a step without my permission, and this place and the ground beneath your feet’ will engulf you. Ten thousand pounds of powder are in these cellars. I will, however, grant your pardon, unworthy though you are. I will even allow you to take these sacks filled with gold; they may recompense you for the losses which my brother’s enemies have recently

inflicted on you. But depart this instant without a word, and dare not to trouble me again; I have other means of destruction at command besides gunpowder. Life is nothing to me, remember that; but your mountains may yet at my command become the tomb of your wives and children. Go!”

She ceased, and her would-be murderers fled terror.

Shortly after the plague broke out in these mountains, Chainitza had distributed infected garments among gipsies, who scattered contagion wherever they went.

“We are indeed of the same blood!” cried Ali with pride, when he heard of his sister’s conduct; and from that hour he appeared to regain all the fire and audacity of his youth. When, a few days later, he was informed that Mouktar and Veli, seduced by the brilliant promises of Dacha Bey, had surrendered Prevesa and Argyro-Castron, “It does not surprise me,” he observed coldly. “I have long known them to be unworthy of being my sons, and henceforth my only children and heirs are those who defend my cause.” And on hearing a report that both had been beheaded by Dacha Bey’s order, he contented himself with saying, “They betrayed their father, and have only received their deserts; speak no more of them.” And to show how little it discouraged him, he redoubled his fire upon the Turks.

But the latter, who had at length obtained some artillery, answered his fire with vigour, and began to rally to discrown the old pacha’s fortress. Feeling that the danger was pressing, Ali redoubled both his prudence and activity. His immense treasures were the real reason of the war waged against him, and these might induce his own soldiers to rebel, in order to become masters of them. He resolved to protect them from either surprise or conquest. The sum necessary for present use was deposited in the powder magazine, so that, if driven to extremity, it might be destroyed in a moment; the remainder was enclosed in strong-boxes, and sunk in different parts of the lake. This labour lasted a fortnight, when, finally, Ali put to death the gipsies who had been employed about it, in order that the secret might remain with himself.

While he thus set his own affairs in order, he applied himself to the troubling those of his adversary. A great number of Suliots had joined the Ottoman army in order to assist in the destruction of him who formerly had ruined their country. Their camp, which for a long time had enjoyed immunity from the guns of Janina, was one day overwhelmed with bombs. The Suliots were terrified, until

they remarked that the bombs did not burst. They then, much astonished, proceeded to pick up and examine these projectiles. Instead of a match, they found rolls of paper enclosed in a wooden cylinder, on which was engraved these words, "Open carefully." The paper contained a truly Macchiavellian letter from Ali, which began by saying that they were quite justified in having taken up arms against him, and added that he now sent them a part of the pay of which the traitorous Ismail was defrauding them, and that the bombs thrown into their cantonment contained six thousand sequins in gold. He begged them to amuse Ismail by complaints and recriminations, while his gondola should by night fetch one of them, to whom he would communicate what more he had to say. If they accepted his proposition, they were to light three fires as a signal.

The signal was not long in appearing. Ali despatched his barge, which took on board a monk, the spiritual chief of the Suliots. He was clothed in sackcloth, and repeated the prayers for the dying, as one going to execution. Ali, however, received him with the utmost cordiality: He assured the priest of his repentance, his good intentions, his esteem for the Greek captains, and then gave him a paper which startled him considerably. It was a despatch, intercepted by Ali, from Khalid Effendi to the Seraskier Ismail, ordering the latter to exterminate all Christians capable of bearing arms. All male children were to be circumcised, and brought up to form a legion drilled in European fashion; and the letter went on to explain how the Suliots, the Armatolis, the Greek races of the mainland and those of the Archipelago should be disposed of. Seeing the effect produced on the monk by the perusal of this paper, Ali hastened to make him the most advantageous offers, declaring that his own wish was to give Greece a political existence, and only requiring that the Suliot captains should send him a certain number of their children as hostages. He then had cloaks and arms brought which he presented to the monk, dismissing him in haste, in order that darkness might favour his return.

The next day Ali was resting, with his head on Basilissa's lap, when he was informed that the enemy was advancing upon the intrenchments which had been raised in the midst of the ruins of Janina. Already the outposts had been forced, and the fury of the assailants threatened to triumph over all obstacles. Ali immediately ordered a sortie of all his troops, announcing that he himself would conduct it. His master of the horse brought him the famous Arab charger called the Dervish, his chief huntsman presented him with his guns, weapons still famous in Epirus, where they figure in the ballads of the Skipetars. The first was an enormous gun, of Versailles manufacture, formerly presented by the

conqueror of the Pyramids to Djezzar, the Pacha of St. Jean-d'Arc, who amused himself by enclosing living victims in the walls of his palace, in order that he might hear their groans in the midst of his festivities. Next came a carabine given to the Pacha of Janina in the name of Napoleon in 1806; then the battle musket of Charles XII of Sweden, and finally—the much revered sabre of Krim-Guerai. The signal was given; the draw bridge crossed; the Guegues and other adventurers uttered a terrific shout; to which the cries of the assailants replied. Ali placed himself on a height, whence his eagle eye sought to discern the hostile chiefs; but he called and defied Pacho Bey in vain. Perceiving Hassan-Stamboul, colonel of the Imperial bombardiers outside his battery, Ali demanded the gun of Djezzar, and laid him dead on the spot. He then took the carabine of Napoleon, and shot with it Kekriman, Bey of Sponga, whom he had formerly appointed Pacha of Lepanto. The enemy now became aware of his presence, and sent a lively fusillade in his direction; but the balls seemed to diverge from his person. As soon as the smoke cleared, he perceived Capelan, Pacha of Croie, who had been his guest, and wounded him mortally in the chest. Capelan uttered a sharp cry, and his terrified horse caused disorder in the ranks. Ali picked off a large number of officers, one after another; every shot was mortal, and his enemies began to regard him in, the light of a destroying angel. Disorder spread through the forces of the Seraskier, who retreated hastily to his intrenchments.

The Suliots meanwhile sent a deputation to Ismail offering their submission, and seeking to regain their country in a peaceful manner; but, being received by him with the most humiliating contempt, they resolved to make common cause with Ali. They hesitated over the demand for hostages, and at length required Ali's grandson, Hussien Pacha, in exchange. After many difficulties, Ali at length consented, and the agreement was concluded. The Suliots received five hundred thousand piastres and a hundred and fifty charges of ammunition, Hussien Pacha was given up to them, and they left the Ottoman camp at dead of night. Morco Botzaris remained with three hundred and twenty men, threw down the palisades, and then ascending Mount Paktoros with his troops, waited for dawn in order to announce his defection to the Turkish army. As soon as the sun appeared he ordered a general salvo of artillery and shouted his war-cry. A few Turks in charge of an outpost were slain, the rest fled. A cry of "To arms" was raised, and the standard of the Cross floated before the camp of the infidels.

Signs and omens of a coming general insurrection appeared on all sides; there was no lack of prodigies, visions, or popular rumours, and the Mohammedans

became possessed with the idea that the last hour of their rule in Greece had struck. Ali Pacha favoured the general demoralisation; and his agents, scattered throughout the land, fanned the flame of revolt. Ismail Pacha was deprived of his title of Seraskier, and superseded by Kursheed Pacha. As soon as Ali heard this, he sent a messenger to Kursheed, hoping to influence him in his favour. Ismail, distrusting the Skipetars, who formed part of his troops, demanded hostages from them. The Skipetars were indignant, and Ali hearing of their discontent, wrote inviting them to return to him, and endeavouring to dazzle them by the most brilliant promises. These overtures were received by the offended troops with enthusiasm, and Alexis Noutza, Ali's former general, who had forsaken him for Ismail, but who had secretly returned to his allegiance and acted as a spy on the Imperial army, was deputed to treat with him. As soon as he arrived, Ali began to enact a comedy in the intention of rebutting the accusation of incest with his daughter-in-law Zobeide; for this charge, which, since Veli himself had revealed the secret of their common shame, could only be met by vague denials, had never ceased to produce a most unfavourable impression on Noutza's mind. Scarcely had he entered the castle by the lake, when Ali rushed to meet him, and flung himself into his arms. In presence of his officers and the garrison, he loaded him with the most tender names, calling him his son, his beloved Alexis, his own legitimate child, even as Salik Pacha. He burst into tears, and, with terrible oaths, called Heaven to witness that Mouktar and Veli, whom he disavowed on account of their cowardice, were the adulterous offspring of Emineh's amours. Then, raising his hand against the tomb of her whom he had loved so much, he drew the stupefied Noutza into the recess of a casemate, and sending for Basilissa, presented him to her as a beloved son, whom only political considerations had compelled him to keep at a distance, because, being born of a Christian mother, he had been brought up in the faith of Jesus.

Having thus softened the suspicions of his soldiers, Ali resumed his underground intrigues. The Suliots had informed him that the sultan had made them extremely advantageous offers if they would return to his service, and they demanded pressingly that Ali should give up to them the citadel of Kiapha, which was still in his possession, and which commanded Suli. He replied with the information that he intended, January 26, to attack the camp of Pacho Bey early in the morning, and requested their assistance. In order to cause a diversion, they were to descend into the valley of Janina at night, and occupy a position which he pointed out to them, and he gave them the word "flouri" as password for the night. If successful, he undertook to grant their request.

Ali's letter was intercepted, and fell into Ismail's hands, who immediately conceived a plan for snaring his enemy in his own toils. When the night fixed by Ali arrived, the Seraskier marched out a strong division under the command of Omar Brionis, who had been recently appointed Pacha, and who was instructed to proceed along the western slope of Mount Paktor as far as the village of Besdoun, where he was to place an outpost, and then to retire along the other side of the mountain, so that, being visible in the starlight, the sentinels placed to watch on the hostile towers might take his men for the Suliots and report to Ali that the position of Saint-Nicolas, assigned to them, had been occupied as arranged. All preparations for battle were made, and the two mortal enemies, Ismail and Ali, retired to rest, each cherishing the darling hope of shortly annihilating his rival.

At break of day a lively cannonade, proceeding from the castle of the lake and from Lithoritz, announced that the besieged intended a sortie. Soon Ali's Skipetars, preceded by a detachment of French, Italians, and Swiss, rushed through the Ottoman fire and carried the first redoubt, held by Ibrahim-Aga-Stamboul. They found six pieces of cannon, which the Turks, notwithstanding their terror, had had time to spike. This misadventure, for they had hoped to turn the artillery against the intrenched camp, decided Ali's men on attacking the second redoubt, commanded by the chief bombardier. The Asiatic troops of Baltadgi Pacha rushed to its defence. At their head appeared the chief Imaun of the army, mounted on a richly caparisoned mule and repeating the curse fulminated by the mufti against Ali, his adherents, his castles, and even his cannons, which it was supposed might be rendered harmless by these adjurations. Ali's Mohammedan Skipetars averted their eyes, and spat into their bosoms, hoping thus to escape the evil influence. A superstitious terror was beginning to spread among them, when a French adventurer took aim at the Imaun and brought him down, amid the acclamations of the soldiers; whereupon the Asiatics, imagining that Eblis himself fought against them, retired within the intrenchments, whither the Skipetars, no longer fearing the curse, pursued them vigorously.

At the same time, however, a very different action was proceeding at the northern end of the besiegers' intrenchments. Ali left his castle of the lake, preceded by twelve torch-bearers carrying braziers filled with lighted pitch-wood, and advanced towards the shore of Saint-Nicolas, expecting to unite with the Suliots. He stopped in the middle of the ruins to wait for sunrise, and while there heard that his troops had carried the battery of Ibrahim-Aga-Stamboul.

Overjoyed, he ordered them to press on to the second intrenchment, promising that in an hour, when he should have been joined by the Suliots, he would support them, and he then pushed forward, preceded by two field-pieces with their waggons, and followed by fifteen hundred men, as far as a large plateau on which he perceived at a little distance an encampment which he supposed to be that of the Suliots. He then ordered the Mirdite prince, Kyr Lekos, to advance with an escort of twenty-five men, and when within hearing distance to wave a blue flag and call out the password. An Imperial officer replied with the countersign "flouri," and Lekos immediately sent back word to Ali to advance. His orderly hastened back, and the prince entered the camp, where he and his escort were immediately surrounded and slain.

On receiving the message, Ali began to advance, but cautiously, being uneasy at seeing no signs of the Mirdite troop. Suddenly, furious cries, and a lively fusillade, proceeding from the vineyards and thickets, announced that he had fallen into a trap, and at the same moment Omar Pacha fell upon his advance guard, which broke, crying "Treason!".

Ali sabred the fugitives mercilessly, but fear carried them away, and, forced to follow the crowd, he perceived the Kersales and Baltadgi Pacha descending the side of Mount Paktoras, intending to cut off his retreat. He attempted another route, hastening towards the road to Dgeleva, but found it held by the Tapagetæ under the Bimbashi Aslon of Argyro-Castron. He was surrounded, all seemed lost, and feeling that his last hour had come, he thought only of selling his life as dearly as possible. Collecting his bravest soldiers round him, he prepared for a last rush on Omar Pacha; when, suddenly, with an inspiration born of despair, he ordered his ammunition waggons to be blown up. The Kersales, who were about to seize them, vanished in the explosion, which scattered a hail of stones and debris far and wide. Under cover of the smoke and general confusion, Ali succeeded in withdrawing his men to the shelter of the guns of his castle of Litharitzza, where he continued the fight in order to give time to the fugitives to rally, and to give the support he had promised to those fighting on the other slope; who, in the meantime, had carried the second battery and were attacking the fortified camp. Here the Seraskier Ismail met them with a resistance so well managed, that he was able to conceal the attack he was preparing to make on their rear. Ali, guessing that the object of Ismail's manoeuvres was to crush those whom he had promised to help, and unable, on account of the distance, either to support or to warn them, endeavoured to impede Omar Pasha, hoping still that his Skipetars might either see or hear him. He encouraged the fugitives, who

recognised him from afar by his scarlet dolman, by the dazzling whiteness of his horse, and by the terrible cries which he uttered; for, in the heat of battle, this extraordinary man appeared to have regained the vigour and audacity, of his youth. Twenty times he led his soldiers to the charge, and as often was forced to recoil towards his castles. He brought up his reserves, but in vain. Fate had declared against him. His troops which were attacking the intrenched camp found themselves taken between two fires, and he could not help them. Foaming with passion, he threatened to rush singly into the midst of his enemies. His officers besought him to calm himself, and, receiving only refusals, at last threatened to lay hands upon him if he persisted in exposing himself like a private soldier. Subdued by this unaccustomed opposition, Ali allowed himself to be forced back into the castle by the lake, while his soldiers dispersed in various directions.

But even this defeat did not discourage the fierce pasha. Reduced to extremity, he yet entertained the hope of shaking the Ottoman Empire, and from the recesses of his fortress he agitated the whole of Greece. The insurrection which he had stirred up, without foreseeing what the results might be, was spreading with the rapidity of a lighted train of powder, and the Mohammedans were beginning to tremble, when at length Kursheed Pasha, having crossed the Pindus at the head of an army of eighty thousand men, arrived before Janina.

His tent had hardly been pitched, when Ali caused a salute of twenty-one guns to be fired in his honour, and sent a messenger, bearing a letter of congratulation on his safe arrival. This letter, artful and insinuating, was calculated to make a deep impression on Kursheed. Ali wrote that, being driven by the infamous lies of a former servant, called Pacho Bey, into resisting, not indeed the authority of the sultan, before whom he humbly bent his head weighed down with years and grief, but the perfidious plots of His Highness's advisers, he considered himself happy in his misfortunes to have dealings with a vizier noted for his lofty qualities. He then added that these rare merits had doubtless been very far from being estimated at their proper value by a Divan in which men were only classed in accordance with the sums they laid out in gratifying the rapacity of the ministers. Otherwise, how came it about that Kursheed Pasha, Viceroy of Egypt—after the departure of the French, the conqueror of the Mamelukes, was only rewarded for these services by being recalled without a reason? Having been twice Romili-Valicy, why, when he should have enjoyed the reward of his labours, was he relegated to the obscure post of Salonica? And, when appointed Grand Vizier and sent to pacify Servia, instead of being entrusted with the

government of this kingdom which he had reconquered for the sultan, why was he hastily despatched to Aleppo to repress a trifling sedition of emirs and janissaries? Now, scarcely arrived in the Morea, his powerful arm was to be employed against an aged man.

Ali then plunged into details, related the pillaging, avarice, and imperious dealing of Pacho Bey, as well as of the pachas subordinate to him; how they had alienated the public mind, how they had succeeded in offending the Armatolis, and especially the Suliots, who might be brought back to their duty with less trouble than these imprudent chiefs had taken to estrange them. He gave a mass of special information on this subject, and explained that in advising the Suliots to retire to their mountains he had really only put them in a false position as long as he retained possession of the fort of Kiapha, which is the key of the Selleide.

The Seraskier replied in a friendly manner, ordered the military salute to be returned in Ali's honour, shot for shot, and forbade that henceforth a person of the valour and intrepidity of the Lion of Tepelen should be described by the epithet of "excommunicated." He also spoke of him by his title of "vizier," which he declared he had never forfeited the right to use; and he also stated that he had only entered Epirus as a peacemaker. Kursheed's emissaries had just seized some letters sent by Prince Alexander Ypsilanti to the Greek captains at Epirus. Without going into details of the events which led to the Greek insurrection, the prince advised the Polemarchs, chiefs of the Selleid, to aid Ali Pacha in his revolt against the Porte, but to so arrange matters that they could easily detach themselves again, their only aim being to seize his treasures, which might be used to procure the freedom of Greece.

These letters a messenger from Kursheed delivered to Ali. They produced such an impression upon his mind that he secretly resolved only to make use of the Greeks, and to sacrifice them to his own designs, if he could not inflict a terrible vengeance on their perfidy. He heard from the messenger at the same time of the agitation in European Turkey, the hopes of the Christians, and the apprehension of a rupture between the Porte and Russia. It was necessary to lay aside vain resentment and to unite against these threatening dangers. Kursheed Pacha was, said his messenger, ready to consider favourably any propositions likely to lead to a prompt pacification, and would value such a result far more highly than the glory of subduing by means of the imposing force at his command, a valiant prince whom he had always regarded as one of the strongest bulwarks of the Ottoman Empire. This information produced a different effect upon Ali to that

intended by the Seraskier. Passing suddenly from the depth of despondency to the height of pride, he imagined that these overtures of reconciliation were only a proof of the inability of his foes to subdue him, and he sent the following propositions to Kursheed Pacha:

“If the first duty of a prince is to do justice, that of his subjects is to remain faithful, and obey him in all things. From this principle we derive that of rewards and punishments, and although my services might sufficiently justify my conduct to all time, I nevertheless acknowledge that I have deserved the wrath of the sultan, since he has raised the arm of his anger against the head of his slave. Having humbly implored his pardon, I fear not to invoke his severity towards those who have abused his confidence. With this object I offer—First, to pay the expenses of the war and the tribute in arrears due from my Government without delay. Secondly, as it is important for the sake of example that the treason of an inferior towards his superior should receive fitting chastisement, I demand that Pacho Bey, formerly in my service, should be beheaded, he being the real rebel, and the cause of the public calamities which are afflicting the faithful of Islam. Thirdly, I require that for the rest of my life I shall retain, without annual re-investiture, my pachalik of Janina, the coast of Epirus, Acarnania and its dependencies, subject to the rights, charges and tribute due now and hereafter to the sultan. Fourthly, I demand amnesty and oblivion of the past for all those who have served me until now. And if these conditions are not accepted without modifications, I am prepared to defend myself to the last.

“Given at the castle of Janina, March 7, 1821.”

CHAPTER X

This mixture of arrogance and submission only merited indignation, but it suited Kursheed to dissemble. He replied that, assenting to such propositions being beyond his powers, he would transmit them to Constantinople, and that hostilities might be suspended, if Ali wished, until the courier, could return.

Being quite as cunning as Ali himself, Kursheed profited by the truce to carry on intrigues against him. He corrupted one of the chiefs of the garrison, Metz-Abbas by name, who obtained pardon for himself and fifty followers, with permission to return to their homes. But this clemency appeared to have seduced also four hundred Skipetars who made use of the amnesty and the money with which Ali provided them, to raise Toxis and the Tapygetae in the latter's favour. Thus the Seraskier's scheme turned against himself, and he perceived he had been deceived by Ali's seeming apathy, which certainly did not mean dread of defection. In fact, no man worth anything could have abandoned him, supported as he seemed to be by almost supernatural courage. Suffering from a violent attack of gout, a malady he had never before experienced, the pacha, at the age of eighty-one, was daily carried to the most exposed place on the ramparts of his castle. There, facing the hostile batteries, he gave audience to whoever wished to see him. On this exposed platform he held his councils, despatched orders, and indicated to what points his guns should be directed. Illumined by the flashes of fire, his figure assumed fantastic and weird shapes. The balls sung in the air, the bullets hailed around him, the noise drew blood from the ears of those with him. Calm and immovable, he gave signals to the soldiers who were still occupying part of the ruins of Janina, and encouraged them by voice and gesture. Observing the enemy's movements by the help of a telescope, he improvised means of counteracting them. Sometimes he amused himself by, greeting curious persons and newcomers after a fashion of his own. Thus the chancellor of the French Consul at Prevesa, sent as an envoy to Kursheed Pacha, had scarcely entered the lodging assigned to him, when he was visited by a bomb which caused him to leave it again with all haste. This greeting was due to Ali's chief engineer, Caretto, who next day sent a whole shower of balls and shells into the midst of a group of Frenchmen, whose curiosity had brought them to Tika, where Kursheed was forming a battery. "It is time," said Ali, "that these contemptible gossip-mongers should find listening at doors may become uncomfortable. I have furnished matter enough for them to talk about. Frangistan (Christendom) shall

henceforth hear only of my triumph or my fall, which will leave it considerable trouble to pacify." Then, after a moment's silence, he ordered the public criers to inform his soldiers of the insurrections in Wallachia and the Morea, which news, proclaimed from the ramparts, and spreading immediately in the Imperial camp, caused there much dejection.

The Greeks were now everywhere proclaiming their independence, and Kursheed found himself unexpectedly surrounded by enemies. His position threatened to become worse if the siege of Janina dragged on much longer. He seized the island in the middle of the lake, and threw up redoubts upon it, whence he kept up an incessant fire on the southern front of the castle of Litharitzza, and a practicable trench of nearly forty feet having been made, an assault was decided on. The troops marched out boldly, and performed prodigies of valour; but at the end of an hour, Ali, carried on a litter because of his gout, having led a sortie, the besiegers were compelled to give way and retire to their intrenchments, leaving three hundred dead at the foot of the rampart. "The Pindian bear is yet alive," said Ali in a message to Kursheed; "thou mayest take thy dead and bury them; I give them up without ransom, and as I shall always do when thou attackest me as a brave man ought." Then, having entered his fortress amid the acclamations of his soldiers, he remarked on hearing of the general rising of Greece and the Archipelago, "It is enough! two men have ruined Turkey!" He then remained silent, and vouchsafed no explanation of this prophetic sentence.

Ali did not on this occasion manifest his usual delight on having gained a success. As soon as he was alone with Basilissa, he informed her with tears of the death of Chainitzza. A sudden apoplexy had stricken this beloved sister, the life of his councils, in her palace of Libokovo, where she remained undisturbed until her death. She owed this special favour to her riches and to the intercession of her nephew, Djiladin Pacha of Ochrida, who was reserved by fate to perform the funeral obsequies of the guilty race of Tepelen.

A few months afterwards, Ibrahim Pacha of Berat died of poison, being the last victim whom Chainitzza had demanded from her brother.

Ali's position was becoming daily more difficult, when the time of Ramadan arrived, during which the Turks relax hostilities, and a species of truce ensued. Ali himself appeared to respect the old popular customs, and allowed his Mohammedan soldiers to visit the enemy's outposts and confer on the subject of

various religious ceremonies. Discipline was relaxed in Kursheed's camp, and Ali profited thereby to ascertain the smallest details of all that passed.

He learned from his spies that the general's staff, counting on the "Truce of God," a tacit suspension of all hostilities during the feast of Bairam, the Mohammedan Easter, intended to repair to the chief mosque, in the quarter of Loutcha. This building, spared by the bombs, had until now been respected by both sides. Ali, according to reports spread by himself, was supposed to be ill, weakened by fasting, and terrified into a renewal of devotion, and not likely to give trouble on so sacred a day. Nevertheless he ordered Caretto to turn thirty guns against the mosque, cannon, mortars and howitzers, intending, he said, to solemnise Bairam by discharges of artillery. As soon as he was sure that the whole of the staff had entered the mosque, he gave the signal.

Instantly, from the assembled thirty pieces, there issued a storm of shells, grenades and cannon-balls. With a terrific noise, the mosque crumbled together, amid the cries of pain and rage of the crowd inside crushed in the ruins. At the end of a quarter of an hour the wind dispersed the smoke, and disclosed a burning crater, with the large cypresses which surrounded the building blazing as if they had been torches lighted for the funeral ceremonies of sixty captains and two hundred soldiers.

"Ali Pacha is yet alive!" cried the old Homeric hero of Janina, leaping with joy; and his words, passing from mouth to mouth, spread yet more terror amid Kursheed's soldiers, already overwhelmed by the horrible spectacle passing before their eyes.

Almost on the same day, Ali from the height of his keep beheld the standard of the Cross waving in the distance. The rebellious Greeks were bent on attacking Kursheed. The insurrection promoted by the Vizier of Janina had passed far beyond the point he intended, and the rising had become a revolution. The delight which Ali first evinced cooled rapidly before this consideration, and was extinguished in grief when he found that a conflagration, caused by the besiegers' fire, had consumed part of his store in the castle by the lake. Kursheed, thinking that this event must have shaken the old lion's resolution, recommenced negotiations, choosing the Kiaia of Moustai Pacha: as an envoy, who gave Ali a remarkable warning. "Reflect," said he, "that these rebels bear the sign of the Cross on their standards. You are now only an instrument in their hands. Beware lest you become the victim of their policy." Ali understood the

danger, and had the sultan been better advised, he would have pardoned Ali on condition of again bringing Hellos under his iron yoke. It is possible that the Greeks might not have prevailed against an enemy so formidable and a brain so fertile in intrigue. But so simple an idea was far beyond the united intellect of the Divan, which never rose above idle display. As soon as these negotiations, had commenced, Kursheed filled the roads with his couriers, sending often two in a day to Constantinople, from whence as many were sent to him. This state of things lasted more than three weeks, when it became known that Ali, who had made good use of his time in replacing the stores lost in the conflagration, buying actually from the Kiaia himself a part of the provisions brought by him for the Imperial camp, refused to accept the Ottoman ultimatum. Troubles which broke, out at the moment of the rupture of the negotiations proved that he foresaw the probable result.

Kursheed was recompensed for the deception by which he had been duped by the reduction of the fortress of Litharitzza. The Guegue Skipetars, who composed the garrison, badly paid, wearied out by the long siege, and won by the Seraskier's bribes, took advantage of the fact that the time of their engagement with Ali had elapsed some months previously, and delivering up the fortress they defended, passed over to the enemy. Henceforth Ali's force consisted of only six hundred men.

It was to be feared that this handful of men might also become a prey to discouragement, and might surrender their chief to an enemy who had received all fugitives with kindness. The Greek insurgents dreaded such an event, which would have turned all Kursheed's army, hitherto detained before the castle, of Janina, loose upon themselves. Therefore they hastened to send to their former enemy, now their ally, assistance which he declined to accept. Ali saw himself surrounded by enemies thirsting for his wealth, and his avarice increasing with the danger, he had for some months past refused to pay his defenders. He contented himself with informing his captains of the insurgents' offer, and telling them that he was confident that bravery such as theirs required no reinforcement. And when some of them besought him to at least receive two or three hundred Palikars into the castle, "No," said he; "old serpents always remain old serpents: I distrust the Suliots and their friendship."

Ignorant of Ali's decision, the Greeks of the Selleid were advancing, as well as the Toxidae, towards Janina, when they received the following letter from Ali Pacha:

“My well-beloved children, I have just learned that you are preparing to despatch a party of your Palikars against our common enemy, Kursheed. I desire to inform you that this my fortress is impregnable, and that I can hold out against him for several years. The only service I require of your courage is, that you should reduce Arta, and take alive Ismail Pacho Bey, my former servant, the mortal enemy of my family, and the author of the evils and frightful calamities which have so long oppressed our unhappy country, which he has laid waste before our eyes. Use your best efforts to accomplish this, it will strike at the root of the evil, and my treasures shall reward your Palikars, whose courage every day gains a higher value in my eyes.”

Furious at this mystification, the Suliots retired to their mountains, and Kursheed profited by the discontent Ali's conduct had caused, to win over the Toxide Skipetars, with their commanders Tahir Abbas and Hagi Bessiaris, who only made two conditions: one, that Ismail Pacho Bey, their personal enemy, should be deposed; the other, that the life of their old vizier should be respected.

The first condition was faithfully adhered to by Kursheed, actuated by private motives different from those which he gave publicly, and Ismail Pacho Bey was solemnly deposed. The tails, emblems of his authority, were removed; he resigned the plumes of office; his soldiers forsook him, his servants followed suit. Fallen to the lowest rank, he was soon thrown into prison, where he only blamed Fate for his misfortunes. All the Skipetar Agas hastened to place themselves under Kursheeds' standard, and enormous forces now threatened Janina. All Epirus awaited the denouement with anxiety.

Had he been less avaricious, Ali might have enlisted all the adventurers with whom the East was swarming, and made the sultan tremble in his capital. But the aged pacha clung passionately to his treasures. He feared also, perhaps not unreasonably, that those by whose aid he might triumph would some day become his master. He long deceived himself with the idea that the English, who had sold Parga to him, would never allow a Turkish fleet to enter the Ionian Sea. Mistaken on this point, his foresight was equally at fault with regard to the cowardice of his sons. The defection of his troops was not less fatal, and he only understood the bearing of the Greek insurrection which he himself had provoked, so far as to see that in this struggle he was merely an instrument in procuring the freedom of a country which he had too cruelly oppressed to be able to hold even an inferior rank in it. His last letter to the Suliots opened the eyes of his followers, but under the influence of a sort of polite modesty these

were at least anxious to stipulate for the life of their vizier. Kursheed was obliged to produce firmans from the Porte, declaring that if Ali Tepelen submitted, the royal promise given to his sons should be kept, and that he should, with them, be transferred to Asia Minor, as also his harem, his servants; and his treasures, and allowed to finish his days in peace. Letters from Ali's sons were shown to the Agas, testifying to the good treatment they had experienced in their exile; and whether the latter believed all this, or whether they merely sought to satisfy their own consciences, they henceforth thought only of inducing their rebellious chief to submit. Finally, eight months' pay, given them in advance, proved decisive, and they frankly embraced the cause of the sultan.

The garrison of the castle on the lake, whom Ali seemed anxious to offend as much as possible, by refusing their pay, he thinking them so compromised that they would not venture even to accept an amnesty guaranteed by the mufti, began to desert as soon as they knew the Toxidae had arrived at the Imperial camp. Every night these Skipetars who could cross the moat betook themselves to Kursheed's quarters. One single man yet baffled all the efforts of the besiegers. The chief engineer, Caretto, like another Archimedes, still carried terror into the midst of their camp.

Although reduced to the direst misery, Caretto could not forget that he owed his life to the master who now only repaid his services with the most sordid ingratitude. When he had first come to Epirus, Ali, recognising his ability, became anxious to retain him, but without incurring any expense. He ascertained that the Neapolitan was passionately in love with a Mohammedan girl named Nekibi, who returned his affection. Acting under Ali's orders, Tahir Abbas accused the woman before the cadi of sacrilegious intercourse with an infidel. She could only escape death by the apostasy of her lover; if he refused to deny his God, he shared her fate, and both would perish at the stake. Caretto refused to renounce his religion, but only Nekibi suffered death. Caretto was withdrawn from execution, and Ali kept him concealed in a place of safety, whence he produced him in the time of need. No one had served him with greater zeal; it is even possible that a man of this type would have died at his post, had his cup not been filled with mortification and insult.

Eluding the vigilance of Athanasius Vaya, whose charge it was to keep guard over him, Caretto let himself down by a cord fastened to the end of a cannon: He fell at the foot of the rampart, and thence dragged himself, with a broken arm, to the opposite camp. He had become nearly blind through the explosion of a

cartridge which had burnt his face. He was received as well as a Christian from whom there was now nothing to fear, could expect. He received the bread of charity, and as a refugee is only valued in proportion to the use which can be made of him, he was despised and forgotten.

The desertion of Caretto was soon followed by a defection which annihilated Ali's last hopes. The garrison which had given him so many proofs of devotion, discouraged by his avarice, suffering from a disastrous epidemic, and no longer equal to the necessary labour in defence of the place, opened all the gates simultaneously to the enemy. But the besiegers, fearing a trap, advanced very slowly; so that Ali, who had long prepared against every sort of surprise, had time to gain a place which he called his "refuge."

It was a sort of fortified enclosure, of solid masonry, bristling with cannon, which surrounded the private apartments of his seraglio, called the "Women's Tower." He had taken care to demolish everything which could be set on fire, reserving only a mosque and the tomb of his wife Emineh, whose phantom, after announcing an eternal repose, had ceased to haunt him. Beneath was an immense natural cave, in which he had stored ammunition, precious articles, provisions, and the treasures which had not been sunk in the lake. In this cave an apartment had been made for Basilissa and his harem, also a shelter in which he retired to sleep when exhausted with fatigue. This place was his last resort, a kind of mausoleum; and he did not seem distressed at beholding the castle in the hands of his enemies. He calmly allowed them to occupy the entrance, deliver their hostages, overrun the ramparts, count the cannon which were on the platforms, crumbling from the hostile shells; but when they came within hearing, he demanded by one of his servants that Kursheed should send him an envoy of distinction; meanwhile he forbade anyone to pass beyond a certain place which he pointed out.

Kursheed, imagining that, being in the last extremity, he would capitulate, sent out Tahir Abbas and Hagi Bessiaris. Ali listened without reproaching them for their treachery, but simply observed that he wished to meet some of the chief officers.

The Seraskier then deputed his keeper of the wardrobe, accompanied by his keeper of the seals and other persons of quality. Ali received them with all ceremony, and, after the usual compliments had been exchanged, invited them to descend with him into the cavern. There he showed them more than two

thousand barrels of powder carefully arranged beneath his treasures, his remaining provisions, and a number of valuable objects which adorned this slumbering volcano. He showed them also his bedroom, a sort of cell richly furnished, and close to the powder. It could be reached only by means of three doors, the secret of which was known to no one but himself. Alongside of this was the harem, and in the neighbouring mosque was quartered his garrison, consisting of fifty men, all ready to bury themselves under the ruins of this fortification, the only spot remaining to him of all Greece, which had formerly bent beneath his authority.

After this exhibition, Ali presented one of his most devoted followers to the envoys. Selim, who watched over the fire, was a youth in appearance as gentle as his heart was intrepid, and his special duty was to be in readiness to blow up the whole place at any moment. The pacha gave him his hand to kiss, inquiring if he were ready to die, to which he only responded by pressing his master's hand fervently to his lips. He never took his eyes off Ali, and the lantern, near which a match was constantly smoking, was entrusted only to him and to Ali, who took turns with him in watching it. Ali drew a pistol from his belt, making as if to turn it towards the powder magazine, and the envoys fell at his feet, uttering involuntary cries of terror. He smiled at their fears, and assured them that, being wearied of the weight of his weapons, he had only intended to relieve himself of some of them. He then begged them to seat themselves, and added that he should like even a more terrible funeral than that which they had just ascribed to him. "I do not wish to drag down with me," he exclaimed, "those who have come to visit me as friends; it is Kursheed, whom I have long regarded as my brother, his chiefs, those who have betrayed me, his whole army in short, whom I desire to follow me to the tomb—a sacrifice which will be worthy of my renown, and of the brilliant end to which I aspire."

The envoys gazed at him with stupefaction, which did not diminish when Ali further informed them that they were not only sitting over the arch of a casemate filled with two hundred thousand pounds of powder, but that the whole castle, which they had so rashly occupied, was undermined. "The rest you have seen," he said, "but of this you could not be aware. My riches are the sole cause of the war which has been made against me, and in one moment I can destroy them. Life is nothing to me, I might have ended it among the Greeks, but could I, a powerless old man, resolve to live on terms of equality among those whose absolute master I have been? Thus, whichever way I look, my career is ended. However, I am attached to those who still surround me, so hear my last resolve.

Let a pardon, sealed by the sultan's hands, be given me, and I will submit. I will go to Constantinople, to Asia Minor, or wherever I am sent. The things I should see here would no longer be fitting for me to behold."

To this Kursheed's envoys made answer that without doubt these terms would be conceded. Ali then touched his breast and forehead, and, drawing forth his watch, presented it to the keeper of the wardrobe. "I mean what I say, my friend," he observed; "my word will be kept. If within an hour thy soldiers are not withdrawn from this castle which has been treacherously yielded to them, I will blow it up. Return to the Seraskier, warn him that if he allows one minute more to elapse than the time specified, his army, his garrison, I myself and my family, will all perish together: two hundred thousand pounds of powder can destroy all that surrounds us. Take this watch, I give it thee, and forget not that I am a man of my word." Then, dismissing the messengers, he saluted them graciously, observing that he did not expect an answer until the soldiers should have evacuated the castle.

The envoys had barely returned to the camp when Kursheed sent orders to abandon the fortress. As the reason for this step could not be concealed, everyone, exaggerating the danger, imagined deadly mines ready to be fired everywhere, and the whole army clamoured to break up the camp. Thus Ali and his fifty followers cast terror into the hearts of nearly thirty thousand men, crowded together on the slopes of Janina. Every sound, every whiff of smoke, ascending from near the castle, became a subject of alarm for the besiegers. And as the besieged had provisions for a long time, Kursheed saw little chance of successfully ending his enterprise; when Ali's demand for pardon occurred to him. Without stating his real plans, he proposed to his Council to unite in signing a petition to the Divan for Ali's pardon.

This deed, formally executed, and bearing more than sixty signatures, was then shown to Ali, who was greatly delighted. He was described in it as Vizier, as Aulic Councillor, and also as the most distinguished veteran among His Highness the Sultan's slaves. He sent rich presents to Kursheed and the principal officers, whom he hoped to corrupt, and breathed as though the storm had passed away. The following night, however, he heard the voice of Emineh, calling him several times, and concluded that his end drew nigh.

During the two next nights he again thought he heard Emineh's voice, and sleep forsook his pillow, his countenance altered, and his endurance appeared to be

giving way. Leaning on a long Malacca cane, he repaired at early dawn to Emineh's tomb, on which he offered a sacrifice of two spotted lambs, sent him by Tahir Abbas, whom in return he consented to pardon, and the letters he received appeared to mitigate his trouble. Some days later, he saw the keeper of the wardrobe, who encouraged him, saying that before long there would be good news from Constantinople. Ali learned from him the disgrace of Pacho Bey, and of Ismail Pliaga, whom he detested equally, and this exercise of authority, which was made to appear as a beginning of satisfaction offered him, completely reassured him, and he made fresh presents to this officer, who had succeeded in inspiring him with confidence.

Whilst awaiting the arrival of the firman of pardon which Ali was reassured must arrive from Constantinople without fail, the keeper of the wardrobe advised him to seek an interview with Kursheed. It was clear that such a meeting could not take place in the undermined castle, and Ali was therefore invited to repair to the island in the lake. The magnificent pavilion, which he had constructed there in happier days, had been entirely refurnished, and it was proposed that the conference should take place in this kiosk.

Ali appeared to hesitate at this proposal, and the keeper of the wardrobe, wishing to anticipate his objections, added that the object of this arrangement was, to prove to the army, already aware of it, that there was no longer any quarrel between himself and the commander-in-chief. He added that Kursheed would go to the conference attended only by members of his Divan, but that as it was natural an outlawed man should be on his guard, Ali might, if he liked, send to examine the place, might take with him such guards as he thought necessary, and might even arrange things on the same footing as in his citadel, even to his guardian with the lighted match, as the surest guarantee which could be given him.

The proposition was accepted, and when Ali, having crossed over with a score of soldiers, found himself more at large than he did in his casemate, he congratulated himself on having come. He had Basilissa brought over, also his diamonds; and several chests of money. Two days passed without his thinking of anything but procuring various necessaries, and he then began to inquire what caused the Seraskier to delay his visit. The latter excused himself on the plea of illness, and offered meanwhile to send anyone Ali might wish to see, to visit him: The pacha immediately mentioned several of his former followers, now employed in the Imperial army, and as no difficulty was made in allowing them

to go, he profited by the permission to interview a large number of his old acquaintances, who united in reassuring him and in giving him great hopes of success.

Nevertheless, time passed on, and neither the Seraskier nor the firman appeared. Ali, at first uneasy, ended by rarely mentioning either the one or the other, and never was deceiver more completely deceived. His security was so great that he loudly congratulated himself on having come to the island. He had begun to form a net of intrigue to cause himself to be intercepted on the road when he should be sent to Constantinople, and he did not despair of soon finding numerous partisans in the Imperial army.

CHAPTER XI

For a whole week all seemed going well, when, on the morning of February 5th, Kursheed sent Hassan Pacha to convey his compliments to Ali, and announce that the sultan's firman, so long desired, had at length arrived. Their mutual wishes had been heard, but it was desirable, for the dignity of their sovereign, that Ali, in order to show his gratitude and submission, should order Selim to extinguish the fatal match and to leave the cave, and that the rest of the garrison should first display the Imperial standard and then evacuate the enclosure. Only on this condition could Kursheed deliver into Ali's hands the sultan's decree of clemency.

Ali was alarmed, and his eyes were at length opened. He replied hesitatingly, that on leaving the citadel he had charged Selim to obey only his own verbal order, that no written command, even though signed and sealed by himself, would produce any effect, and therefore he desired to repair himself to the castle, in order to fulfil what was required.

Thereupon a long argument ensued, in which Ali's sagacity, skill, and artifice struggled vainly against a decided line of action. New protestations were made to deceive him, oaths were even taken on the Koran that no evil designs, no mental reservations, were entertained. At length, yielding to the prayers of those who surrounded him, perhaps concluding that all his skill could no longer fight against Destiny, he finally gave way.

Drawing a secret token from his bosom, he handed it to Kursheed's envoy, saying, "Go, show this to Selim, and you will convert a dragon into a lamb." And in fact, at sight of the talisman, Selim prostrated himself, extinguished the match, and fell, stabbed to the heart. At the same time the garrison withdrew, the Imperial standard displayed its blazonry, and the lake castle was occupied by the troops of the Seraskier, who rent the air with their acclamations.

It was then noon. Ali, in the island, had lost all illusions. His pulse beat violently, but his countenance did not betray his mental trouble. It was noticed that he appeared at intervals to be lost in profound thought, that he yawned frequently, and continually drew his fingers through his beard. He drank coffee and iced water several times, incessantly looked at his watch, and taking his field-glass,

surveyed by turns the camp, the castles of Janina, the Pindus range, and the peaceful waters of the lake. Occasionally he glanced at his weapons, and then his eyes sparkled with the fire of youth and of courage. Stationed beside him, his guards prepared their cartridges, their eyes fixed on the landing-place.

The kiosk which he occupied was connected with a wooden structure raised upon pillars, like the open-air theatres constructed for a public festival, and the women occupied the most remote apartments. Everything seemed sad and silent. The vizier, according to custom, sat facing the doorway, so as to be the first to perceive any who might wish to enter. At five o'clock boats were seen approaching the island, and soon Hassan Pacha, Omar Brionis, Kursheed's sword-bearer, Mehemet, the keeper of the wardrobe, and several officers of the army, attended by a numerous suite, drew near with gloomy countenances.

Seeing them approach, Ali sprang up impetuously, his hand upon the pistols in his belt. "Stand! ... what is it you bring me?" he cried to Hassan in a voice of thunder. "I bring the commands of His Highness the Sultan,—knowest thou not these august characters?" And Hassan exhibited the brilliantly gilded frontispiece which decorated the firman. "I know them and revere them." "Then bow before thy destiny; make thy ablutions; address thy prayer to Allah and to His Prophet; for thy head is demanded... ." Ali did not allow him to finish. "My head," he cried with fury, "will not be surrendered like the head of a slave."

These rapidly pronounced words were instantly followed by a pistol-shot which wounded Hassan in the thigh. Swift as lightning, a second killed the keeper of the wardrobe, and the guards, firing at the same time, brought down several officers. Terrified, the Osmanlis forsook the pavilion. Ali, perceiving blood flowing from a wound in his chest, roared like a bull with rage. No one dared to face his wrath, but shots were fired at the kiosk from all sides, and four of his guards fell dead beside him. He no longer knew which way to turn, hearing the noise made by the assailants under the platform, who were firing through the boards on which he stood. A ball wounded him in the side, another from below lodged in his spine; he staggered, clung to a window, then fell on the sofa. "Hasten," he cried to one of his officers, "run, my friend, and strangle my poor Basilissa; let her not fall a prey to these infamous wretches."

The door opened, all resistance ceased, the guards hastened to escape by the windows. Kursheed's sword-bearer entered, followed by the executioners. "Let the justice of Allah be accomplished!" said a cadî. At these words the

executioners seized Ali, who was still alive, by the beard, and dragged him out into the porch, where, placing his head on one of the steps, they separated it from the body with many blows of a jagged cutlass. Thus ended the career of the dreaded Ali Pacha.

His head still preserved so terrible and imposing an aspect that those present beheld it with a sort of stupor. Kursheed, to whom it was presented on a large dish of silver plate, rose to receive it, bowed three times before it, and respectfully kissed the beard, expressing aloud his wish that he himself might deserve a similar end. To such an extent did the admiration with which Ali's bravery inspired these barbarians efface the memory of his crimes. Kursheed ordered the head to be perfumed with the most costly essences, and despatched to Constantinople, and he allowed the Skipetars to render the last honours to their former master.

Never was seen greater mourning than that of the warlike Epirotes. During the whole night, the various Albanian tribes watched by turns around the corpse, improvising the most eloquent funeral songs in its honour. At daybreak, the body, washed and prepared according to the Mohammedan ritual, was deposited in a coffin draped with a splendid Indian Cashmere shawl, on which was placed a magnificent turban, adorned with the plumes Ali had worn in battle. The mane of his charger was cut off, and the animal covered with purple housings, while Ali's shield, his sword, his numerous weapons, and various insignia, were borne on the saddles of several led horses. The cortege proceeded towards the castle, accompanied by hearty imprecations uttered by the soldiers against the "Son of a Slave," the epithet bestowed on their sultan by the Turks in seasons of popular excitement.

The Selaon-Aga, an officer appointed to render the proper salutes, acted as chief mourner, surrounded by weeping mourners, who made the ruins of Janina echo with their lamentations. The guns were fired at long intervals. The portcullis was raised to admit the procession, and the whole garrison, drawn up to receive it, rendered a military salute. The body, covered with matting, was laid in a grave beside that of Amina. When the grave had been filled in, a priest approached to listen to the supposed conflict between the good and bad angels, who dispute the possession of the soul of the deceased. When he at length announced that Ali Tepelen Zadi would repose in peace amid celestial hours, the Skipetars, murmuring like the waves of the sea after a tempest, dispersed to their quarters:

Kursheed, profiting by the night spent by the Epirotes in mourning, caused Ali's head to be enclosed in a silver casket, and despatched it secretly to Constantinople. His sword-bearer Mehemet, who, having presided at the execution, was entrusted with the further duty of presenting it to the sultan, was escorted by three hundred Turkish soldiers. He was warned to be expeditious, and before dawn was well out of reach of the Arnauts, from whom a surprise might have been feared.

The Seraskier then ordered the unfortunate Basilissa, whose life had been spared, to be brought before him. She threw herself at his feet, imploring him to spare, not her life, but her honour; and he consoled her, and assured her of the sultan's protection. She burst into tears when she beheld Ali's secretaries, treasurers, and steward loaded with irons. Only sixty thousand purses (about twenty-five million piastres) of Ali's treasure could be found, and already his officers had been tortured, in order to compel them to disclose where the rest might be concealed. Fearing a similar fate, Basilissa fell insensible into the arms of her attendants, and she was removed to the farm of Bouila, until the Supreme Porte should decide on her fate.

The couriers sent in all directions to announce the death of Ali, having preceded the sword-bearer Mehemet's triumphal procession, the latter, on arriving at Greveno, found the whole population of that town and the neighbouring hamlets assembled to meet him, eager to behold the head of the terrible Ali Pacha. Unable to comprehend how he could possibly have succumbed, they could hardly believe their eyes when the head was withdrawn from its casket and displayed before them. It remained exposed to view in the house of the Mussulman Veli Aga whilst the escort partook of refreshment and changed horses, and as the public curiosity continued to increase throughout the journey, a fixed charge was at length made for its gratification, and the head of the renowned vizier was degraded into becoming an article of traffic exhibited at every post-house, until it arrived at Constantinople.

The sight of this dreaded relic, exposed on the 23rd of February at the gate of the seraglio, and the birth of an heir-presumptive to the sword of Othman—which news was announced simultaneously with that of the death of Ali, by the firing of the guns of the seraglio—roused the enthusiasm of the military inhabitants of Constantinople to a state of frenzy, and triumphant shouts greeted the appearance of a document affixed to the head which narrated Ali's crimes and the circumstances of his death, ending with these words: "This is the Head of the

above-named Ali Pacha, a Traitor to the Faith of Islam.”

Having sent magnificent presents to Kursheed, and a hyperbolic despatch to his army, Mahmoud II turned his attention to Asia Minor; where Ali's sons would probably have been forgotten in their banishment, had it not been supposed that their riches were great. A sultan does not condescend to mince matters with his slaves, when he can despoil them with impunity; His Supreme Highness simply sent them his commands to die. Veli Pacha, a greater coward than a woman-slave born in the harem, heard his sentence kneeling. The wretch who had, in his palace at Arta, danced to the strains of a lively orchestra, while innocent victims were being tortured around him, received the due reward of his crimes. He vainly embraced the knees of his executioners, imploring at least the favour of dying in privacy; and he must have endured the full bitterness of death in seeing his sons strangled before his eyes, Mehemet the elder, remarkable, for his beauty, and the gentle Selim, whose merits might have procured the pardon of his family had not Fate ordained otherwise. After next beholding the execution of his brother, Salik Pacha, Ali's best loved son, whom a Georgian slave had borne to him in his old age, Veli, weeping, yielded his guilty head to the executioners.

His women were then seized, and the unhappy Zobeide, whose scandalous story had even reached Constantinople, sewn up in a leather sack, was flung into the Pursak—a river whose waters mingle with those of the Sagaris. Katherin, Veli's other wife, and his daughters by various mothers, were dragged to the bazaar and sold ignominiously to Turcoman shepherds, after which the executioners at once proceeded to make an inventory of the spoils of their victims.

But the inheritance of Mouktar Pacha was not quite such an easy prey. The kapidgi-bachi who dared to present him with the bowstring was instantly laid dead at his feet by a pistol-shot. “Wretch!” cried Mouktar, roaring like a bull escaped from the butcher, “dost thou think an Arnaout dies like an eunuch? I also am a Tepelenian! To arms, comrades! they would slay us!” As he spoke, he rushed, sword in hand, upon the Turks, and driving them back, succeeded in barricading himself in his apartments.

Presently a troop of janissaries from Koutaieh, ordered to be in readiness, advanced, hauling up cannon, and a stubborn combat began. Mouktar's frail defences were soon in splinters. The venerable Metche-Bono, father of Elmas Bey, faithful to the end, was killed by a bullet; and Mouktar, having slain a host

of enemies with his own hand and seen all his friends perish, himself riddled with wounds, set fire to the powder magazine, and died, leaving as inheritance for the sultan only a heap of smoking ruins. An enviable fate, if compared with that of his father and brothers, who died by the hand of the executioner.

The heads of Ali's children, sent to Constantinople and exposed at the gate of the seraglio, astonished the gaping multitude. The sultan himself, struck with the beauty of Mehemet and Selim, whose long eyelashes and closed eyelids gave them the appearance of beautiful youths sunk in peaceful slumber, experienced a feeling of emotion. "I had imagined them," he said stupidly, "to be quite as old as their father;" and he expressed sorrow for the fate to which he had condemned them.

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CRIMES, v7 by Alexander Dumas, Pere

CELEBRATED CRIMES VOLUME 7, Part 2

By Alexander Dumas, Pere

THE COUNTESS DE SAINT-GERAN

About the end of the year 1639, a troop of horsemen arrived, towards midday, in a little village at the northern extremity of the province of Auvergne, from the direction of Paris. The country folk assembled at the noise, and found it to proceed from the provost of the mounted police and his men. The heat was excessive, the horses were bathed in sweat, the horsemen covered with dust, and the party seemed on its return from an important expedition. A man left the escort, and asked an old woman who was spinning at her door if there was not an inn in the place. The woman and her children showed him a bush hanging over a door at the end of the only street in the village, and the escort recommenced its march at a walk. There was noticed, among the mounted men, a young man of

distinguished appearance and richly dressed, who appeared to be a prisoner. This discovery redoubled the curiosity of the villagers, who followed the cavalcade as far as the door of the wine-shop. The host came out, cap in hand, and the provost enquired of him with a swaggering air if his pothouse was large enough to accommodate his troop, men and horses. The host replied that he had the best wine in the country to give to the king's servants, and that it would be easy to collect in the neighbourhood litter and forage enough for their horses. The provost listened contemptuously to these fine promises, gave the necessary orders as to what was to be done, and slid off his horse, uttering an oath proceeding from heat and fatigue. The horsemen clustered round the young man: one held his stirrup, and the provost deferentially gave way to him to enter the inn first. No, more doubt could be entertained that he was a prisoner of importance, and all kinds of conjectures were made. The men maintained that he must be charged with a great crime, otherwise a young nobleman of his rank would never have been arrested; the women argued, on the contrary, that it was impossible for such a pretty youth not to be innocent.

Inside the inn all was bustle: the serving-lads ran from cellar to garret; the host swore and despatched his servant-girls to the neighbours, and the hostess scolded her daughter, flattening her nose against the panes of a downstairs window to admire the handsome youth.

There were two tables in the principal eating-room. The provost took possession of one, leaving the other to the soldiers, who went in turn to tether their horses under a shed in the back yard; then he pointed to a stool for the prisoner, and seated himself opposite to him, rapping the table with his thick cane.

“Ouf!” he cried, with a fresh groan of weariness, “I heartily beg your pardon, marquis, for the bad wine I am giving you!”

The young man smiled gaily.

“The wine is all very well, monsieur provost,” said he, “but I cannot conceal from you that however agreeable your company is to me, this halt is very inconvenient; I am in a hurry to get through my ridiculous situation, and I should have liked to arrive in time to stop this affair at once.”

The girl of the house was standing before the table with a pewter pot which she had just brought, and at these words she raised her eyes on the prisoner, with a

reassured look which seemed to say, "I was sure that he was innocent."

"But," continued the marquis, carrying the glass to his lips, "this wine is not so bad as you say, monsieur provost."

Then turning to the girl, who was eyeing his gloves and his ruff—

"To your health, pretty child."

"Then," said the provost, amazed at this free and easy air, "perhaps I shall have to beg you to excuse your sleeping quarters."

"What!" exclaimed the marquis, "do we sleep here?"

"My lord;" said the provost, "we have sixteen long leagues to make, our horses are done up, and so far as I am concerned I declare that I am no better than my horse."

The marquis knocked on the table, and gave every indication of being greatly annoyed. The provost meanwhile puffed and blowed, stretched out his big boots, and mopped his forehead with his handkerchief. He was a portly man, with a puffy face, whom fatigue rendered singularly uncomfortable.

"Marquis," said he, "although your company, which affords me the opportunity of showing you some attention, is very precious to me, you cannot doubt that I had much rather enjoy it on another footing. If it be within your power, as you say, to release yourself from the hands of justice, the sooner you do so the better I shall be pleased. But I beg you to consider the state we are in. For my part, I am unfit to keep the saddle another hour, and are you not yourself knocked up by this forced march in the great heat?"

"True, so I am," said the marquis, letting his arms fall by his side.

"Well, then, let us rest here, sup here, if we can, and we will start quite fit in the cool of the morning."

"Agreed," replied the marquis; "but then let us pass the time in a becoming manner. I have two pistoles left, let them be given to these good fellows to drink. It is only fair that I should treat them, seeing that I am the cause of giving them so much trouble."

He threw two pieces of money on the table of the soldiers, who cried in chorus, "Long live M. the marquis!" The provost rose, went to post sentinels, and then repaired to the kitchen, where he ordered the best supper that could be got. The men pulled out dice and began to drink and play. The marquis hummed an air in the middle of the room, twirled his moustache, turning on his heel and looking cautiously around; then he gently drew a purse from his trousers pocket, and as the daughter of the house was coming and going, he threw his arms round her neck as if to kiss her, and whispered, slipping ten Louis into her hand—

"The key of the front door in my room, and a quart of liquor to the sentinels, and you save my life."

The girl went backwards nearly to the door, and returning with an expressive look, made an affirmative sign with her hand. The provost returned, and two hours later supper was served. He ate and drank like a man more at home at table than in the saddle. The marquis plied him with bumpers, and sleepiness, added to the fumes of a very heady wine, caused him to repeat over and over again—

"Confound it all, marquis, I can't believe you are such a blackguard as they say you are; you seem to me a jolly good sort."

The marquis thought he was ready to fall under the table, and was beginning to open negotiations with the daughter of the house, when, to his great disappointment, bedtime having come, the provoking provost called his sergeant, gave him instructions in an undertone, and announced that he should have the honour of conducting M. the marquis to bed, and that he should not go to bed himself before performing this duty. In fact, he posted three of his men, with torches, escorted the prisoner to his room, and left him with many profound bows.

The marquis threw himself on his bed without pulling off his boots, listening to a clock which struck nine. He heard the men come and go in the stables and in the yard.

An hour later, everybody being tired, all was perfectly still. The prisoner then rose softly, and felt about on tiptoe on the chimneypiece, on the furniture, and even in his clothes, for the key which he hoped to find. He could not find it. He could not be mistaken, nevertheless, in the tender interest of the young girl, and he could not believe that she was deceiving him. The marquis's room had a

window which opened upon the street, and a door which gave access to a shabby gallery which did duty for a balcony, whence a staircase ascended to the principal rooms of the house. This gallery hung over the courtyard, being as high above it as the window was from the street. The marquis had only to jump over one side or the other: he hesitated for some time, and just as he was deciding to leap into the street, at the risk of breaking his neck, two taps were struck on the door. He jumped for joy, saying to himself as he opened, "I am saved!" A kind of shadow glided into the room; the young girl trembled from head to foot, and could not say a word. The marquis reassured her with all sorts of caresses.

"Ah, sir," said she, "I am dead if we are surprised."

"Yes," said the marquis, "but your fortune is made if you get me out of here."

"God is my witness that I would with all my soul, but I have such a bad piece of news--"

She stopped, suffocated with varying emotions. The poor girl had come barefooted, for fear of making a noise, and appeared to be shivering.

"What is the matter?" impatiently asked the marquis.

"Before going to bed," she continued, "M. the provost has required from my father all the keys of the house, and has made him take a great oath that there are no more. My father has given him all: besides, there is a sentinel at every door; but they are very tired; I have heard them muttering and grumbling, and I have given them more wine than you told me."

"They will sleep," said the marquis, nowise discouraged, "and they have already shown great respect to my rank in not nailing me up in this room."

"There is a small kitchen garden," continued the girl, "on the side of the fields, fenced in only by a loose hurdle, but--"

"Where is my horse?"

"No doubt in the shed with the rest."

"I will jump into the yard."

“You will be killed.”

“So much the better!”

“Ah monsieur marquis, what have, you done?” said the young girl with grief.

“Some foolish things! nothing worth mentioning; but my head and my honour are at stake. Let us lose no time; I have made up my mind.”

“Stay,” replied the girl, grasping his arm; “at the left-hand corner of the yard there is a large heap of straw, the gallery hangs just over it—”

“Bravo! I shall make less noise, and do myself less mischief.” He made a step towards the door; the girl, hardly knowing what she was doing, tried to detain him; but he got loose from her and opened it. The moon was shining brightly into the yard; he heard no sound. He proceeded to the end of the wooden rail, and perceived the dungheap, which rose to a good height: the girl made the sign of the cross. The marquis listened once again, heard nothing, and mounted the rail. He was about to jump down, when by wonderful luck he heard murmurings from a deep voice. This proceeded from one of two horsemen, who were recommencing their conversation and passing between them a pint of wine. The marquis crept back to his door, holding his breath: the girl was awaiting him on the threshold.

“I told you it was not yet time,” said she.

“Have you never a knife,” said the marquis, “to cut those rascals’ throats with?”

“Wait, I entreat you, one hour, one hour only,” murmured the young girl; “in an hour they will all be asleep.”

The girl’s voice was so sweet, the arms which she stretched towards him were full of such gentle entreaty, that the marquis waited, and at the end of an hour it was the young girl’s turn to tell him to start.

The marquis for the last time pressed with his mouth those lips but lately so innocent, then he half opened the door, and heard nothing this time but dogs barking far away in an otherwise silent country. He leaned over the balustrade, and saw: very plainly a soldier lying prone on the straw.

“If they were to awake?” murmured the young girl in accents of anguish.

“They will not take me alive, be assured,” said the marquis.

“Adieu, then,” replied she, sobbing; “may Heaven preserve you!”

He bestrode the balustrade, spread himself out upon it, and fell heavily on the dungheap. The young girl saw him run to the shed, hastily detach a horse, pass behind the stable wall, spur his horse in both flanks, tear across the kitchen garden, drive his horse against the hurdle, knock it down, clear it, and reach the highroad across the fields.

The poor girl remained at the end of the gallery, fixing her eyes on the sleeping sentry, and ready to disappear at the slightest movement. The noise made by spurs on the pavement and by the horse at the end of the courtyard had half awakened him. He rose, and suspecting some surprise, ran to the shed. His horse was no longer there; the marquis, in his haste to escape, had taken the first which came to hand, and this was the soldier's. Then the soldier gave the alarm; his comrades woke up. They ran to the prisoner's room, and found it empty. The provost came from his bed in a dazed condition. The prisoner had escaped.

Then the young girl, pretending to have been roused by the noise, hindered the preparations by mislaying the saddlery, impeding the horsemen instead of helping them; nevertheless, after a quarter of an hour, all the party were galloping along the road. The provost swore like a pagan. The best horses led the way, and the sentinel, who rode the marquis's, and who had a greater interest in catching the prisoner, far outstripped his companions; he was followed by the sergeant, equally well mounted, and as the broken fence showed the line he had taken, after some minutes they were in view of him, but at a great distance. However, the marquis was losing ground; the horse he had taken was the worst in the troop, and he had pressed it as hard as it could go. Turning in the saddle, he saw the soldiers half a musket-shot off; he urged his horse more and more, tearing his sides with his spurs; but shortly the beast, completely winded, foundered; the marquis rolled with it in the dust, but when rolling over he caught hold of the holsters, which he found to contain pistols; he lay flat by the side of the horse, as if he had fainted, with a pistol at full cock in his hand. The sentinel, mounted on a valuable horse, and more than two hundred yards ahead of his serafile, came up to him. In a moment the marquis, jumping up before he had time to resist him, shot him through the head; the horseman fell, the marquis

jumped up in his place without even setting foot in the stirrup, started off at a gallop, and went away like the wind, leaving fifty yards behind him the non-commissioned officer, dumbfounded with what had just passed before his eyes.

The main body of the escort galloped up, thinking that he was taken; and the provost shouted till he was hoarse, "Do not kill him!" But they found only the sergeant, trying to restore life to his man, whose skull was shattered, and who lay dead on the spot.

As for the marquis, he was out of sight; for, fearing a fresh pursuit, he had plunged into the cross roads, along which he rode a good hour longer at full gallop. When he felt pretty sure of having shaken the police off his track, and that their bad horses could not overtake him, he determined to slacken to recruit his horse; he was walking him along a hollow lane, when he saw a peasant approaching; he asked him the road to the Bourbonnais, and flung him a crown. The man took the crown and pointed out the road, but he seemed hardly to know what he was saying, and stared at the marquis in a strange manner. The marquis shouted to him to get out of the way; but the peasant remained planted on the roadside without stirring an inch. The marquis advanced with threatening looks, and asked how he dared to stare at him like that.

"The reason is," said the peasant, "that you have--", and he pointed to his shoulder and his ruff.

The marquis glanced at his dress, and saw that his coat was dabbled in blood, which, added to the disorder of his clothes and the dust with which he was covered, gave him a most suspicious aspect.

"I know," said he. "I and my servant have been separated in a scuffle with some drunken Germans; it's only a tipsy spree, and whether I have got scratched, or whether in collaring one of these fellows I have drawn some of his blood, it all arises from the row. I don't think I am hurt a bit." So saying, he pretended to feel all over his body.

"All the same," he continued, "I should not be sorry to have a wash; besides, I am dying with thirst and heat, and my horse is in no better case. Do you know where I can rest and refresh myself?"

The peasant offered to guide him to his own house, only a few yards off. His wife and children, who were working, respectfully stood aside, and went to

collect what was wanted—wine, water, fruit, and a large piece of black bread. The marquis sponged his coat, drank a glass of wine, and called the people of the house, whom he questioned in an indifferent manner. He once more informed himself of the different roads leading into the Bourbonnais province, where he was going to visit a relative; of the villages, cross roads, distances; and finally he spoke of the country, the harvest, and asked what news there was.

The peasant replied, with regard to this, that it was surprising to hear of disturbances on the highway at this moment, when it was patrolled by detachments of mounted police, who had just made an important capture.

“Who is that?—” asked the marquis.

“Oh,” said the peasant, “a nobleman who has done a lot of mischief in the country.”

“What! a nobleman in the hands of justice?”

“Just so; and he stands a good chance of losing his head.”

“Do they say what he has done?”

“Shocking things; horrid things; everything he shouldn’t do. All the province is exasperated with him.”

“Do you know him?”

“No, but we all have his description.”

As this news was not encouraging, the marquis, after a few more questions, saw to his horse, patted him, threw some more money to the peasant, and disappeared in the direction pointed out.

The provost proceeded half a league farther along the road; but coming to the conclusion that pursuit was useless, he sent one of his men to headquarters, to warn all the points of exit from the province, and himself returned with his troop to the place whence he had started in the morning. The marquis had relatives in the neighbourhood, and it was quite possible that he might seek shelter with some of them. All the village ran to meet the horsemen, who were obliged to confess that they had been duped by the handsome prisoner. Different views

were expressed on the event, which gave rise to much talking. The provost entered the inn, banging his fist on the furniture, and blaming everybody for the misfortune which had happened to him. The daughter of the house, at first a prey to the most grievous anxiety, had great difficulty in concealing her joy.

The provost spread his papers over the table, as if to nurse his ill-temper.

“The biggest rascal in the world!” he cried; “I ought to have suspected him.”

“What a handsome man he was!” said the hostess.

“A consummate rascal! Do you know who he is? He is the Marquis de Saint-Maixent!”

“The Marquis de Saint-Maixent!” all cried with horror.

“Yes, the very man,” replied the provost; “the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, accused, and indeed convicted, of coining and magic.”

“Ah!”

“Convicted of incest.”

“O my God!”

“Convicted of having strangled his wife to marry another, whose husband he had first stabbed.”

“Heaven help us!” All crossed themselves.

“Yes, good people,” continued the furious provost, “this is the nice boy who has just escaped the king’s justice!”

The host’s daughter left the room, for she felt she was going to faint.

“But,” said the host, “is there no hope of catching him again?”

“Not the slightest, if he has taken the road to the Bourbonnais; for I believe there are in that province noblemen belonging to his family who will not allow him to be rearrested.”

The fugitive was, indeed, no other than the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, accused of all the enormous crimes detailed by the provost, who by his audacious flight opened for himself an active part in the strange story which it remains to relate.

It came to pass, a fortnight after these events, that a mounted gentleman rang at the wicket gate of the chateau de Saint-Geran, at the gates of Moulins. It was late, and the servants were in no hurry to open. The stranger again pulled the bell in a masterful manner, and at length perceived a man running from the bottom of the avenue. The servant peered through the wicket, and making out in the twilight a very ill-appointed traveller, with a crushed hat, dusty clothes, and no sword, asked him what he wanted, receiving a blunt reply that the stranger wished to see the Count de Saint-Geran without any further loss of time. The servant replied that this was impossible; the other got into a passion.

“Who are you?” asked the man in livery.

“You are a very ceremonious fellow!” cried the horseman. “Go and tell M. de Saint-Geran that his relative, the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, wishes to see him at once.”

The servant made humble apologies, and opened the wicket gate. He then walked before the marquis, called other servants, who came to help him to dismount, and ran to give his name in the count’s apartments. The latter was about to sit down to supper when his relative was announced; he immediately went to receive the marquis, embraced him again and again, and gave him the most friendly and gracious reception possible. He wished then to take him into the diningroom to present him to all the family; but the marquis called his attention to the disorder of his dress, and begged for a few minutes’ conversation. The count took him into his dressing-room, and had him dressed from head to foot in his own clothes, whilst they talked. The marquis then narrated a made-up story to M. de Saint-Geran relative to the accusation brought against him. This greatly impressed his relative, and gave him a secure footing in the chateau. When he had finished dressing, he followed the count, who presented him to the countess and the rest of the family.

It will now be in place to state who the inmates of the chateau were, and to relate some previous occurrences to explain subsequent ones.

The Marshal de Saint-Geran, of the illustrious house of Guiche, and governor of

the Bourbonnais, had married, for his first wife, Anne de Tournon, by whom he had one son, Claude de la Guiche, and one daughter, who married the Marquis de Bouille. His wife dying, he married again with Suzanne des Epaulles, who had also been previously married, being the widow of the Count de Longaunay, by whom she had Suzanne de Longaunay.

The marshal and his wife, Suzanne des Epauies, for the mutual benefit of their children by first nuptials, determined to marry them, thus sealing their own union with a double tie. Claude de Guiche, the marshal's son, married Suzanne de Longaunay.

This alliance was much to the distaste of the Marchioness de Bouille, the marshal's daughter, who found herself separated from her stepmother, and married to a man who, it was said, gave her great cause for complaint, the greatest being his threescore years and ten.

The contract of marriage between Claude de la Guiche and Suzanne de Longaunay was executed at Rouen on the 17th of February 1619; but the tender age of the bridegroom, who was then but eighteen, was the cause of his taking a tour in Italy, whence he returned after two years. The marriage was a very happy one but for one circumstance—it produced no issue. The countess could not endure a barrenness which threatened the end of a great name, the extinction of a noble race. She made vows, pilgrimages; she consulted doctors and quacks; but to no purpose.

The Marshal de Saint-Geran died on the Loth of December 1632, having the mortification of having seen no descending issue from the marriage of his son. The latter, now Count de Saint-Geran, succeeded his father in the government of the Bourbonnais, and was named Chevalier of the King's Orders.

Meanwhile the Marchioness de Bouille quarrelled with her old husband the marquis, separated from him after a scandalous divorce, and came to live at the chateau of Saint-Geran, quite at ease as to her brother's marriage, seeing that in default of heirs all his property would revert to her.

Such was the state of affairs when the Marquis de Saint-Maixent arrived at the chateau. He was young, handsome, very cunning, and very successful with women; he even made a conquest of the dowager Countess de Saint-Geran, who lived there with her children. He soon plainly saw that he might easily enter into

the most intimate relations with the Marchioness de Bouille.

The Marquis de Saint-Maixent's own fortune was much impaired by his extravagance and by the exactions of the law, or rather, in plain words, he had lost it all. The marchioness was heiress presumptive to the count: he calculated that she would soon lose her own husband; in any case, the life of a septuagenarian did not much trouble a man like the marquis; he could then prevail upon the marchioness to marry him, thus giving him the command of the finest fortune in the province.

He set to work to pay his court to her, especially avoiding anything that could excite the slightest suspicion. It was, however, difficult to get on good terms with the marchioness without showing outsiders what was going on. But the marchioness, already prepossessed by the agreeable exterior of M. de Saint-Maixent, soon fell into his toils, and the unhappiness of her marriage, with the annoyances incidental to a scandalous case in the courts, left her powerless to resist his schemes. Nevertheless, they had but few opportunities of seeing one' another alone: the countess innocently took a part in all their conversations; the count often came to take the marquis out hunting; the days passed in family pursuits. M. de Saint-Maixent had not so far had an opportunity of saying what a discreet woman ought to pretend not to hear; this intrigue, notwithstanding the marquis's impatience, dragged terribly.

The countess, as has been stated, had for twenty years never ceased to hope that her prayers would procure for her the grace of bearing a son to her husband. Out of sheer weariness she had given herself up to all kinds of charlatans, who at that period were well received by people of rank. On one occasion she brought from Italy a sort of astrologer, who as nearly as possible poisoned her with a horrible nostrum, and was sent back to his own country in a hurry, thanking his stars for having escaped so cheaply. This procured Madame de Saint-Geran a severe reprimand from her confessor; and, as time went on, she gradually accustomed herself to the painful conclusion that she would die childless, and cast herself into the arms of religion. The count, whose tenderness for her never failed, yet clung to the hope of an heir, and made his Will with this in view. The marchioness's hopes had become certainties, and M. de Saint-Maixent, perfectly tranquil on this head, thought only of forwarding his suit with Madame-de Bouille, when, at the end of the month of November 1640, the Count de Saint-Geran was obliged to repair to Paris in great haste on pressing duty.

The countess, who could not bear to be separated from her husband, took the family advice as to accompanying him. The marquis, delighted at an opportunity which left him almost alone in the chateau with Madame de Bouille, painted the journey to Paris in the most attractive colours, and said all he could to decide her to go. The marchioness, for her part, worked very quietly to the same end; it was more than was needed. It was settled that the countess should go with M. de Saint-Geran. She soon made her preparations, and a few days later they set off on the journey together.

The marquis had no fears about declaring his passion; the conquest of Madame de Bouille gave him no trouble; he affected the most violent love, and she responded in the same terms. All their time was spent in excursions and walks from, which the servants were excluded; the lovers, always together, passed whole days in some retired part of the park, or shut up in their apartments. It was impossible for these circumstances not to cause gossip among an army of servants, against whom they had to keep incessantly on their guard; and this naturally happened.

The marchioness soon found herself obliged to make confidantes of the sisters Quinet, her maids; she had no difficulty in gaining their support, for the girls were greatly attached to her. This was the first step of shame for Madame de Bouille, and the first step of corruption for herself and her paramour, who soon found themselves entangled in the blackest of plots. Moreover, there was at the chateau de Saint-Geran a tall, spare, yellow, stupid man, just intelligent enough to perform, if not to conceive, a bad action, who was placed in authority over the domestics; he was a common peasant whom the old marshal had deigned to notice, and whom the count had by degrees promoted to the service of major-domo on account of his long service in the house, and because he had seen him there since he himself was a child; he would not take him away as body servant, fearing that his notions of service would not do for Paris, and left him to the superintendence of the household. The marquis had a quiet talk with this man, took his measure, warped his mind as he wished, gave him some money, and acquired him body and soul. These different agents undertook to stop the chatter of the servants' hall, and thenceforward the lovers could enjoy free intercourse.

One evening, as the Marquis de Saint-Maixent was at supper in company with the marchioness, a loud knocking was heard at the gate of the chateau, to which they paid no great attention. This was followed by the appearance of a courier who had come post haste from Paris; he entered the courtyard with a letter from

the Count de Saint-Geran for M. the marquis; he was announced and introduced, followed by nearly all the household. The marquis asked the meaning of all this, and dismissed all the following with a wave of the hand; but the courier explained that M. the count desired that the letter in his hands should be read before everyone. The marquis opened it without replying, glanced over it, and read it out loud without the slightest alteration: the count announced to his good relations and to all his household that the countess had indicated positive symptoms of pregnancy; that hardly had she arrived in Paris when she suffered from fainting fits, nausea, retching, that she bore with joy these premonitory indications, which were no longer a matter of doubt to the physicians, nor to anyone; that for his part he was overwhelmed with joy at this event, which was the crowning stroke to all his wishes; that he desired the chateau to share his satisfaction by indulging in all kinds of gaieties; and that so far as other matters were concerned they could remain as they were till the return of himself and the countess, which the letter would precede only a few days, as he was going to transport her in a litter for greater safety. Then followed the specification of certain sums of money to be distributed among the servants.

The servants uttered cries of joy; the marquis and marchioness exchanged a look, but a very troublous one; they, however, restrained themselves so far as to simulate a great satisfaction, and the marquis brought himself to congratulate the servants on their attachment to their master and mistress. After this they were left alone, looking very serious, while crackers exploded and violins resounded under the windows. For some time they preserved silence, the first thought which occurred to both being that the count and countess had allowed themselves to be deceived by trifling symptoms, that people had wished to flatter their hopes, that it was impossible for a constitution to change so suddenly after twenty years, and that it was a case of simulative pregnancy. This opinion gaining strength in their minds made them somewhat calmer.

The next day they took a walk side by side in a solitary path in the park and discussed the chances of their situation. M. de Saint-Maixent brought before the marchioness the enormous injury which this event would bring them. He then said that even supposing the news to be true, there were many rocks ahead to be weathered before the succession could be pronounced secure.

“The child may die,” he said at last.

And he uttered some sinister expressions on the slight damage caused by the loss

of a puny creature without mind, interest, or consequence; nothing, he said, but a bit of ill-organised matter, which only came into the world to ruin so considerable a person as the marchioness.

“But what is the use of tormenting ourselves?” he went on impatiently; “the countess is not pregnant, nor can she be.”

A gardener working near them overheard this part of the conversation, but as they walked away from him he could not hear any more.

A few days later, some outriders, sent before him by the count, entered the chateau, saying that their master and mistress were close at hand. In fact, they were promptly followed by brakes and travelling-carriages, and at length the countess’s litter was descried, which M. de Saint-Geran, on horse back, had never lost sight of during the journey. It was a triumphal reception: all the peasants had left their work, and filled the air with shouts of welcome; the servants ran to meet their mistress; the ancient retainers wept for joy at seeing the count so happy and in the hope that his noble qualities might be perpetuated in his heir. The marquis and Madame de Bouille did their best to tune up to the pitch of this hilarity.

The dowager countess, who had arrived at the chateau the same day, unable to convince herself as to this news, had the pleasure of satisfying her self respecting it. The count and countess were much beloved in the Bourbonnais province; this event caused therein a general satisfaction, particularly in the numerous houses attached to them by consanguinity. Within a few days of their return, more than twenty ladies of quality flocked to visit them in great haste, to show the great interest they took in this pregnancy. All these ladies, on one occasion or another, convinced themselves as to its genuineness, and many of them, carrying the subject still further, in a joking manner which pleased the countess, dubbed themselves prophetesses, and predicted the birth of a boy. The usual symptoms incidental to the situation left no room for doubt: the country physicians were all agreed. The count kept one of these physicians in the chateau for two months, and spoke to the Marquis of Saint-Maixent of his intention of procuring a good midwife, on the same terms. Finally, the dowager countess, who was to be sponsor, ordered at a great expense a magnificent store of baby linen, which she desired to present at the birth.

The marchioness devoured her rage, and among the persons who went beside

themselves with joy not one remarked the disappointment which overspread her soul. Every day she saw the marquis, who did all he could to increase her regret, and incessantly stirred up her ill-humour by repeating that the count and countess were triumphing over her misfortune, and insinuating that they were importing a supposititious child to disinherit her. As usual both in private and political affairs, he began by corrupting the marchioness's religious views, to pervert her into crime. The marquis was one of those libertines so rare at that time, a period less unhappy than is generally believed, who made science dependent upon, atheism. It is remarkable that great criminals of this epoch, Sainte-Croix for instance, and Exili, the gloomy poisoner, were the first unbelievers, and that they preceded the learned of the following age both, in philosophy and in the exclusive study of physical science, in which they included that of poisons. Passion, interest, hatred fought the marquis's battles in the heart of Madame de Bouille; she readily lent herself to everything that M. de Saint-Maixent wished.

The Marquis de Saint-Maixent had a confidential servant, cunning, insolent, resourceful, whom he had brought from his estates, a servant well suited to such a master, whom he sent on errands frequently into the neighbourhood of Saint-Geran.

One evening, as the marquis was about to go to bed, this man, returning from one of his expeditions, entered his room, where he remained for a long time, telling him that he had at length found what he wanted, and giving him a small piece of paper which contained several names of places and persons.

Next morning, at daybreak, the marquis caused two of his horses to be saddled, pretended that he was summoned home on pressing business, foresaw that he should be absent for three or four days, made his excuses to the count, and set off at full gallop, followed by his servant.

They slept that night at an inn on the road to Auvergne, to put off the scent any persons who might recognise them; then, following cross-country roads, they arrived after two days at a large hamlet, which they had seemed to have passed far to their left.

In this hamlet was a woman who practised the avocation of midwife, and was known as such in the neighbourhood, but who had, it was said, mysterious and infamous secrets for those who paid her well. Further, she drew a good income

from the influence which her art gave her over credulous people. It was all in her line to cure the king's evil, compound philtres and love potions; she was useful in a variety of ways to girls who could afford to pay her; she was a lovers' go-between, and even practised sorcery for country folk. She played her cards so well, that the only persons privy to her misdeeds were unfortunate creatures who had as strong an interest as herself in keeping them profoundly secret; and as her terms were very high, she lived comfortably enough in a house her own property, and entirely alone, for greater security. In a general way, she was considered skilful in her ostensible profession, and was held in estimation by many persons of rank. This woman's name was Louise Goillard.

Alone one evening after curfew, she heard a loud knocking at the door of her house. Accustomed to receive visits at all hours, she took her lamp without hesitation, and opened the door. An armed man, apparently much agitated, entered the room. Louise Goillard, in a great fright, fell into a chair; this man was the Marquis de Saint-Maixent.

“Calm yourself, good woman,” said the stranger, panting and stammering; “be calm, I beg; for it is I, not you, who have any cause for emotion. I am not a brigand, and far from your having anything to fear, it is I, on the contrary, who am come to beg for your assistance.”

He threw his cloak into a corner, unbuckled his waistbelt, and laid aside his sword. Then falling into a chair, he said—

“First of all, let me rest a little.”

The marquis wore a travelling-dress; but although he had not stated his name, Louise Goillard saw at a glance that he was a very different person from what she had thought, and that, on the contrary, he was some fine gentleman who had come on his love affairs.

“I beg you to excuse,” said she, “a fear which is insulting to you. You came in so hurriedly that I had not time to see whom I was talking to. My house is rather lonely; I am alone; ill-disposed people might easily take advantage of these circumstances to plunder a poor woman who has little enough to lose. The times are so bad! You seem tired. Will you inhale some essence?”

“Give me only a glass of water.”

Louise Goillard went into the adjoining room, and returned with an ewer. The marquis affected to rinse his lips, and said—

“I come from a great distance on a most important matter. Be assured that I shall be properly grateful for your services.”

He felt in his pocket, and pulled out a purse, which he rolled between his fingers.

“In the first place; you must swear to the greatest secrecy.”

“There is no need of that with us,” said Louise Goillard; “that is the first condition of our craft.”

“I must have more express guarantees, and your oath that you will reveal to no one in the world what I am going to confide to you.”

“I give you my word, then, since you demand it; but I repeat that this is superfluous; you do not know me.”

“Consider that this is a most serious matter, that I am as it were placing my head in your hands, and that I would lose my life a thousand times rather than see this mystery unravelled.”

“Consider also,” bluntly replied the midwife, “that we ourselves are primarily interested in all the secrets entrusted to us; that an indiscretion would destroy all confidence in us, and that there are even cases—You may speak.”

When the marquis had reassured her as to himself by this preface, he continued: “I know that you are a very able woman.”

“I could indeed wish to be one, to serve you.”

“That you have pushed the study of your art to its utmost limits.”

“I fear they have been flattering your humble servant.”

“And that your studies have enabled you to predict the future.”

“That is all nonsense.”

“It is true; I have been told so.”

“You have been imposed upon.”

“What is the use of denying it and refusing to do me a service?”

Louise Goillard defended herself long: she could not understand a man of this quality believing in fortune-telling, which she practised only with low-class people and rich farmers; but the marquis appeared so earnest that she knew not what to think.

“Listen,” said he, “it is no use dissembling with me, I know all. Be easy; we are playing a game in which you are laying one against a thousand; moreover, here is something on account to compensate you for the trouble I am giving.”

He laid a pile of gold on the table. The matron weakly owned that she had sometimes attempted astrological combinations which were not always fortunate, and that she had been only induced to do so by the fascination of the phenomena of science. The secret of her guilty practices was drawn from her at the very outset of her defence.

“That being so,” replied the marquis, “you must be already aware of the situation in which I find myself; you must know that, hurried away by a blind and ardent passion, I have betrayed the confidence of an old lady and violated the laws of hospitality by seducing her daughter in her own house; that matters have come to a crisis, and that this noble damsel, whom I love to distraction, being pregnant, is on the point of losing her life and honour by the discovery of her fault, which is mine.”

The matron replied that nothing could be ascertained about a person except from private questions; and to further impose upon the marquis, she fetched a kind of box marked with figures and strange emblems. Opening this, and putting together certain figures which it contained, she declared that what the marquis had told her was true, and that his situation was a most melancholy one. She added, in order to frighten him, that he was threatened by still more serious misfortunes than those which had already overtaken him, but that it was easy to anticipate and obviate these mischances by new consultations.

“Madame,” replied the marquis, “I fear only one thing in the world, the dishonour of the woman I love. Is there no method of remedying the usual embarrassment of a birth?”

“I know of none,” said the matron.

“The young lady has succeeded in concealing her condition; it would be easy for her confinement to take place privately.”

“She has already risked her life; and I cannot consent to be mixed up in this affair, for fear of the consequences.”

“Could not, for instance,” said the marquis, “a confinement be effected without pain?”

“I don’t know about that, but this I do” know, that I shall take very good care not to practise any method contrary to the laws of nature.”

“You are deceiving me: you are acquainted with this method, you have already practised it upon a certain person whom I could name to you.”

“Who has dared to calumniate me thus? I operate only after the decision of the Faculty. God forbid that I should be stoned by all the physicians, and perhaps expelled from France!”

“Will you then let me die of despair? If I were capable of making a bad use of your secrets, I could have done so long ago, for I know them. In Heaven’s name, do not dissimulate any longer, and tell me how it is possible to stifle the pangs of labour. Do you want more gold? Here it is.” And he threw more Louis on the table.

“Stay,” said the matron: “there is perhaps a method which I think I have discovered, and which I have never employed, but I believe it efficacious.”

“But if you have never employed it, it may be dangerous, and risk the life of the lady whom I love.”

“When I say never, I mean that I have tried it once, and most successfully. Be at your ease.”

“Ah!” cried the marquis, “you have earned my everlasting gratitude! But,” continued he, “if we could anticipate the confinement itself, and remove from henceforth the symptoms of pregnancy?”

“Oh, sir, that is a great crime you speak of!”

“Alas!” continued the marquis, as if speaking to himself in a fit of intense grief; “I had rather lose a dear child, the pledge of our love, than bring into the world an unhappy creature which might possibly cause its mother’s death.”

“I pray you, sir, let no more be said on the subject; it is a horrible crime even to think of such a thing.”

“But what is to be done? Is it better to destroy two persons and perhaps kill a whole family with despair? Oh, madame, I entreat you, extricate us from this extremity!”

The marquis buried his face in his hands, and sobbed as though he were weeping copiously.

“Your despair grievously affects me,” said the matron; “but consider that for a woman of my calling it is a capital offence.”

“What are you talking about? Do not our mystery, our safety, and our credit come in first?”

“They can never get at you till after the death and dishonour of all that is dear to me in the world.”

“I might then, perhaps. But in this case you must insure me against legal complications, fines, and procure me a safe exit from the kingdom.”

“Ah! that is my affair. Take my whole fortune! Take my life!”

And he threw the whole purse on the table.

“In this case, and solely to extricate you from the extreme danger in which I see you placed, I consent to give you a decoction, and certain instructions, which will instantly relieve the lady from her burden. She must use the greatest precaution, and study to carry out exactly what I am about to tell you. My God! only such desperate occasions as this one could induce me to— Here—”

She took a flask from the bottom of a cupboard, and continued—

“Here is a liquor which never fails.”

“Oh, madame, you save my honour, which is dearer to me than life! But this is not enough: tell me what use I am to make of this liquor, and in what doses I am to administer it.”

“The patient,” replied the midwife, “must take one spoonful the first day; the second day two; the third—”

“You will obey me to the minutest particular?”

“I swear it.”

“Let us start, then.”

She asked but for time to pack a little linen, put things in order, then fastened her doors, and left the house with the marquis. A quarter of an hour later they were galloping through the night, without her knowing where the marquis was taking her.

The marquis reappeared three days later at the chateau, finding the count’s family as he had left them—that is to say, intoxicated with hope, and counting the weeks, days, and hours before the accouchement of the countess. He excused his hurried departure on the ground of the importance of the business which had summoned him away; and speaking of his journey at table, he related a story current in the country whence he came, of a surprising event which he had all but witnessed. It was the case of a lady of quality who suddenly found herself in the most dangerous pangs of labour. All the skill of the physicians who had been summoned proved futile; the lady was at the point of death; at last, in sheer despair, they summoned a midwife of great repute among the peasantry, but whose practice did not include the gentry. From the first treatment of this woman, who appeared modest and diffident to a degree, the pains ceased as if by enchantment; the patient fell into an indefinable calm languor, and after some hours was delivered of a beautiful infant; but after this was attacked by a violent fever which brought her to death’s door. They then again had recourse to the doctors, notwithstanding the opposition of the master of the house, who had confidence in the matron. The doctors’ treatment only made matters worse. In this extremity they again called in the midwife, and at the end of three weeks the lady was miraculously restored to life, thus, added the marquis, establishing the reputation of the matron, who had sprung into such vogue in the town where she

lived and the neighbouring country that nothing else was talked about.

This story made a great impression on the company, on account of the condition of the countess; the dowager added that it was very wrong to ridicule these humble country experts, who often through observation and experience discovered secrets which proud doctors were unable to unravel with all their studies. Hereupon the count cried out that this midwife must be sent for, as she was just the kind of woman they wanted. After this other matters were talked about, the marquis changing the conversation; he had gained his point in quietly introducing the thin end of the wedge of his design.

After dinner, the company walked on the terrace. The countess dowager not being able to walk much on account of her advanced age, the countess and Madame de Bouille took chairs beside her. The count walked up and down with M. de Saint-Maixent. The marquis naturally asked how things had been going on during his absence, and if Madame de Saint-Geran had suffered any inconvenience, for her pregnancy had become the most important affair in the household, and hardly anything else was talked about.

“By the way,” said the count, “you were speaking just now of a very skilful midwife; would it not be a good step to summon her?”

“I think,” replied the marquis, “that it would be an excellent selection, for I do not suppose there is one in this neighbourhood to compare to her.”

“I have a great mind to send for her at once, and to keep her about the countess, whose constitution she will be all the better acquainted with if she studies it beforehand. Do you know where I can send for her?”

“Faith,” said the marquis, “she lives in a village, but I don’t know which.”

“But at least you know her name?”

“I can hardly remember it. Louise Boyard, I think, or Polliard, one or the other.”

“How! have you not even retained the name?”

“I heard the story, that’s all. Who the deuce can keep a name in his head which he hears in such a chance fashion?”

“But did the condition of the countess never occur to you?”

“It was so far away that I did not suppose you would send such a distance. I thought you were already provided.”

“How can we set about to find her?”

“If that is all, I have a servant who knows people in that part of the country, and who knows how to go about things: if you like, he shall go in quest of her.”

“If I like? This very moment.”

The same evening the servant started on his errand with the count's instructions, not forgetting those of his master. He went at full speed. It may readily be supposed that he had not far to seek the woman he was to bring back with him; but he purposely kept away for three days, and at the end of this time Louise Goillard was installed in the chateau.

She was a woman of plain and severe exterior, who at once inspired confidence in everyone. The plots of the marquis and Madame de Bouille thus thrived with most baneful success; but an accident happened which threatened to nullify them, and, by causing a great disaster, to prevent a crime.

The countess, passing into her apartments, caught her foot in a carpet, and fell heavily on the floor. At the cries of a footman all the household was astir. The countess was carried to bed; the most intense alarm prevailed; but no bad consequences followed this accident, which produced only a further succession of visits from the neighbouring gentry. This happened about the end of the seventh month.

At length the moment of accouchement came. Everything had long before been arranged for the delivery, and nothing remained to be done. The marquis had employed all this time in strengthening Madame de Bouille against her scruples. He often saw Louise Goillard in private, and gave her his instructions; but he perceived that the corruption of Baulieu, the house steward, was an essential factor. Baulieu was already half gained over by the interviews of the year preceding; a large sum of ready money and many promises did the rest. This wretch was not ashamed to join a plot against a master to whom he owed everything. The marchioness for her part, and always under the instigation of M. de Saint-Maixent, secured matters all round by bringing into the abominable plot

the Quinet girls, her maids; so that there was nothing but treason and conspiracy against this worthy family among their upper servants, usually styled confidential. Thus, having prepared matters, the conspirators awaited the event.

On the 16th of August the Countess de Saint-Geran was overtaken by the pangs of labour in the chapel of the chateau, where she was hearing mass. They carried her to her room before mass was over, her women ran around her, and the countess dowager with her own hands arranged on her head a cap of the pattern worn by ladies about to be confined—a cap which is not usually removed till some time later.

The pains recurred with terrible intensity. The count wept at his wife's cries. Many persons were present. The dowager's two daughters by her second marriage, one of whom, then sixteen years of age, afterwards married the Duke de Ventadour and was a party to the lawsuit, wished to be present at this accouchement, which was to perpetuate by a new scion an illustrious race near extinction. There were also Dame Saligny, sister of the late Marshal Saint-Geran, the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, and the Marchioness de Bouille.

Everything seemed to favour the projects of these last two persons, who took an interest in the event of a very different character from that generally felt. As the pains produced no result, and the accouchement was of the most difficult nature, while the countess was near the last extremity, expresses were sent to all the neighbouring parishes to offer prayers for the mother and the child; the Holy Sacrament was elevated in the churches at Moulins.

The midwife attended to everything herself. She maintained that the countess would be more comfortable if her slightest desires were instantly complied with. The countess herself never spoke a word, only interrupting the gloomy silence by heartrending cries. At once, Madame de Bouille, who affected to be bustling about, pointed out that the presence of so many persons was what hindered the countess's accouchement, and, assuming an air of authority justified by fictitious tenderness, said that everyone must retire, leaving the patient in the hands of the persons who were absolutely necessary to her, and that, to remove any possible objections, the countess dowager her mother must set the example. The opportunity was made use of to remove the count from this harrowing spectacle, and everyone followed the countess dowager. Even the countess's own maids were not allowed to remain, being sent on errands which kept them out of the way. This further reason was given, that the eldest being scarcely fifteen,

they were too young to be present on such an occasion. The only persons remaining by the bedside were the Marchioness de Bouille, the midwife, and the two Quinet girls; the countess was thus in the hands of her most cruel enemies.

It was seven o'clock in the evening; the labours continued; the elder Quinet girl held the patient by the hand to soothe her. The count and the dowager sent incessantly to know the news. They were told that everything was going on well, and that shortly their wishes would be accomplished; but none of the servants were allowed to enter the room.

Three hours later, the midwife declared that the countess could not hold out any longer unless she got some rest. She made her swallow a liquor which was introduced into her mouth by spoonfuls. The countess fell into so deep a sleep that she seemed to be dead. The younger Quinet girl thought for a moment that they had killed her, and wept in a corner of the room, till Madame de Bouille reassured her.

During this frightful night a shadowy figure prowled in the corridors, silently patrolled the rooms, and came now and then to the door of the bedroom, where he conferred in a low tone with the midwife and the Marchioness de Bouille. This was the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, who gave his orders, encouraged his people, watched over every point of his plot, himself a prey to the agonies of nervousness which accompany the preparations for a great crime.

The dowager countess, owing to her great age, had been compelled to take some rest. The count sat up, worn out with fatigue, in a downstairs room hard by that in which they were compassing the ruin of all most dear to him in the world.

The countess, in her profound lethargy, gave birth, without being aware of it, to a boy, who thus fell on his entry into the world into the hands of his enemies, his mother powerless to defend him by her cries and tears. The door was half opened, and a man who was waiting outside brought in; this was the major-domo Baulieu.

The midwife, pretending to afford the first necessary cares to the child, had taken it into a corner. Baulieu watched her movements, and springing upon her, pinioned her arms. The wretched woman dug her nails into the child's head. He snatched it from her, but the poor infant for long bore the marks of her claws.

Possibly the Marchioness de Bouille could not nerve herself to the commission

of so great a crime; but it seems more probable that the steward prevented the destruction of the child under the orders of M. de Saint-Maixent. The theory is that the marquis, mistrustful of the promise made him by Madame de Bouille to marry him after the death of her husband, desired to keep the child to oblige her to keep her word, under threats of getting him acknowledged, if she proved faithless to him. No other adequate reason can be conjectured to determine a man of his character to take such great care of his victim.

Baulieu swaddled the child immediately, put it in a basket, hid it under his cloak, and went with his prey to find the marquis; they conferred together for some time, after which the house steward passed by a postern gate into the moat, thence to a terrace by which he reached a bridge leading into the park. This park had twelve gates, and he had the keys of all. He mounted a blood horse which he had left waiting behind a wall, and started off at full gallop. The same day he passed through the village of Escherolles, a league distant from Saint-Geran, where he stopped at the house of a nurse, wife of a glove-maker named Claude. This peasant woman gave her breast to the child; but the steward, not daring to stay in a village so near Saint-Geran, crossed the river Allier at the port de la Chaise, and calling at the house of a man named Boucaud, the good wife suckled the child for the second time; he then continued his journey in the direction of Auvergne.

The heat was excessive, his horse was done up, the child seemed uneasy. A carrier's cart passed him going to Riom; it was owned by a certain Paul Boithion of the town of Aigueperce, a common carrier on the road. Baulieu went alongside to put the child in the cart, which he entered himself, carrying the infant on his knees. The horse followed, fastened by the bridle to the back of the cart.

In the conversation which he held with this man, Baulieu said that he should not take so much care of the child did it not belong to the most noble house in the Bourbonnais. They reached the village of Che at midday. The mistress of the house where he put up, who was nursing an infant, consented to give some of her milk to the child. The poor creature was covered with blood; she warmed some water, stripped off its swaddling linen, washed it from head to foot, and swathed it up again more neatly.

The carrier then took them to Riom. When they got there, Baulieu got rid of him by giving a false meeting-place for their departure; left in the direction of the

abbey of Lavoine, and reached the village of Descoutoux, in the mountains, between Lavoine and Thiers. The Marchioness de Bouille had a chateau there where she occasionally spent some time.

The child was nursed at Descoutoux by Gabrielle Moini, who was paid a month in advance; but she only kept it a week or so, because they refused to tell her the father and mother and to refer her to a place where she might send reports of her charge. This woman having made these reasons public, no nurse could be found to take charge of the child, which was removed from the village of Descoutoux. The persons who removed it took the highroad to Burgundy, crossing a densely wooded country, and here they lost their way.

The above particulars were subsequently proved by the nurses, the carrier, and others who made legal depositions. They are stated at length here, as they proved very important in the great lawsuit. The compilers of the case, into which we search for information, have however omitted to tell us how the absence of the major-domo was accounted for at the castle; probably the far-sighted marquis had got an excuse ready.

The countess's state of drowsiness continued till daybreak. She woke bathed in blood, completely exhausted, but yet with a sensation of comfort which convinced her that she had been delivered from her burden. Her first words were about her child; she wished to see it, kiss it; she asked where it was. The midwife coolly told her, whilst the girls who were by were filled with amazement at her audacity, that she had not been confined at all. The countess maintained the contrary, and as she grew very excited, the midwife strove to calm her, assuring her that in any case her delivery could not be long protracted, and that, judging from all the indications of the night, she would give birth to a boy. This promise comforted the count and the countess dowager, but failed to satisfy the countess, who insisted that a child had been born.

The same day a scullery-maid met a woman going to the water's edge in the castle moat, with a parcel in her arms. She recognised the midwife, and asked what she was carrying and where she was going so early. The latter replied that she was very inquisitive, and that it was nothing at all; but the girl, laughingly pretending to be angry at this answer, pulled open one of the ends of the parcel before the midwife had time to stop her, and exposed to view some linen soaked in blood.

“Madame has been confined, then?” she said to the matron.

“No,” replied she briskly, “she has not.”

The girl was unconvinced, and said, “How do you mean that she has not, when madame the marchioness, who was there, says she has?” The matron in great confusion replied, “She must have a very long tongue, if she said so.”

The girl’s evidence was later found most important.

The countess’s uneasiness made her worse the next day. She implored with sighs and tears at least to be told what had become of her child, steadily maintaining that she was not mistaken when she assured them that she had given birth to one. The midwife with great effrontery told her that the new moon was unfavourable to childbirth, and that she must wait for the wane, when it would be easier as matters were already prepared.

Invalids’ fancies do not obtain much credence; still, the persistence of the countess would have convinced everyone in the long run, had not the dowager said that she remembered at the end of the ninth month of one of her own pregnancies she had all the premonitory symptoms of lying in, but they proved false, and in fact the accouchement took place three months later.

This piece of news inspired great confidence. The marquis and Madame de Bouille did all in their power to confirm it, but the countess obstinately refused to listen to it, and her passionate transports of grief gave rise to the greatest anxiety. The midwife, who knew not how to gain time, and was losing all hope in face of the countess’s persistence, was almost frightened out of her wits; she entered into medical details, and finally said that some violent exercise must be taken to induce labour. The countess, still unconvinced, refused to obey this order; but the count, the dowager, and all the family entreated her so earnestly that she gave way.

They put her in a close carriage, and drove her a whole day over ploughed fields, by the roughest and hardest roads. She was so shaken that she lost the power of breathing; it required all the strength of her constitution to support this barbarous treatment in the delicate condition of a lady so recently confined. They put her to bed again after this cruel drive, and seeing that nobody took her view, she threw herself into the arms of Providence, and consoled herself by religion; the midwife administered violent remedies to deprive her of milk; she got over all

these attempts to murder her, and slowly got better.

Time, which heals the deepest affliction, gradually soothed that of the countess; her grief nevertheless burst out periodically on the slightest cause; but eventually it died out, till the following events rekindled it.

There had been in Paris a fencing-master who used to boast that he had a brother in the service of a great house. This fencing-master had married a certain Marie Pigoreau, daughter of an actor. He had recently died in poor circumstances, leaving her a widow with two children. This woman Pigoreau did not enjoy the best of characters, and no one knew how she made a living, when all at once, after some short absences from home and visit from a man who came in the evening, his face muffled in his cloak, she launched out into a more expensive style of living; the neighbours saw in her house costly clothes, fine swaddling-clothes, and at last it became known that she was nursing a strange child.

About the same time it also transpired that she had a deposit of two thousand livres in the hands of a grocer in the quarter, named Ragueneau; some days later, as the child's baptism had doubtless been put off for fear of betraying his origin, Pigoreau had him christened at St. Jean en Greve. She did not invite any of the neighbours to the function, and gave parents' names of her own choosing at the church. For godfather she selected the parish sexton, named Paul Marmiou, who gave the child the name of Bernard. La Pigoreau remained in a confessional during the ceremony, and gave the man ten sou. The godmother was Jeanne Chevalier, a poor woman of the parish.

The entry in the register was as follows:-

“On the seventh day of March one thousand six hundred and forty-two was baptized Bernard, son of ... and ... his godfather being Paul Marmiou, day labourer and servant of this parish, and his godmother Jeanne Chevalier, widow of Pierre Thibou.”

A few days afterwards la Pigoreau put out the child to nurse in the village of Torcy en Brie, with a woman who had been her godmother, whose husband was called Paillard. She gave out that it was a child of quality which had been entrusted to her, and that she should not hesitate, if such a thing were necessary, to save its life by the loss of one of her own children. The nurse did not keep it long, because she fell ill; la Pigoreau went to fetch the child away, lamenting this

accident, and further saying that she regretted it all the more, as the nurse would have earned enough to make her comfortable for the rest of her life. She put the infant out again in the same village, with the widow of a peasant named Marc Peguin. The monthly wage was regularly paid, and the child brought up as one of rank. La Pigoreau further told the woman that it was the son of a great nobleman, and would later make the fortunes of those who served him. An elderly man, whom the people supposed to be the child's father, but who Pigoreau assured them was her brother-in-law, often came to see him.

When the child was eighteen months old, la Pigoreau took him away and weaned him. Of the two by her husband the elder was called Antoine, the second would have been called Henri if he had lived; but he was born on the 9th of August 1639, after the death of his father, who was killed in June of the same year, and died shortly after his birth. La Pigoreau thought fit to give the name and condition of this second son to the stranger, and thus bury for ever the secret of his birth. With this end in view, she left the quarter where she lived, and removed to conceal herself in another parish where she was not known. The child was brought up under the name and style of Henri, second son of la Pigoreau, till he was two and a half years of age; but at this time, whether she was not engaged to keep it any longer, or whether she had spent the two thousand livres deposited with the grocer Raguenet, and could get no more from the principals, she determined to get rid of it.

Her gossips used to tell this woman that she cared but little for her eldest son, because she was very confident of the second one making his fortune, and that if she were obliged to give up one of them, she had better keep the younger, who was a beautiful boy. To this she would reply that the matter did not depend upon her; that the boy's godfather was an uncle in good circumstances, who would not charge himself with any other child. She often mentioned this uncle, her brother-in-law, she said, who was major-domo in a great house.

One morning, the hall porter at the hotel de Saint-Geran came to Baulieu and told him that a woman carrying a child was asking for him at the wicket gate; this Baulieu was, in fact, the brother of the fencing master, and godfather to Pigoreau's second son. It is now supposed that he was the unknown person who had placed the child of quality with her, and who used to go and see him at his nurse's. La Pigoreau gave him a long account of her situation. The major-domo took the child with some emotion, and told la Pigoreau to wait his answer a short distance off, in a place which he pointed out.

Baulieu's wife made a great outcry at the first proposal of an increase of family; but he succeeded in pacifying her by pointing out the necessities of his sister-in-law, and how easy and inexpensive it was to do this good work in such a house as the count's. He went to his master and mistress to ask permission to bring up this child in their hotel; a kind of feeling entered into the charge he was undertaking which in some measure lessened the weight on his conscience.

The count and countess at first opposed this project; telling him that having already five children he ought not to burden himself with any more, but he petitioned so earnestly that he obtained what he wanted. The countess wished to see it, and as she was about to start for Moulins she ordered it to be put in her women's coach; when it was shown her, she cried out, "What a lovely child!" The boy was fair, with large blue eyes and very regular features, She gave him a hundred caresses, which the child returned very prettily. She at once took a great fancy to him, and said to Baulieu, "I shall not put him in my women's coach; I shall put him in my own."

After they arrived at the chateau of Saint-Geran, her affection for Henri, the name retained by the child, increased day by day. She often contemplated him with sadness, then embraced him with tenderness, and kept him long on her bosom. The count shared this affection for the supposed nephew of Baulieu, who was adopted, so to speak, and brought up like a child of quality.

The Marquis de Saint-Maixent and Madame de Bouille had not married, although the old Marquis de Bouille had long been dead. It appeared that they had given up this scheme. The marchioness no doubt felt scruples about it, and the marquis was deterred from marriage by his profligate habits. It is moreover supposed that other engagements and heavy bribes compensated the loss he derived from the marchioness's breach of faith.

He was a man about town at that period, and was making love to the demoiselle Jacqueline de la Garde; he had succeeded in gaining her affections, and brought matters to such a point that she no longer refused her favours except on the grounds of her pregnancy and the danger of an indiscretion. The marquis then offered to introduce to her a matron who could deliver women without the pangs of labour, and who had a very successful practice. The same Jacqueline de la Garde further gave evidence at the trial that M. de Saint-Maixent had often boasted, as of a scientific intrigue, of having spirited away the son of a governor of a province and grandson of a marshal of France; that he spoke of the

Marchioness de Bouille, said that he had made her rich, and that it was to him she owed her great wealth; and further, that one day having taken her to a pretty country seat which belonged to him, she praised its beauty, saying “c’etait un beau lieu”; he replied by a pun on a man’s name, saying that he knew another Baulieu who had enabled him to make a fortune of five hundred thousand crowns. He also said to Jadelon, sieur de la Barbesange, when posting with him from Paris, that the Countess de Saint-Geran had been delivered of a son who was in his power.

The marquis had not seen Madame de Bouille for a long time; a common danger reunited them. They had both learned with terror the presence of Henri at the hotel de Saint-Geran. They consulted about this; the marquis undertook to cut the danger short. However, he dared put in practice nothing overtly against the child, a matter still more difficult just then, inasmuch as some particulars of his discreditable adventures had leaked out, and the Saint-Geran family received him more than coldly.

Baulieu, who witnessed every day the tenderness of the count and countess for the boy Henri, had been a hundred times on the point of giving himself up and confessing everything. He was torn to pieces with remorse. Remarks escaped him which he thought he might make without ulterior consequences; seeing the lapse of time, but they were noted and commented on. Sometimes he would say that he held in his hand the life and honour of Madame the Marchioness de Bouille; sometimes that the count and countess had more reasons than they knew of for loving Henri. One day he put a case of conscience to a confessor, thus: “Whether a man who had been concerned in the abduction of a child could not satisfy his conscience by restoring him to his father and mother without telling them who he was?” What answer the confessor made is not known, but apparently it was not what the major-domo wanted. He replied to a magistrate of Moulins, who congratulated him on having a nephew whom his masters overburdened with kind treatment, that they ought to love him, since he was nearly related to them.

These remarks were noticed by others than those principally concerned. One day a wine merchant came to propose to Baulieu the purchase of a pipe of Spanish wine, of which he gave him a sample bottle; in the evening he was taken violently ill. They carried him to bed, where he writhed, uttering horrible cries. One sole thought possessed him when his sufferings left him a lucid interval, and in his agony he repeated over and over again that he wished to implore pardon

from the count and countess for a great injury which he had done them. The people round about him told him that was a trifle, and that he ought not to let it embitter his last moments, but he begged so piteously that he got them to promise that they should be sent for.

The count thought it was some trifling irregularity, some misappropriation in the house accounts; and fearing to hasten the death of the sufferer by the shame of the confession of a fault, he sent word that he heartily forgave him, that he might die tranquil, and refused to see him. Baulieu expired, taking his secret with him. This happened in 1648.

The child was then seven years old. His charming manners grew with his age, and the count and countess felt their love for him increase. They caused him to be taught dancing and fencing, put him into breeches and hose, and a page's suit of their livery, in which capacity he served them. The marquis turned his attack to this quarter. He was doubtless preparing some plot as criminal as the preceding, when justice overtook him for some other great crimes of which he had been guilty. He was arrested one day in the street when conversing with one of the Saint-Geran footmen, and taken to the Conciergerie of the Palace of Justice.

Whether owing to these occurrences, or to grounds for suspicion before mentioned, certain reports spread in the Bourbonnais embodying some of the real facts; portions of them reached the ears of the count and countess, but they had only the effect of renewing their grief without furnishing a clue to the truth.

Meanwhile, the count went to take the waters at Vichy. The countess and Madame de Bouille followed him, and there they chanced to encounter Louise Goillard, the midwife. This woman renewed her acquaintance with the house, and in particular often visited the Marchioness de Bouille. One day the countess, unexpectedly entering the marchioness's room, found them both conversing in an undertone. They stopped talking immediately, and appeared disconcerted.

The countess noticed this without attaching any importance to it, and asked the subject of their conversation.

"Oh, nothing," said the marchioness.

"But what is it?" insisted the countess, seeing that she blushed.

The marchioness, no longer able to evade the question, and feeling her difficulties increase, replied—

“Dame Louise is praising my brother for bearing no ill-will to her.”

“Why?” said the countess, turning to the midwife,—“why should you fear any ill-will on the part of my husband?”

“I was afraid,” said Louise Goillard awkwardly, “that he might have taken a dislike to me on account of all that happened when you expected to be confined.”

The obscurity of these words and embarrassment of the two women produced a lively effect upon the countess; but she controlled herself and let the subject drop. Her agitation, however, did not escape the notice of the marchioness, who the next day had horses put to her coach and retired to her estate of Lavoine. This clumsy proceeding strengthened suspicion.

The first determination of the countess was to arrest Louise Goillard; but she saw that in so serious a matter every step must be taken with precaution. She consulted the count and the countess dowager. They quietly summoned the midwife, to question her without any preliminaries. She prevaricated and contradicted herself over and over again; moreover, her state of terror alone sufficed to convict her of a crime. They handed her over to the law, and the Count de Saint-Geran filed an information before the vice-seneschal of Moulins.

The midwife underwent a first interrogatory. She confessed the truth of the accouchement, but she added that the countess had given birth to a still-born daughter, which she had buried under a stone near the step of the barn in the back yard. The judge, accompanied by a physician and a surgeon, repaired to the place, where he found neither stone, nor foetus, nor any indications of an interment. They searched unsuccessfully in other places.

When the dowager countess heard this statement, she demanded that this horrible woman should be put on her trial. The civil lieutenant, in the absence of the criminal lieutenant, commenced the proceedings.

In a second interrogation, Louise Goillard positively declared that the countess had never been confined;

In a third, that she had been delivered of a mole;

In a fourth, that she had been confined of a male infant, which Baulieu had carried away in a basket;

And in a fifth, in which she answered from the dock, she maintained that her evidence of the countess's accouchement had been extorted from her by violence. She made no charges against either Madame de Bouille or the Marquis de Saint Maixent. On the other hand, no sooner was she under lock and key than she despatched her son Guillemain to the marchioness to inform her that she was arrested. The marchioness recognised how threatening things were, and was in a state of consternation; she immediately sent the sieur de la Foresterie, her steward, to the lieutenant-general, her counsel, a mortal enemy of the count, that he might advise her in this conjuncture, and suggest a means for helping the matron without appearing openly in the matter. The lieutenant's advice was to quash the proceedings and obtain an injunction against the continuance of the preliminaries to the action. The marchioness spent a large sum of money, and obtained this injunction; but it was immediately reversed, and the bar to the suit removed.

La Foresterie was then ordered to pass to Riom, where the sisters Quinet lived, and to bribe them heavily to secrecy. The elder one, on leaving the marchioness's service, had shaken her fist in her face, feeling secure with the secrets in her knowledge, and told her that she would repent having dismissed her and her sister, and that she would make a clean breast of the whole affair, even were she to be hung first. These girls then sent word that they wished to enter her service again; that the countess had promised them handsome terms if they would speak; and that they had even been questioned in her name by a Capuchin superior, but that they said nothing, in order to give time to prepare an answer for them. The marchioness found herself obliged to take back the girls; she kept the younger, and married the elder to Delisle, her house steward. But la Foresterie, finding himself in this network of intrigue, grew disgusted at serving such a mistress, and left her house. The marchioness told him on his departure that if he were so indiscreet as to repeat a word of what he had learned from the Quinet girls, she would punish him with a hundred poniard stabs from her major-domo Delisle. Having thus fortified her position, she thought herself secure against any hostile steps; but it happened that a certain prudent Berger, gentleman and page to the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, who enjoyed his master's confidence and went to see him in the Conciergerie, where he was imprisoned, threw some strange light on

this affair. His master had narrated to him all the particulars of the accouchement of the countess and of the abduction of the child.

“I am astonished, my lord,” replied the page, “that having so many dangerous affairs on hand; you did not relieve your conscience of this one.”

“I intend,” replied the marquis, “to restore this child to his father: I have been ordered to do so by a Capuchin to whom I confessed having carried off from the midst of the family, without their knowing it, a grandson of a marshal of France and son of a governor of a province.”

The marquis had at that time permission to go out from prison occasionally on his parole. This will not surprise anyone acquainted with the ideas which prevailed at that period on the honour of a nobleman, even the greatest criminal. The marquis, profiting by this facility, took the page to see a child of about seven years of age, fair and with a beautiful countenance.

“Page,” said he, “look well at this child, so that you may know him again when I shall send you to inquire about him.”

He then informed him that this was the Count de Saint-Geran’s son whom he had carried away.

Information of these matters coming to the ears of justice, decisive proofs were hoped for; but this happened just when other criminal informations were lodged against the marquis, which left him helpless to prevent the exposure of his crimes. Police officers were despatched in all haste to the Conciergerie; they were stopped by the gaolers, who told them that the marquis, feeling ill, was engaged with a priest who was administering the sacraments, to him. As they insisted on seeing him; the warders approached the cell: the priest came out, crying that persons must be sought to whom the sick man had a secret to reveal; that he was in a desperate state, and said he had just poisoned himself; all entered the cell.

M. de Saint-Maixent was writhing on a pallet, in a pitiable condition, sometimes shrieking like a wild beast, sometimes stammering disconnected words. All that the officers could hear was

“Monsieur le Comte ... call ... the Countess ... de Saint-Geran ... let them come... .” The officers earnestly begged him to try to be more explicit.

The marquis had another fit; when he opened his eyes, he said—

“Send for the countess ... let them forgive me ... I wish to tell them everything.” The police officers asked him to speak; one even told him that the count was there. The marquis feebly murmured—

“I am going to tell you—” Then he gave a loud cry and fell back dead.

It thus seemed as if fate took pains to close every mouth from which the truth might escape. Still, this avowal of a deathbed revelation to be made to the Count de Saint-Geran and the deposition of the priest who had administered the last sacraments formed a strong link in the chain of evidence.

The judge of first instruction, collecting all the information he had got, made a report the weight of which was overwhelming. The carters, the nurse, the domestic servants, all gave accounts consistent with each other; the route and the various adventures of the child were plainly detailed, from its birth till its arrival at the village of Descoutoux.

Justice, thus tracing crime to its sources, had no option but to issue a warrant for the arrest of the Marchioness de Bouilie; but it seems probable that it was not served owing to the strenuous efforts of the Count de Saint-Geran, who could not bring himself to ruin his sister, seeing that her dishonour would have been reflected on him. The marchioness hid her remorse in solitude, and appeared again no more. She died shortly after, carrying the weight of her secret till she drew her last breath.

The judge of Moulins at length pronounced sentence on the midwife, whom he declared arraigned and convicted of having suppressed the child born to the countess; for which he condemned her to be tortured and then hanged. The matron lodged an appeal against this sentence, and the case was referred to the Conciergerie.

No sooner had the count and countess seen the successive proofs of the procedure, than tenderness and natural feelings accomplished the rest. They no longer doubted that their page was their son; they stripped him at once of his livery and gave him his rank and prerogatives, under the title of the Count de la Palice.

Meanwhile, a private person named Sequeville informed the countess that he had

made a very important discovery; that a child had been baptized in 1642 at St. Jean-en-Greve, and that a woman named Marie Pigoreau had taken a leading part in the affair. Thereupon inquiries were made, and it was discovered that this child had been nursed in the village of Torcy. The count obtained a warrant which enabled him to get evidence before the judge of Torcy; nothing was left undone to elicit the whole truth; he also obtained a warrant through which he obtained more information, and published a monitory. The elder of the Quinet girls on this told the Marquis de Canillac that the count was searching at a distance for things very near him. The truth shone out with great lustre through these new facts which gushed from all this fresh information. The child, exhibited in the presence of a legal commissary to the nurses and witnesses of Torcy, was identified, as much by the scars left by the midwife's nails on his head, as by his fair hair and blue eyes. This ineffaceable vestige of the woman's cruelty was the principal proof; the witnesses testified that la Pigoreau, when she visited this child with a man who appeared to be of condition, always asserted that he was the son of a great nobleman who had been entrusted to her care, and that she hoped he would make her fortune and that of those who had reared him.

The child's godfather, Paul Marmiou, a common labourer; the grocer Ragueneau, who had charge of the two thousand livres; the servant of la Pigoreau, who had heard her say that the count was obliged to take this child; the witnesses who proved that la Pigoreau had told them that the child was too well born to wear a page's livery, all furnished convincing proofs; but others were forthcoming.

It was at la Pigoreau's that the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, living then at the hotel de Saint-Geran, went to see the child, kept in her house as if it were hers; Prudent Berger, the marquis's page, perfectly well remembered la Pigoreau, and also the child, whom he had seen at her house and whose history the marquis had related to him. Finally, many other witnesses heard in the course of the case, both before the three chambers of nobles, clergy, and the tiers etat, and before the judges of Torcy, Cusset, and other local magistrates, made the facts so clear and conclusive in favour of the legitimacy of the young count, that it was impossible to avoid impeaching the guilty parties. The count ordered the summons in person of la Pigoreau, who had not been compromised in the original preliminary proceedings. This drastic measure threw the intriguing woman on her beam ends, but she strove hard to right herself.

The widowed Duchess de Ventadour, daughter by her mother's second marriage of the Countess dowager of Saint-Geran, and half-sister of the count, and the

Countess de Lude, daughter of the Marchioness de Bouille, from whom the young count carried away the Saint-Geran inheritance, were very warm in the matter, and spoke of disputing the judgment. La Pigoreau went to see them, and joined in concert with them.

Then commenced this famous lawsuit, which long occupied all France, and is parallel in some respects, but not in the time occupied in the hearing, to the case heard by Solomon, in which one child was claimed by two mothers.

The Marquis de Saint-Maixent and Madame de Bouille being dead, were naturally no parties to the suit, which was fought against the Saint-Geran family by la Pigoreau and Mesdames du Lude and de Ventadour. These ladies no doubt acted in good faith, at first at any rate, in refusing to believe the crime; for if they had originally known the truth it is incredible that they could have fought the case so long and so obstinately.

They first of all went to the aid of the midwife, who had fallen sick in prison; they then consulted together, and resolved as follows:

That the accused should appeal against criminal proceedings;

That la Pigoreau should lodge a civil petition against the judgments which ordered her arrest and the confronting of witnesses;

That they should appeal against the abuse of obtaining and publishing monitories, and lodge an interpleader against the sentence of the judge of first instruction, who had condemned the matron to capital punishment;

And that finally, to carry the war into the enemy's camp, la Pigoreau should impugn the maternity of the countess, claiming the child as her own; and that the ladies should depose that the countess's accouchement was an imposture invented to cause it to be supposed that she had given birth to a child.

For more safety and apparent absence of collusion Mesdames du Lude and de Ventadour pretended to have no communication with la Pigoreau.

About this time the midwife died in prison, from an illness which vexation and remorse had aggravated. After her death, her son Guillemin confessed that she had often told him that the countess had given birth to a son whom Baulieu had carried off, and that the child entrusted to Baulieu at the chateau Saint-Geran

was the same as the one recovered; the youth added that he had concealed this fact so long as it might injure his mother, and he further stated that the ladies de Ventadour and du Lude had helped her in prison with money and advice—another strong piece of presumptive evidence.

The petitions of the accused and the interpleadings of Mesdames du Lude and de Ventadour were discussed in seven hearings, before three courts convened. The suit proceeded with all the languor and chicanery of the period.

After long and specious arguments, the attorney general Bijnon gave his decision in favour of the Count and Countess of Saint-Geran, concluding thus:—

“The court rejects the civil appeal of la Pigoreau; and all the opposition and appeals of the appellants and the defendants; condemns them to fine and in costs; and seeing that the charges against la Pigoreau were of a serious nature, and that a personal summons had been decreed against her, orders her committal, recommending her to the indulgence of the court.”

By a judgment given in a sitting at the Tournelle by M. de Mesmes, on the 18th of August 1657, the appellant ladies' and the defendants' opposition was rejected with fine and costs. La Pigoreau was forbidden to leave the city and suburbs of Paris under penalty of summary conviction. The judgment in the case followed the rejection of the appeal.

This reverse at first extinguished the litigation of Mesdames du Lude and de Ventadour, but it soon revived more briskly than ever. These ladies, who had taken la Pigoreau in their coach to all the hearings, prompted her, in order to procrastinate, to file a fresh petition, in which she demanded the confrontment of all the witnesses to the pregnancy, and the confinement. On hearing this petition, the court gave on the 28th of August 1658 a decree ordering the confrontment, but on condition that for three days previously la Pigoreau should deliver herself a prisoner in the Conciergerie.

This judgment, the consequences of which greatly alarmed la Pigoreau, produced such an effect upon her that, after having weighed the interest she had in the suit, which she would lose by flight, against the danger to her life if she ventured her person into the hands of justice, she abandoned her false plea of maternity, and took refuge abroad. This last circumstance was a heavy blow to Mesdames du Lude and de Ventadour; but they were not at the end of their

resources and their obstinacy.

Contempt of court being decreed against la Pigoreau, and the case being got up against the other defendants, the Count de Saint-Geran left for the Bourbonnais, to put in execution the order to confront the witnesses. Scarcely had he arrived in the province when he was obliged to interrupt his work to receive the king and the queen mother, who were returning from Lyons and passing through Moulins. He presented the Count de la Palice to their Majesties as his son; they received him as such. But during the visit of the king and queen the Count de Saint-Geran fell ill, over fatigued, no doubt, by the trouble he had taken to give them a suitable reception, over and above the worry of his own affairs.

During his illness, which only lasted a week, he made in his will a new acknowledgment of his son, naming his executors M. de Barriere, intendant of the province, and the sieur Vialet, treasurer of France, desiring them to bring the lawsuit to an end. His last words were for his wife and child; his only regret that he had not been able to terminate this affair. He died on the 31st of January 1659.

The maternal tenderness of the countess did not need stimulating by the injunctions of her husband, and she took up the suit with energy. The ladies de Ventadour and du Lude obtained by default letters of administration as heiresses without liability, which were granted out of the Chatelet. At the same time they appealed against the judgment of the lieutenant-general of the Bourbonnais, giving the tutelage of the young count to the countess his mother, and his guardianship to sieur de Bompre. The countess, on her side, interpleaded an appeal against the granting of letters of administration without liability, and did all in her power to bring back the case to the Tournelle. The other ladies carried their appeal to the high court, pleading that they were not parties to the lawsuit in the Tournelle.

It would serve no purpose to follow the obscure labyrinth of legal procedure of that period, and to recite all the marches and countermarches which legal subtlety suggested to the litigants. At the end of three years, on the 9th of April 1661, the countess obtained a judgment by which the king in person—

“Assuming to his own decision the civil suit pending at the Tournelle, as well as the appeals pled by both parties, and the last petition of Mesdames du Lude and de Ventadour, sends back the whole case to the three assembled chambers of

the States General, to be by them decided on its merits either jointly or separately, as they may deem fit.”

The countess thus returned to her first battlefield. Legal science produced an immense quantity of manuscript, barristers and attorneys greatly distinguishing themselves in their calling. After an interminable hearing, and pleadings longer and more complicated than ever, which however did not bamboozle the court, judgment was pronounced in Conformity with the summing up of the attorney-general, thus—

“That passing over the petition of Mesdames Marie de la Guiche and Eleonore de Bouille, on the grounds,” *etc. etc.*;

“Evidence taken,” *etc.*;

“Appeals, judgments annulled,” *etc.*;

“With regard to the petition of the late Claude de la Guiche and Suzanne de Longaunay, dated 12th August 1658,”

“Ordered,

“That the rule be made absolute;

“Which being done, Bernard de la Guiche is pronounced, maintained, and declared the lawfully born and legitimate son of Claude de la Guiche and Suzanne de Longaunay; in possession and enjoyment of the name and arms of the house of Guiche, and of all the goods left by Claude de la Guiche, his father; and Marie de la Guiche and Eleonore de Bouille are interdicted from interfering with him;

“The petitions of Eleonore de Bouille and Marie de la Guiche, dated 4th June 1664, 4th August 1665, 6th January, 10th February, 12th March, 15th April, and 2nd June, 1666, are dismissed with costs;

“Declared,

“That the defaults against la Pigoreau are confirmed; and that she, arraigned and convicted of the offences imputed to her, is condemned to be hung and strangled at a gallows erected in the Place de Greve in this city, if taken and apprehended;

otherwise, in effigy at a gallows erected in the Place de Greve aforesaid; that all her property subject to confiscation is seized and confiscated from whomsoever may be in possession of it; on which property and other not subject to confiscation, is levied a fine of eight hundred Paris livres, to be paid to the King, and applied to the maintenance of prisoners in the Conciergerie of the Palace of justice, and to the costs.”

Possibly a more obstinate legal contest was never waged, on both sides, but especially by those who lost it. The countess, who played the part of the true mother in the Bible, had the case so much to heart that she often told the judges, when pleading her cause, that if her son were not recognised as such, she would marry him, and convey all her property to him.

The young Count de la Palice became Count de Saint-Geran through the death of his father, married, in 1667, Claude Francoise Madeleine de Farignies, only daughter of Francois de Monfreville and of Marguerite Jourdain de Carbone de Canisi. He had only one daughter, born in 1688, who became a nun. He died at the age of fifty-five years, and thus this illustrious family became extinct.

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CELEBRATED CRIMES VOLUME 7, Part 3

By Alexander Dumas, Pere

MURAT

1815

I

TOULON

On the 18th June, 1815, at the very moment when the destiny of Europe was being decided at Waterloo, a man dressed like a beggar was silently following the road from Toulon to Marseilles.

Arrived at the entrance of the Gorge of Ollioulles, he halted on a little eminence from which he could see all the surrounding country; then either because he had reached the end of his journey, or because, before attempting that forbidding, sombre pass which is called the Thermopylae of Provence, he wished to enjoy the magnificent view which spread to the southern horizon a little longer, he went and sat down on the edge of the ditch which bordered the road, turning his back on the mountains which rise like an amphitheatre to the north of the town, and having at his feet a rich plain covered with tropical vegetation, exotics of a conservatory, trees and flowers quite unknown in any other part of France.

Beyond this plain, glittering in the last rays of the sun, pale and motionless as a mirror lay the sea, and on the surface of the water glided one brig-of-war, which, taking advantage of a fresh land breeze, had all sails spread, and was bowling along rapidly, making for Italian seas. The beggar followed it eagerly with his eyes until it disappeared between the Cape of Gien and the first of the islands of Hyeres, then as the white apparition vanished he sighed deeply, let his head fall into his hands, and remained motionless and absorbed in his reflections until the trampings of a cavalcade made him start; he looked up, shook back his long black hair, as if he wished to get rid of the gloomy thoughts which were overwhelming him, and, looking at the entrance to the gorge from whence the noise came, he soon saw two riders appear, who were no doubt well known to him, for, drawing himself up to his full height, he let fall the stick he was carrying, and folding his arms he turned towards them. On their side the newcomers had hardly seen him before they halted, and the foremost dismounted, threw his bridle to his companion, and uncovering, though fifty paces from the man in rags, advanced respectfully towards him. The beggar allowed him to approach with an air of sombre dignity and without a single movement; then, when he was quite near—

“Well, marshal, have, you news for me?” said the beggar.

“Yes, sire,” said the other sadly.

“And what are they?”

“Such that I could wish it were anyone but myself to announce them to your Majesty—”

“So the Emperor refuses my services! He forgets the victories of Aboukir, Eylau, and Moscow?”

“No, sire; but he remembers the treaty of Naples, the taking of Reggio, and the declaration of war of the viceroy of Italy.”

The beggar struck his forehead.

“Yes, yes! I daresay he thinks I deserve his reproaches, and yet it seems to me that he ought to remember that there are two men in me—the soldier whom he made his brother, and the brother whom he made a king.... Yes, as brother I have treated him ill—very ill, but as king, upon my soul, I could not have acted differently.... I had to choose between my sword and my crown, and between a regiment and a people. Listen, Brune: you do not know how it all happened. There was an English fleet, the guns of which were growling in the port, there was a Neapolitan population howling in the streets. If I had been alone, I would have passed through the fleet with one boat, through the crowd with my sword alone, but I had a wife and children. Yet I hesitated; the idea of being called traitor and deserter caused me to shed more tears than the loss of my throne, or perhaps the death of those I love best, will ever wring from me.... And so he will have nothing more to do with me? He refuses me as general, captain, private? Then what is left for me to do?”

“Sire, your Majesty must leave France immediately.”

“And if I don’t obey?”

“My orders are to arrest you and deliver you up to a court-martial!”

“Old comrade, you will not do that?”

“I shall do it, praying God to strike me dead in the moment I lay hands on you!”

“That’s you all over, Brune. You have been able to remain a good, loyal fellow. He did not give you a kingdom, he did not encircle your brow with a band of iron which men call a crown and which drives one mad; he did not place you between your conscience and your family. So I must leave France, begin my vagabond life again, and say farewell to Toulon, which recalls so many memories to me! See, Brune,” continued Murat, leaning on the arm of the marshal, “are not the pines yonder as fine as any at the Villa Pamfili, the palms as imposing as any at Cairo, the mountains as grand as any range in the Tyrol? Look to your left, is not Cape Gien something like Castellamare and Sorrento—leaving out Vesuvius? And see, Saint-Mandrier at the farthest point of the gulf, is it not like my rock of Capri, which Lamarque juggled away so cleverly from that idiot of a Sir Hudson Lowe? My God! and I must leave all this! Is there no way of remaining on this little corner of French ground—tell me, Brune!”

“You’ll break my heart, sire!” answered the marshal.

“Well, we’ll say no more about it. What news?”

“The Emperor has left Paris to join the army. They must be fighting now.”

“Fighting now and I not there! Oh, I feel I could have been of use to him on this battlefield. How I would have gloried in charging those miserable Prussians and dastardly English! Brune, give me a passport, I’ll go at full speed, I’ll reach the army, I will make myself known to some colonel, I shall say, ‘Give me your regiment.’ I’ll charge at its head, and if the Emperor does not clasp my hand tonight, I’ll blow my brains out, I swear I will. Do what I ask, Brune, and however it may end, my eternal gratitude will be yours!”

“I cannot, sire.”

“Well, well, say no more about it.”

“And your Majesty is going to leave France?”

“I don’t know. Obey your orders, marshal, and if you come across me again, have me arrested. That’s another way of doing something for me. Life is a heavy burden nowadays. He who will relieve me of it will be welcome.... Goodbye, Brune.”

He held out his hand to the marshal, who tried to kiss it; but Murat opened his

arms, the two old comrades held each other fast for a moment, with swelling hearts and eyes full of tears; then at last they parted. Brune remounted his horse, Murat picked up his stick again, and the two men went away in opposite directions, one to meet his death by assassination at Avignon, the other to be shot at Pizzo. Meanwhile, like Richard III, Napoleon was bartering his crown against a horse at Waterloo.

After the interview that has just been related, Murat took refuge with his nephew, who was called Bonafoux, and who was captain of a frigate; but this retreat could only be temporary, for the relationship would inevitably awake the suspicions of the authorities. In consequence, Bonafoux set about finding a more secret place of refuge for his uncle. He hit on one of his friends, an avocat, a man famed for his integrity, and that very evening Bonafoux went to see him.

After chatting on general subjects, he asked his friend if he had not a house at the seaside, and receiving an affirmative answer, he invited himself to breakfast there the next day; the proposal naturally enough was agreed to with pleasure. The next day at the appointed hour Bonafoux arrived at Bonette, which was the name of the country house where M. Marouin's wife and daughter were staying. M. Marouin himself was kept by his work at Toulon. After the ordinary greetings, Bonafoux stepped to the window, beckoning to Marouin to rejoin him.

"I thought," he said uneasily, "that your house was by the sea."

"We are hardly ten minutes' walk from it."

"But it is not in sight."

"That hill prevents you from seeing it."

"May we go for a stroll on the beach before breakfast is served?"

"By all means. Well, your horse is still saddled. I will order mine—I will come back for you."

Marouin went out. Bonafoux remained at the window, absorbed in his thoughts. The ladies of the house, occupied in preparations for the meal, did not observe, or did not appear to observe, his preoccupation. In five minutes Marouin came back. He was ready to start. The avocat and his friend mounted their horses and rode quickly down to the sea. On the beach the captain slackened his pace, and

riding along the shore for about half an hour, he seemed to be examining the bearings of the coast with great attention. Marouin followed without inquiring into his investigations, which seemed natural enough for a naval officer.

After about an hour the two men went back to the house.

Marouin wished to have the horses unsaddled, but Bonafoux objected, saying that he must go back to Toulon immediately after lunch. Indeed, the coffee was hardly finished before he rose and took leave of his hosts. Marouin, called back to town by his work, mounted his horse too, and the two friends rode back to Toulon together. After riding along for ten minutes, Bonafoux went close to his companion and touched him on the thigh—

“Marouin,” he said, “I have an important secret to confide to you.”

“Speak, captain. After a father confessor, you know there is no one so discreet as a notary, and after a notary an avocat.”

“You can quite understand that I did not come to your country house just for the pleasure of the ride. A more important object, a serious responsibility, preoccupied me; I have chosen you out of all my friends, believing that you were devoted enough to me to render me a great service.”

“You did well, captain.”

“Let us go straight to the point, as men who respect and trust each other should do. My uncle, King Joachim, is proscribed, he has taken refuge with me; but he cannot remain there, for I am the first person they will suspect. Your house is in an isolated position, and consequently we could not find a better retreat for him. You must put it at our disposal until events enable the king to come to some decision.”

“It is at your service,” said Marouin.

“Right. My uncle shall sleep there tonight.”

“But at least give me time to make some preparations worthy of my royal guest.”

“My poor Marouin, you are giving yourself unnecessary trouble, and making a vexatious delay for us: King Joachim is no longer accustomed to palaces and

courtiers; he is only too happy nowadays to find a cottage with a friend in it; besides, I have let him know about it, so sure was I of your answer. He is counting on sleeping at your house tonight, and if I try to change his determination now he will see a refusal in what is only a postponement, and you will lose all the credit for your generous and noble action. There—it is agreed: tonight at ten at the Champs de Mars.”

With these words the captain put his horse to a gallop and disappeared. Marouin turned his horse and went back to his country house to give the necessary orders for the reception of a stranger whose name he did not mention.

At ten o'clock at night, as had been agreed, Marouin was on the Champs de Mars, then covered with Marshal Brune's field-artillery. No one had arrived yet. He walked up and down between the gun-carriages until a functionary came to ask what he was doing. He was hard put to it to find an answer: a man is hardly likely to be wandering about in an artillery park at ten o'clock at night for the mere pleasure of the thing. He asked to see the commanding officer. The officer came up: M. Marouin informed him that he was an avocat, attached to the law courts of Toulon, and told him that he had arranged to meet someone on the Champs de Mars, not knowing that it was prohibited, and that he was still waiting for that person. After this explanation, the officer authorised him to remain, and went back to his quarters. The sentinel, a faithful adherent to discipline, continued to pace up and down with his measured step, without troubling any more about the stranger's presence.

A few moments later a group of several persons appeared from the direction of Les Lices. The night was magnificent, and the moon brilliant. Marouin recognised Bonafoux, and went up to him. The captain at once took him by the hand and led him to the king, and speaking in turn to each of them—

“Sire,” he said, “here is the friend. I told you of.”

Then turning to Marouin—

“Here,” he said, “is the King of Naples, exile and fugitive, whom I confide to your care. I do not speak of the possibility that some day he may get back his crown, that would deprive you of the credit of your fine action.... Now, be his guide—we will follow at a distance. March!”

The king and the lawyer set out at once together. Murat was dressed in a blue

coat-semi-military, semi-civil, buttoned to the throat; he wore white trousers and top boots with spurs; he had long hair, moustache, and thick whiskers, which would reach round his neck.

As they rode along he questioned his host about the situation of his country house and the facility for reaching the sea in case of a surprise. Towards midnight the king and Marouin arrived at Bonette; the royal suite came up in about ten minutes; it consisted of about thirty individuals. After partaking of some light refreshment, this little troop, the last of the court of the deposed king, retired to disperse in the town and its environs, and Murat remained alone with the women, only keeping one valet named Leblanc.

Murat stayed nearly a month in this retirement, spending all his time in answering the newspapers which accused him of treason to the Emperor. This accusation was his absorbing idea, a phantom, a spectre to him; day and night he tried to shake it off, seeking in the difficult position in which he had found himself all the reasons which it might offer him for acting as he had acted. Meanwhile the terrible news of the defeat at Waterloo had spread abroad. The Emperor who had exiled him was an exile himself, and he was waiting at Rochefort, like Murat at Toulon, to hear what his enemies would decide against him. No one knows to this day what inward prompting Napoleon obeyed when, rejecting the counsels of General Lallemande and the devotion of Captain Bodin, he preferred England to America, and went like a modern Prometheus to be chained to the rock of St. Helena.

We are going to relate the fortuitous circumstance which led Murat to the moat of Pizzo, then we will leave it to fatalists to draw from this strange story whatever philosophical deduction may please them. We, as humble annalists, can only vouch for the truth of the facts we have already related and of those which will follow.

King Louis XVIII remounted his throne, consequently Murat lost all hope of remaining in France; he felt he was bound to go. His nephew Bonafoux fitted out a frigate for the United States under the name of Prince Rocca Romana. The whole suite went on board, and they began to carry on to the boat all the valuables which the exile had been able to save from the shipwreck of his kingdom. First a bag of gold weighing nearly a hundred pounds, a sword-sheath on which were the portraits of the king, the queen, and their children, the deed of the civil estates of his family bound in velvet and adorned with his arms. Murat

carried on his person a belt where some precious papers were concealed, with about a score of unmounted diamonds, which he estimated himself to be worth four millions.

When all these preparations for departing were accomplished, it was agreed that the next day, the 1st of August, at five o'clock, a boat should fetch the king to the brig from a little bay, ten minutes' walk from the house where he was staying. The king spent the night making out a route for M. Marouin by which he could reach the queen, who was then in Austria, I think.

It was finished just as it was time to leave, and on crossing the threshold of the hospitable house where he had found refuge he gave it to his host, slipped into a volume of a pocket edition of Voltaire. Below the story of 'Micromegas' the king had written: [The volume is still in the hands of M. Marouin, at Toulon.]

Reassure yourself, dear Caroline; although unhappy, I am free. I am departing, but I do not know whither I am bound. Wherever I may be my heart will be with you and my children. "J. M."

Ten minutes later Murat and his host were waiting on the beach at Bonette for the boat which was to take them out to the ship.

They waited until midday, and nothing appeared; and yet on the horizon they could see the brig which was to be his refuge, unable to lie at anchor on account of the depth of water, sailing along the coast at the risk of giving the alarm to the sentinels.

At midday the king, worn out with fatigue and the heat of the sun, was lying on the beach, when a servant arrived, bringing various refreshments, which Madame Marouin, being very uneasy, had sent at all hazards to her husband. The king took a glass of wine and water and ate an orange, and got up for a moment to see whether the boat he was expecting was nowhere visible on the vastness of the sea. There was not a boat in sight, only the brig tossing gracefully on the horizon, impatient to be off, like a horse awaiting its master.

The king sighed and lay down again on the sand.

The servant went back to Bonette with a message summoning M. Marouin's brother to the beach. He arrived in a few minutes, and almost immediately afterwards galloped off at full speed to Toulon, in order to find out from M.

Bonafoux why the boat had not been sent to the king. On reaching the captain's house, he found it occupied by an armed force. They were making a search for Murat.

The messenger at last made his way through the tumult to the person he was in search of, and he heard that the boat had started at the appointed time, and that it must have gone astray in the creeks of Saint Louis and Sainte Marguerite. This was, in fact, exactly what had happened.

By five o'clock M. Marouin had reported the news to his brother and the king. It was bad news. The king had no courage left to defend his life even by flight, he was in a state of prostration which sometimes overwhelms the strongest of men, incapable of making any plan for his own safety, and leaving M. Marouin to do the best he could. Just then a fisherman was coming into harbour singing. Marouin beckoned to him, and he came up.

Marouin began by buying all the man's fish; then, when he had paid him with a few coins, he let some gold glitter before his eyes, and offered him three louis if he would take a passenger to the brig which was lying off the Croix-des-Signaoux. The fisherman agreed to do it. This chance of escape gave back Murat all his strength; he got up, embraced Marouin, and begged him to go to the queen with the volume of Voltaire. Then he sprang into the boat, which instantly left the shore.

It was already some distance from the land when the king stopped the man who was rowing and signed to Marouin that he had forgotten something. On the beach lay a bag into which Murat had put a magnificent pair of pistols mounted with silver gilt which the queen had given him, and which he set great store on. As soon as he was within hearing he shouted his reason for returning to his host. Marouin seized the valise, and without waiting for Murat to land he threw it into the boat; the bag flew open, and one of the pistols fell out. The fisherman only glanced once at the royal weapon, but it was enough to make him notice its richness and to arouse his suspicions. Nevertheless, he went on rowing towards the frigate. M. Marouin seeing him disappear in the distance, left his brother on the beach, and bowing once more to the king, returned to the house to calm his wife's anxieties and to take the repose of which he was in much need.

Two hours later he was awakened. His house was to be searched in its turn by soldiers. They searched every nook and corner without finding a trace of the

king. Just as they were getting desperate, the brother came in; Maroum smiled at him; believing the king to be safe, but by the newcomer's expression he saw that some fresh misfortune was in the wind. In the first moment's respite given him by his visitors he went up to his brother.

"Well," he said, "I hope the king is on board?"

"The king is fifty yards away, hidden in the outhouse."

"Why did he come back?"

"The fisherman pretended he was afraid of a sudden squall, and refused to take him off to the brig."

"The scoundrel!"

The soldiers came in again.

They spent the night in fruitless searching about the house and buildings; several times they passed within a few steps of the king, and he could hear their threats and imprecations. At last, half an hour before dawn, they went away. Marouin watched them go, and when they were out of sight he ran to the king. He found him lying in a corner, a pistol clutched in each hand. The unhappy man had been overcome by fatigue and had fallen asleep. Marouin hesitated a moment to bring him back to his wandering, tormented life, but there was not a minute to lose. He woke him.

They went down to the beach at once. A morning mist lay over the sea. They could not see anything two hundred yards ahead. They were obliged to wait. At last the first sunbeams began to pierce this nocturnal mist. It slowly dispersed, gliding over the sea as clouds move in the sky. The king's hungry eye roved over the tossing waters before him, but he saw nothing, yet he could not banish the hope that somewhere behind that moving curtain he would find his refuge. Little by little the horizon came into view; light wreaths of mist, like smoke, still floated about the surface of the water, and in each of them the king thought he recognised the white sails of his vessel. The last gradually vanished, the sea was revealed in all its immensity, it was deserted. Not daring to delay any longer, the ship had sailed away in the night.

"So," said the king, "the die is cast. I will go to Corsica."

The same day Marshal Brune was assassinated at Avignon.

II

CORSICA

Once more on the same beach at Bonette, in the same bay where he had awaited the boat in vain, still attended by his band of faithful followers, we find Murat on the 22nd August in the same year. It was no longer by Napoleon that he was threatened, it was by Louis XVIII that he was proscribed; it was no longer the military loyalty of Marshal Brune who came with tears in his eyes to give notice of the orders he had received, but the ungrateful hatred of M. de Riviere, who had set a price [48,000 francs.] on the head of the man who had saved his own. [Conspiracy of Pichegru.] M. de Riviere had indeed written to the ex-King of Naples advising him to abandon himself to the good faith and humanity of the King of France, but his vague invitation had not seemed sufficient guarantee to the outlaw, especially on the part of one who had allowed the assassination almost before his eyes of a man who carried a safe-conduct signed by himself. Murat knew of the massacre of the Mamelukes at Marseilles, the assassination of Brune at Avignon; he had been warned the day before by the police of Toulon that a formal order for his arrest was out; thus it was impossible that he should remain any longer in France. Corsica, with its hospitable towns, its friendly mountains, its impenetrable forests, was hardly fifty leagues distant; he must reach Corsica, and wait in its towns, mountains, and forests until the crowned heads of Europe should decide the fate of the man they had called brother for seven years.

At ten o'clock at night the king went down to the shore. The boat which was to take him across had not reached the rendezvous, but this time there was not the slightest fear that it would fail; the bay had been reconnoitred during the day by three men devoted to the fallen fortunes of the king—Messieurs Blancard, Langlade, and Donadieu, all three naval officers, men of ability and warm heart, who had sworn by their own lives to convey Murat to Corsica, and who were in fact risking their lives in order to accomplish their promise. Murat saw the deserted shore without uneasiness, indeed this delay afforded him a few more moments of patriotic satisfaction.

On this little patch of land, this strip of sand, the unhappy exile clung to his mother France, for once his foot touched the vessel which was to carry him

away, his separation from France would be long, if not eternal. He started suddenly amidst these thoughts and sighed: he had just perceived a sail gliding over the waves like a phantom through the transparent darkness of the southern night. Then a sailor's song was heard; Murat recognised the appointed signal, and answered it by burning the priming of a pistol, and the boat immediately ran inshore; but as she drew three feet of water, she was obliged to stop ten or twelve feet from the beach; two men dashed into the water and reached the beach, while a third remained crouching in the stern-sheets wrapped in his boat-cloak.

"Well, my good friends," said the king, going towards Blancard and Langlade until he felt the waves wet his feet "the moment is come, is it not? The wind is favourable, the sea calm, we must get to sea."

"Yes, answered Langlade, "yes, we must start; and yet perhaps it would be wiser to wait till tomorrow."

"Why?" asked Murat.

Langlade did not answer, but turning towards the west, he raised his hand, and according to the habit of sailors, he whistled to call the wind.

"That's no good," said Donadieu, who had remained in the boat. "Here are the first gusts; you will have more than you know what to do with in a minute.... Take care, Langlade, take care! Sometimes in calling the wind you wake up a storm."

Murat started, for he thought that this warning which rose from the sea had been given him by the spirit of the waters; but the impression was a passing one, and he recovered himself in a moment.

"All the better," he said; "the more wind we have, the faster we shall go."

"Yes," answered Langlade, "but God knows where it will take us if it goes on shifting like this."

"Don't start tonight, sire," said Blancard, adding his voice to those of his two companions.

"But why not?"

“You see that bank of black cloud there, don’t you? Well, at sunset it was hardly visible, now it covers a good part of the sky, in an hour there won’t be a star to be seen.”

“Are you afraid?” asked Murat.

“Afraid!” answered Langlade. “Of what? Of the storm? I might as well ask if your Majesty is afraid of a cannon-ball. We have demurred solely on your account, sire; do you think seadogs like ourselves would delay on account of the storm?”

“Then let us go!” cried Murat, with a sigh.

“Goodbye, Marouin.... God alone can reward you for what you have done for me. I am at your orders, gentlemen.”

At these words the two sailors seized the king and hoisted him on to their shoulders, and carried him into the sea; in another moment he was on board. Langlade and Blancard sprang in behind him. Donadieu remained at the helm, the two other officers undertook the management of the boat, and began their work by unfurling the sails. Immediately the pinnace seemed to rouse herself like a horse at touch of the spur; the sailors cast a careless glance back, and Murat feeling that they were sailing away, turned towards his host and called for a last time—

“You have your route as far as Trieste. Do not forget my wife!... Goodbye-goodbye—!”

“God keep you, sire!” murmured Marouin.

And for some time, thanks to the white sail which gleamed through the darkness, he could follow with his eyes the boat which was rapidly disappearing; at last it vanished altogether. Marouin lingered on the shore, though he could see nothing; then he heard a cry, made faint by the distance; it was Murat’s last adieu to France.

When M. Marouin was telling me these details one evening on the very spot where it all happened, though twenty years had passed, he remembered clearly the slightest incidents of the embarkation that night. From that moment he assured me that a presentiment of misfortune seized him; he could not tear

himself away from the shore, and several times he longed to call the king back, but, like a man in a dream, he opened his mouth without being able to utter a sound. He was afraid of being thought foolish, and it was not until one o'clock that is, two and a half hours after the departure of the boat-that he went home with a sad and heavy heart.

The adventurous navigators had taken the course from Toulon to Bastia, and at first it seemed to the king that the sailors' predictions were belied; the wind, instead of getting up, fell little by little, and two hours after the departure the boat was rocking without moving forward or backward on the waves, which were sinking from moment to moment. Murat sadly watched the phosphorescent furrow trailing behind the little boat: he had nerved himself to face a storm, but not a dead calm, and without even interrogating his companions, of whose uneasiness he took no account, he lay down in the boat, wrapped in his cloak, closing his eyes as if he were asleep, and following the flow of his thoughts, which were far more tumultuous than that of the waters. Soon the two sailors, thinking him asleep, joined the pilot, and sitting down beside the helm, they began to consult together.

"You were wrong, Langlade," said Donadieu, "in choosing a craft like this, which is either too small or else too big; in an open boat we can never weather a storm, and without oars we can never make any way in a calm."

"Fore God! I had no choice. I was obliged to take what I could get, and if it had not been the season for tunny-fishing I might not even have got this wretched pinnace, or rather I should have had to go into the harbour to find it, and they keep such a sharp lookout that I might well have gone in without coming out again."

"At least it is seaworthy," said Blancard.

"Pardieu, you know what nails and planks are when they have been soaked in sea-water for ten years. On any ordinary occasion, a man would rather not go in her from Marseilles to the Chateau d'If, but on an occasion like this one would willingly go round the world in a nutshell."

"Hush!" said Donadieu. The sailors listened; a distant growl was heard, but it was so faint that only the experienced ear of a sailor could have distinguished it.

"Yes, yes," said Langlade, "it is a warning for those who have legs or wings to

regain the homes and nests that they ought never to have left.”

“Are we far from the islands?” asked Donadieu quickly.

“About a mile off.”

“Steer for them.”

“What for?” asked Murat, looking up.

“To put in there, sire, if we can.”

“No, no,” cried Murat; “I will not land except in Corsica. I will not leave France again. Besides, the sea is calm and the wind is getting up again—”

“Down with the sails!” shouted Donadieu. Instantly Langlade and Blancard jumped forward to carry out the order. The sail slid down the mast and fell in a heap in the bottom of the boat.

“What are you doing?” cried Murat. “Do you forget that I am king and that I command you?”

“Sire,” said Donadieu, “there is a king more powerful than you—God; there is a voice which drowns yours—the voice of the tempest: let us save your Majesty if possible, and demand nothing more of us.”

Just then a flash of lightning quivered along the horizon, a clap of thunder nearer than the first one was heard, a light foam appeared on the surface of the water, and the boat trembled like a living thing. Murat began to understand that danger was approaching, then he got up smiling, threw his hat behind him, shook back his long hair, and breathed in the storm like the smell of powder—the soldier was ready for the battle.

“Sire,” said Donadieu, “you have seen many a battle, but perhaps you have never watched a storm if you are curious about it, cling to the mast, for you have a fine opportunity now.”

“What ought I to do?” said Murat. “Can I not help you in any way?”

“No, not just now, sire; later you will be useful at the pumps.”

During this dialogue the storm had drawn near; it rushed on the travellers like a war-horse, breathing out fire and wind through its nostrils, neighing like thunder, and scattering the foam of the waves beneath its feet.

Donadieu turned the rudder, the boat yielded as if it understood the necessity for prompt obedience, and presented the poop to the shock of wind; then the squall passed, leaving the sea quivering, and everything was calm again. The storm took breath.

“Will that gust be all?” asked Murat.

“No, your Majesty, that was the advance-guard only; the body of the army will be up directly.”

“And are you not going to prepare for it?” asked the king gaily.

“What could we do?” said Donadieu. “We have not an inch of canvas to catch the wind, and as long as we do not make too much water, we shall float like a cork. Look out-sire!”

Indeed, a second hurricane was on its way, bringing rain and lightning; it was swifter than the first. Donadieu endeavoured to repeat the same manoeuvre, but he could not turn before the wind struck the boat, the mast bent like a reed; the boat shipped a wave.

“To the pumps!” cried Donadieu. “Sire, now is the moment to help us—”

Blancard, Langlade, and Murat seized their hats and began to bale out the boat. The position of the four men was terrible—it lasted three hours.

At dawn the wind fell, but the sea was still high. They began to feel the need of food: all the provisions had been spoiled by sea-water, only the wine had been preserved from its contact.

The king took a bottle and swallowed a little wine first, then he passed it to his companions, who drank in their turn: necessity had overcome etiquette. By

chance Langlade had on him a few chocolates, which he offered to the king. Murat divided them into four equal parts, and forced his companions to take their shares; then, when the meal was over, they steered for Corsica, but the boat had suffered so much that it was improbable that it would reach Bastia.

The whole day passed without making ten miles; the boat was kept under the jib, as they dared not hoist the mainsail, and the wind was so variable that much time was lost in humouring its caprices.

By evening the boat had drawn a considerable amount of water, it penetrated between the boards, the handkerchiefs of the crew served to plug up the leaks, and night, which was descending in mournful gloom, wrapped them a second time in darkness. Prostrated with fatigue, Murat fell asleep, Blancard and Langlade took their places beside Donadieu, and the three men, who seemed insensible to the calls of sleep and fatigue, watched over his slumbers.

The night was calm enough apparently, but low grumblings were heard now and then.

The three sailors looked at each other strangely and then at the king, who was sleeping at the bottom of the boat, his cloak soaked with sea-water, sleeping as soundly as he had slept on the sands of Egypt or the snows of Russia.

Then one of them got up and went to the other end of the boat, whistling between his teeth a Provencal air; then, after examining the sky, the waves; and the boat, he went back to his comrades and sat down, muttering, "Impossible! Except by a miracle, we shall never make the land."

The night passed through all its phases. At dawn there was a vessel in sight.

"A sail!" cried Donadieu,— "a sail!"

At this cry the king—awoke; and soon a little trading brig hove in sight, going from Corsica to Toulon.

Donadieu steered for the brig, Blancard hoisted enough sail to work the boat, and Langlade ran to the prow and held up the king's cloak on the end of a sort of harpoon. Soon the voyagers perceived that they had been sighted, the brig went about to approach them, and in ten minutes they found themselves within fifty yards of it. The captain appeared in the bows. Then the king hailed him and

offered him a substantial reward if he would receive them on board and take them to Corsica. The captain listened to the proposal; then immediately turning to the crew, he gave an order in an undertone which Donadieu could not hear, but which he understood probably by the gesture, for he instantly gave Langlade and Blancard the order to make away from the schooner. They obeyed with the unquestioning promptitude of sailors; but the king stamped his foot.

“What are you doing, Donadieu? What are you about? Don’t you see that she is coming up to us?”

“Yes—upon my soul—so she is.... Do as I say, Langlade; ready, Blancard. Yes, she is coming upon us, and perhaps I was too late in seeing this. That’s all right—that’s all right: my part now.”

Then he forced over the rudder, giving it so violent a jerk that the boat, forced to change her course suddenly, seemed to rear and plunge like a horse struggling against the curb; finally she obeyed. A huge wave, raised by the giant bearing down on the pinnacle, carried it on like a leaf, and the brig passed within a few feet of the stern.

“Ah!.... traitor!” cried the king, who had only just begun to realise the intention of the captain. At the same time, he pulled a pistol from his belt, crying “Board her! board her!” and tried to fire on the brig, but the powder was wet and would not catch. The king was furious, and went on shouting “Board her! board her!”

“Yes, the wretch, or rather the imbecile,” said Donadieu, “he took us for pirates, and wanted to sink us—as if we needed him to do that!”

Indeed, a single glance at the boat showed that she was beginning to make water.

The effort—to escape which Donadieu had made had strained the boat terribly, and the water was pouring in by a number of leaks between the planks; they had to begin again bailing out with their hats, and went on at it for ten hours. Then for the second time Donadieu heard the consoling cry, “A sail! a sail!” The king and his companions immediately left off bailing; they hoisted the sails again, and steered for the vessel which was coming towards them, and neglected to fight against the water, which was rising rapidly.

From that time forth it was a question of time, of minutes, of seconds; it was a question of reaching the ship before the boat foundered.

The vessel, however, seemed to understand the desperate position of the men imploring help; she was coming up at full speed. Langlade was the first to recognise her; she was a Government felucca plying between Toulon and Bastia. Langlade was a friend of the captain, and he called his name with the penetrating voice of desperation, and he was heard. It was high time: the water kept on rising, and the king and his companions were already up to their knees; the boat groaned in its death-struggle; it stood still, and began to go round and round.

Just then two or three ropes thrown from the felucca fell upon the boat; the king seized one, sprang forward, and reached the rope-ladder: he was saved.

Blancard and Langlade immediately followed. Donadieu waited until the last, as was his duty, and as he put his foot on the ladder he felt the other boat begin to go under; he turned round with all a sailor's calm, and saw the gulf open its jaws beneath him, and then the shattered boat capsized, and immediately disappeared. Five seconds more, and the four men who were saved would have been lost beyond recall! [These details are well known to the people of Toulon, and I have heard them myself a score of times during the two stays that I made in that town during 1834 and 1835. Some of the people who related them had them first-hand from Langlade and Donadieu themselves.]

Murat had hardly gained the deck before a man came and fell at his feet: it was a Mameluke whom he had taken to Egypt in former years, and had since married at Castellamare; business affairs had taken him to Marseilles, where by a miracle he had escaped the massacre of his comrades, and in spite of his disguise and fatigue he had recognised his former master.

His exclamations of joy prevented the king from keeping up his incognito. Then Senator Casabianca, Captain Oletta, a nephew of Prince Baciocchi, a staff-paymaster called Boerco, who were themselves fleeing from the massacres of the South, were all on board the vessel, and improvising a little court, they greeted the king with the title of "your Majesty." It had been a sudden embarkation, it brought about a swift change: he was no longer Murat the exile; he was Joachim, the King of Naples. The exile's refuge disappeared with the foundered boat; in its place Naples and its magnificent gulf appeared on the horizon like a marvellous mirage, and no doubt the primary idea of the fatal expedition of Calabria was originated in the first days of exultation which followed those hours of anguish. The king, however, still uncertain of the welcome which awaited him in Corsica, took the name of the Count of Campo

Melle, and it was under this name that he landed at Bastia on the 25th August. But this precaution was useless; three days after his arrival, not a soul but knew of his presence in the town.

Crowds gathered at once, and cries of “Long live Joachim!” were heard, and the king, fearing to disturb the public peace, left Bastia the same evening with his three companions and his Mameluke. Two hours later he arrived at Viscovato, and knocked at the door of General Franceschetti, who had been in his service during his whole reign, and who, leaving Naples at the same time as the king, had gone to Corsica with his wife, to live with his father-in-law, M. Colonna Cicaldi.

He was in the middle of supper when a servant told him that a stranger was asking to speak to him—he went out, and found Murat wrapped in a military greatcoat, a sailor’s cap drawn down on his head, his beard grown long, and wearing a soldier’s trousers, boots, and gaiters.

The general stood still in amazement; Murat fixed his great dark eyes on him, and then, folding his arms:—

“Franceschetti,” said he, “have you room at your table for your general, who is hungry? Have you a shelter under your roof for your king, who is an exile?”

Franceschetti looked astonished as he recognised Joachim, and could only answer him by falling on his knees and kissing his hand. From that moment the general’s house was at Murat’s disposal.

The news of the king’s arrival had hardly been handed about the neighbourhood before officers of all ranks hastened to Viscovato, veterans who had fought under him, Corsican hunters who were attracted by his adventurous character; in a few days the general’s house was turned into a palace, the village into a royal capital, the island into a kingdom.

Strange rumours were heard concerning Murat’s intentions. An army of nine hundred men helped to give them some amount of confirmation. It was then that Blancard, Donadieu, and Langlade took leave of him; Murat wished to keep them, but they had been vowed to the rescue of the exile, not to the fortunes of the king.

We have related how Murat had met one of his former Mamelukes, a man called

Othello, on board the Bastia mailboat. Othello had followed him to Viscovato, and the ex-King of Naples considered how to make use of him. Family relations recalled him naturally to Castellamare, and Murat ordered him to return there, entrusting to him letters for persons on whose devotion he could depend. Othello started, and reached his father-in-law's safely, and thought he could confide in him; but the latter was horror-struck, and alarmed the police, who made a descent on Othello one night, and seized the letters.

The next day each man to whom a letter was addressed was arrested and ordered to answer Murat as if all was well, and to point out Salerno as the best place for disembarking: five out of seven were dastards enough to obey; the two remaining, who were two Spanish brothers, absolutely refused; they were thrown into a dungeon.

However, on the 17th September, Murat left Viscovato; General Franceschetti and several Corsican officers served as escort; he took the road to Ajaccio by Cotone, the mountains of Serra and Bosco, Venaco and Vivaro, by the gorges of the forest of Vezzanovo and Bogognone; he was received and feted like a king everywhere, and at the gates of the towns he was met by deputations who made him speeches and saluted him with the title of "Majesty"; at last, on the 23rd September, he arrived at Ajaccio. The whole population awaited him outside the walls, and his entry into the town was a triumphal procession; he was taken to the inn which had been fixed upon beforehand by the quartermasters. It was enough to turn the head of a man less impressionable than Murat; as for him, he was intoxicated with it. As he went into the inn he held out his hand to Franceschetti.

"You see," he said, "what the Neapolitans will do for me by the way the Corsicans receive me."

It was the first mention which had escaped him of his plans for the future, and from that very day he began to give orders for his departure.

They collected ten little feluccas: a Maltese, named Barbara, former captain of a frigate of the Neapolitan navy, was appointed commander-in-chief of the expedition; two hundred and fifty men were recruited and ordered to hold themselves in readiness for the first signal.

Murat was only waiting for the answers to Othello's letters: they arrived on the

afternoon of the 28th. Murat invited all his officers to a grand dinner, and ordered double pay and double rations to the men.

The king was at dessert when the arrival of M. Maceroni was announced to him: he was the envoy of the foreign powers who brought Murat the answer which he had been awaiting so long at Toulon. Murat left the table and went into another room. M. Maceroni introduced himself as charged with an official mission, and handed the king the Emperor of Austria's ultimatum. It was couched in the following terms:

“Monsieur Maceroni is authorised by these presents to announce to King Joachim that His Majesty the Emperor of Austria will afford him shelter in his States on the following terms:—

“1. The king is to take a private name. The queen having adopted that of Lipano, it is proposed that the king should do likewise.

“2. It will be permitted to the king to choose a town in Bohemia, Moravia, or the Tyrol, as a place of residence. He could even inhabit a country house in one of these same provinces without inconvenience.

“3. The king is to give his word of honour to His Imperial and Royal Majesty that he will never leave the States of Austria without the express-permission of the Emperor, and that he is to live like a private gentleman of distinction, but submitting to the laws in force in the States of Austria.

“In attestation whereof, and to guard against abuse, the undersigned has received the order of the Emperor to sign the present declaration.

“(Signed) PRINCE OF METTERNICH “PARIS, 1st Sept. 1815.”

Murat smiled as he finished reading, then he signed to M. Maceroni to follow him:

He led him on to the terrace of the house, which looked over the whole town, and over which a banner floated as it might on a royal castle. From thence they could see Ajaccio all gay and illuminated, the port with its little fleet, and the streets crowded with people, as if it were a fete-day.

Hardly had the crowd set eyes on Murat before a universal cry arose, "Long live Joachim, brother of Napoleon! Long live the King of Naples!"

Murat bowed, and the shouts were redoubled, and the garrison band played the national airs.

M. Maceroni did not know how to believe his own eyes and ears.

When the king had enjoyed his astonishment, he invited him to go down to the drawing-room. His staff were there, all in full uniform: one might have been at Caserte or at Capo di Monte. At last, after a moment's hesitation, Maceroni approached Murat.

"Sir," he said, "what is my answer to be to His Majesty the Emperor of Austria?"

"Sir," answered Murat, with the lofty dignity which sat so well on his fine face, "tell my brother Francis what you have seen and heard, and add that I am setting out this very night to reconquer my kingdom of Naples."

III

PIZZO

The letters which had made Murat resolve to leave Corsica had been brought to him by a Calabrian named Luidgi. He had presented himself to the king as the envoy of the Arab, Othello, who had been thrown into prison in Naples, as we have related, as well as the seven recipients of the letters.

The answers, written by the head of the Neapolitan police, indicated the port of Salerno as the best place for Joachim to land; for King Ferdinand had assembled three thousand Austrian troops at that point, not daring to trust the Neapolitan soldiers, who cherished a brilliant and enthusiastic memory of Murat.

Accordingly the flotilla was directed for the Gulf of Salerno, but within sight of the island of Capri a violent storm broke over it, and drove it as far as Paola, a little seaport situated ten miles from Cosenza. Consequently the vessels were anchored for the night of the 5th of October in a little indentation of the coast not worthy of the name of a roadstead. The king, to remove all suspicion from the

coastguards and the Sicilian scoriccori, [Small vessels fitted up as ships-of-war.] ordered that all lights should be extinguished and that the vessels should tack about during the night; but towards one o'clock such a violent land-wind sprang up that the expedition was driven out to sea, so that on the 6th at dawn the king's vessel was alone.

During the morning they overhauled Captain Cicconi's felucca, and the two ships dropped anchor at four o'clock in sight of Santo-Lucido. In the evening the king commanded Ottoviani, a staff officer, to go ashore and reconnoitre. Luidgi offered to accompany him. Murat accepted his services. So Ottoviani and his guide went ashore, whilst Cicconi and his felucca put out to sea in search of the rest of the fleet.

Towards eleven o'clock at night the lieutenant of the watch descried a man in the waves swimming to the vessel. As soon as he was within hearing the lieutenant hailed him. The swimmer immediately made himself known: it was Luidgi. They put out the boat, and he came on board. Then he told them that Ottoviani had been arrested, and he had only escaped himself by jumping into the sea. Murat's first idea was to go to the rescue of Ottoviani; but Luidgi made the king realise the danger and uselessness of such an attempt; nevertheless, Joachim remained agitated and irresolute until two o'clock in the morning.

At last he gave the order to put to sea again. During the manoeuvre which effected this a sailor fell overboard and disappeared before they had time to help him. Decidedly these were ill omens.

On the morning of the 7th two vessels were in sight. The king gave the order to prepare for action, but Barbara recognised them as Cicconi's felucca and Courrand's lugger, which had joined each other and were keeping each other company. They hoisted the necessary signals, and the two captains brought up their vessels alongside the admiral's.

While they were deliberating as to what route to follow, a boat came up to Murat's vessel. Captain Pernice was on board with a lieutenant. They came to ask the king's permission to board his ship, not wishing to remain on Courrand's, for in their opinion he was a traitor.

Murat sent to fetch him, and in spite of his protestations he was made to descend into a boat with fifty men, and the boat was moored to the vessel. The order was

carried out at once, and the little squadron advanced, coasting along the shores of Calabria without losing sight of them; but at ten o'clock in the evening, just as they came abreast of the Gulf of Santa-Eufemia, Captain Courrand cut the rope which moored his boat to the vessel, and rowed away from the fleet.

Murat had thrown himself on to his bed without undressing; they brought him the news.

He rushed up to the deck, and arrived in time to see the boat, which was fleeing in the direction of Corsica, grow small and vanish in the distance. He remained motionless, not uttering a cry, giving no signs of rage; he only sighed and let his head fall on his breast: it was one more leaf falling from the exhausted tree of his hopes.

General Franceschetti profited by this hour of discouragement to advise him not to land in Calabria, and to go direct to Trieste, in order to claim from Austria the refuge which had been offered.

The king was going through one of those periods of extreme exhaustion, of mortal depression, when courage quite gives way: he refused flatly at first, and there at last agreed to do it.

Just then the general perceived a sailor lying on some coils of ropes, within hearing of all they said; he interrupted himself, and pointed him out to Murat.

The latter got up, went to see the man, and recognised Luidgi; overcome with exhaustion, he had fallen asleep on deck. The king satisfied himself that the sleep was genuine, and besides he had full confidence in the man. The conversation, which had been interrupted for a moment, was renewed: it was agreed that without saying anything about the new plans, they would clear Cape Spartivento and enter the Adriatic; then the king and the general went below again to the lower deck.

The next day, the 8th October, they found themselves abreast of Pizzo, when Joachim, questioned by Barbara as to what he proposed to do, gave the order to steer for Messina. Barbara answered that he was ready to obey, but that they were in need of food and water; consequently he offered to go on, board Cicconi's vessel and to land with him to get stores. The king agreed; Barbara asked for the passports which he had received from the allied powers, in order, he said, not to be molested by the local authorities.

These documents were too important for Murat to consent to part with them; perhaps the king was beginning to suspect: he refused. Barbara insisted; Murat ordered him to land without the papers; Barbara flatly refused.

The king, accustomed to being obeyed, raised his riding-whip to strike the Maltese, but, changing his resolution, he ordered the soldiers to prepare their arms, the officers to put on full uniform; he himself set the example. The disembarkation was decided upon, and Pizzo was to become the Golfe Juan of the new Napoleon.

Consequently the vessels were steered for land. The king got down into a boat with twenty-eight soldiers and three servants, amongst whom was Luidgi. As they drew near the shore General Franceschetti made a movement as if to land, but Murat stopped him.

“It is for me to land first,” he said, and he sprang on shore.

He was dressed in a general’s coat, white breeches and riding-boots, a belt carrying two pistols, a gold-embroidered hat with a cockade fastened in with a clasp made of fourteen brilliants, and lastly he carried under his arm the banner round which he hoped to rally his partisans. The town clock of Pizzo struck ten. Murat went straight up to the town, from which he was hardly a hundred yards distant. He followed the wide stone staircase which led up to it.

It was Sunday. Mass was about to be celebrated, and the whole population had assembled in the Great Square when he arrived. No one recognised him, and everyone gazed with astonishment at the fine officer. Presently he saw amongst the peasants a former sergeant of his who had served in his guard at Naples. He walked straight up to him and put his hand on the man’s shoulder.

“Tavella,” he said, “don’t you recognise me?”

But as the man made no answer:

“I am Joachim Murat, I am your king,” he said. “Yours be the honour to shout ‘Long live Joachim!’ first.”

Murat’s suite instantly made the air ring with acclamations, but the Calabrians remained silent, and not one of his comrades took up the cry for which the king himself had given the signal; on the contrary, a low murmur ran through the

crowd. Murat well understood this forerunner of the storm.

“Well,” he said to Tavella, “if you won’t cry ‘Long live Joachim!’ you can at least fetch me a horse, and from sergeant I will promote you to be captain.”

Tavella walked away without answering, but instead of carrying out the king’s behest, went into his house, and did not appear again.

In the meantime the people were massing together without evincing any of the sympathy that the king had hoped for. He felt that he was lost if he did not act instantly.

“To Monteleone!” he cried, springing forward towards the road which led to that town.

“To Monteleone!” shouted his officers and men, as they followed him.

And the crowd, persistently silent, opened to let them pass.

But they had hardly left the square before a great disturbance broke out. A man named Giorgio Pellegrino came out of his house with a gun and crossed the square, shouting, “To your arms!”

He knew that Captain Trenta Capelli commanding the Cosenza garrison was just then in Pizzo, and he was going to warn him.

The cry “To arms!” had more effect on the crowd than the cry “Long live Joachim!”

Every Calabrian possesses a gun, and each one ran to fetch his, and when Trenta Capelli and Giorgio Pellegrino came back to the square they found nearly two hundred armed men there.

They placed themselves at the head of the column, and hastened forward in pursuit of the king; they came up with him about ten minutes from the square, where the bridge is nowadays. Seeing them, Murat stopped and waited for them.

Trenta Capelli advanced, sword in hand, towards the king.

“Sir,” said the latter, “will you exchange your captain’s epaulettes for a

general's? Cry 'Long live Joachim!' and follow me with these brave fellows to Monteleone."

"Sire," said Trenta Capelli, "we are the faithful subjects of King Ferdinand, and we come to fight you, and not to bear you company. Give yourself up, if you would prevent bloodshed."

Murat looked at the captain with an expression which it would be impossible to describe; then without deigning to answer, he signed to Cagelli to move away, while his other hand went to his pistol. Giotgio Pellegrino perceived the movement.

"Down, captain, down!" he cried. The captain obeyed. Immediately a bullet whistled over his head and brushed Murat's head.

"Fire!" commanded Franceschetti.

"Down with your arms!" cried Murat.

Waving his handkerchief in his right hand, he made a step towards the peasants, but at the same moment a number of shots were fired, an officer and two or three men fell. In a case like this, when blood has begun to flow, there is no stopping it.

Murat knew this fatal truth, and his course of action was rapidly decided on. Before him he had five hundred armed men, and behind him a precipice thirty feet high: he sprang from the jagged rock on which he was standing, and alighting on the sand, jumped up safe and sound. General Franceschetti and his aide-de-camp Campana were able to accomplish the jump in the same way, and all three went rapidly down to the sea through the little wood which lay within a hundred yards of the shore, and which hid them for a few moments from their enemies.

As they came out of the wood a fresh discharge greeted them, bullets whistled round them, but no one was hit, and the three fugitives went on down to the beach.

It was only then that the king perceived that the boat which had brought them to land had gone off again. The three ships which composed the fleet, far from remaining to guard his landing, were sailing away at full speed into the open sea.

The Maltese, Barbara, was going off not only with Murat's fortune, but with his hopes likewise, his salvation, his very life. They could not believe in such treachery, and the king took it for some manoeuvre of seamanship, and seeing a fishing-boat drawn up on the beach on some nets, he called to his two companions, "Launch that boat!"

They all began to push it down to the sea with the energy of despair, the strength of agony.

No one had dared to leap from the rock in pursuit of them; their enemies, forced to make a detour, left them a few moments of liberty.

But soon shouts were heard: Giorgio Pellegrino, Trenta Capelli, followed by the whole population of Pizzo, rushed out about a hundred and fifty paces from where Murat, Franceschetti, and Campana were straining themselves to make the boat glide down the sand.

These cries were immediately followed by a volley. Campana fell, with a bullet through his heart.

The boat, however, was launched. Franceschetti sprang into it, Murat was about to follow, but he had not observed that the spurs of his riding-boots had caught in the meshes of the net. The boat, yielding to the push he gave it, glided away, and the king fell head foremost, with his feet on land and his face in the water. Before he had time to pick himself up, the populace had fallen on him: in one instant they had torn away his epaulettes, his banner, and his coat, and would have torn him to bits himself, had not Giorgio Pellegrino and Trenta Capelli taken him under their protection, and giving him an arm on each side, defended him in their turn against the people. Thus he crossed the square as a prisoner where an hour before he had walked as a king.

His captors took him to the castle: he was pushed into the common prison, the door was shut upon him, and the king found himself among thieves and murderers, who, not knowing him, took him for a companion in crime, and greeted him with foul language and hoots of derision.

A quarter of an hour later the door of the gaol opened and Commander Mattei came in: he found Murat standing with head proudly erect and folded arms. There was an expression of indefinable loftiness in this half-naked man whose face was stained with blood and bespattered with mud. Mattei bowed before

him.

“Commander,” said Murat, recognising his rank by his epaulettes, “look round you and tell me whether this is a prison for a king.”

Then a strange thing happened: the criminals, who, believing Murat their accomplice, had welcomed him with vociferations and laughter, now bent before his royal majesty, which had not overawed Pellegrino and Trenta Capelli, and retired silently to the depths of their dungeon.

Misfortune had invested Murat with a new power.

Commander Mattei murmured some excuse, and invited Murat to follow him to a room that he had had prepared for him; but before going out, Murat put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a handful of gold and let it fall in a shower in the midst of the gaol.

“See,” he said, turning towards the prisoners, “it shall not be said that you have received a visit from a king, prisoner and crownless as he is, without having received largesse.”

“Long live Joachim!” cried the prisoners.

Murat smiled bitterly. Those same words repeated by the same number of voices an hour before in the public square, instead of resounding in the prison, would have made him King of Naples.

The most important events proceed sometimes from such mere trifles, that it seems as if God and the devil must throw dice for the life or death of men, for the rise or fall of empires.

Murat followed Commander Mattei: he led him to a little room which the porter had put at his disposal. Mattei was going to retire when Murat called him back.

“Commander,” he said, “I want a scented bath.”

“Sire, it will be difficult to obtain.”

“Here are fifty ducats; let someone buy all the eau de Cologne that can be obtained. Ah—and let some tailors be sent to me.”

“It will be impossible to find anyone here capable of making anything but a peasant’s clothes.”

“Send someone to Monteleone to fetch them from there.”

The commander bowed and went out.

Murat was in his bath when the Lavalieri Alcala was announced, a General and Governor of the town. He had sent damask coverlets, curtains, and armchairs. Murat was touched by this attention, and it gave him fresh composure. At two o’clock the same day General Nunziante arrived from Santa-Tropea with three thousand men. Murat greeted his old acquaintance with pleasure; but at the first word the king perceived that he was before his judge, and that he had not come for the purpose of making a visit, but to make an official inquiry.

Murat contented himself with stating that he had been on his way from Corsica to Trieste with a passport from the Emperor of Austria when stormy weather and lack of provisions had forced him to put into Pizzo. All other questions Murat met with a stubborn silence; then at least, wearied by his importunity—

“General,” he said, “can you lend me some clothes after my bath?”

The general understood that he could expect no more information, and, bowing to the king, he went out. Ten minutes later, a complete uniform was brought to Murat; he put it on immediately, asked for a pen and ink, wrote to the commander-in-chief of the Austrian troops at Naples, to the English ambassador, and to his wife, to tell them of his detention at Pizzo. These letters written, he got up and paced his room for some time in evident agitation; at last, needing fresh air, he opened the window. There was a view of the very beach where he had been captured.

Two men were digging a hole in the sand at the foot of the little redoubt. Murat watched them mechanically. When the two men had finished, they went into a neighbouring house and soon came out, bearing a corpse in their arms.

The king searched his memory, and indeed it seemed to him that in the midst of that terrible scene he had seen someone fall, but who it was he no longer remembered. The corpse was quite without covering, but by the long black hair and youthful outlines the king recognised Campana, the aide-decamp he had always loved best.

This scene, watched from a prison window in the twilight, this solitary burial on the shore, in the sand, moved Murat more deeply than his own fate. Great tears filled his eyes and fell silently down the leonine face. At that moment General Nunziante came in and surprised him with outstretched arms and face bathed with tears. Murat heard him enter and turned round, and seeing the old soldier's surprise.

"Yes, general," he said, "I weep; I weep for that boy, just twenty-four, entrusted to me by his parents, whose death I have brought about. I weep for that vast, brilliant future which is buried in an unknown grave, in an enemy's country, on a hostile shore. Oh, Campana! Campana! if ever I am king again, I will raise you a royal tomb."

The general had had dinner served in an adjacent room. Murat followed him and sat down to table, but he could not eat. The sight which he had just witnessed had made him heartbroken, and yet without a line on his brow that man had been through the battles of Aboukir, Eylau, and Moscow! After dinner, Murat went into his room again, gave his various letters to General Nunziante, and begged to be left alone. The general went away.

Murat paced round his room several times, walking with long steps, and pausing from time to time before the window, but without opening it.

At last he overcame a deep reluctance, put his hand on the bolt and drew the lattice towards him.

It was a calm, clear night: one could see the whole shore. He looked for Campana's grave. Two dogs scratching the sand showed him the spot.

The king shut the window violently, and without undressing threw himself onto his bed. At last, fearing that his agitation would be attributed to personal alarm, he undressed and went to bed, to sleep, or seem to sleep all night.

On the morning of the 9th the tailors whom Murat had asked for arrived. He ordered a great many clothes, taking the trouble to explain all the details suggested by his fastidious taste. He was thus employed when General Nunziante came in. He listened sadly to the king's commands. He had just received telegraphic despatches ordering him to try the King of Naples by court-martial as a public enemy. But he found the king so confident, so tranquil, almost cheerful indeed, that he had not the heart to announce his trial to him, and took

upon himself to delay the opening of operation until he received written instructions. These arrived on the evening of the 12th. They were couched in the following terms:

NAPLES, October 9, 1815

“Ferdinand, by the grace of God, etc . . . wills and decrees the following:

“Art. 1. General Murat is to be tried by court-martial, the members whereof are to be nominated by our Minister of War.

“Art. 2. Only half an hour is to be accorded to the condemned for the exercises of religion.

“(Signed) FERDINAND.”

Another despatch from the minister contained the names of the members of the commission. They were:—

Giuseppe Foscolo, adjutant, commander-in-chief of the staff, president.

Laffaello Scalfaro, chief of the legion of Lower Calabria.

Latereo Natali, lieutenant-colonel of the Royal Marines.

Gennaro Lanzetta, lieutenant-colonel of the Engineers.

W. T. captain of Artillery.

Francois de Venge, ditto.

Francesco Martellari, lieutenant of Artillery.

Francesco Froio, lieutenant in the 3rd regiment of the line.

Giovanni delta Camera, Public Prosecutor to the Criminal Courts of Lower Calabria.

Francesco Papavassi, registrar.

The commission assembled that night.

On the 13th October, at six o'clock in the morning, Captain Stratti came into the king's prison; he was sound asleep. Stratti was going away again, when he stumbled against a chair; the noise awoke Murat.

"What do you want with me, captain?" asked the king.

Stratti tried to speak, but his voice failed him.

"Ah ha!" said Murat, "you must have had news from Naples."

"Yes, sire," muttered Stratti.

"What are they?" said Murat.

"Your trial, sire."

"And by whose order will sentence be pronounced, if you please? Where will they find peers to judge me? If they consider me as a king, I must have a tribunal of kings; if I am a marshal of France, I must have a court of marshals; if I am a general, and that is the least I can be, I must have a jury of generals."

"Sire, you are declared a public enemy, and as such you are liable to be judged by court-martial: that is the law which you instituted yourself for rebels."

"That law was made for brigands, and not for crowned heads, sir," said Murat scornfully. "I am ready; let them butcher me if they like. I did not think King Ferdinand capable of such an action."

"Sire, will you not hear the names of your judges?"

"Yes, sir, I will. It must be a curious list. Read it: I am listening."

Captain Stratti read out the names that we have enumerated. Murat listened with a disdainful smile.

"Ah," he said, as the captain finished, "it seems that every precaution has been taken."

“How, sire?”

“Yes. Don’t you know that all these men, with the exception of Francesco Froio, the reporter; owe their promotion to me? They will be afraid of being accused of sparing me out of gratitude, and save one voice, perhaps, the sentence will be unanimous.”

“Sire, suppose you were to appear before the court, to plead your own cause?”

“Silence, sir, silence!” said Murat. “I could, not officially recognise the judges you have named without tearing too many pages of history. Such tribunal is quite incompetent; I should be disgraced if I appeared before it. I know I could not save my life, let me at least preserve my royal dignity.”

At this moment Lieutenant Francesco Froio came in to interrogate the prisoner, asking his name, his age, and his nationality. Hearing these questions, Murat rose with an expression of sublime dignity.

“I am Joachim Napoleon, King of the Two Sicilies,” he answered, “and I order you to leave me.”

The registrar obeyed.

Then Murat partially dressed himself, and asked Stratti if he could write a farewell to his wife and children. The Captain no longer able to speak, answered by an affirmative sign; then Joachim sat down to the table and wrote this letter:

“DEAR CAROLINE OF MY HEART,—The fatal moment has come: I am to suffer the death penalty. In an hour you will be a widow, our children will be fatherless: remember me; never forget my memory. I die innocent; my life is taken from me unjustly.

“Goodbye, Achilles goodbye, Laetitia; goodbye, Lucien; goodbye, Louise.

“Show yourselves worthy of me; I leave you in a world and in a kingdom full of my enemies. Show yourselves superior to adversity, and remember never to think yourselves better than you are, remembering what you have been.

“Farewell. I bless you all. Never curse my memory. Remember that the worst pang of my agony is in dying far from my children, far from my wife, without a

friend to close my eyes. Farewell, my own Caroline. Farewell, my children. I send you my blessing, my most tender tears, my last kisses. Farewell, farewell. Never forget your unhappy father,

“Pizzo, Oct. 13, 1815”

[We can guarantee the authenticity of this letter, having copied it ourselves at Pizzo, from the Lavalier Alcala’s copy of the original]

Then he cut off a lock of his hair and put it in his letter. Just then General Nunziante came in; Murat went to him and held out his hand.

“General,” he said, “you are a father, you are a husband, one day you will know what it is to part from your wife and sons. Swear to me that this letter shall be delivered.”

“On my epaulettes,” said the general, wiping his eyes. [Madame Murat never received this letter.]

“Come, come, courage, general,” said Murat; “we are soldiers, we know how to face death. One favour—you will let me give the order to fire, will you not?”

The general signed acquiescence: just then the registrar came in with the king’s sentence in his hand.

Murat guessed what it was.

“Read, sir,” he said coldly; “I am listening.”

The registrar obeyed. Murat was right.

The sentence of death had been carried with only one dissentient voice.

When the reading was finished, the king turned again to Nunziante.

“General,” he said, “believe that I distinguish in my mind the instrument which strikes me and the hand that wields that instrument. I should never have thought that Ferdinand would have had me shot like a dog; he does not hesitate apparently before such infamy. Very well. We will say no more about it. I have challenged my judges, but not my executioners. What time have you fixed for

my execution?”

“Will you fix it yourself, sir?” said the general.

Murat pulled out a watch on which there was a portrait of his wife; by chance he turned up the portrait, and not the face of the watch; he gazed at it tenderly.

“See, general,” he said, showing it to Nunziante; “it is a portrait of the queen. You know her; is it not like her?”

The general turned away his head. Murat sighed and put away the watch.

“Well, sire,” said the registrar, “what time have you fixed?”

“Ah yes,” said Murat, smiling, “I forgot why I took out my watch when I saw Caroline’s portrait.”

Then he looked at his watch again, but this time at its face.

“Well, it shall be at four o’clock, if you like; it is past three o’clock. I ask for fifty minutes. Is that too much, sir?”

The registrar bowed and went out. The general was about to follow him.

“Shall I never see you again, Nunziante?” said Murat.

“My orders are to be present at your death, sire, but I cannot do it.”

“Very well, general. I will dispense with your presence at the last moment, but I should like to say farewell once more and to embrace you.”

“I will be near, sire.”

“Thank you. Now leave me alone.”

“Sire, there are two priests here.”

Murat made an impatient movement.

“Will you receive them?” continued the general.

“Yes; bring them in.”

The general went out. A moment later, two priests appeared in the doorway. One of them was called Francesco Pellegrino, uncle of the man who had caused the king’s death; the other was Don Antonio Masdea.

“What do you want here?” asked Murat.

“We come to ask you if you are dying a Christian?”

“I am dying as a soldier. Leave me.”

Don Francesco Pellegrino retired. No doubt he felt ill at ease before Joachim. But Antonio Masdea remained at the door.

“Did you not hear me?” asked the king.

“Yes, indeed,” answered the old man; “but permit me, sire, to hope that it was not your last word to me. It is not, the first time that I see you or beg something of you. I have already had occasion to ask a favour of you.”

“What was that?”

“When your Majesty came to Pizzo in 1810, I asked you for 25,000 francs to enable us to finish our church. Your Majesty sent me 40,000 francs.”

“I must have foreseen that I should be buried there,” said Murat, smiling.

“Ah, sire, I should like to think that you did not refuse my second boon any more than my first. Sire, I entreat you on my knees.”

The old man fell at Murat’s feet.

“Die as a Christian!”

“That would give you pleasure, then, would it?” said the king.

“Sire, I would give the few short days remaining to me if God would grant that His Holy Spirit should fall upon you in your last hour.”

“Well,” said Murat, “hear my confession. I accuse myself of having been

disobedient to my parents as a child. Since I reached manhood I have done nothing to reproach myself with.”

“Sire, will you give me an attestation that you die in the Christian faith?”

“Certainly,” said Murat.

And he took a pen and wrote: “I, Joachim Murat, die a Christian, believing in the Holy Catholic Church, Apostolic and Roman.”

He signed it.

“Now, father,” continued the king, “if you have a third favour to ask of me, make haste, for in half an hour it will be too late.”

Indeed, the castle clock was striking half-past three. The priest signed that he had finished.

“Then leave me alone,” said Murat; and the old man went out.

Murat paced his room for a few moments, then he sat down on his bed and let his head fall into his hands. Doubtless, during the quarter of an hour he remained thus absorbed in his thoughts, he saw his whole life pass before him, from the inn where he had started to the palace he had reached; no doubt his adventurous career unrolled itself before him like some golden dream, some brilliant fiction, some tale from the Arabian Nights.

His life gleamed athwart the storm like a rainbow, and like a rainbow’s, its two extremities were lost in clouds—the clouds of birth and death. At last he roused himself from this inward contemplation, and lifted a pale but tranquil face. Then he went to the glass and arranged his hair. His strange characteristics never left him. The affianced of Death, he was adorning himself to meet his bride.

Four o’clock struck.

Murat went to the door himself and opened it.

General Nunziante was waiting for him.

“Thank you, general,” said Murat. “You have kept your word. Kiss me, and go at

once, if you like.”

The general threw himself into the king’s arms, weeping, and utterly unable to speak.

“Courage,” said Murat. “You see I am calm.” It was this very calmness which broke the general’s heart. He dashed out of the corridor, and left the castle, running like a madman.

Then the king walked out into the courtyard.

Everything was ready for the execution.

Nine men and a corporal were ranged before the door of the council chamber. Opposite them was a wall twelve feet high. Three feet away from the wall was a stone block: Murat mounted it, thus raising himself about a foot above the soldiers who were to execute him. Then he took out his watch, [Madame Murat recovered this watch at the price of 200 Louis] kissed his wife’s portrait, and fixing his eyes on it, gave the order to fire. At the word of command five out of the nine men fired: Murat remained standing. The soldiers had been ashamed to fire on their king, and had aimed over his head. That moment perhaps displayed most gloriously the lionlike courage which was Murat’s special attribute. His face never changed, he did not move a muscle; only gazing at the soldiers with an expression of mingled bitterness and gratitude, he said:

“Thank you; my friends. Since sooner or later you will be obliged to aim true, do not prolong my death-agonies. All I ask you is to aim at the heart and spare the face. Now—”

With the same voice, the same calm, the same expression, he repeated the fatal words one after another, without lagging, without hastening, as if he were giving an accustomed command; but this time, happier than the first, at the word “Fire!” he fell pierced by eight bullets, without a sigh, without a movement, still holding the watch in his left hand.

The soldiers took up the body and laid it on the bed where ten minutes before he had been sitting, and the captain put a guard at the door.

In the evening a man presented himself, asking to go into the death-chamber: the sentinel refused to let him in, and he demanded an interview with the governor

of the prison. Led before him, he produced an order. The commander read it with surprise and disgust, but after reading it he led the man to the door where he had been refused entrance.

“Pass the Signor Luidgi,” he said to the sentinel.

Ten minutes had hardly elapsed before he came out again, holding a bloodstained handkerchief containing something to which the sentinel could not give a name.

An hour later, the carpenter brought the coffin which was to contain the king’s remains. The workman entered the room, but instantly called the sentinel in a voice of indescribable terror.

The sentinel half opened the door to see what had caused the man’s panic.

The carpenter pointed to a headless corpse!

At the death of King Ferdinand, that, head, preserved in spirits of wine, was found in a secret cupboard in his bedroom.

A week after the execution of Pizzo everyone had received his reward: Trenta Capelli was made a colonel, General Nunziante a marquis, and Luidgi died from the effects of poison.

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of “MURAT”, CELEBRATED CRIMES, v7
by Alexander Dumas, Pere

CELEBRATED CRIMES VOLUME 8 (of 8), Part 1

by ALEXANDER DUMAS, PERE

THE MARQUISE DE BRINVILLIERS

Towards the end of the year 1665, on a fine autumn evening, there was a considerable crowd assembled on the Pont-Neuf where it makes a turn down to the rue Dauphine. The object of this crowd and the centre of attraction was a closely shut, carriage. A police official was trying to force open the door, and two out of the four sergeants who were with him were holding the horses back and the other two stopping the driver, who paid no attention to their commands, but only endeavoured to urge his horses to a gallop. The struggle had been going on some time, when suddenly one of the doors violently pushed open, and a young officer in the uniform of a cavalry captain jumped down, shutting the door as he did so though not too quickly for the nearest spectators to perceive a woman sitting at the back of the carriage. She was wrapped in cloak and veil, and judging by the precautions she, had taken to hide her face from every eye, she must have had her reasons for avoiding recognition.

“Sir,” said the young man, addressing the officer with a haughty air, “I presume, till I find myself mistaken, that your business is with me alone; so I will ask you to inform me what powers you may have for thus stopping my coach; also, since I have alighted, I desire you to give your men orders to let the vehicle go on.”

“First of all,” replied the man, by no means intimidated by these lordly airs, but signing to his men that they must not release the coach or the horses, “be so good as to answer my questions.”

“I am attending,” said the young man, controlling his agitation by a visible effort.

“Are you the Chevalier Gaudin de Sainte-Croix?”

“I am he.”

“Captain of the Tracy, regiment?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Then I arrest you in the king’s name.”

“What powers have you?”

“This warrant.”

Sainte-Croix cast a rapid glance at the paper, and instantly recognised the signature of the minister of police: he then apparently confined his attention to the woman who was still in the carriage; then he returned to his first question.

“This is all very well, sir,” he said to the officer, “but this warrant contains no other name than mine, and so you have no right to expose thus to the public gaze the lady with whom I was travelling when you arrested me. I must beg of you to order your assistants to allow this carriage to drive on; then take me where you please, for I am ready to go with you.”

To the officer this request seemed a just one: he signed to his men to let the driver and the horses go on; and, they, who had waited only for this, lost no time in breaking through the crowd, which melted away before them; thus the woman escaped for whose safety the prisoner seemed so much concerned.

Sainte-Croix kept his promise and offered no resistance; for some moments he followed the officer, surrounded by a crowd which seemed to have transferred all its curiosity to his account; then, at the corner of the Quai de d’Horloge, a man called up a carriage that had not been observed before, and Sainte-Croix took his place with the same haughty and disdainful air that he had shown throughout the scene we have just described. The officer sat beside him, two of his men got up behind, and the other two, obeying no doubt their master’s orders, retired with a parting direction to the driver,

“The Bastille!”

Our readers will now permit us to make them more fully acquainted with the man who is to take the first place in the story. The origin of Gaudin de Sainte-Croix was not known: according to one tale, he was the natural son of a great lord; another account declared that he was the offspring of poor people, but that, disgusted with his obscure birth, he preferred a splendid disgrace, and therefore chose to pass for what he was not. The only certainty is that he was born at Montauban, and in actual rank and position he was captain of the Tracy regiment. At the time when this narrative opens, towards the end of 1665, Sainte-Croix was about twenty-eight or thirty, a fine young man of cheerful and lively appearance, a merry comrade at a banquet, and an excellent captain: he took his pleasure with other men, and was so impressionable a character that he enjoyed a virtuous project as well as any plan for a debauch; in love he was most susceptible, and jealous to the point of madness even about a courtesan, had she

once taken his fancy; his prodigality was princely, although he had no income; further, he was most sensitive to slights, as all men are who, because they are placed in an equivocal position, fancy that everyone who makes any reference to their origin is offering an intentional insult.

We must now see by what a chain of circumstances he had arrived at his present position. About the year 1660, Sainte-Croix, while in the army, had made the acquaintance of the Marquis de Brinvilliers, maitre-de-camp of the Normandy regiment.

Their age was much the same, and so was their manner of life: their virtues and their vices were similar, and thus it happened that a mere acquaintance grew into a friendship, and on his return from the field the marquis introduced Sainte-Croix to his wife, and he became an intimate of the house. The usual results followed. Madame de Brinvilliers was then scarcely eight-and-twenty: she had married the marquis in 1651-that is, nine years before. He enjoyed an income of 30,000 livres, to which she added her dowry of 200,000 livres, exclusive of her expectations in the future. Her name was Marie-Madeleine; she had a sister and two brothers: her father, M. de Dreux d'Aubray; was civil lieutenant at the Chatelet de Paris. At the age of twenty-eight the marquise was at the height of her beauty: her figure was small but perfectly proportioned; her rounded face was charmingly pretty; her features, so regular that no emotion seemed to alter their beauty, suggested the lines of a statue miraculously endowed with life: it was easy enough to mistake for the repose of a happy conscience the cold, cruel calm which served as a mask to cover remorse.

Sainte-Croix and the marquise loved at first sight, and she was soon his mistress. The marquis, perhaps endowed with the conjugal philosophy which alone pleased the taste of the period, perhaps too much occupied with his own pleasure to see what was going on before his eyes, offered no jealous obstacle to the intimacy, and continued his foolish extravagances long after they had impaired his fortunes: his affairs became so entangled that the marquise, who cared for him no longer, and desired a fuller liberty for the indulgence of her new passion, demanded and obtained a separation. She then left her husband's house, and henceforth abandoning all discretion, appeared everywhere in public with Sainte-Croix. This behaviour, authorised as it was by the example of the highest nobility, made no impression upon the Marquis of Brinvilliers, who merrily pursued the road to ruin, without worrying about his wife's behaviour. Not so M. de Dreux d'Aubray: he had the scrupulosity of a legal dignitary. He was

scandalised at his daughter's conduct, and feared a stain upon his own fair name: he procured a warrant for the arrest of Sainte-Croix wheresoever the bearer might chance to encounter him. We have seen how it was put in execution when Sainte-Croix was driving in the carriage of the marquise, whom our readers will doubtless have recognised as the woman who concealed herself so carefully.

From one's knowledge of the character of Sainte-Croix, it is easy to imagine that he had to use great self-control to govern the anger he felt at being arrested in the middle of the street; thus, although during the whole drive he uttered not a single word, it was plain to see that a terrible storm was gathering, soon to break. But he preserved the same impossibility both at the opening and shutting of the fatal gates, which, like the gates of hell, had so often bidden those who entered abandon all hope on their threshold, and again when he replied to the formal questions put to him by the governor. His voice was calm, and when they gave him the prison register he signed it with a steady hand. At once a gaoler, taking his orders from the governor, bade him follow: after traversing various corridors, cold and damp, where the daylight might sometimes enter but fresh air never, he opened a door, and Sainte-Croix had no sooner entered than he heard it locked behind him.

At the grating of the lock he turned. The gaoler had left him with no light but the rays of the moon, which, shining through a barred window some eight or ten feet from the ground, shed a gleam upon a miserable truckle-bed and left the rest of the room in deep obscurity. The prisoner stood still for a moment and listened; then, when he had heard the steps die away in the distance and knew himself to be alone at last, he fell upon the bed with a cry more like the roaring of a wild beast than any human sound: he cursed his fellow-man who had snatched him from his joyous life to plunge him into a dungeon; he cursed his God who had let this happen; he cried aloud to whatever powers might be that could grant him revenge and liberty.

Just at that moment, as though summoned by these words from the bowels of the earth, a man slowly stepped into the circle of blue light that fell from the window—a man thin and pale, a man with long hair, in a black doublet, who approached the foot of the bed where Sainte-Croix lay. Brave as he was, this apparition so fully answered to his prayers (and at the period the power of incantation and magic was still believed in) that he felt no doubt that the arch-enemy of the human race, who is continually at hand, had heard him and had now come in answer to his prayers. He sat up on the bed, feeling mechanically at

the place where the handle of his sword would have been but two hours since, feeling his hair stand on end, and a cold sweat began to stream down his face as the strange fantastic being step by step approached him. At length the apparition paused, the prisoner and he stood face to face for a moment, their eyes riveted; then the mysterious stranger spoke in gloomy tones.

“Young man,” said he, “you have prayed to the devil for vengeance on the men who have taken you, for help against the God who has abandoned you. I have the means, and I am here to proffer it. Have you the courage to accept?”

“First of all,” asked Sainte-Croix; “who are you?”

“Why seek you to know who I am,” replied the unknown, “at the very moment when I come at your call, and bring what you desire?”

“All the same,” said Sainte-Croix, still attributing what he heard to a supernatural being, “when one makes a compact of this kind, one prefers to know with whom one is treating.”

“Well, since you must know,” said the stranger, “I am the Italian Exili.”

Sainte-Croix shuddered anew, passing from a supernatural vision to a horrible reality. The name he had just heard had a terrible notoriety at the time, not only in France but in Italy as well. Exili had been driven out of Rome, charged with many poisonings, which, however, could not be satisfactorily brought home to him. He had gone to Paris, and there, as in his native country, he had drawn the eyes of the authorities upon himself; but neither in Paris nor in Rome was he, the pupil of Rene and of Trophana, convicted of guilt. All the same, though proof was wanting, his enormities were so well accredited that there was no scruple as to having him arrested. A warrant was out against him: Exili was taken up, and was lodged in the Bastille. He had been there about six months when Sainte-Croix was brought to the same place. The prisoners were numerous just then, so the governor had his new guest put up in the same room as the old one, mating Exili and Sainte-Croix, not knowing that they were a pair of demons. Our readers now understand the rest. Sainte-Croix was put into an unlighted room by the gaoler, and in the dark had failed to see his companion: he had abandoned himself to his rage, his imprecations had revealed his state of mind to Exili, who at once seized the occasion for gaining a devoted and powerful disciple, who once out of prison might open the doors for him, perhaps, or at least avenge his

fate should he be incarcerated for life.

The repugnance felt by Sainte-Croix for his fellow-prisoner did not last long, and the clever master found his pupil apt. Sainte-Croix, a strange mixture of qualities good and evil, had reached the supreme crisis of his life, when the powers of darkness or of light were to prevail. Maybe, if he had met some angelic soul at this point, he would have been led to God; he encountered a demon, who conducted him to Satan.

Exili was no vulgar poisoner: he was a great artist in poisons, comparable with the Medici or the Borgias. For him murder was a fine art, and he had reduced it to fixed and rigid rules: he had arrived at a point when he was guided not by his personal interest but by a taste for experiment. God has reserved the act of creation for Himself, but has suffered destruction to be within the scope of man: man therefore supposes that in destroying life he is God's equal. Such was the nature of Exili's pride: he was the dark, pale alchemist of death: others might seek the mighty secret of life, but he had found the secret of destruction.

For a time Sainte-Croix hesitated: at last he yielded to the taunts of his companion, who accused Frenchmen of showing too much honour in their crimes, of allowing themselves to be involved in the ruin of their enemies, whereas they might easily survive them and triumph over their destruction. In opposition to this French gallantry, which often involves the murderer in a death more cruel than that he has given, he pointed to the Florentine traitor with his amiable smile and his deadly poison. He indicated certain powders and potions, some of them of dull action, wearing out the victim so slowly that he dies after long suffering; others violent and so quick, that they kill like a flash of lightning, leaving not even time for a single cry. Little by little Sainte-Croix became interested in the ghastly science that puts the lives of all men in the hand of one. He joined in Exili's experiments; then he grew clever enough to make them for himself; and when, at the year's end, he left the Bastille, the pupil was almost as accomplished as his master.

Sainte-Croix returned into that society which had banished him, fortified by a fatal secret by whose aid he could repay all the evil he had received. Soon afterwards Exili was set free—how it happened is not known—and sought out Sainte-Croix, who let him a room in the name of his steward, Martin de Breuille, a room situated in the blind, alley off the Place Maubert, owned by a woman called Brunet.

It is not known whether Sainte-Croix had an opportunity of seeing the Marquise de Brinvilliers during his sojourn in the Bastille, but it is certain that as soon as he was a free man the lovers were more attached than ever. They had learned by experience, however, of what they had to fear; so they resolved that they would at once make trial of Sainte-Croix's newly acquired knowledge, and M. d'Aubray was selected by his daughter for the first victim. At one blow she would free herself from the inconvenience of his rigid censorship, and by inheriting his goods would repair her own fortune, which had been almost dissipated by her husband. But in trying such a bold stroke one must be very sure of results, so the marquise decided to experiment beforehand on another person. Accordingly, when one day after luncheon her maid, Françoise Roussel, came into her room, she gave her a slice of mutton and some preserved gooseberries for her own meal. The girl unsuspectingly ate what her mistress gave her, but almost at once felt ill, saying she had severe pain in the stomach, and a sensation as though her heart were being pricked with pins. But she did not die, and the marquise perceived that the poison needed to be made stronger, and returned it to Sainte-Croix, who brought her some more in a few days' time.

The moment had come for action. M. d'Aubray, tired with business, was to spend a holiday at his castle called Offemont. The marquise offered to go with him. M. d'Aubray, who supposed her relations with Sainte-Croix to be quite broken off, joyfully accepted. Offemont was exactly the place for a crime of this nature. In the middle of the forest of Aigue, three or four miles from Compiègne, it would be impossible to get efficient help before the rapid action of the poison had made it useless.

M. d'Aubray started with his daughter and one servant only. Never had the marquise been so devoted to her father, so especially attentive, as she was during this journey. And M. d'Aubray, like Christ—who though He had no children had a father's heart—loved his repentant daughter more than if she had never strayed. And then the marquise profited by the terrible calm look which we have already noticed in her face: always with her father, sleeping in a room adjoining his, eating with him, caring for his comfort in every way, thoughtful and affectionate, allowing no other person to do anything for him, she had to present a smiling face, in which the most suspicious eye could detect nothing but filial tenderness, though the vilest projects were in her heart. With this mask she one evening offered him some soup that was poisoned. He took it; with her eyes she saw him put it to his lips, watched him drink it down, and with a brazen countenance she gave no outward sign of that terrible anxiety that must have

been pressing on her heart. When he had drunk it all, and she had taken with steady hands the cup and its saucer, she went back to her own room, waited and listened....

The effect was rapid. The marquise heard her father moan; then she heard groans. At last, unable to endure his sufferings, he called out to his daughter. The marquise went to him. But now her face showed signs of the liveliest anxiety, and it was for M. d'Aubray to try to reassure her about himself! He thought it was only a trifling indisposition, and was not willing that a doctor should be disturbed. But then he was seized by a frightful vomiting, followed by such unendurable pain that he yielded to his daughter's entreaty that she should send for help. A doctor arrived at about eight o'clock in the morning, but by that time all that could have helped a scientific inquiry had been disposed of: the doctor saw nothing, in M. d'Aubray's story but what might be accounted for by indigestion; so he dosed him, and went back to Compiègne.

All that day the marquise never left the sick man. At night she had a bed made up in his room, declaring that no one else must sit up with him; thus she, was able to watch the progress of the malady and see with her own eyes the conflict between death and life in the body of her father. The next day the doctor came again: M. d'Aubray was worse; the nausea had ceased, but the pains in the stomach were now more acute; a strange fire seemed to burn his vitals; and a treatment was ordered which necessitated his return to Paris. He was soon so weak that he thought it might be best to go only so far as Compiègne, but the marquise was so insistent as to the necessity for further and better advice than anything he could get away from home, that M. d'Aubray decided to go. He made the journey in his own carriage, leaning upon his daughter's shoulder; the behaviour of the marquise was always the same: at last M. d'Aubray reached Paris. All had taken place as the marquise desired; for the scene was now changed: the doctor who had witnessed the symptoms would not be present at the death; no one could discover the cause by studying the progress of the disorder; the thread of investigation was snapped in two, and the two ends were now too distant to be joined again. In spite, of every possible attention, M. d'Aubray grew continually worse; the marquise was faithful to her mission, and never left him for an hour. At last, after four days of agony, he died in his daughter's arms, blessing the woman who was his murderess. Her grief then broke forth uncontrolled. Her sobs and tears were so vehement that her brothers' grief seemed cold beside hers. Nobody suspected a crime, so no autopsy was held; the tomb was closed, and not the slightest suspicion had approached her.

But the marquise had only gained half her purpose. She had now more freedom for her love affairs, but her father's dispositions were not so favourable as she expected: the greater part of his property, together with his business, passed to the elder brother and to the second brother, who was Parliamentary councillor; the position of, the marquise was very little improved in point of fortune.

Sainte-Croix was leading a fine and joyous life. Although nobody supposed him to be wealthy, he had a steward called Martin, three lackeys called George, Lapierre, and Lachaussee, and besides his coach and other carriages he kept ordinary bearers for excursions at night. As he was young and good-looking, nobody troubled about where all these luxuries came from. It was quite the custom in those days that a well-set-up young gentleman should want for nothing, and Sainte-Croix was commonly said to have found the philosopher's stone. In his life in the world he had formed friendships with various persons, some noble, some rich: among the latter was a man named Reich de Penautier, receiver-general of the clergy and treasurer of the States of Languedoc, a millionaire, and one of those men who are always successful, and who seem able by the help of their money to arrange matters that would appear to be in the province of God alone. This Penautier was connected in business with a man called d'Alibert, his first clerk, who died all of a sudden of apoplexy. The attack was known to Penautier sooner than to his own family: then the papers about the conditions of partnership disappeared, no one knew how, and d'Alibert's wife and child were ruined. D'Alibert's brother-in-law, who was Sieur de la Magdelaine, felt certain vague suspicions concerning this death, and wished to get to the bottom of it; he accordingly began investigations, which were suddenly brought to an end by his death.

In one way alone Fortune seemed to have abandoned her favourite: Maitre Penautier had a great desire to succeed the Sieur of Mennevillette, who was receiver of the clergy, and this office was worth nearly 60,000 livres. Penautier knew that Mennevillette was retiring in favour of his chief clerk, Messire Pierre Hannyvel, Sieur de Saint-Laurent, and he had taken all the necessary steps for buying the place over his head: the Sieur de Saint-Laurent, with the full support of the clergy, obtained the reversion for nothing—a thing that never happened before. Penautier then offered him 40,000 crowns to go halves, but Saint-Laurent refused. Their relations, however, were not broken off, and they continued to meet. Penautier was considered such a lucky fellow that it was generally expected he would somehow or other get some day the post he coveted so highly. People who had no faith in the mysteries of alchemy declared that Sainte-

Croix and Penautier did business together.

Now, when the period for mourning was over, the relations of the marquise and Sainte-Croix were as open and public as before: the two brothers d'Aubray expostulated with her by the medium of an older sister who was in a Carmelite nunnery, and the marquise perceived that her father had on his death bequeathed the care and supervision of her to her brothers. Thus her first crime had been all but in vain: she had wanted to get rid of her father's rebukes and to gain his fortune; as a fact the fortune was diminished by reason of her elder brothers, and she had scarcely enough to pay her debts; while the rebukes were renewed from the mouths of her brothers, one of whom, being civil lieutenant, had the power to separate her again from her lover. This must be prevented. Lachaussee left the service of Sainte-Croix, and by a contrivance of the marquise was installed three months later as servant of the elder brother, who lived with the civil lieutenant. The poison to be used on this occasion was not so swift as the one taken by M. d'Aubray so violent a death happening so soon in the same family might arouse suspicion. Experiments were tried once more, not on animals—for their different organisation might put the poisoner's science in the wrong—but as before upon human subjects; as before, a 'corpus vili' was taken. The marquise had the reputation of a pious and charitable lady; seldom did she fail to relieve the poor who appealed: more than this, she took part in the work of those devoted women who are pledged to the service of the sick, and she walked the hospitals and presented wine and other medicaments. No one was surprised when she appeared in her ordinary way at l'Hotel-Dieu. This time she brought biscuits and cakes for the convalescent patients, her gifts being, as usual, gratefully received. A month later she paid another visit, and inquired after certain patients in whom she was particularly interested: since the last time she came they had suffered a relapse—the malady had changed in nature, and had shown graver symptoms. It was a kind of deadly fatigue, killing them by a slow strange decay. She asked questions of the doctors but could learn nothing: this malady was unknown to them, and defied all the resources of their art. A fortnight later she returned. Some of the sick people were dead, others still alive, but desperately ill; living skeletons, all that seemed left of them was sight, speech, and breath. At the end of two months they were all dead, and the physicians had been as much at a loss over the post-mortems as over the treatment of the dying.

Experiments of this kind were reassuring; so Lachaussee had orders to carry out his instructions. One day the civil lieutenant rang his bell, and Lachaussee, who served the councillor, as we said before, came up for orders. He found the

lieutenant at work with his secretary, Couste what he wanted was a glass of wine and water. In a moment Lachaussee brought it in. The lieutenant put the glass to his lips, but at the first sip pushed it away, crying, "What have you brought, you wretch? I believe you want to poison me." Then handing the glass to his secretary, he added, "Look at it, Couste: what is this stuff?" The secretary put a few drops into a coffee-spoon, lifting it to his nose and then to his mouth: the drink had the smell and taste of vitriol. Meanwhile Lachaussee went up to the secretary and told him he knew what it must be: one of the councillor's valets had taken a dose of medicine that morning, and without noticing he must have brought the very glass his companion had used. Saying this, he took the glass from the secretary's hand, put it to his lips, pretending to taste it himself, and then said he had no doubt it was so, for he recognised the smell. He then threw the wine into the fireplace.

As the lieutenant had not drunk enough to be upset by it, he soon forgot this incident and the suspicions that had been aroused at the moment in his mind. Sainte-Croix and the marquise perceived that they had made a false step, and at the risk of involving several people in their plan for vengeance, they decided on the employment of other means. Three months passed without any favourable occasion presenting itself; at last, on one of the early days of April 1670, the lieutenant took his brother to his country place, Villequoy, in Beauce, to spend the Easter vacation. Lachaussee was with his master, and received his instructions at the moment of departure.

The day after they arrived in the country there was a pigeon-pie for dinner: seven persons who had eaten it felt indisposed after the meal, and the three who had not taken it were perfectly well. Those on whom the poisonous substance had chiefly acted were the lieutenant, the councillor, and the commandant of the watch. He may have eaten more, or possibly the poison he had tasted on the former occasion helped, but at any rate the lieutenant was the first to be attacked with vomiting two hours later, the councillor showed the same symptoms; the commandant and the others were a prey for several hours to frightful internal pains; but from the beginning their condition was not nearly so grave as that of the two brothers. This time again, as usual, the help of doctors was useless. On the 12th of April, five days after they had been poisoned, the lieutenant and his brother returned to Paris so changed that anyone would have thought they had both suffered a long and cruel illness. Madame de Brinvilliers was in the country at the time, and did not come back during the whole time that her brothers were ill. From the very first consultation in the lieutenant's case the doctors

entertained no hope. The symptoms were the same as those to which his father had succumbed, and they supposed it was an unknown disease in the family. They gave up all hope of recovery. Indeed, his state grew worse and worse; he felt an unconquerable aversion for every kind of food, and the vomiting was incessant. The last three days of his life he complained that a fire was burning in his breast, and the flames that burned within seemed to blaze forth at his eyes, the only part of his body that appeared to live, so like a corpse was all the rest of him. On the 17th of June 1670 he died: the poison had taken seventy-two days to complete its work. Suspicion began to dawn: the lieutenant's body was opened, and a formal report was drawn up. The operation was performed in the presence of the surgeons Dupre and Durant, and Gavart, the apothecary, by M. Bachot, the brothers' private physician. They found the stomach and duodenum to be black and falling to pieces, the liver burnt and gangrened. They said that this state of things must have been produced by poison, but as the presence of certain bodily humours sometimes produces similar appearances, they durst not declare that the lieutenant's death could not have come about by natural causes, and he was buried without further inquiry.

It was as his private physician that Dr. Bachot had asked for the autopsy of his patient's brother. For the younger brother seemed to have been attacked by the same complaint, and the doctor hoped to find from the death of the one some means for preserving the life of the other. The councillor was in a violent fever, agitated unceasingly both in body and mind: he could not bear any position of any kind for more than a few minutes at a time. Bed was a place of torture; but if he got up, he cried for it again, at least for a change of suffering. At the end of three months he died. His stomach, duodenum, and liver were all in the same corrupt state as his brother's, and more than that, the surface of his body was burnt away. This, said the doctors; was no dubious sign of poisoning; although, they added, it sometimes happened that a 'caco-chyme' produced the same effect. Lachaussee was so far from being suspected, that the councillor, in recognition of the care he had bestowed on him in his last illness, left him in his will a legacy of a hundred crowns; moreover, he received a thousand francs from Sainte-Croix and the marquise.

So great a disaster in one family, however, was not only sad but alarming. Death knows no hatred: death is deaf and blind, nothing more, and astonishment was felt at this ruthless destruction of all who bore one name. Still nobody suspected the true culprits, search was fruitless, inquiries led nowhere: the marquise put on mourning for her brothers, Sainte-Croix continued in his path of folly, and all

things went on as before. Meanwhile Sainte-Croix had made the acquaintance of the Sieur de Saint Laurent, the same man from whom Penautier had asked for a post without success, and had made friends with him. Penautier had meanwhile become the heir of his father-in-law, the Sieur Lesecq, whose death had most unexpectedly occurred; he had thereby gained a second post in Languedoc and an immense property: still, he coveted the place of receiver of the clergy. Chance now once more helped him: a few days after taking over from Sainte-Croix a man-servant named George, M. de Saint-Laurent fell sick, and his illness showed symptoms similar to those observed in the case of the d'Aubrays, father and sons; but it was more rapid, lasting only twenty-four hours. Like them, M. de Saint-Laurent died a prey to frightful tortures. The same day an officer from the sovereign's court came to see him, heard every detail connected with his friend's death, and when told of the symptoms said before the servants to Sainfray the notary that it would be necessary to examine the body. An hour later George disappeared, saying nothing to anybody, and not even asking for his wages. Suspicions were excited; but again they remained vague. The autopsy showed a state of things not precisely to be called peculiar to poisoning cases the intestines, which the fatal poison had not had time to burn as in the case of the d'Aubrays, were marked with reddish spots like flea-bites. In June Penautier obtained the post that had been held by the Sieur de Saint-Laurent.

But the widow had certain suspicions which were changed into something like certainty by George's flight. A particular circumstance aided and almost confirmed her doubts. An abbe who was a friend of her husband, and knew all about the disappearance of George, met him some days afterwards in the rue des Masons, near the Sorbonne. They were both on the same side, and a hay-cart coming along the street was causing a block. George raised his head and saw the abbe, knew him as a friend of his late master, stooped under the cart and crawled to the other side, thus at the risk of being crushed escaping from the eyes of a man whose appearance recalled his crime and inspired him with fear of punishment. Madame de Saint-Laurent preferred a charge against George, but though he was sought for everywhere, he could never be found. Still the report of these strange deaths, so sudden and so incomprehensible, was bruited about Paris, and people began to feel frightened. Sainte-Croix, always in the gay world, encountered the talk in drawing-rooms, and began to feel a little uneasy. True, no suspicion pointed as yet in his direction; but it was as well to take precautions, and Sainte-Croix began to consider how he could be freed from anxiety. There was a post in the king's service soon to be vacant, which would cost 100,000 crowns; and although Sainte-Croix had no apparent means, it was

rumoured that he was about to purchase it. He first addressed himself to Belleguise to treat about this affair with Penautier. There was some difficulty, however, to be encountered in this quarter. The sum was a large one, and Penautier no longer required help; he had already come into all the inheritance he looked for, and so he tried to throw cold water on the project.

Sainte-Croix thus wrote to Belleguise:

“DEAR FRIEND,—Is it possible that you need any more talking to about the matter you know of, so important as it is, and, maybe, able to give us peace and quiet for the rest of our days! I really think the devil must be in it, or else you simply will not be sensible: do show your common sense, my good man, and look at it from all points of view; take it at its very worst, and you still ought to feel bound to serve me, seeing how I have made everything all right for you: all our interests are together in this matter. Do help me, I beg of you; you may feel sure I shall be deeply grateful, and you will never before have acted so agreeably both for me and for yourself. You know quite enough about it, for I have not spoken so openly even to my own brother as I have to you. If you can come this afternoon, I shall be either at the house or quite near at hand, you know where I mean, or I will expect you tomorrow morning, or I will come and find you, according to what you reply.—Always yours with all my heart.”

The house meant by Sainte-Croix was in the rue des Bernardins, and the place near at hand where he was to wait for Belleguise was the room he leased from the widow Brunet, in the blind alley out of the Place Maubert. It was in this room and at the apothecary Glazer's that Sainte-Croix made his experiments; but in accordance with poetical justice, the manipulation of the poisons proved fatal to the workers themselves. The apothecary fell ill and died; Martin was attacked by fearful sickness, which brought, him to death's door. Sainte-Croix was unwell, and could not even go out, though he did not know what was the matter. He had a furnace brought round to his house from Glazer's, and ill as he was, went on with the experiments. Sainte-Croix was then seeking to make a poison so subtle that the very effluvia might be fatal. He had heard of the poisoned napkin given to the young dauphin, elder brother of Charles VII, to wipe his hands on during a game of tennis, and knew that the contact had caused his death; and the still discussed tradition had informed him of the gloves of Jeanne d'Albret; the secret was lost, but Sainte-Croix hoped to recover it. And then

there happened one of those strange accidents which seem to be not the hand of chance but a punishment from Heaven. At the very moment when Sainte-Croix was bending over his furnace, watching the fatal preparation as it became hotter and hotter, the glass mask which he wore over his face as a protection from any poisonous exhalations that might rise up from the mixture, suddenly dropped off, and Sainte-Croix dropped to the ground as though felled by a lightning stroke. At supper-time, his wife finding that he did not come out from his closet where he was shut in, knocked at the door, and received no answer; knowing that her husband was wont to busy himself with dark and mysterious matters, she feared some disaster had occurred. She called her servants, who broke in the door. Then she found Sainte-Croix stretched out beside the furnace, the broken glass lying by his side. It was impossible to deceive the public as to the circumstances of this strange and sudden death: the servants had seen the corpse, and they talked. The commissary Picard was ordered to affix the seals, and all the widow could do was to remove the furnace and the fragments of the glass mask.

The noise of the event soon spread all over Paris. Sainte-Croix was extremely well known, and the news that he was about to purchase a post in the court had made him known even more widely. Lachaussee was one of the first to learn of his master's death; and hearing that a seal had been set upon his room, he hastened to put in an objection in these terms:

“Objection of Lachaussee, who asserts that for seven years he was in the service of the deceased; that he had given into his charge, two years earlier, 100 pistoles and 200 white crowns, which should be found in a cloth bag under the closet window, and in the same a paper stating that the said sum belonged to him, together with the transfer of 300 livres owed to him by the late M. d'Aubray, councillor; the said transfer made by him at Laserre, together with three receipts from his master of apprenticeship, 100 livres each: these moneys and papers he claims.”

To Lachaussee the reply was given that he must wait till the day when the seals were broken, and then if all was as he said, his property would be returned.

But Lachaussee was not the only person who was agitated about the death of Sainte-Croix. The marquise, who was familiar with all the secrets of this fatal closet, had hurried to the commissary as soon as she heard of the event, and although it was ten o'clock at night had demanded to speak with him. But he had replied by his head clerk, Pierre Frater, that he was in bed; the marquise

insisted, begging them to rouse him up, for she wanted a box that she could not allow to have opened. The clerk then went up to the Sieur Picard's bedroom, but came back saying that what the marquise demanded was for the time being an impossibility, for the commissary was asleep. She saw that it was idle to insist, and went away, saying that she should send a man the next morning to fetch the box. In the morning the man came, offering fifty Louis to the commissary on behalf of the marquise, if he would give her the box. But he replied that the box was in the sealed room, that it would have to be opened, and that if the objects claimed by the marquise were really hers, they would be safely handed over to her. This reply struck the marquise like a thunderbolt. There was no time to be lost: hastily she removed from the rue Neuve-Saint-Paul, where her town house was, to Picpus, her country place. Thence she posted the same evening to Liege, arriving the next morning, and retired to a convent.

The seals had been set on the 31st of July 1672, and they were taken off on the 8th of August following. Just as they set to work a lawyer charged with full powers of acting for the marquise, appeared and put in the following statement: "Alexandre Delamarre, lawyer acting for the Marquise de Brinvilliers, has come forward, and declares that if in the box claimed by his client there is found a promise signed by her for the sum of 30,000 livres, it is a paper taken from her by fraud, against which, in case of her signature being verified, she intends to lodge an appeal for nullification." This formality over, they proceeded to open Sainte-Croix's closet: the key was handed to the commissary Picard by a Carmelite called Friar Victorin. The commissary opened the door, and entered with the parties interested, the officers, and the widow, and they began by setting aside the loose papers, with a view to taking them in order, one at a time. While they were thus busy, a small roll fell down, on which these two words were written: "My Confession." All present, having no reason to suppose Sainte-Croix a bad man, decided that this paper ought not to be read. The deputy for the attorney general on being consulted was of this opinion, and the confession of Sainte-Croix was burnt. This act of conscience performed, they proceeded to make an inventory. One of the first objects that attracted the attention of the officers was the box claimed by Madame de Brinvilliers. Her insistence had provoked curiosity, so they began with it. Everybody went near to see what was in it, and it was opened.

We shall let the report speak: in such cases nothing is so effective or so terrible as the official statement.

“In the closet of Sainte-Croix was found a small box one foot square, on the top of which lay a half-sheet of paper entitled ‘My Will,’ written on one side and containing these words: ‘I humbly entreat any into whose hands this chest may fall to do me the kindness of putting it into the hands of Madame the Marquise de Brinvilliers, resident in the rue Neuve-Saint-Paul, seeing that all the contents concern and belong to her alone, and are of no use to any person in the world apart from herself: in case of her being already dead before me, the box and all its contents should be burnt without opening or disturbing anything. And lest anyone should plead ignorance of the contents, I swear by the God I worship and by all that is most sacred that no untruth is here asserted. If anyone should contravene my wishes that are just and reasonable in this matter, I charge their conscience therewith in discharging my own in this world and the next, protesting that such is my last wish.

“‘Given at Paris, the 25th of May after noon, 1672. Signed by Sainte-Croix,’

“And below were written these words: ‘There is one packet only addressed to M. Penautier which should be delivered.’”

It may be easily understood that a disclosure of this kind only increased the interest of the scene; there was a murmur of curiosity, and when silence again reigned, the official continued in these words:

“A packet has been found sealed in eight different places with eight different seals. On this is written: ‘Papers to be burnt in case of my death, of no consequence to anyone. I humbly beg those into whose hands they may fall to burn them. I give this as a charge upon their conscience; all without opening the packet.’ In this packet we find two parcels of sublimate.

“Item, another packet sealed with six different seals, on which is a similar inscription, in which is found more sublimate, half a pound in weight.

“Item, another packet sealed with six different seals, on which is a similar inscription, in which are found three parcels, one containing half an ounce of sublimate, the second 2 1/4 ozs. of Roman vitriol, and the third some calcined prepared vitriol. In the box was found a large square phial, one pint in capacity, full of a clear liquid, which was looked at by M. Moreau, the doctor; he, however, could not tell its nature until it was tested.

“Item, another phial, with half a pint of clear liquid with a white sediment, about which Moreau said the same thing as before.

“Item, a small earthenware pot containing two or three lumps of prepared opium.

“Item, a folded paper containing two drachms of corrosive sublimate powdered.

“Next, a little box containing a sort of stone known as infernal stone.

“Next, a paper containing one ounce of opium.

“Next, a piece of pure antimony weighing three ounces.

“Next, a packet of powder on which was written: ‘To check the flow of blood.’ Moreau said that it was quince flower and quince buds dried.

“Item, a pack sealed with six seals, on which was written, ‘Papers to be burnt in case of death.’ In this twenty-four letters were found, said to have been written by the Marquise de Brinvilliers.

“Item, another packet sealed with six seals, on which a similar inscription was written. In this were twenty-seven pieces of paper on each of which was written: ‘Sundry curious secrets.’

“Item, another packet with six more seals, on which a similar inscription was written. In this were found seventy-five livres, addressed to different persons. Besides all these, in the box there were two bonds, one from the marquise for 30,000, and one from Penautier for 10,000 francs, their dates corresponding to the time of the deaths of M. d’Aubray and the Sieur de St. Laurent.”

The difference in the amount shows that Sainte-Croix had a tariff, and that parricide was more expensive than simple assassination. Thus in his death did Sainte-Croix bequeath the poisons to his mistress and his friend; not content with his own crimes in the past, he wished to be their accomplice in the future.

The first business of the officials was to submit the different substances to analysis, and to experiment with them on animals. The report follows of Guy Simon, an apothecary, who was charged to undertake the analysis and the

experiments:

“This artificial poison reveals its nature on examination. It is so disguised that one fails to recognise it, so subtle that it deceives the scientific, so elusive that it escapes the doctor’s eye: experiments seem to be at fault with this poison, rules useless, aphorisms ridiculous. The surest experiments are made by the use of the elements or upon animals. In water, ordinary poison falls by its own weight. The water is superior, the poison obeys, falls downwards, and takes the lower place.

“The trial by fire is no less certain: the fire evaporates and disperses all that is innocent and pure, leaving only acrid and sour matter which resists its influence. The effect produced by poisons on animals is still more plain to see: its malignity extends to every part that it reaches, and all that it touches is vitiated; it burns and scorches all the inner parts with a strange, irresistible fire.

“The poison employed by Sainte-Croix has been tried in all the ways, and can defy every experiment. This poison floats in water, it is the superior, and the water obeys it; it escapes in the trial by fire, leaving behind only innocent deposits; in animals it is so skilfully concealed that no one could detect it; all parts of the animal remain healthy and active; even while it is spreading the cause of death, this artificial poison leaves behind the marks and appearance of life. Every sort of experiment has been tried. The first was to pour out several drops of the liquid found into oil of tartar and sea water, and nothing was precipitated into the vessels used; the second was to pour the same liquid into a sanded vessel, and at the bottom there was found nothing acrid or acid to the tongue, scarcely any stains; the third experiment was tried upon an Indian fowl, a pigeon, a dog, and some other animals, which died soon after. When they were opened, however, nothing was found but a little coagulated blood in the ventricle of the heart. Another experiment was giving a white powder to a cat, in a morsel of mutton. The cat vomited for half an hour, and was found dead the next day, but when opened no part of it was found to be affected by the poison. A second trial of the same poison was made upon a pigeon, which soon died. When opened, nothing peculiar was found except a little reddish water in the stomach.”

These experiments proved that Sainte-Croix was a learned chemist, and suggested the idea that he did not employ his art for nothing; everybody recalled the sudden, unexpected deaths that had occurred, and the bonds from the marquise and from Penautier looked like blood-money. As one of these two was absent, and the other so powerful and rich that they dared not arrest him without

proofs, attention was now paid to the objection put in by Lachaussee.

It was said in the objection that Lachaussee had spent seven years in the service of Sainte-Croix, so he could not have considered the time he had passed with the d'Aubrays as an interruption to this service. The bag containing the thousand pistoles and the three bonds for a hundred livres had been found in the place indicated; thus Lachaussee had a thorough knowledge of this closet: if he knew the closet, he would know about the box; if he knew about the box, he could not be an innocent man. This was enough to induce Madame Mangot de Villarceaux, the lieutenant's widow, to lodge an accusation against him, and in consequence a writ was issued against Lachaussee, and he was arrested.

When this happened, poison was found upon him. The trial came on before the Chatelet. Lachaussee denied his guilt obstinately. The judges thinking they had no sufficient proof, ordered the preparatory question to be applied. *Mme.* Mangot appealed from a judgment which would probably save the culprit if he had the strength to resist the torture and own to nothing;

[Note: There were two kinds of question, one before and one after the sentence was passed. In the first, an accused person would endure frightful torture in the hope of saving his life, and so would often confess nothing. In the second, there was no hope, and therefore it was not worth while to suffer additional pains.]

so, in virtue of this appeal, a judgment, on March 4th, 1673, declared that Jean Amelin Lachaussee was convicted of having poisoned the lieutenant and the councillor; for which he was to be broken alive on the wheel, having been first subjected to the question both ordinary and extraordinary, with a view to the discovery of his accomplices. At the same time Madame de Brinvilliers was condemned in default of appearance to have her head cut off.

Lachaussee suffered the torture of the boot. This was having each leg fastened between two planks and drawn together in an iron ring, after which wedges were driven in between the middle planks; the ordinary question was with four wedges, the extraordinary with eight. At the third wedge Lachaussee said he was ready to speak; so the question was stopped, and he was carried into the choir of the chapel stretched on a mattress, where, in a weak voice—for he could hardly speak—he begged for half an hour to recover himself. We give a verbatim extract from the report of the question and the execution of the death-sentence:

“Lachaussee, released from the question and laid on the mattress, the official reporter retired. Half an hour later Lachaussee begged that he might return, and said that he was guilty; that Sainte-Croix told him that Madame de Brinvilliers had given him the poison to administer to her brothers; that he had done it in water and soup, had put the reddish water in the lieutenant’s glass in Paris, and the clear water in the pie at Villequoy; that Sainte-Croix had promised to keep him always, and to make him a gift of 100 pistolets; that he gave him an account of the effect of the poisons, and that Sainte-Croix had given him some of the waters several times. Sainte-Croix told him that the marquise knew nothing of his other poisonings, but Lachaussee thought she did know, because she had often spoken to him about his poisons; that she wanted to compel him to go away, offering him money if he would go; that she had asked him for the box and its contents; that if Sainte-Croix had been able to put anyone into the service of Madame d’Aubray, the lieutenant’s widow, he would possibly have had her poisoned also; for he had a fancy for her daughter.”

This declaration, which left no room for doubt, led to the judgment that came next, thus described in the Parliamentary register: “Report of the question and execution on the 24th of March 1673, containing the declarations and confessions of Jean Amelin Lachaussee; the court has ordered that the persons mentioned, Belleguise, Martin, Poitevin, Olivier, Veron pere, the wife of Quesdon the wigmaker, be summoned to appear before the court to be interrogated and heard concerning matters arising from the present inquiry, and orders that the decree of arrest against Lapierre and summons against Penautier decreed by the criminal lieutenant shall be carried out. In Parliament, 27th March 1673.” In virtue of this judgment, Penautier, Martin, and Belleguise were interrogated on the 21st, 22nd, and 24th of April. On the 26th of July, Penautier was discharged; fuller information was desired concerning Belleguise, and the arrest of Martin was ordered. On the 24th of March, Lachaussee had been broken on the wheel. As to Exili, the beginner of it all, he had disappeared like Mephistopheles after Faust’s end, and nothing was heard of him. Towards the end of the year Martin was released for want of sufficient evidence. But the Marquise de Brinvilliers remained at Liege, and although she was shut up in a convent she had by no means abandoned one, at any rate, of the most worldly pleasures. She had soon found consolation for the death of Sainte-Croix, whom, all the same, she had loved so much as to be willing to kill herself for his sake. But she had adopted a new lover, Theria by name. About this man it has been

impossible to get any information, except that his name was several times mentioned during the trial. Thus, all the accusations had, one by one, fallen upon her, and it was resolved to seek her out in the retreat where she was supposed to be safe. The mission was difficult and very delicate. Desgrais, one of the cleverest of the officials, offered to undertake it. He was a handsome man, thirty-six years old or thereabouts: nothing in his looks betrayed his connection with the police; he wore any kind of dress with equal ease and grace, and was familiar with every grade in the social scale, disguising himself as a wretched tramp or a noble lord. He was just the right man, so his offer was accepted.

He started accordingly for Liege, escorted by several archers, and, fortified by a letter from the king addressed to the Sixty of that town, wherein Louis xiv demanded the guilty woman to be given up for punishment. After examining the letter, which Desgrais had taken pains to procure, the council authorised the extradition of the marquise.

This was much, but it was not all. The marquise, as we know, had taken refuge in a convent, where Desgrais dared not arrest her by force, for two reasons: first, because she might get information beforehand, and hide herself in one of the cloister retreats whose secret is known only to the superior; secondly, because Liege was so religious a town that the event would produce a great sensation: the act might be looked upon as a sacrilege, and might bring about a popular rising, during which the marquise might possibly contrive to escape. So Desgrais paid a visit to his wardrobe, and feeling that an abbe's dress would best free him from suspicion, he appeared at the doors of the convent in the guise of a fellow-countryman just returned from Rome, unwilling to pass through Liege without presenting his compliments to the lovely and unfortunate marquise. Desgrais had just the manner of the younger son of a great house: he was as flattering as a courtier, as enterprising as a musketeer. In this first visit he made himself attractive by his wit and his audacity, so much so that more easily than he had dared to hope, he got leave to pay a second call. The second visit was not long delayed: Desgrais presented himself the very next day. Such eagerness was flattering to the marquise, so Desgrais was received even better than the night before. She, a woman of rank and fashion, for more than a year had been robbed of all intercourse with people of a certain set, so with Desgrais the marquise resumed her Parisian manner. Unhappily the charming abbe was to leave Liege in a few days; and on that account he became all the more pressing, and a third visit, to take place next day, was formally arranged. Desgrais was punctual: the marquise was impatiently waiting him; but by a conjunction of circumstances

that Desgrais had no doubt arranged beforehand, the amorous meeting was disturbed two or three times just as they were getting more intimate and least wanting to be observed. Desgrais complained of these tiresome checks; besides, the marquise and he too would be compromised: he owed concealment to his cloth: He begged her to grant him a rendezvous outside the town, in some deserted walk, where there would be no fear of their being recognised or followed: the marquise hesitated no longer than would serve to put a price on the favour she was granting, and the rendezvous was fixed for the same evening.

The evening came: both waited with the same impatience, but with very different hopes. The marquise found Desgrais at the appointed spot: he gave her his arm then holding her hand in his own, he gave a sign, the archers appeared, the lover threw off his mask, Desgrais was confessed, and the marquise was his prisoner. Desgrais left her in the hands of his men, and hastily made his way to the convent. Then, and not before, he produced his order from the Sixty, by means of which he opened the marquise's room. Under her bed he found a box, which he seized and sealed; then he went back to her, and gave the order to start.

When the marquise saw the box in the hands of Desgrais, she at first appeared stunned; quickly recovering, she claimed a paper inside it which contained her confession. Desgrais refused, and as he turned round for the carriage to come forward, she tried to choke herself by swallowing a pin. One of the archers, called Claude, Rolla, perceiving her intention, contrived to get the pin out of her mouth. After this, Desgrais commanded that she should be doubly watched.

They stopped for supper. An archer called Antoine Barbier was present at the meal, and watched so that no knife or fork should be put on the table, or any instrument with which she could wound or kill herself. The marquise, as she put her glass to her mouth as though to drink, broke a little bit off with her teeth; but the archer saw it in time, and forced her to put it out on her plate. Then she promised him, if he would save her, that she would make his fortune. He asked what he would have to do for that. She proposed that he should cut Desgrais' throat; but he refused, saying that he was at her service in any other way. So she asked him for pen and paper, and wrote this letter:

“DEAR THERIA,—I am in the hands of Desgrais, who is taking me by road from Liege to Paris. Come quickly and save me.”

Antoine Barbier took the letter, promising to deliver it at the right address; but he

gave it to Desgrais instead. The next day, finding that this letter had not been pressing enough, she wrote him another, saying that the escort was only eight men, who could be easily overcome by four or five determined assailants, and she counted on him to strike this bald stroke. But, uneasy when she got no answer and no result from her letters, she despatched a third missive to Theria. In this she implored him by his own salvation, if he were not strong enough to attack her escort and save her, at least to kill two of the four horses by which she was conveyed, and to profit by the moment of confusion to seize the chest and throw it into the fire; otherwise, she declared, she was lost. Though Theria received none of these letters, which were one by one handed over by Barbier to Desgrais, he all the same did go to Maestricht, where the marquise was to pass, of his own accord. There he tried to bribe the archers, offering much as 10,000 livres, but they were incorruptible. At Rocroy the cortege met M. Palluau, the councillor, whom the Parliament had sent after the prisoner, that he might put questions to her at a time when she least expected them, and so would not have prepared her answers. Desgrais told him all that had passed, and specially called his attention to the famous box, the object of so much anxiety and so many eager instructions. M. de Palluau opened it, and found among other things a paper headed "My Confession." This confession was a proof that the guilty feel great need of discovering their crimes either to mankind or to a merciful God. Sainte-Croix, we know, had made a confession that was burnt, and here was the marquise equally imprudent. The confession contained seven articles, and began thus, "I confess to God, and to you, my father," and was a complete avowal, of all the crimes she had committed.

In the first article she accused herself of incendiarism;

In the second, of having ceased to be a virgin at seven years of age;

In the third of having poisoned her father;

In the fourth, of having poisoned her two brothers;

In the fifth, that she had tried to poison her sister, a Carmelite nun.

The two other articles were concerned with the description of strange and unnatural sins. In this woman there was something of Locusta and something of Messalina as well: antiquity could go no further.

M. de Palluau, fortified by his knowledge of this important document, began his

examination forthwith. We give it verbatim, rejoicing that we may substitute an official report for our own narrative.

Asked why she fled to Liege, she replied that she left France on account of some business with her sister-in-law.

Asked if she had any knowledge of the papers found in the box, she replied that in the box there were several family papers, and among them a general confession which she desired to make; when she wrote it, however, her mind was disordered; she knew not what she had said or done, being distraught at the time, in a foreign country, deserted by her relatives, forced to borrow every penny.

Asked as to the first article, what house it was she had burnt, she replied that she had not burnt anything, but when she wrote that she was out of her senses.

Asked about the six other articles she replied that she had no recollection of them.

Asked if she had not poisoned her father and brothers, she replied that she knew nothing at all about it.

Asked if it were not Lachaussee who poisoned her brothers, she replied that she knew nothing about it.

Asked if she did not know that her sister could not live long, having been poisoned, she said that she expected her sister to die, because she suffered in the same way as her brothers; that she had lost all memory of the time when she wrote this confession; admitted that she left France by the advice of her relations.

Asked why her relations had advised her thus, she replied that it was in connection with her brothers' affairs; admitted seeing Sainte-Croix since his release from the Bastille.

Asked if Sainte-Croix had not persuaded her to get rid of her father, she replied that she could not remember; neither did she remember if Sainte-Croix had given her powders or other drugs, nor if Sainte-Croix had told her he knew how to make her rich.

Eight letters having been produced, asked to whom she had written them, she replied that she did not remember.

Asked why she had promised to pay 30,000 livres to Sainte-Croix, she replied that she intended to entrust this sum to his care, so that she might make use of it when she wanted it, believing him to be her friend; she had not wished this to be known, by reason of her creditors; that she had an acknowledgment from Sainte-Croix, but had lost it in her travels; that her husband knew nothing about it.

Asked if the promise was made before or after the death of her brothers, she replied that she could not remember, and it made no difference.

Asked if she knew an apothecary called Glazer, she replied that she had consulted him three times about inflammation.

Asked why she wrote to Theria to get hold of the box, she replied that she did not understand.

Asked why, in writing to Theria, she had said she was lost unless he got hold of the box, she replied that she could not remember.

Asked if she had seen during the journey with her father the first symptoms of his malady, she replied that she had not noticed that her father was ill on the journey, either going or coming back in 1666.

Asked if she had not done business with Penautier, she replied that Penautier owed her 30,000 livres.

Asked how this was, she replied that she and her husband had lent Penautier 10,000 crowns, that he had paid it back, and since then they had had no dealings with him.

The marquise took refuge, we see, in a complete system of denial: arrived in Paris, and confined in the Conciergerie, she did the same; but soon other terrible

charges were added, which still further overwhelmed her.

The sergeant Cluet deposed: that, observing a lackey to M. d'Aubray, the councillor, to be the man Lachaussee, whom he had seen in the service of Sainte-Croix, he said to the marquise that if her brother knew that Lachaussee had been with Sainte-Croix he would not like it, but that Madame de Brinvilliers exclaimed, "Dear me, don't tell my brothers; they would give him a thrashing, no doubt, and he may just as well get his wages as any body else." He said nothing to the d'Aubrays, though he saw Lachaussee paying daily visits to Sainte-Croix and to the marquise, who was worrying Sainte-Croix to let her have her box, and wanted her bill for two or three thousand pistoles. Other wise she would have had him assassinated. She often said that she was very anxious that no one should see the contents of the box; that it was a very important matter, but only concerned herself. After the box was opened, the witness added, he had told the marquise, that the commissary Picard said to Lachaussee that there were strange things in it; but the lady blushed, and changed the subject. He asked her if she were not an accomplice. She said, "What! I?" but then muttered to herself: "Lachaussee ought to be sent off to Picardy." The witness repeated that she had been after Sainte-Croix along time about the box, and if she had got it she would have had his throat cut. The witness further said that when he told Briancourt that Lachaussee was taken and would doubtless confess all, Briancourt, speaking of the marquise, remarked, "She is a lost woman." That d'Aubray's daughter had called Briancourt a rogue, but Briancourt had replied that she little knew what obligations she was under to him; that they had wanted to poison both her and the lieutenant's widow, and he alone had hindered it. He had heard from Briancourt that the marquise had often said that there are means to get rid of people one dislikes, and they can easily be put an end to in a bowl of soup.

The girl Edme Huet, a woman of Brescia, deposed that Sainte-Croix went to see the marquise every day, and that in a box belonging to that lady she had seen two little packets containing sublimate in powder and in paste: she recognised these, because she was an apothecary's daughter. She added that one day Madame de Brinvilliers, after a dinner party, in a merry mood, said, showing her a little box, "Here is vengeance on one's enemies: this box is small, but holds plenty of successions!" That she gave back the box into her hands, but soon changing from her sprightly mood, she cried, "Good heavens, what have I said? Tell nobody." That Lambert, clerk at the palace, told her he had brought the packets to Madame from Sainte-Croix; that Lachaussee often went to see her; and that she herself, not being paid ten pistoles which the marquise owed her, went to

complain to Sainte-Croix, threatening to tell the lieutenant what she had seen; and accordingly the ten pistoles were paid; further, that the marquise and Sainte-Croix always kept poison about them, to make use of, in case of being arrested.

Laurent Perrette, living with Glazer, said that he had often seen a lady call on his mistress with Sainte-Croix; that the footman told him she was the Marquise de Brinvilliers; that he would wager his head on it that they came to Glazer's to make poison; that when they came they used to leave their carriage at the Foire Saint-Germain.

Marie de Villeray, maid to the marquise, deposed that after the death of M. d'Aubray the councillor, Lachaussee came to see the lady and spoke with her in private; that Briancourt said she had caused the death of a worthy man; that Briancourt every day took some electuary for fear of being poisoned, and it was no doubt due to this precaution that he was still alive; but he feared he would be stabbed, because she had told him the secret about the poisoning; that d'Aubray's daughter had to be warned; and that there was a similar design against the tutor of M. de Brinvillier's children. Marie de Villeray added that two days after the death of the councillor, when Lachaussee was in Madame's bedroom, Couste, the late lieutenant's secretary, was announced, and Lachaussee had to be hidden in the alcove by the bed. Lachaussee brought the marquise a letter from Sainte-Croix.

Francois Desgrais, officer, deposed that when he was given the king's orders he arrested the marquise at Liege; that he found under her bed a box which he sealed; that the lady had demanded a paper which was in it, containing her confession, but he refused it; that on the road to Paris the marquise had told him that she believed it was Glazer who made the poisons for Sainte-Croix; that Sainte-Croix, who had made a rendezvous with her one day at the cross Saint-Honore, there showed her four little bottles, saying, "See what Glazer has sent me." She asked him for one, but Sainte-Croix said he would rather die than give it up. He added that the archer Antoine Barbier had given him three letters written by the marquise to Theria; that in the first she had told him to come at once and snatch her from the hands of the soldiers; that in the second she said that the escort was only composed of eight persons, who could be worsted by five men; that in the third she said that if he could not save her from the men who were taking her away, he should at least approach the commissary, and killing his valet's horse and two other horses in his carriage, then take the box, and burn it; otherwise she was lost.

Laviolette, an archer, deposed that on the evening of the arrest. the marquise had a long pin and tried to put it in her mouth; that he stopped her, and told her that she was very wicked; that he perceived that people said the truth and that she had poisoned all her family; to which she replied, that if she had, it was only through following bad advice, and that one could not always be good.

Antoine Barbier, an archer, said that the marquise at table took up a glass as though to drink, and tried to swallow a piece of it; that he prevented this, and she promised to make his fortune if only he would save her; that she wrote several letters to Theria; that during the whole journey she tried all she could to swallow pins, bits of glass, and earth; that she had proposed that he should cut Desgrais' throat, and kill the commissary's valet; that she had bidden him get the box and burn it, and bring a lighted torch to burn everything; that she had written to Penautier from the Conciergerie; that she gave him, the letter, and he pretended to deliver it.

Finally, Francoise Roussel deposed that she had been in the service of the marquise, and the lady had one day given her some preserved gooseberries; that she had eaten some on the point of her knife, and at once felt ill. She also gave her a slice of mutton, rather wet, which she ate, afterwards suffering great pain in the stomach, feeling as though she had been pricked in the heart, and for three years had felt the same, believing herself poisoned.

It was difficult to continue a system of absolute denial in face of proofs like these. The marquise persisted, all the same, that she was in no way guilty; and Maitre Nivelles, one of the best lawyers of the period, consented to defend her cause.

He combated one charge after another, in a remarkably clever way, owing to the adulterous connection of the marquise with Sainte-Croix, but denying her participation in the murders of the d'Aubrays, father and sons: these he ascribed entirely to the vengeance desired by Sainte-Croix. As to the confession, the strongest and, he maintained, the only evidence against Madame de Brinvilliers, he attacked its validity by bringing forward certain similar cases, where the evidence supplied by the accused against themselves had not been admitted by reason of the legal action: 'Non auditur perire volens'. He cited three instances, and as they are themselves interesting, we copy them verbatim from his notes.

FIRST CASE

Dominicus Soto, a very famous canonist and theologian, confessor to Charles V, present at the first meetings of the Council of Trent under Paul III, propounds a question about a man who had lost a paper on which he had written down his sins. It happened that this paper fell into the hands of an ecclesiastical judge, who wished to put in information against the writer on the strength of this document. Now this judge was justly punished by his superior, because confession is so sacred that even that which is destined to constitute the confession should be wrapped in eternal silence. In accordance with this precedent, the following judgment, reported in the 'Traite des Confesseurs', was given by Roderic Acugno. A Catalonian, native of Barcelona, who was condemned to death for homicide and owned his guilt, refused to confess when the hour of punishment arrived. However strongly pressed, he resisted, and so violently, giving no reason, that all were persuaded that his mind was unhinged by the fear of death. Saint-Thomas of Villeneuve, Archbishop of Valencia, heard of his obstinacy. Valencia was the place where his sentence was given. The worthy prelate was so charitable as to try to persuade the criminal to make his confession, so as not to lose his soul as well as his body. Great was his surprise, when he asked the reason of the refusal, to hear the doomed man declare that he hated confessors, because he had been condemned through the treachery of his own priest, who was the only person who knew about the murder. In confession he had admitted his crime and said where the body was buried, and all about it; his confessor had revealed it all, and he could not deny it, and so he had been condemned. He had only just learned, what he did not know at the time he confessed, that his confessor was the brother of the man he had killed, and that the desire for vengeance had prompted the bad priest to betray his confession. Saint-Thomas, hearing this, thought that this incident was of more importance than the trial, which concerned the life of only one person, whereas the honour of religion was at stake, with consequences infinitely more important. He felt he must verify this statement, and summoned the confessor. When he had admitted the breach of faith, the judges were obliged to revoke their sentence and pardon the criminal, much to the gratification of the public mind. The confessor was adjudged a very severe penance, which Saint-Thomas modified because of his prompt avowal of his fault, and still more because he had given an opportunity for the public exhibition of that reverence which judges themselves are bound to pay to confessions.

SECOND CASE

In 1579 an innkeeper at Toulouse killed with his own hand, unknown to the inmates of his house, a stranger who had come to lodge with him, and buried him secretly in the cellar. The wretch then suffered from remorse, and confessed the crime with all its circumstances, telling his confessor where the body was buried. The relations of the dead man, after making all possible search to get news of him, at last proclaimed through the town a large reward to be given to anyone who would discover what had happened to him. The confessor, tempted by this bait, secretly gave word that they had only to search in the innkeeper's cellar and they would find the corpse. And they found it in the place indicated. The innkeeper was thrown into prison, was tortured, and confessed his crime. But afterwards he always maintained that his confessor was the only person who could have betrayed him. Then the Parliament, indignant with such means of finding out the truth, declared him innocent, failing other proof than what came through his confessor. The confessor was himself condemned to be hanged, and his body was burnt. So fully did the tribunal in its wisdom recognise the importance of securing the sanctity of a sacrament that is indispensable to salvation.

THIRD CASE

An Armenian woman had inspired a violent passion in a young Turkish gentleman, but her prudence was long an obstacle to her lover's desires. At last he went beyond all bounds, and threatened to kill both her and her husband if she refused to gratify him. Frightened by this threat, which she knew too well he would carry out, she feigned consent, and gave the Turk a rendezvous at her house at an hour when she said her husband would be absent; but by arrangement the husband arrived, and although the Turk was armed with a sabre and a pair of pistols, it so befell that they were fortunate enough to kill their enemy, whom they buried under their dwelling unknown to all the world. But some days after the event they went to confess to a priest of their nation, and revealed every detail of the tragic story. This unworthy minister of the Lord supposed that in a Mahomedan country, where the laws of the priesthood and the functions of a confessor are either unknown or disapproved, no examination would be made into the source of his information, and that his evidence would have the same weight as any other accuser's. So he resolved to make a profit and

gratify his own avarice. Several times he visited the husband and wife, always borrowing considerable sums, and threatening to reveal their crime if they refused him. The first few times the poor creatures gave in to his exactions; but the moment came at last when, robbed of all their fortune, they were obliged to refuse the sum he demanded. Faithful to his threat, the priest, with a view to more reward, at once denounced them to the dead man's father. He, who had adored his son, went to the vizier, told him he had identified the murderers through their confessor, and asked for justice. But this denunciation had by no means the desired effect. The vizier, on the contrary, felt deep pity for the wretched Armenians, and indignation against the priest who had betrayed them. He put the accuser into a room which adjoined the court, and sent for the Armenian bishop to ask what confession really was, and what punishment was deserved by a priest who betrayed it, and what was the fate of those whose crimes were made known in this fashion. The bishop replied that the secrets of confession are inviolable, that Christians burn the priest who reveals them, and absolve those whom he accuses, because the avowal made by the guilty to the priest is proscribed by the Christian religion, on pain of eternal damnation. The vizier, satisfied with the answer, took the bishop into another room, and summoned the accused to declare all the circumstances: the poor wretches, half dead, fell at the vizier's feet. The woman spoke, explaining that the necessity of defending life and honour had driven them to take up arms to kill their enemy. She added that God alone had witnessed their crime, and it would still be unknown had not the law of the same God compelled them to confide it to the ear of one of His ministers for their forgiveness. Now the priest's insatiable avarice had ruined them first and then denounced them. The vizier made them go into a third room, and ordered the treacherous priest to be confronted with the bishop, making him again rehearse the penalties incurred by those who betray confessions. Then, applying this to the guilty priest, he condemned him to be burnt alive in a public place;—in anticipation, said he, of burning in hell, where he would assuredly receive the punishment of his infidelity and crimes. The sentence was executed without delay.

In spite of the effect which the advocate intended to produce by these three cases, either the judges rejected them, or perhaps they thought the other evidence without the confession was enough, and it was soon clear to everyone, by the way the trial went forward, that the marquise would be condemned. Indeed, before sentence was pronounced, on the morning of July 16th, 1676, she saw M. Pirot, doctor of the Sorbonne, come into her prison, sent by the chief president. This worthy magistrate, foreseeing the issue, and feeling that one so guilty

should not be left till the last moment, had sent the good priest. The latter, although he had objected that the Conciergerie had its own two chaplains, and added that he was too feeble to undertake such a task, being unable even to see another man bled without feeling ill, accepted the painful mission, the president having so strongly urged it, on the ground that in this case he needed a man who could be entirely trusted. The president, in fact, declared that, accustomed as he was to dealing with criminals, the strength of the marquise amazed him. The day before he summoned M. Pirot, he had worked at the trial from morning to night, and for thirteen hours the accused had been confronted with Briancourt, one of the chief witnesses against her. On that very day, there had been five hours more, and she had borne it all, showing as much respect towards her judges as haughtiness towards the witness, reproaching him as a miserable valet, given to drink, and protesting that as he had been dismissed for his misdemeanours, his testimony against her ought to go for nothing. So the chief president felt no hope of breaking her inflexible spirit, except by the agency of a minister of religion; for it was not enough to put her to death, the poisons must perish with her, or else society would gain nothing. The doctor Pirot came to the marquise with a letter from her sister, who, as we know, was a nun bearing the name of Sister Marie at the convent Saint-Jacques. Her letter exhorted the marquise, in the most touching and affectionate terms, to place her confidence in the good priest, and look upon him not only as a helper but as a friend.

When M. Pirot came before the marquise, she had just left the dock, where she had been for three hours without confessing anything, or seeming in the least touched by what the president said, though he, after acting the part of judge, addressed her simply as a Christian, and showing her what her deplorable position was, appearing now for the last time before men, and destined so soon to appear before God, spoke to her such moving words that he broke down himself, and the oldest and most obdurate judges present wept when they heard him. When the marquise perceived the doctor, suspecting that her trial was leading her to death, she approached him, saying:

“You have come, sir, because—”

But Father Chavigny, who was with M. Pirot; interrupted her, saying:

“Madame, we will begin with a prayer.”

They all fell on their knees invoking the Holy Spirit; then the marquise asked

them to add a prayer to the Virgin, and, this prayer finished, she went up to the doctor, and, beginning afresh, said:

“Sir, no doubt the president has sent you to give me consolation: with you I am to pass the little life I have left. I have long been eager to see you.”

“Madame,” the doctor replied, “I come to render you any spiritual office that I can; I only wish it were on another occasion.”

“We must have resolution, sir,” said she, smiling, “for all things.”

Then turning to Father Chavigny, she said:

“My father, I am very grateful to you for bringing the doctor here, and for all the other visits you have been willing to pay me. Pray to God for me, I entreat you; henceforth I shall speak with no one but the doctor, for with him I must speak of things that can only be discussed *tete-a-tete*. Farewell, then, my father; God will reward you for the attention you have been willing to bestow upon me.”

With these words the father retired, leaving the marquise alone with the doctor and the two men and one woman always in attendance on her. They were in a large room in the Montgomery tower extending, throughout its whole length. There was at the end of the room a bed with grey curtains for the lady, and a folding-bed for the custodian. It is said to have been the same room where the poet Theophile was once shut up, and near the door there were still verses in his well-known style written by his hand.

As soon as the two men and the woman saw for what the doctor had come, they retired to the end of the room, leaving the marquise free to ask for and receive the consolations brought her by the man of God. Then the two sat at a table side by side. The marquise thought she was already condemned, and began to speak on that assumption; but the doctor told her that sentence was not yet given, and he did not know precisely when it would be, still less what it would be; but at these words the marquise interrupted him.

“Sir,” she said, “I am not troubled about the future. If my sentence is not given yet, it soon will be. I expect the news this morning, and I know it will be death: the only grace I look for from the president is a delay between the sentence and its execution; for if I were executed to-day I should have very little time to prepare, and I feel I have need for more.”

The doctor did not expect such words, so he was overjoyed to learn what she felt. In addition to what the president had said, he had heard from Father Chavigny that he had told her the Sunday before that it was very unlikely she would escape death, and indeed, so far as one could judge by reports in the town, it was a foregone conclusion. When he said so, at first she had appeared stunned, and said with an air of great terror, "Father, must I die?" And when he tried to speak words of consolation, she had risen and shaken her head, proudly replying

"No, no, father; there is no need to encourage me. I will play my part, and that at once: I shall know how to die like a woman of spirit."

Then the father had told her that we cannot prepare for death so quickly and so easily; and that we have to be in readiness for a long time, not to be taken by surprise; and she had replied that she needed but a quarter of an hour to confess in, and one moment to die.

So the doctor was very glad to find that between Sunday and Thursday her feelings had changed so much.

"Yes," said she, "the more I reflect the more I feel that one day would not be enough to prepare myself for God's tribunal, to be judged by Him after men have judged me."

"Madame," replied the doctor, "I do not know what or when your sentence will be; but should it be death, and given to-day, I may venture to promise you that it will not be carried out before tomorrow. But although death is as yet uncertain, I think it well that you should be prepared for any event."

"Oh, my death is quite certain," said she, "and I must not give way to useless hopes. I must repose in you the great secrets of my whole life; but, father, before this opening of my heart, let me hear from your lips the opinion you have formed of me, and what you think in my present state I ought to do."

"You perceive my plan," said the doctor, "and you anticipate what I was about to say. Before entering into the secrets of your conscience, before opening the discussion of your affairs with God, I am ready, madame, to give you certain definite rules. I do not yet know whether you are guilty at all, and I suspend my judgment as to all the crimes you are accused of, since of them I can learn nothing except through your confession. Thus it is my duty still to doubt your

guilt. But I cannot be ignorant of what you are accused of: this is a public matter, and has reached my ears; for, as you may imagine, madame, your affairs have made a great stir, and there are few people who know nothing about them.”

“Yes,” she said, smiling, “I know there has been a great deal of talk, and I am in every man’s mouth.”

“Then,” replied the doctor, “the crime you are accused of is poisoning. If you are guilty, as is believed, you cannot hope that God will pardon you unless you make known to your judges what the poison is, what is its composition and what its antidote, also the names of your accomplices. Madame, we must lay hands on all these evil-doers without exception; for if you spared them, they would be able to make use of your poison, and you would then be guilty of all the murders committed by them after your death, because you did not give them over to the judges during your life; thus one might say you survive yourself, for your crime survives you. You know, madame, that a sin in the moment of death is never pardoned, and that to get remission for your crimes, if crimes you have, they must die when you die: for if you slay them not, be very sure they will slay you.”

“Yes, I am sure of that,” replied the marquise, after a moment of silent thought; “and though I will not admit that I am guilty, I promise, if I am guilty, to weigh your words. But one question, sir, and pray take heed that an answer is necessary. Is there not crime in this world that is beyond pardon? Are not some people guilty of sins so terrible and so numerous that the Church dares not pardon them, and if God, in His justice, takes account of them, He cannot for all His mercy pardon them? See, I begin with this question, because, if I am to have no hope, it is needless for me to confess.”

“I wish to think, madame,” replied the doctor, in spite of himself half frightened at the marquise, “that this your first question is only put by way of a general thesis, and has nothing to do with your own state. I shall answer the question without any personal application. No, madame, in this life there are no unpardonable sinners, terrible and numerous howsoever their sins may be. This is an article of faith, and without holding it you could not die a good Catholic. Some doctors, it is true, have before now maintained the contrary, but they have been condemned as heretics. Only despair and final impenitence are unpardonable, and they are not sins of our life but in our death.”

“Sir,” replied the marquise, “God has given me grace to be convinced by what

you say, and I believe He will pardon all sins—that He has often exercised this power. Now all my trouble is that He may not deign to grant all His goodness to one so wretched as I am, a creature so unworthy of the favours already bestowed on her.”

The doctor reassured her as best he could, and began to examine her attentively as they conversed together. “She was,” he said, “a woman naturally courageous and fearless; naturally gentle and good; not easily excited; clever and penetrating, seeing things very clearly in her mind, and expressing herself well and in few but careful words; easily finding a way out of a difficulty, and choosing her line of conduct in the most embarrassing circumstances; light-minded and fickle; unstable, paying no attention if the same thing were said several times over. For this reason,” continued the doctor, “I was obliged to alter what I had to say from time to time, keeping her but a short time to one subject, to which, however, I would return later, giving the matter a new appearance and disguising it a little. She spoke little and well, with no sign of learning and no affectation, always, mistress of herself, always composed and saying just what she intended to say. No one would have supposed from her face or from her conversation that she was so wicked as she must have been, judging by her public avowal of the parricide. It is surprising, therefore—and one must bow down before the judgment of God when He leaves mankind to himself—that a mind evidently of some grandeur, professing fearlessness in the most untoward and unexpected events, an immovable firmness and a resolution to await and to endure death if so it must be, should yet be so criminal as she was proved to be by the parricide to which she confessed before her judges. She had nothing in her face that would indicate such evil. She had very abundant chestnut hair, a rounded, well-shaped face, blue eyes very pretty and gentle, extraordinarily white skin, good nose, and no disagreeable feature. Still, there was nothing unusually attractive in the face: already she was a little wrinkled, and looked older than her age. Something made me ask at our first interview how old she was. ‘Monsieur,’ she said, ‘if I were to live till Sainte-Madeleine’s day I should be forty-six. On her day I came into the world, and I bear her name. I was christened Marie-Madeleine. But near to the day as we now are, I shall not live so long: I must end to-day, or at latest tomorrow, and it will be a favour to give me the one day. For this kindness I rely on your word.’ Anyone would have thought she was quite forty-eight. Though her face as a rule looked so gentle, whenever an unhappy thought crossed her mind she showed it by a contortion that frightened one at first, and from time to time I saw her face twitching with anger, scorn, or ill-will. I forgot to say that she was very little and thin. Such is,

roughly given, a description of her body and mind, which I very soon came to know, taking pains from the first to observe her, so as to lose no time in acting on what I discovered.”

As she was giving a first brief sketch of her life to her confessor, the marquise remembered that he had not yet said mass, and reminded him herself that it was time to do so, pointing out to him the chapel of the Conciergerie. She begged him to say a mass for her and in honour of Our Lady, so that she might gain the intercession of the Virgin at the throne of God. The Virgin she had always taken for her patron saint, and in the midst of her crimes and disorderly life had never ceased in her peculiar devotion. As she could not go with the priest, she promised to be with him at least in the spirit. He left her at half-past ten in the morning, and after four hours spent alone together, she had been induced by his piety and gentleness to make confessions that could not be wrung from her by the threats of the judges or the fear of the question. The holy and devout priest said his mass, praying the Lord’s help for confessor and penitent alike. After mass, as he returned, he learned from a librarian called Seney, at the porter’s lodge, as he was taking a glass of wine, that judgment had been given, and that Madame de Brinvilliers was to have her hand cut off. This severity—as a fact, there was a mitigation of the sentence—made him feel yet more interest in his penitent, and he hastened back to her side.

As soon as she saw the door open, she advanced calmly towards him, and asked if he had truly prayed for her; and when he assured her of this, she said, “Father, shall I have the consolation of receiving the viaticum before I die?”

“Madame,” replied the doctor, “if you are condemned to death, you must die without that sacrament, and I should be deceiving you if I let you hope for it. We have heard of the death of the constable of Saint-Paul without his obtaining this grace, in spite of all his entreaties. He was executed in sight of the towers of Notre-Dame. He offered his own prayer, as you may offer yours, if you suffer the same fate. But that is all: God, in His goodness, allows it to suffice.”

“But,” replied the marquise, “I believe M. de Cinq-Mars and M. de Thou communicated before their death.”

“I think not, madame,” said the doctor; “for it is not so said in the pages of Montresor or any other book that describes their execution.”

“But M. de Montmorency?” said she.

“But M. de Marillac?” replied the doctor.

In truth, if the favour had been granted to the first, it had been refused to the second, and the marquise was specially struck thereby, for M. de Marillac was of her own family, and she was very proud of the connection. No doubt she was unaware that M. de Rohan had received the sacrament at the midnight mass said for the salvation of his soul by Father Bourdaloue, for she said nothing about it, and hearing the doctor’s answer, only sighed.

“Besides,” he continued, “in recalling examples of the kind, madame, you must not build upon them, please: they are extraordinary cases, not the rule. You must expect no privilege; in your case the ordinary laws will be carried out, and your fate will not differ from the fate of other condemned persons. How would it have been had you lived and died before the reign of Charles VI? Up to the reign of this prince, the guilty died without confession, and it was only by this king’s orders that there was a relaxation of this severity. Besides, communion is not absolutely necessary to salvation, and one may communicate spiritually in reading the word, which is like the body; in uniting oneself with the Church, which is the mystical substance of Christ; and in suffering for Him and with Him, this last communion of agony that is your portion, madame, and is the most perfect communion of all. If you heartily detest your crime and love God with all your soul, if you have faith and charity, your death is a martyrdom and a new baptism.”

“Alas, my God,” replied the marquise, “after what you tell me, now that I know the executioner’s hand was necessary to my salvation, what should I have become had I died at Liege? Where should I have been now? And even if I had not been taken, and had lived another twenty years away from France, what would my death have been, since it needed the scaffold for my purification? Now I see all my wrong-doings, and the worst of all is the last—I mean my effrontery before the judges. But all is not yet lost, God be thanked; and as I have one last examination to go through, I desire to make a complete confession about my whole life. You, Sir, I entreat specially to ask pardon on my behalf of the first president; yesterday, when I was in the dock, he spoke very touching words to me, and I was deeply moved; but I would not show it, thinking that if I made no avowal the evidence would not be sufficiently strong to convict me. But it has happened otherwise, and I must have scandalised my judges by such an

exhibition of hardihood. Now I recognise my fault, and will repair it. Furthermore, sir, far from feeling angry with the president for the judgment he to-day passes against me, far from complaining of the prosecutor who has demanded it, I thank them both most humbly, for my salvation depends upon it.”

The doctor was about to answer, encouraging her, when the door opened: it was dinner coming in, for it was now half-past one. The marquise paused and watched what was brought in, as though she were playing hostess in her own country house. She made the woman and the two men who watched her sit down to the table, and turning to the doctor, said, “Sir, you will not wish me to stand on ceremony with you; these good people always dine with me to keep me company, and if you approve, we will do the same to-day. This is the last meal,” she added, addressing them, “that I shall take with you.” Then turning to the woman, “Poor Madame du Rus,” said she, “I have been a trouble to you for a long time; but have a little patience, and you will soon be rid of me. Tomorrow you can go to Dravet; you will have time, for in seven or eight hours from now there will be nothing more to do for me, and I shall be in the gentleman’s hands; you will not be allowed near me. After then, you can go away for good; for I don’t suppose you will have the heart to see me executed.” All this she said quite calmly, but not with pride. From time to time her people tried to hide their tears, and she made a sign of pitying them. Seeing that the dinner was on the table and nobody eating, she invited the doctor to take some soup, asking him to excuse the cabbage in it, which made it a common soup and unworthy of his acceptance. She herself took some soup and two eggs, begging her fellow-guests to excuse her for not serving them, pointing out that no knife or fork had been set in her place.

When the meal was almost half finished, she begged the doctor to let her drink his health. He replied by drinking hers, and she seemed to be quite charmed by, his condescension. “Tomorrow is a fast day,” said she, setting down her glass, “and although it will be a day of great fatigue for me, as I shall have to undergo the question as well as death, I intend to obey the orders of the Church and keep my fast.”

“Madame,” replied the doctor, “if you needed soup to keep you up, you would not have to feel any scruple, for it will be no self-indulgence, but a necessity, and the Church does not exact fasting in such a case.”

“Sir,” replied the marquise, “I will make no difficulty about it, if it is necessary

and if you order it; but it will not be needed, I think: if I have some soup this evening for supper, and some more made stronger than usual a little before midnight, it will be enough to last me through tomorrow, if I have two fresh eggs to take after the question.”

“In truth,” says the priest in the account we give here, “I was alarmed by this calm behaviour. I trembled when I heard her give orders to the concierge that the soup was to be made stronger than usual and that she was to have two cups before midnight. When dinner was over, she was given pen and ink, which she had already asked for, and told me that she had a letter to write before I took up my pen to put down what she wanted to dictate.” The letter, she explained, which was difficult to write, was to her husband. She would feel easier when it was written. For her husband she expressed so much affection, that the doctor, knowing what had passed, felt much surprised, and wishing to try her, said that the affection was not reciprocated, as her husband had abandoned her the whole time of the trial. The marquise interrupted him:

“My father, we must not judge things too quickly or merely by appearances. M. de Brinvilliers has always concerned himself with me, and has only failed in doing what it was impossible to do. Our interchange of letters never ceased while I was out of the kingdom; do not doubt but that he would have come to Paris as soon as he knew I was in prison, had the state of his affairs allowed him to come safely. But you must know that he is deeply in debt, and could not appear in Paris without being arrested. Do not suppose that he is without feeling for me.”

She then began to write, and when her letter was finished she handed it to the doctor, saying, “You, sir, are the lord and master of all my sentiments from now till I die; read this letter, and if you find anything that should be altered, tell me.”

This was the letter—

“When I am on the point of yielding up my soul to God, I wish to assure you of my affection for you, which I shall feel until the last moment of my life. I ask your pardon for all that I have done contrary to my duty. I am dying a shameful death, the work of my enemies: I pardon them with all my heart, and I pray you to do the same. I also beg you to forgive me for any ignominy that may attach to you herefrom; but consider that we are only here for a time, and that you may soon be forced to render an account to God of all your actions, and even your

idle words, just as I must do now. Be mindful of your worldly affairs, and of our children, and give them a good example; consult Madame Marillac and Madame Couste. Let as many prayers as possible be said for me, and believe that in my death I am still ever yours, D'AUBRAY."

The doctor read this letter carefully; then he told her that one of her phrases was not right—the one about her enemies. "For you have no other enemies," said he, "than your own crimes. Those whom you call your enemies are those who love the memory of your father and brothers, whom you ought to have loved more than they do."

"But those who have sought my death," she replied, "are my enemies, are they not, and is it not a Christian act to forgive them?"

"Madame," said the doctor, "they are not your enemies, but you are the enemy of the human race: nobody can think without horror of your crimes."

"And so, my father," she replied, "I feel no resentment towards them, and I desire to meet in Paradise those who have been chiefly instrumental in taking me and bringing me here."

"Madame," said the doctor, "what mean you by this? Such words are used by some when they desire people's death. Explain, I beg, what you mean."

"Heaven forbid," cried the marquise, "that you should understand me thus! Nay, may God grant them long prosperity in this world and infinite glory in the next! Dictate a new letter, and I will write just what you please."

When a fresh letter had been written, the marquise would attend to nothing but her confession, and begged the doctor to take the pen for her. "I have done so many wrong things," she said, "that if I only gave you a verbal confession, I should never be sure I had given a complete account."

Then they both knelt down to implore the grace of the Holy Spirit. They said a 'Veni Creator' and a 'Salve Regina', and the doctor then rose and seated himself at a table, while the marquise, still on her knees, began a Confiteor and made her whole confession. At nine o'clock, Father Chavigny, who had brought Doctor Pirot in the morning, came in again. The marquise seemed annoyed, but still put a good face upon it. "My father," said she, "I did not expect to see you so late; pray leave me a few minutes longer with the doctor." He retired. "Why has he

come?” asked the marquise.

“It is better for you not to be alone,” said the doctor.

“Then do you mean to leave me?” cried the marquise, apparently terrified.

“Madame, I will do as you wish,” he answered; “but you would be acting kindly if you could spare me for a few hours. I might go home, and Father Chavigny would stay with you.”

“Ah!” she cried, wringing her hands, “you promised you would not leave me till I am dead, and now you go away. Remember, I never saw you before this morning, but since then you have become more to me than any of my oldest friends.”

“Madame,” said the good doctor, “I will do all I can to please you. If I ask for a little rest, it is in order that I may resume my place with more vigour tomorrow, and render you better service than I otherwise could. If I take no rest, all I say or do must suffer. You count on the execution for tomorrow; I do not know if you are right; but if so, tomorrow will be your great and decisive day, and we shall both need all the strength we have. We have already been working for thirteen or fourteen hours for the good of your salvation; I am not a strong man, and I think you should realise, madame, that if you do not let me rest a little, I may not be able to stay with you to the end.”

“Sir,” said the marquise, “you have closed my mouth. Tomorrow is for me a far more important day than to-day, and I have been wrong: of course you must rest tonight. Let us just finish this one thing, and read over what we have written.”

It was done, and the doctor would have retired; but the supper came in, and the marquise would not let him go without taking something. She told the concierge to get a carriage and charge it to her. She took a cup of soup and two eggs, and a minute later the concierge came back to say the carriage was at the door. Then the marquise bade the doctor good-night, making him promise to pray for her and to be at the Conciergerie by six o’clock the next morning. This he promised her.

The day following, as he went into the tower, he found Father Chavigny, who had taken his place with the marquise, kneeling and praying with her. The priest was weeping, but she was calm, and received the doctor in just the same way as

she had let him go. When Father Chavigny saw him, he retired. The marquise begged Chavigny to pray for her, and wanted to make him promise to return, but that he would not do. She then turned to the doctor, saying, "Sir, you are punctual, and I cannot complain that you have broken your promise; but oh, how the time has dragged, and how long it has seemed before the clock struck six!"

"I am here, madame," said the doctor; "but first of all, how have you spent the night?"

"I have written three letters," said the marquise, "and, short as they were, they took a long time to write: one was to my sister, one to Madame de Marillac, and the third to M. Couste. I should have liked to show them to you, but Father Chavigny offered to take charge of them, and as he had approved of them, I could not venture to suggest any doubts. After the letters were written, we had some conversation and prayer; but when the father took up his breviary and I my rosary with the same intention, I felt so weary that I asked if I might lie on my bed; he said I might, and I had two good hours' sleep without dreams or any sort of uneasiness; when I woke we prayed together, and had just finished when you came back."

"Well, madame," said the doctor, "if you will, we can pray again; kneel down, and let us say the 'Veni Sancte Spiritus'."

She obeyed, and said the prayer with much unction and piety. The prayer finished, M. Pirot was about to take up the pen to go on with the confession, when she said, "Pray let me submit to you one question which is troubling me. Yesterday you gave me great hope of the mercy of God; but I cannot presume to hope I shall be saved without spending a long time in purgatory; my crime is far too atrocious to be pardoned on any other conditions; and when I have attained to a love of God far greater than I can feel here, I should not expect to be saved before my stains have been purified by fire, without suffering the penalty that my sins have deserved. But I have been told that the flames of purgatory where souls are burned for a time are just the same as the flames of hell where those who are damned burn through all eternity tell me, then, how can a soul awaking in purgatory at the moment of separation from this body be sure that she is not really in hell? how can she know that the flames that burn her and consume not will some day cease? For the torment she suffers is like that of the damned, and the flames wherewith she is burned are even as the flames of hell. This I would fain know, that at this awful moment I may feel no doubt, that I may know for

certain whether I dare hope or must despair.”

“Madame,” replied the doctor, “you are right, and God is too just to add the horror of uncertainty to His rightful punishments. At that moment when the soul quits her earthly body the judgment of God is passed upon her: she hears the sentence of pardon or of doom; she knows whether she is in the state of grace or of mortal sin; she sees whether she is to be plunged forever into hell, or if God sends her for a time to purgatory. This sentence, madame, you will learn at the very instant when the executioner’s axe strikes you; unless, indeed, the fire of charity has so purified you in this life that you may pass, without any purgatory at all, straight to the home of the blessed who surround the throne of the Lord, there to receive a recompense for earthly martyrdom.”

“Sir,” replied the marquise, “I have such faith in all you say that I feel I understand it all now, and I am satisfied.”

The doctor and the marquise then resumed the confession that was interrupted the night before. The marquise had during the night recollected certain articles that she wanted to add. So they continued, the doctor making her pause now and then in the narration of the heavier offences to recite an act of contrition.

After an hour and a half they came to tell her to go down. The registrar was waiting to read her the sentence. She listened very calmly, kneeling, only moving her head; then, with no alteration in her voice, she said, “In a moment: we will have one word more, the doctor and I, and then I am at your disposal.” She then continued to dictate the rest of her confession. When she reached the end, she begged him to offer a short prayer with her, that God might help her to appear with such becoming contrition before her judges as should atone for her scandalous effrontery. She then took up her cloak, a prayer-book which Father Chavigny had left with her, and followed the concierge, who led her to the torture chamber, where her sentence was to be read.

First, there was an examination which lasted five hours. The marquise told all she had promised to tell, denying that she had any accomplices, and affirming that she knew nothing of the composition of the poisons she had administered, and nothing of their antidotes. When this was done, and the judges saw that they could extract nothing further, they signed to the registrar to read the sentence. She stood to hear it: it was as follows:

“That by the finding of the court, d’Aubray de Brinvilliers is convicted of causing the death by poison of Maitre Dreux d’Aubray, her father, and of the two Maitres d’Aubray, her brothers, one a civil lieutenant, the other a councillor to the Parliament, also of attempting the life of Therese d’Aubray, her sister; in punishment whereof the court has condemned and does condemn the said d’Aubray de Brinvilliers to make the rightful atonement before the great gate of the church of Paris, whither she shall be conveyed in a tumbril, barefoot, a rope on her neck, holding in her hands a burning torch two pounds in weight; and there on her knees she shall say and declare that maliciously, with desire for revenge and seeking their goods, she did poison her father, cause to be poisoned her two brothers, and attempt the life of her sister, whereof she doth repent, asking pardon of God, of the king, and of the judges; and when this is done, she shall be conveyed and carried in the same tumbril to the Place de Greve of this town, there to have her head cut off on a scaffold to be set up for the purpose at that place; afterwards her body to be burnt and the ashes scattered; and first she is to be subjected to the question ordinary and extraordinary, that she may reveal the names of her accomplices. She is declared to be deprived of all successions from her said father, brothers, and sister, from the date of the several crimes; and all her goods are confiscated to the proper persons; and the sum of 4000 livres shall be paid out of her estate to the king, and 400 livres to the Church for prayers to be said on behalf of the poisoned persons; and all the costs shall be paid, including those of Amelin called Lachaussee. In Parliament, 16th July 1676.”

The marquise heard her sentence without showing any sign of fear or weakness. When it was finished, she said to the registrar, “Will you, sir, be so kind as to read it again? I had not expected the tumbril, and I was so much struck by that that I lost the thread of what followed.”

The registrar read the sentence again. From that moment she was the property of the executioner, who approached her. She knew him by the cord he held in his hands, and extended her own, looking him over coolly from head to foot without a word. The judges then filed out, disclosing as they did so the various apparatus of the question. The marquise firmly gazed upon the racks and ghastly rings, on which so many had been stretched crying and screaming. She noticed the three buckets of water

[Note: The torture with the water was thus administered. There were eight vessels, each containing 2 pints of water. Four of these were given for the

ordinary, and eight for the extraordinary. The executioner inserted a horn into the patient's mouth, and if he shut his teeth, forced him to open them by pinching his nose with the finger and thumb.]

prepared for her, and turned to the registrar—for she would not address the executioner—saying, with a smile, “No doubt all this water is to drown me in? I hope you don't suppose that a person of my size could swallow it all.” The executioner said not a word, but began taking off her cloak and all her other garments, until she was completely naked. He then led her up to the wall and made her sit on the rack of the ordinary question, two feet from the ground. There she was again asked to give the names of her accomplices, the composition of the poison and its antidote; but she made the same reply as to the doctor, only adding, “If you do not believe me, you have my body in your hands, and you can torture me.”

The registrar signed to the executioner to do his duty. He first fastened the feet of the marquise to two rings close together fixed to a board; then making her lie down, he fastened her wrists to two other rings in the wall, distant about three feet from each other. The head was at the same height as the feet, and the body, held up on a trestle, described a half-curve, as though lying over a wheel. To increase the stretch of the limbs, the man gave two turns to a crank, which pushed the feet, at first about twelve inches from the rings, to a distance of six inches. And here we may leave our narrative to reproduce the official report.

“On the small trestle, while she was being stretched, she said several times, ‘My God! you are killing me! And I only spoke the truth.’

“The water was given: she turned and twisted, saying, ‘You are killing me!’

“The water was again given.

“Admonished to name her accomplices, she said there was only one man, who had asked her for poison to get rid of his wife, but he was dead.

“The water was given; she moved a little, but would not say anything.

“Admonished to say why, if she had no accomplice, she had written from the Conciergerie to Penautier, begging him to do all he could for her, and to remember that his interests in this matter were the same as her own, she said that she never knew Penautier had had any understanding with Sainte-Croix about

the poisons, and it would be a lie to say otherwise; but when a paper was found in Sainte-Croix's box that concerned Penautier, she remembered how often she had seen him at the house, and thought it possible that the friendship might have included some business about the poisons; that, being in doubt on the point, she risked writing a letter as though she were sure, for by doing so she was not prejudicing her own case; for either Penautier was an accomplice of Sainte-Croix or he was not. If he was, he would suppose the marquise knew enough to accuse him, and would accordingly do his best to save her; if he was not, the letter was a letter wasted, and that was all.

“The water was again given; she turned and twisted much, but said that on this subject she had said all she possibly could; if she said anything else, it would be untrue.”

The ordinary question was at an end. The marquise had now taken half the quantity of water she had thought enough to drown her. The executioner paused before he proceeded to the extraordinary question. Instead of the trestle two feet and a half high on which she lay, they passed under her body a trestle of three and a half feet, which gave the body a greater arch, and as this was done without lengthening the ropes, her limbs were still further stretched, and the bonds, tightly straining at wrists and ankles, penetrated the flesh and made the blood run. The question began once more, interrupted by the demands of the registrar and the answers of the sufferer. Her cries seemed not even to be heard.

“On the large trestle, during the stretching, she said several times, ‘O God, you tear me to, pieces! Lord, pardon me! Lord, have mercy upon me!’

“Asked if she had nothing more to tell regarding her accomplices, she said they might kill her, but she would not tell a lie that would destroy her soul.

“The water was given, she moved about a little, but would not speak.

“Admonished that she should tell the composition of the poisons and their antidotes, she said that she did not know what was in them; the only thing she could recall was toads; that Sainte-Croix never revealed his secret to her; that she did not believe he made them himself, but had them prepared by Glazer; she seemed to remember that some of them contained nothing but rarefied arsenic; that as to an antidote, she knew of no other than milk; and Sainte-Croix had told her that if one had taken milk in the morning, and on the first onset of the poison

took another glassful, one would have nothing to fear.

“Admonished to say if she could add anything further, she said she had now told everything; and if they killed her, they could not extract anything more.

“More water was given; she writhed a little, and said she was dead, but nothing more.

“More water was given; she writhed more violently, but would say no more.

“Yet again water was given; writhing and twisting, she said, with a deep groan, ‘O my God, I am killed!’ but would speak no more.”

Then they tortured her no further: she was let down, untied, and placed before the fire in the usual manner. While there, close to the fire, lying on the mattress, she was visited by the good doctor, who, feeling he could not bear to witness the spectacle just described, had asked her leave to retire, that he might say a mass for her, that God might grant her patience and courage. It is plain that the good priest had not prayed in vain.

“Ah,” said the marquise, when she perceived him, “I have long been desiring to see you again, that you might comfort me. My torture has been very long and very painful, but this is the last time I shall have to treat with men; now all is with God for the future. See my hands, sir, and my feet, are they not torn and wounded? Have not my executioners smitten me in the same places where Christ was smitten?”

“And therefore, madame,” replied the priest, “these sufferings now are your happiness; each torture is one step nearer to heaven. As you say, you are now for God alone; all your thoughts and hopes must be fastened upon Him; we must pray to Him, like the penitent king, to give you a place among His elect; and since nought that is impure can pass thither, we must strive, madame, to purify you from all that might bar the way to heaven.”

The marquise rose with the doctor’s aid, for she could scarcely stand; tottering, she stepped forward between him and the executioner, who took charge of her immediately after the sentence was read, and was not allowed to leave her before it was completely carried out. They all three entered the chapel and went into the choir, where the doctor and the marquise knelt in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. At that moment several persons appeared in the nave, drawn by

curiosity. They could not be turned out, so the executioner, to save the marquise from being annoyed, shut the gate of the choir, and let the patient pass behind the altar. There she sat down in a chair, and the doctor on a seat opposite; then he first saw, by the light of the chapel window, how greatly changed she was. Her face, generally so pale, was inflamed, her eyes glowing and feverish, all her body involuntarily trembling. The doctor would have spoken a few words of consolation, but she did not attend. "Sir," she said, "do you know that my sentence is an ignominious one? Do you know there is fire in the sentence?"

The doctor gave no answer; but, thinking she needed something, bade the gaoler to bring her wine. A minute later he brought it in a cup, and the doctor handed it to the marquise, who moistened her lips and then gave it back. She then noticed that her neck was uncovered, and took out her handkerchief to cover it, asking the gaoler for a pin to fasten it with. When he was slow in finding a pin, looking on his person for it, she fancied that he feared she would choke herself, and shaking her head, said, with a smile, "You have nothing to fear now; and here is the doctor, who will pledge his word that I will do myself no mischief."

"Madame," said the gaoler, handing her the pin she wanted, "I beg your pardon for keeping you waiting. I swear I did not distrust you; if anyone distrusts you, it is not I."

Then kneeling before her, he begged to kiss her hand. She gave it, and asked him to pray to God for her. "Ah yes," he cried, sobbing, "with all my heart." She then fastened her dress as best she could with her hands tied, and when the gaoler had gone and she was alone with the doctor, said:—

"Did you not hear what I said, sir? I told you there was fire in my sentence. And though it is only after death that my body is to be burnt, it will always be a terrible disgrace on my memory. I am saved the pain of being burnt alive, and thus, perhaps, saved from a death of despair, but the shamefulness is the same, and it is that I think of."

"Madame," said the doctor, "it in no way affects your soul's salvation whether your body is cast into the fire and reduced to ashes or whether it is buried in the ground and eaten by worms, whether it is drawn on a hurdle and thrown upon a dungheap, or embalmed with Oriental perfumes and laid in a rich man's tomb. Whatever may be your end, your body will arise on the appointed day, and if Heaven so will, it will come forth from its ashes more glorious than a royal

corpse lying at this moment in a gilded casket. Obsequies, madame, are for those who survive, not for the dead.”

A sound was heard at the door of the choir. The doctor went to see what it was, and found a man who insisted on entering, all but fighting with the executioner. The doctor approached and asked what was the matter. The man was a saddler, from whom the marquise had bought a carriage before she left France; this she had partly paid for, but still owed him two hundred livres. He produced the note he had had from her, on which was a faithful record of the sums she had paid on account. The marquise at this point called out, not knowing what was going on, and the doctor and executioner went to her. “Have they come to fetch me already?” said she. “I am not well prepared just at this moment; but never mind, I am ready.”

The doctor reassured her, and told her what was going on. “The man is quite right,” she said to the executioner; “tell him I will give orders as far as I can about the money.” Then, seeing the executioner retiring, she said to the doctor, “Must I go now, sir? I wish they would give me a little more time; for though I am ready, as I told you, I am not really prepared. Forgive me, father; it is the question and the sentence that have upset me it is this fire burning in my eyes like hell-flames.

“Had they left me with you all this time, there would now be better hope of my salvation.”

“Madame,” said the doctor, “you will probably have all the time before nightfall to compose yourself and think what remains for you to do.”

“Ah, sir,” she replied, with a smile, “do not think they will show so much consideration for a poor wretch condemned to be burnt. That does not depend on ourselves; but as soon as everything is ready, they will let us know, and we must start.”

“Madame,” said the doctor, “I am certain that they will give you the time you need.”

“No, no,” she replied abruptly and feverishly, “no, I will not keep them waiting. As soon as the tumbril is at this door, they have only to tell me, and I go down.”

“Madame,” said he, “I would not hold you back if I found you prepared to stand

before the face of God, for in your situation it is right to ask for no time, and to go when the moment is come; but not everyone is so ready as Christ was, who rose from prayer and awaked His disciples that He might leave the garden and go out to meet His enemies. You at this moment are weak, and if they come for you just now I should resist your departure.”

“Be calm; the time is not yet come,” said the executioner, who had heard this talk. He knew his statement must be believed, and wished as far as possible to reassure the marquise. “There is no hurry, and we cannot start for another two of three hours.”

This assurance calmed the marquise somewhat, and she thanked the man. Then turning to the doctor, she said, “Here is a rosary that I would rather should not fall into this person’s hands. Not that he could not make good use of it; for, in spite of their trade, I fancy that these people are Christians like ourselves. But I should prefer to leave this to somebody else.”

“Madame,” said the doctor, “if you will tell me your wishes in this matter, I will see that they are carried out.”

“Alas!” she said, “there is no one but my sister; and I fear lest she, remembering my crime towards her, may be too horrified to touch anything that belonged to me. If she did not mind, it would be a great comfort to me to think she would wear it after my death, and that the sight of it would remind her to pray for me; but after what has passed, the rosary could hardly fail to revive an odious recollection. My God, my God! I am desperately wicked; can it be that you will pardon me?”

“Madame,” replied the doctor, “I think you are mistaken about Mlle, d’Aubray. You may see by her letter what are her feelings towards you, and you must pray with this rosary up to the very end. Let not your prayers be interrupted or distracted, for no guilty penitent must cease from prayer; and I, madame, will engage to deliver the rosary where it will be gladly received.”

And the marquise, who had been constantly distracted since the morning, was now, thanks to the patient goodness of the doctor, able to return with her former fervour to her prayers. She prayed till seven o’clock. As the clock struck, the executioner without a word came and stood before her; she saw that her moment had come, and said to the doctor, grasping his arm, “A little longer; just a few

moments, I entreat.”

“Madame,” said the doctor, rising, “we will now adore the divine blood of the Sacrament, praying that you may be thus cleansed from all soil and sin that may be still in your heart. Thus shall you gain the respite you desire.”

The executioner then tied tight the cords round her hands that he had let loose before, and she advanced pretty firmly and knelt before the altar, between the doctor and the chaplain. The latter was in his surplice, and chanted a ‘Veni Creator, Salve Regina, and Tantum ergo’. These prayers over, he pronounced the blessing of the Holy Sacrament, while the marquise knelt with her face upon the ground. The executioner then went forward to get ready a shirt, and she made her exit from the chapel, supported on the left by the doctor’s arm, on the right by the executioner’s assistant. Thus proceeding, she first felt embarrassment and confusion. Ten or twelve people were waiting outside, and as she suddenly confronted them, she made a step backward, and with her hands, bound though they were, pulled the headdress down to cover half her face. She passed through a small door, which was closed behind her, and then found herself between the two doors alone, with the doctor and the executioner’s man. Here the rosary, in consequence of her violent movement to cover her face, came undone, and several beads fell on the floor. She went on, however, without observing this; but the doctor stopped her, and he and the man stooped down and picked up all the beads, which they put into her hand. Thanking them humbly for this attention, she said to the man, “Sir, I know I have now no worldly possessions, that all I have upon me belongs to you, and I may not give anything away without your consent; but I ask you kindly to allow me to give this chaplet to the doctor before I die: you will not be much the loser, for it is of no value, and I am giving it to him for my sister. Kindly let me do this.”

“Madame,” said the man, “it is the custom for us to get all the property of the condemned; but you are mistress of all you have, and if the thing were of the very greatest value you might dispose of it as you pleased.”

The doctor, whose arm she held, felt her shiver at this gallantry, which for her, with her natural haughty disposition, must have been the worst humiliation imaginable; but the movement was restrained, and her face gave no sign. She now came to the porch of the Conciergerie, between the court and the first door, and there she was made to sit down, so as to be put into the right condition for making the ‘amende honorable’. Each step brought her nearer to the scaffold,

and so did each incident cause her more uneasiness. Now she turned round desperately, and perceived the executioner holding a shirt in his hand. The door of the vestibule opened, and about fifty people came in, among them the Countess of Soissons, Madame du Refuge, *Mlle. de Scudery*, *M. de Roquelaure*, and the Abbe de Chimay. At the sight the marquise reddened with shame, and turning to the doctor, said, "Is this man to strip me again, as he did in the question chamber? All these preparations are very cruel; and, in spite of myself, they divert my thoughts, from God."

Low as her voice was, the executioner heard, and reassured her, saying that they would take nothing off, only putting the shirt over her other clothes.

He then approached, and the marquise, unable to speak to the doctor with a man on each side of her, showed him by her looks how deeply she felt the ignominy of her situation. Then, when the shirt had been put on, for which operation her hands had to be untied, the man raised the headdress which she had pulled down, and tied it round her neck, then fastened her hands together with one rope and put another round her waist, and yet another round her neck; then, kneeling before her, he took off her shoes and stockings. Then she stretched out her hands to the doctor.

"Oh, sir," she cried, "in God's name, you see what they have done to me! Come and comfort me."

The doctor came at once, supporting her head upon his breast, trying to comfort her; but she, in a tone of bitter lamentation, gazing at the crowd, who devoured her with all their eyes, cried, "Oh, sir, is not this a strange, barbarous curiosity?"

"Madame," said he, the tears in his eyes, "do not look at these eager people from the point of view of their curiosity and barbarity, though that is real enough, but consider it part of the humiliation sent by God for the expiation of your crimes. God, who was innocent, was subject to very different opprobrium, and yet suffered all with joy; for, as Tertullian observes, He was a victim fattened on the joys of suffering alone."

As the doctor spoke these words, the executioner placed in the marquise's hands the lighted torch which she was to carry to Notre-Dame, there to make the 'amende honorable', and as it was too heavy, weighing two pounds, the doctor supported it with his right hand, while the registrar read her sentence aloud a

second time. The doctor did all in his power to prevent her from hearing this by speaking unceasingly of God. Still she grew frightfully pale at the words, "When this is done, she shall be conveyed on a tumbril, barefoot, a cord round her neck, holding in her hands a burning torch two pounds in weight," and the doctor could feel no doubt that in spite of his efforts she had heard. It became still worse when she reached the threshold of the vestibule and saw the great crowd waiting in the court. Then her face worked convulsively, and crouching down, as though she would bury her feet in the earth, she addressed the doctor in words both plaintive and wild: "Is it possible that, after what is now happening, M. de Brinvilliers can endure to go on living?"

"Madame," said the doctor, "when our Lord was about to leave His disciples, He did not ask God to remove them from this earth, but to preserve them from all sin. 'My Father,' He said, 'I ask not that You take them from the world, but keep them safe from evil.' If, madame, you pray for M. de Brinvilliers, let it be only that he may be kept in grace, if he has it, and may attain to it if he has it not."

But the words were useless: at that moment the humiliation was too great and too public; her face contracted, her eyebrows knit, flames darted from her eyes, her mouth was all twisted. Her whole appearance was horrible; the devil was once more in possession. During this paroxysm, which lasted nearly a quarter of an hour, Lebrun, who stood near, got such a vivid impression of her face that the following night he could not sleep, and with the sight of it ever before his eyes made the fine drawing which—is now in the Louvre, giving to the figure the head of a tiger, in order to show that the principal features were the same, and the whole resemblance very striking.

The delay in progress was caused by the immense crowd blocking the court, only pushed aside by archers on horseback, who separated the people. The marquise now went out, and the doctor, lest the sight of the people should completely distract her, put a crucifix in her hand, bidding her fix her gaze upon it. This advice she followed till they gained the gate into the street where the tumbril was waiting; then she lifted her eyes to see the shameful object. It was one of the smallest of carts, still splashed with mud and marked by the stones it had carried, with no seat, only a little straw at the bottom. It was drawn by a wretched horse, well matching the disgraceful conveyance.

The executioner bade her get in first, which she did very rapidly, as if to escape observation. There she crouched like a wild beast, in the left corner, on the straw,

riding backwards. The doctor sat beside her on the right. Then the executioner got in, shutting the door behind him, and sat opposite her, stretching his legs between the doctor's. His man, whose business it was to guide the horse, sat on the front, back to back with the doctor and the marquise, his feet stuck out on the shafts. Thus it is easy to understand how Madame de Sevigne, who was on the Pont Notre-Dame, could see nothing but the headdress of the marquise as she was driven to Notre-Dame.

The cortege had only gone a few steps, when the face of the marquise, for a time a little calmer, was again convulsed. From her eyes, fixed constantly on the crucifix, there darted a flaming glance, then came a troubled and frenzied look which terrified the doctor. He knew she must have been struck by something she saw, and, wishing to calm her, asked what it was.

"Nothing, nothing," she replied quickly, looking towards him; "it was nothing."

"But, madame," said he, "you cannot give the lie to your own eyes; and a minute ago I saw a fire very different from the fire of love, which only some displeasing sight can have provoked. What may this be? Tell me, pray; for you promised to tell me of any sort of temptation that might assail you."

"Sir," she said, "I will do so, but it is nothing." Then, looking towards the executioner, who, as we know, sat facing the doctor, she said, "Put me in front of you, please; hide that man from me." And she stretched out her hands towards a man who was following the tumbril on horseback, and so dropped the torch, which the doctor took, and the crucifix, which fell on the floor. The executioner looked back, and then turned sideways as she wished, nodding and saying, "Oh yes, I understand." The doctor pressed to know what it meant, and she said, "It is nothing worth telling you, and it is a weakness in me not to be able to bear the sight of a man who has illused me. The man who touched the back of the tumbril is Desgrais, who arrested me at Liege, and treated me so badly all along the road. When I saw him, I could not control myself, as you noticed."

"Madame," said the doctor, "I have heard of him, and you yourself spoke of him in confession; but the man was sent to arrest you, and was in a responsible position, so that he had to guard you closely and rigorously; even if he had been more severe, he would only have been carrying out his orders. Jesus Christ, madame, could but have regarded His executioners as ministers of iniquity, servants of injustice, who added of their own accord every indignity they could

think of; yet all along the way He looked on them with patience and more than patience, and in His death He prayed for them.”

In the heart of the marquise a hard struggle was passing, and this was reflected on her face; but it was only for a moment, and after a last convulsive shudder she was again calm and serene; then she said:—

“Sir, you are right, and I am very wrong to feel such a fancy as this: may God forgive me; and pray remember this fault on the scaffold, when you give me the absolution you promise, that this too may be pardoned me.” Then she turned to the executioner and said, “Please sit where you were before, that I may see M. Desgrais.” The man hesitated, but on a sign from the doctor obeyed. The marquise looked fully at Desgrais for some time, praying for him; then, fixing her eyes on the crucifix, began to pray for herself: this incident occurred in front of the church of Sainte-Genevieve des Ardents.

But, slowly as it moved, the tumbril steadily advanced, and at last reached the place of Notre-Dame. The archers drove back the crowding people, and the tumbril went up to the steps, and there stopped. The executioner got down, removed the board at the back, held out his arms to the marquise, and set her down on the pavement. The doctor then got down, his legs quite numb from the cramped position he had been in since they left the Conciergerie. He mounted the church steps and stood behind the marquise, who herself stood on the square, with the registrar on her right, the executioner on her left, and a great crowd of people behind her, inside the church, all the doors being thrown open. She was made to kneel, and in her hands was placed the lighted torch, which up to that time the doctor had helped to carry. Then the registrar read the ‘amende honorable’ from a written paper, and she began to say it after him, but in so low a voice that the executioner said loudly, “Speak out as he does; repeat every word. Louder, louder!” Then she raised her voice, and loudly and firmly recited the following apology.

“I confess that, wickedly and for revenge, I poisoned my father and my brothers, and attempted to poison my sister, to obtain possession of their goods, and I ask pardon of God, of the king, and of my country’s laws.”

The ‘amende honorable’ over, the executioner again carried her to the tumbril, not giving her the torch any more: the doctor sat beside her: all was just as before, and the tumbril went on towards La Greve. From that moment, until she

arrived at the scaffold, she never took her eyes off the crucifix, which the doctor held before her the whole time, exhorting her with religious words, trying to divert her attention from the terrible noise which the people made around the car, a murmur mingled with curses.

When they reached the Place de Greve, the tumbril stopped at a little distance from the scaffold. Then the registrar M. Drouet, came up on horseback, and, addressing the marquise, said, "Madame, have you nothing more to say? If you wish to make any declaration, the twelve commissaries are here at hand, ready to receive it."

"You see, madame," said the doctor, "we are now at the end of our journey, and, thank God, you have not lost your power of endurance on the road; do not destroy the effect of all you have suffered and all you have yet to suffer by concealing what you know, if perchance you do know more than you have hitherto said."

"I have told all I know," said the marquise, "and there is no more I can say."

"Repeat these words in a loud voice," said the doctor, "so that everybody may hear."

Then in her loudest voice the marquise repeated—

"I have told all I know, and there is no more I can say."

After this declaration, they were going to drive the tumbril nearer to the scaffold, but the crowd was so dense that the assistant could not force a way through, though he struck out on every side with his whip. So they had to stop a few paces short. The executioner had already got down, and was adjusting the ladder. In this terrible moment of waiting, the marquise looked calmly and gratefully at the doctor, and when she felt that the tumbril had stopped, said, "Sir, it is not here we part: you promised not to leave me till my head is cut off. I trust you will keep your word."

"To be sure I will," the doctor replied; "we shall not be separated before the moment of your death: be not troubled about that, for I will never forsake you."

"I looked for this kindness," she said, "and your promise was too solemn for you to think for one moment of failing me. Please be on the scaffold and be near me.

And now, sir, I would anticipate the final farewell,—for all the things I shall have to do on the scaffold may distract me,—so let me thank you here. If I am prepared to suffer the sentence of my earthly judge, and to hear that of my heavenly judge, I owe it to your care for me, and I am deeply grateful. I can only ask your forgiveness for the trouble I have given you.” Tears choked the doctor’s speech, and he could not reply. “Do you not forgive me?” she repeated. At her words, the doctor tried to reassure her; but feeling that if he opened his mouth he must needs break into sobs, he still kept silent. The marquise appealed to him a third time. “I entreat you, sir, forgive me; and do not regret the time you have passed with me. You will say a *De Profundis* at the moment of my death, and a mass for me tomorrow: will you not promise?”

“Yes, madame,” said the doctor in a choking voice; “yes, yes, be calm, and I will do all you bid me.”

The executioner hereupon removed the board, and helped the marquise out of the tumbril; and as they advanced the few steps towards the scaffold, and all eyes were upon them, the doctor could hide his tears for a moment without being observed. As he was drying his eyes, the assistant gave him his hand to help him down. Meanwhile the marquise was mounting the ladder with the executioner, and when they reached the platform he told her to kneel down in front of a block which lay across it. Then the doctor, who had mounted with a step less firm than hers, came and knelt beside her, but turned in the other direction, so that he might whisper in her ear—that is, the marquise faced the river, and the doctor faced the Hotel de Ville. Scarcely had they taken their place thus when the man took down her hair and began cutting it at the back and at the sides, making her turn her head this way and that, at times rather roughly; but though this ghastly toilet lasted almost half an hour, she made no complaint, nor gave any sign of pain but her silent tears. When her hair was cut, he tore open the top of the shirt, so as to uncover the shoulders, and finally bandaged her eyes, and lifting her face by the chin, ordered her to hold her head erect. She obeyed, unresisting, all the time listening to the doctor’s words and repeating them from time to time, when they seemed suitable to her own condition. Meanwhile, at the back of the scaffold, on which the stake was placed, stood the executioner, glancing now and again at the folds of his cloak, where there showed the hilt of a long, straight sabre, which he had carefully concealed for fear Madame de Brinvilliers might see it when she mounted the scaffold. When the doctor, having pronounced absolution, turned his head and saw that the man was not yet armed, he uttered these prayers, which she repeated after him: “Jesus, Son of David and Mary,

have mercy upon me; Mary, daughter of David and Mother of Jesus, pray for me; my God, I abandon my body, which is but dust, that men may burn it and do with it what they please, in the firm faith that it shall one day arise and be reunited with my soul. I trouble not concerning my body; grant, O God, that I yield up to Thee my soul, that it may enter into Thy rest; receive it into Thy bosom; that it may dwell once more there, whence it first descended; from Thee it came, to Thee returns; Thou art the source and the beginning; be thou, O God, the centre and the end!”

The marquise had said these words when suddenly the doctor heard a dull stroke like the sound of a chopper chopping meat upon a block: at that moment she ceased to speak. The blade had sped so quickly that the doctor had not even seen a flash. He stopped, his hair bristling, his brow bathed in sweat; for, not seeing the head fall, he supposed that the executioner had missed the mark and must needs start afresh. But his fear was short-lived, for almost at the same moment the head inclined to the left, slid on to the shoulder, and thence backward, while the body fell forward on the crossway block, supported so that the spectators could see the neck cut open and bleeding. Immediately, in fulfilment of his promise, the doctor said a *De Profundis*.

When the prayer was done and the doctor raised his head, he saw before him the executioner wiping his face. “Well, sir,” said he, “was not that a good stroke? I always put up a prayer on these occasions, and God has always assisted me; but I have been anxious for several days about this lady. I had six masses said, and I felt strengthened in hand and heart.” He then pulled out a bottle from under his cloak, and drank a dram; and taking the body under one arm, all dressed as it was, and the head in his other hand, the eyes still bandaged, he threw both upon the faggots, which his assistant lighted.

“The next day,” says Madame de Sevigne, “people were looking for the charred bones of Madame de Brinvilliers, because they said she was a saint.”

In 1814, M. d’Offemont, father of the present occupier of the castle where the Marquise de Brinvilliers poisoned her father, frightened at the approach of all the allied troops, contrived in one of the towers several hiding-places, where he shut up his silver and such other valuables as were to be found in this lonely country in the midst of the forest of Laigue. The foreign troops were passing backwards and forwards at Offemont, and after a three months’ occupation retired to the farther side of the frontier.

Then the owners ventured to take out the various things that had been hidden; and tapping the walls, to make sure nothing had been overlooked, they detected a hollow sound that indicated the presence of some unsuspected cavity. With picks and bars they broke the wall open, and when several stones had come out they found a large closet like a laboratory, containing furnaces, chemical instruments, phials hermetically sealed full of an unknown liquid, and four packets of powders of different colours. Unluckily, the people who made these discoveries thought them of too much or too little importance; and instead of submitting the ingredients to the tests of modern science, they made away with them all, frightened at their probably deadly nature.

Thus was lost this great opportunity—probably the last—for finding and analysing the substances which composed the poisons of Sainte-Croix and Madame de Brinvilliers.

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From CELEBRATED CRIMES, VOL. 8, by Alexander Dumas, Pere

CELEBRATED CRIMES VOLUME 8 (of 8) Part 2

By Alexander Dumas, Pere

VANINKA

About the end of the reign of the Emperor Paul I—that is to say, towards the middle of the first year of the nineteenth century—just as four o’clock in the afternoon was sounding from the church of St. Peter and St. Paul, whose gilded vane overlooks the ramparts of the fortress, a crowd, composed of all sorts and conditions of people, began to gather in front of a house which belonged to General Count Tchermayloff, formerly military governor of a fair-sized town in the government of Pultava. The first spectators had been attracted by the preparations which they saw had been made in the middle of the courtyard for

administering torture with the knout. One of the general's serfs, he who acted as barber, was to be the victim.

Although this kind of punishment was a common enough sight in St. Petersburg, it nevertheless attracted all passers-by when it was publicly administered. This was the occurrence which had caused a crowd, as just mentioned, before General Tchermayloff's house.

The spectators, even had they been in a hurry, would have had no cause to complain of being kept waiting, for at half-past four a young man of about five-and-twenty, in the handsome uniform of an aide-de-camp, his breast covered with decorations, appeared on the steps at the farther end of the courtyard in front of the house. These steps faced the large gateway, and led to the general's apartments.

Arrived on the steps, the young aide-de-camp stopped a moment and fixed his eyes on a window, the closely drawn curtains of which did not allow him the least chance of satisfying his curiosity, whatever may have been its cause. Seeing that it was useless and that he was only wasting time in gazing in that direction, he made a sign to a bearded man who was standing near a door which led to the servants' quarters. The door was immediately opened, and the culprit was seen advancing in the middle of a body of serfs and followed by the executioner. The serfs were forced to attend the spectacle, that it might serve as an example to them. The culprit was the general's barber, as we have said, and the executioner was merely the coachman, who, being used to the handling of a whip, was raised or degraded, which you will, to the office of executioner every time punishment with the knout was ordered. This duty did not deprive him of either the esteem or even the friendship of his comrades, for they well knew that it was his arm alone that punished them and that his heart was not in his work. As Ivan's arm as well as the rest of his body was the property of the general, and the latter could do as he pleased with it, no one was astonished that it should be used for this purpose. More than that, correction administered by Ivan was nearly always gentler than that meted out by another; for it often happened that Ivan, who was a good-natured fellow, juggled away one or two strokes of the knout in a dozen, or if he were forced by those assisting at the punishment to keep a strict calculation, he manoeuvred so that the tip of the lash struck the deal plank on which the culprit was lying, thus taking much of the sting out of the stroke. Accordingly, when it was Ivan's turn to be stretched upon the fatal plank and to receive the correction he was in the habit of administering, on his own account, those who

momentarily played his part as executioner adopted the same expedients, remembering only the strokes spared and not the strokes received. This exchange of mutual benefits, therefore, was productive of an excellent understanding between Ivan and his comrades, which was never so firmly knit as at the moment when a fresh execution was about to take place. It is true that the first hour after the punishment was generally so full of suffering that the knouted was sometimes unjust to the knouter, but this feeling seldom out-lasting the evening, and it was rare when it held out after the first glass of spirits that the operator drank to the health of his patient.

The serf upon whom Ivan was about to exercise his dexterity was a man of five or six-and-thirty, red of hair and beard, a little above average height. His Greek origin might be traced in his countenance, which even in its expression of terror had preserved its habitual characteristics of craft and cunning.

When he arrived at the spot where the punishment was to take place, the culprit stopped and looked up at the window which had already claimed the young aide-de-camp's attention; it still remained shut. With a glance round the throng which obstructed the entrance leading to the street, he ended by gazing, with a horror-stricken shudder upon the plank on which he was to be stretched. The shudder did not escape his friend Ivan, who, approaching to remove the striped shirt that covered his shoulders, took the opportunity to whisper under his breath—

“Come, Gregory, take courage!”

“You remember your promise?” replied the culprit, with an indefinable expression of entreaty.

“Not for the first lashes, Gregory; do not count on that, for during the first strokes the aide-de-camp will be watching; but among the later ones be assured I will find means of cheating him of some of them.”

“Beyond everything you will take care of the tip of the lash?”

“I will do my best, Gregory, I will do my best. Do you not know that I will?”

“Alas! yes,” replied Gregory.

“Now, then!” said the aide-de-camp.

“We are ready, noble sir,” replied Ivan.

“Wait, wait one moment, your high origin,” cried poor Gregory, addressing the young captain as though he had been a colonel, “Vache Vousso Korodie,” in order to flatter him. “I believe that the lady Vaninka’s window is about to open!”

The young captain glanced eagerly towards the spot which had already several times claimed his attention, but not a fold of the silken curtains, which could be seen through the panes of the window, had moved.

“You are mistaken, you rascal,” said the aide-de-camp, unwillingly removing his eyes from the window, as though he also had hoped to see it open, “you are mistaken; and besides, what has your noble mistress to do with all this?”

“Pardon, your excellency,” continued Gregory, gratifying the aide-de-camp with yet higher rank,—“pardon, but it is through her orders I am about to suffer. Perhaps she might have pity upon a wretched servant!”

“Enough, enough; let us proceed,” said the captain in an odd voice, as though he regretted as well as the culprit that Vaninka had not shown mercy.

“Immediately, immediately, noble sir,” said Ivan; then turning to Gregory, he continued, “Come, comrade; the time has come.”

Gregory sighed heavily, threw a last look up at the window, and seeing that everything remained the same there, he mustered up resolution enough to lie down on the fatal plank. At the same time two other serfs, chosen by Ivan for assistants, took him by the arms and attached his wrists to two stakes, one at either side of him, so that it appeared as though he were stretched on a cross. Then they clamped his neck into an iron collar, and seeing that all was in readiness and that no sign favourable to the culprit had been made from the still closely shut window, the young aide-de-camp beckoned with his hand, saying, “Now, then, begin!”

“Patience, my lord, patience,” said Ivan, still delaying the whipping, in the hope that some sign might yet be made from the inexorable window. “I have a knot in my knout, and if I leave it Gregory will have good right to complain.”

The instrument with which the executioner was busying himself, and which is perhaps unknown to our readers, was a species of whip, with a handle about two

feet long. A plaited leather thong, about four feet long and two inches broad, was attached to this handle, this thong terminating in an iron or copper ring, and to this another band of leather was fastened, two feet long, and at the beginning about one and a half inches thick: this gradually became thinner, till it ended in a point. The thong was steeped in milk and then dried in the sun, and on account of this method of preparation its edge became as keen and cutting as a knife; further, the thong was generally changed at every sixth stroke, because contact with blood softened it.

However unwillingly and clumsily Ivan set about untying the knot, it had to come undone at last. Besides, the bystanders were beginning to grumble, and their muttering disturbed the reverie into which the young aide-de-camp had fallen. He raised his head, which had been sunk on his breast, and cast a last look towards the window; then with a peremptory sign; and in a voice which admitted of no delay, he ordered the execution to proceed.

Nothing could put it off any longer: Ivan was obliged to obey, and he did not attempt to find any new pretext for delay. He drew back two paces, and with a spring he returned to his place, and standing on tiptoe, he whirled the knout above his head, and then letting it suddenly fall, he struck Gregory with such dexterity that the lash wrapped itself thrice round his victim's body, encircling him like a serpent, but the tip of the thong struck the plank upon which Gregory was lying. Nevertheless, in spite of this precaution, Gregory uttered a loud shriek, and Ivan counted "One."

At the shriek, the young aide-de-camp again turned towards the window; but it was still shut, and mechanically his eyes went back to the culprit, and he repeated the word "One."

The knout had traced three blue furrows on Gregory's shoulders. Ivan took another spring, and with the same skill as before he again enveloped the culprit's body with the hissing thong, ever taking care that the tip of it should not touch him. Gregory uttered another shriek, and Ivan counted "Two." The blood now began to colour the skin.

At the third stroke several drops of blood appeared; at the fourth the blood spurted out; at the fifth some drops spattered the young officer's face; he drew back, and wiped them away with his handkerchief. Ivan profited by his distraction, and counted seven instead of six: the captain took no notice. At the

ninth stroke Ivan stopped to change the lash, and in the hope that a second fraud might pass off as luckily as the first, he counted eleven instead of ten.

At that moment a window opposite to Vaninka's opened, and a man about forty-five or fifty in general's uniform appeared. He called out in a careless tone, "Enough, that will do," and closed the window again.

Immediately on this apparition the young aide-de-camp had turned towards his general, saluting, and during the few seconds that the general was present he remained motionless. When the window had been shut again, he repeated the general's words, so that the raised whip fell without touching the culprit.

"Thank his excellency, Gregory," said Ivan, rolling the knout's lash round his hand, "for having spared you two strokes;" and he added, bending down to liberate Gregory's hand, "these two with the two I was able to miss out make a total of eight strokes instead of twelve. Come, now, you others, untie his other hand."

But poor Gregory was in no state to thank anybody; nearly swooning with pain, he could scarcely stand.

Two moujiks took him by the arms and led him towards the serfs' quarters, followed by Ivan. Having reached the door, however, Gregory stopped, turned his head, and seeing the aide-de-camp gazing pitifully at him, "Oh sir," he cried, "please thank his excellency the general for me. As for the lady Vaninka," he added in a low tone, "I will certainly thank her myself."

"What are you muttering between your teeth?" cried the young officer, with an angry movement; for he thought he had detected a threatening tone in Gregory's voice.

"Nothing, sir, nothing," said Ivan. "The poor fellow is merely thanking you, Mr. Foedor, for the trouble you have taken in being present at his punishment, and he says that he has been much honoured, that is all."

"That is right," said the young man, suspecting that Ivan had somewhat altered the original remarks, but evidently not wishing to be better informed. "If Gregory wishes to spare me this trouble another time, let him drink less vodka; or else, if he must get drunk, let him at least remember to be more respectful."

Ivan bowed low and followed his comrades, Foedor entered the house again, and the crowd dispersed, much dissatisfied that Ivan's trickery and the general's generosity had deprived them of four strokes of the knout—exactly a third of the punishment.

Now that we have introduced our readers to some of the characters in this history, we must make them better acquainted with those who have made their appearance, and must introduce those who are still behind the curtain.

General Count Tchermayloff, as we have said, after having been governor of one of the most important towns in the environs of Pultava, had been recalled to St. Petersburg by the Emperor Paul, who honoured him with his particular friendship. The general was a widower, with one daughter, who had inherited her mother's fortune, beauty, and pride. Vaninka's mother claimed descent from one of the chieftains of the Tartar race, who had invaded Russia, under the leadership of D'Gengis, in the thirteenth century. Vaninka's naturally haughty disposition had been fostered by the education she had received. His wife being dead, and not having time to look after his daughter's education himself, General Tchermayloff had procured an English governess for her. This lady, instead of suppressing her pupil's scornful propensities, had encouraged them, by filling her head with those aristocratic ideas which have made the English aristocracy the proudest in the world. Amongst the different studies to which Vaninka devoted herself, there was one in which she was specially interested, and that one was, if one may so call it, the science of her own rank. She knew exactly the relative degree of nobility and power of all the Russian noble families—those that were a grade above her own, and those of whom she took precedence. She could give each person the title which belonged to their respective rank, no easy thing to do in Russia, and she had the greatest contempt for all those who were below the rank of excellency. As for serfs and slaves, for her they did not exist: they were mere bearded animals, far below her horse or her dog in the sentiments which they inspired in her; and she would not for one instant have weighed the life of a serf against either of those interesting animals.

Like all the women of distinction in her nation, Vaninka was a good musician, and spoke French, Italian, German, and English equally well.

Her features had developed in harmony with her character. Vaninka was beautiful, but her beauty was perhaps a little too decided. Her large black eyes, straight nose, and lips curling scornfully at the corners, impressed those who saw

her for the first time somewhat unpleasantly. This impression soon wore off with her superiors and equals, to whom she became merely an ordinary charming woman, whilst to subalterns and such like she remained haughty and inaccessible as a goddess. At seventeen Vaninka's education was finished, and her governess who had suffered in health through the severe climate of St. Petersburg, requested permission to leave. This desire was granted with the ostentatious recognition of which the Russian nobility are the last representatives in Europe. Thus Vaninka was left alone, with nothing but her father's blind adoration to direct her. She was his only daughter, as we have mentioned, and he thought her absolutely perfect.

Things were in this state in the-general's house when he received a letter, written on the deathbed of one of the friends of his youth. Count Romayloff had been exiled to his estates, as a result of some quarrel with Potemkin, and his career had been spoilt. Not being able to recover his forfeited position, he had settled down about four hundred leagues from St. Petersburg; broken-hearted, distressed probably less on account of his own exile and misfortune than of the prospects of his only son, Foedor. The count feeling that he was leaving this son alone and friendless in the world, commended the young man, in the name of their early friendship, to the general, hoping that, owing to his being a favourite with Paul I, he would be able to procure a lieutenancy in a regiment for him. The general immediately replied to the count that his son should find a second father in himself; but when this comforting message arrived, Romayloff was no more, and Foedor himself received the letter and carried it back with him to the general, when he went to tell him of his loss and to claim the promised protection. So great was the general's despatch, that Paul I, at his request, granted the young man a sublieutenancy in the Semonowskoi regiment, so that Foedor entered on his duties the very next day after his arrival in St. Petersburg.

Although the young man had only passed through the general's house on his way to the barracks, which were situated in the Litenoi quarter, he had remained there long enough for him to have seen Vaninka, and she had produced a great impression upon him. Foedor had arrived with his heart full of primitive and noble feelings; his gratitude to his protector, who had opened a career for him, was profound, and extended to all his family. These feelings caused him perhaps to have an exaggerated idea of the beauty of the young girl who was presented to him as a sister, and who, in spite of this title, received him with the frigidity and hauteur of a queen. Nevertheless, her appearance, in spite of her cool and freezing manner, had left a lasting impression upon the young man's heart, and

his arrival in St. Petersburg had been marked by feelings till then never experienced before in his life.

As for Vaninka, she had hardly noticed Foedor; for what was a young sublieutenant, without fortune or prospects, to her? What she dreamed of was some princely alliance, that would make her one of the most powerful ladies in Russia, and unless he could realise some dream of the Arabian Nights, Foedor could not offer her such a future.

Some time after this first interview, Foedor came to take leave of the general. His regiment was to form part of a contingent that Field-Marshal Souvarow was taking to Italy, and Foedor was about to die, or show himself worthy of the noble patron who had helped him to a career.

This time, whether on account of the elegant uniform that heightened Foedor's natural good looks, or because his imminent departure, glowing with hope and enthusiasm, lent a romantic interest to the young man, Vaninka was astonished at the marvellous change in him, and deigned, at her father's request, to give him her hand when he left. This was more than Foedor had dared to hope. He dropped upon his knee, as though in the presence of a queen, and took Vaninka's between his own trembling hands, scarcely daring to touch it with his lips. Light though the kiss had been, Vaninka started as though she had been burnt; she felt a thrill run through her, and she blushed violently. She withdrew her hand so quickly, that Foedor, fearing this adieu, respectful though it was, had offended her, remained on his knees, and clasping his hands, raised his eyes with such an expression of fear in them, that Vaninka, forgetting her hauteur, reassured him with a smile. Foedor rose, his heart filled with inexplicable joy, and without being able to say what had caused this feeling, he only knew that it had made him absolutely happy, so that, although he was just about to leave Vaninka, he had never felt greater happiness in his life.

The young man left dreaming golden dreams; for his future, be it gloomy or bright, was to be envied. If it ended in a soldier's grave, he believed he had seen in Vaninka's eyes that she would mourn him; if his future was glorious, glory would bring him back to St. Petersburg in triumph, and glory is a queen, who works miracles for her favourites.

The army to which the young officer belonged crossed Germany, descended into Italy by the Tyrolese mountains, and entered Verona on the 14th of April 1799.

Souvarow immediately joined forces with General Melas, and took command of the two armies. General Chasteler next day suggested that they should reconnoitre. Souvarow, gazing at him with astonishment, replied, "I know of no other way of reconnoitring the enemy than by marching upon him and giving him battle."

As a matter of fact Souvarow was accustomed to this expeditious sort of strategy: through it he had defeated the Turks at Folkschany and Ismailoff; and he had defeated the Poles, after a few days' campaign, and had taken Prague in less than four hours. Catherine, out of gratitude, had sent her victorious general a wreath of oak-leaves, intertwined with precious stones, and worth six hundred thousand roubles, a heavy gold field-marshal's baton encrusted with diamonds; and had created him a field-marshal, with the right of choosing a regiment that should bear his name from that time forward. Besides, when he returned to Russia, she gave him leave of absence, that he might take a holiday at a beautiful estate she had given him, together with the eight thousand serfs who lived upon it.

What a splendid example for Foedor! Souvarow, the son of a humble Russian officer, had been educated at the ordinary cadets' training college, and had left it as a sublieutenant like himself. Why should there not be two Souvarows in the same century?

Souvarow arrived in Italy preceded by an immense reputation; religious, strenuous, unwearied, impassible, loving with the simplicity of a Tartar and fighting with the fury of a Cossack, he was just the man required to continue General Melas's successes over the soldiers of the Republic, discouraged as they had been by the weak vacillations of Scherer.

The Austro-Russian army of one hundred thousand men was opposed by only twenty-nine or thirty thousand French. Souvarow began as usual with a thundering blow. On 20th April he appeared before Brescia, which made a vain attempt at resistance; after a cannonade of about half an hour's duration, the Preschiera gate was forced, and the Korsakow division, of which Foedor's regiment formed the vanguard, charged into the town, pursuing the garrison, which only consisted of twelve hundred men, and obliged them to take refuge in the citadel. Pressed with an impetuosity the French were not accustomed to find in their enemies, and seeing that the scaling ladders were already in position against the ramparts, the captain Boucret wished to come to terms; but his

position was too precarious for him to obtain any conditions from his savage conquerors, and he and his soldiers were made prisoners of war.

Souvarow was experienced enough to know how best to profit by victory; hardly master of Brescia, the rapid occupation of which had discouraged our army anew, he ordered General Kray to vigorously press on the siege of Preschiera. General Kray therefore established his headquarters at Valeggio, a place situated at an equal distance between Preschiera and Mantua, and he extended from the Po to the lake of Garda, on the banks of the Mencio, thus investing the two cities at the same time.

Meanwhile the commander-in-chief had advanced, accompanied by the larger part of his forces, and had crossed the Oglio in two columns: he launched one column, under General Rosenberg, towards Bergamo, and the other, with General Melas in charge, towards the Serio, whilst a body of seven or eight thousand men, commanded by General Kaim and General Hohenzollern, were directed towards Placentia and Cremona, thus occupying the whole of the left bank of the Po, in such a manner that the Austro-Russian army advanced deploying eighty thousand men along a front of forty-five miles.

In view of the forces which were advancing, and which were three times as large as his own, Scherer beat a retreat all along the line. He destroyed the bridges over the Adda, as he did not consider that he was strong enough to hold them, and, having removed his headquarters to Milan, he awaited there the reply to a despatch which he had sent to the Directory, in which, tacitly acknowledging his incapacity, he tendered his resignation. As the arrival of his successor was delayed, and as Souvarow continued to advance, Scherer, more and more terrified by the responsibility which rested upon him, relinquished his command into the hands of his most able lieutenant. The general chosen by him was Moreau, who was again about to fight those Russians in whose ranks he was destined to die at last.

Moreau's unexpected nomination was proclaimed amidst the acclamation of the soldiers. He had been called the French Fabius, on account of his magnificent campaign on the Rhine. He passed his whole army in review, saluted by the successive acclamations of its different divisions, which cried, "Long live Moreau! Long live the saviour of the army of Italy!" But however great this enthusiasm, it did not blind Moreau to the terrible position in which he found himself. At the risk of being outflanked, it was necessary for him to present a

parallel line to that of the Russian army, so that, in order to face his enemy, he was obliged to extend his line from Lake Lecco to Pizzighitone—that is to say, a distance of fifty miles. It is true that he might have retired towards Piedmont and concentrated his troops at Alexandria, to await there the reinforcements the Directory had promised to send him. But if he had done this, he would have compromised the safety of the army at Naples, and have abandoned it, isolated as it was, to the mercy of the enemy. He therefore resolved to defend the passage of the Adda as long as possible, in order to give the division under Dessolles, which was to be despatched to him by Massena, time to join forces with him and to defend his left, whilst Gauthier, who had received orders to evacuate Tuscany and to hasten with forced marches to his aid, should have time to arrive and protect his right. Moreau himself took the centre, and personally defended the fortified bridge of Cassano; this bridge was protected by the Ritorto Canal, and he also defended it with a great deal of artillery and an entrenched vanguard. Besides, Moreau, always as prudent as brave, took every precaution to secure a retreat, in case of disaster, towards the Apennines and the coast of Genoa. Hardly were his dispositions completed before the indefatigable Souvarow entered Triveglio. At the same time as the Russian commander-in-chief arrived at this last town, Moreau heard of the surrender of Bergamo and its castle, and on 23rd April he saw the heads of the columns of the allied army.

The same day the Russian general divided his troops into three strong columns, corresponding to the three principal points in the French line, each column numerically more than double the strength of those to whom they were opposed. The right column, led by General Wukassowich, advanced towards Lake Lecco, where General Serrurier awaited it. The left column, under the command of Melas, took up its position in front of the Cassano entrenchments; and the Austrian division, under Generals Zopf and Ott, which formed the centre, concentrated at Canonia, ready at a given moment to seize Vaprio. The Russian and Austrian troops bivouacked within cannon-shot of the French outposts.

That evening, Foedor, who with his regiment formed part of Chasteler's division, wrote to General Tchermayloff:

“We are at last opposite the French, and a great battle must take place tomorrow morning; tomorrow evening I shall be a lieutenant or a corpse.”

Next morning, 26th April, cannon resounded at break of day from the extremities of the lines; on our left Prince Bagration's grenadiers attacked us, on

our right General Seckendorff, who had been detached from the camp of Triveglia, was marching on Crema.

These two attacks met with very different success. Bagration's grenadiers were repulsed with terrible loss, whilst Seckendorff, on the contrary, drove the French out of Crema, and pushed forward towards the bridge of Lodi. Foedor's predictions were falsified: his portion of the army did nothing the whole day; his regiment remained motionless, waiting for orders that did not come.

Souvarow's arrangements were not yet quite complete, the night was needed for him to finish them. During the night, Moreau, having heard of Seckendorff's success on his extreme right, sent an order to Serrurier commanding him to leave at Lecco, which was an easy post to defend, the 18th light brigade and a detachment of dragoons only, and to draw back with the rest of his troops towards the centre. Serrurier received this order about two o'clock in the morning, and executed it immediately.

On their side the Russians had lost no time, profiting by the darkness of the night. General Wukassowich had repaired the bridge at Brevio, which had been destroyed by the French, whilst General Chasteler had built another bridge two miles below the castle of Trezzo. These two bridges had been, the one repaired and the other built, without the French outposts having the slightest suspicion of what was taking place.

Surprised at two o'clock in the morning by two Austrian divisions, which, concealed by the village of San Gervasio, had reached the right bank of the Adda without their being discovered, the soldiers defending the castle of Trezzo abandoned it and beat a retreat. The Austrians pursued them as far as Pozzo, but there the French suddenly halted and faced about, for General Serrurier was at Pozzo, with the troops he had brought from Lecco. He heard the cannonade behind him, immediately halted, and, obeying the first law of warfare, he marched towards the noise and smoke. It was therefore through him that the garrison of Trezzo rallied and resumed the offensive. Serrurier sent an aide-de-Camp to Moreau to inform him of the manoeuvre he had thought proper to execute.

The battle between the French and Austrian troops raged with incredible fury. Bonaparte's veterans, during their first Italian campaigns, had adopted a custom which they could not renounce: it was to fight His Imperial Majesty's subjects

wherever they found them. Nevertheless, so great was the numerical superiority of the allies, that our troops had begun to retreat, when loud shouts from the rearguard announced that reinforcements had arrived. It was General Grenier, sent by Moreau, who arrived with his division at the moment when his presence was most necessary.

One part of the new division reinforced the centre column, doubling its size; another part was extended upon the left to envelop the enemy. The drums beat afresh down the whole line, and our grenadiers began again to reconquer this battle field already twice lost and won. But at this moment the Austrians were reinforced by the Marquis de Chasteler and his division, so that the numerical superiority was again with the enemy. Grenier drew back his wing to strengthen the centre, and Serrurier, preparing for retreat in case of disaster, fell back on Pozzo, where he awaited the enemy. It was here that the battle raged most fiercely: thrice the village of Pozzo was taken and retaken, until at last, attacked for the fourth time by a force double their own in numbers, the French were obliged to evacuate it. In this last attack an Austrian colonel was mortally wounded, but, on the other hand, General Beker, who commanded the French rearguard, refused to retreat with his soldiers, and maintained his ground with a few men, who were slain as they stood; he was at length obliged to give up his sword to a young Russian officer of the Semenofskoi regiment, who, handing over his prisoner to his own soldiers, returned immediately to the combat.

The two French generals had fixed on the village of Vaprio as a rallying-place, but at the moment when our troops were thrown into disorder through the evacuation of Pozzo, the Austrian cavalry charged heavily, and Serrurier, finding himself separated from his colleague, was obliged to retire with two thousand five hundred men to Verderio, whilst Grenier, having reached the appointed place, Vaprio, halted to face the enemy afresh.

During this time a terrible fight was taking place in the centre. Melas with eighteen to twenty thousand men had attacked the fortified posts at the head of the bridge of Cassano and the Ritorto Canal. About seven o'clock in the morning, when Moreau had weakened himself by despatching Grenier and his division, Melas, leading three battalions of Austrian grenadiers, had attacked the fortifications, and for two hours there was terrible carnage; thrice repulsed, and leaving more than fifteen hundred men at the base of the fortifications, the Austrians had thrice returned to the attack, each time being reinforced by fresh troops, always led on and encouraged by Melas, who had to avenge his former

defeats. At length, having been attacked for the fourth time, forced from their entrenchments, and contesting the ground inch by inch, the French took shelter behind their second fortifications, which defended the entrance to the bridge itself: here they were commanded by Moreau in person. There, for two more hours, a hand-to-hand struggle took place, whilst the terrible artillery belched forth death almost muzzle to muzzle. At last the Austrians, rallying for a last time, advanced at the point of the bayonet, and; lacking either ladders or fascines, piled the bodies of their dead comrades against the fortifications, and succeeded in scaling the breastworks. There was not a moment to be lost. Moreau ordered a retreat, and whilst the French were recrossing the Adda, he protected their passage in person with a single battalion of grenadiers, of whom at the end of half an hour not more than a hundred and twenty men remained; three of his aides-de-camp were killed at his side. This retreat was accomplished without disorder, and then Moreau himself retired, still fighting the enemy, who set foot on the bridge as soon as he reached the other bank. The Austrians immediately rushed forward to capture him, when suddenly a terrible noise was heard rising above the roar of the artillery; the second arch of the bridge was blown into the air, carrying with it all those who were standing on the fatal spot. The armies recoiled, and into the empty space between them fell like rain a debris of stones and human beings. But at this moment, when Moreau had succeeded in putting a momentary obstacle between himself and Melas, General Grenier's division arrived in disorder, after having been forced to evacuate Vaprio, pursued by the Austro-Russians under Zopf, Ott, and Chasteler. Moreau ordered a change of front, and faced this new enemy, who fell upon him when he least expected them; he succeeded in rallying Grenier's troops and in reestablishing the battle. But whilst his back was turned Melas repaired the bridge and crossed the river; thus Moreau found himself attacked frontally, in the rear, and on his two flanks, by forces three times larger than his own. It was then that all the officers who surrounded him begged him to retreat, for on the preservation of his person depended the preservation of Italy for France. Moreau refused for some time, for he knew the awful consequences of the battle he had just lost, and he did not wish to survive it, although it had been impossible for him to win it. At last a chosen band surrounded him, and, forming a square, drew back, whilst the rest of the army sacrificed themselves to cover his retreat; for Moreau's genius was looked upon as the sole hope that remained to them.

The battle lasted nearly three hours longer, during which the rearguard of the army performed prodigies of valour. At length Melas, seeing that the enemy had escaped him, and believing that his troops, tired by the stubborn fight, needed

rest, gave orders that the fighting should cease. He halted on the left bank of the Adda, encamping his army in the villages of Imago, Gorgonzola, and Cassano, and remained master of the battlefield, upon which we had left two thousand five hundred dead, one hundred pieces of cannon, and twenty howitzers.

That night Souvarow invited General Becker to supper with him, and asked him by whom he had been taken prisoner. Becker replied that it was a young officer belonging to the regiment which had first entered Pozzo. Souvarow immediately inquired what regiment this was, and discovered that it was the Semenofskoi; he then ordered that inquiries should be made to ascertain the young officer's name. Shortly afterwards SubLieutenant Foedor Romayloff was announced. He presented General Becker's sword to Souvarow, who invited him to remain and to have supper with his prisoner.

Next day Foedor wrote to his protector: "I have kept my word. I am a lieutenant, and Field-Marshal Souvarow has requested his Majesty Paul I to bestow upon me the order of Saint Vladimir."

On 28th of April, Souvarow entered Milan, which Moreau had just abandoned in order to retreat beyond Tesino. The following proclamation was by his order posted on all the walls of the capital; it admirably paints the spirit of the Muscovite:

"The victorious army of the Apostolical and Roman Emperor is here; it has fought solely for the restoration of the Holy Faith,—the clergy, nobility, and ancient government of Italy. People, join us for God and the Faith, for we have arrived with an army at Milan and Placentia to assist you!"

The dearly bought victories of Trebia and Novi succeeded that of Cassano, and left Souvarow so much weakened that he was unable to profit by them. Besides, just when the Russian general was about to resume his march, a new plan of campaign arrived, sent by the Aulic Council at Vienna. The Allied Powers had decided upon the invasion of France, and had fixed the route each general must follow in order to accomplish this new project. It was decided that Souvarow should invade France by Switzerland, and that the arch-duke should yield him his positions and descend on the Lower Rhine.

The troops with which Souvarow was to operate against Massena from this time were the thirty thousand Russians he had with him, thirty thousand others

detached from the reserve army commanded by Count Tolstoy in Galicia, who were to be led to join him in Switzerland by General Korsakoff, about thirty thousand Austrians under General Hotze, and lastly, five or six thousand French emigrants under the Prince de Conde in all, an army of ninety or ninety-five thousand men. The Austrians were to oppose Moreau and Macdonald.

Foedor had been wounded when entering Novi, but Souvarow had rewarded him with a second cross, and the rank of captain hastened his convalescence, so that the young officer, more happy than proud of the new rank he had received, was in a condition to follow the army, when on 13th September it moved towards Salvedra and entered the valley of Tesino.

So far all had gone well, and as long as they remained in the rich and beautiful Italian plains, Suovarow had nothing but praise for the courage and devotion of his soldiers. But when to the fertile fields of Lombardy, watered by its beautiful river, succeeded the rough ways of the Levantine, and when the lofty summits of the St. Gothard, covered with the eternal snows, rose before them, their enthusiasm was quenched, their energy disappeared, and melancholy forebodings filled the hearts of these savage children of the North.

Unexpected grumblings ran through the ranks; then suddenly the vanguard stopped, and declared that it would go no farther. In vain Foedor, who commanded a company, begged and entreated his own men to set an example by continuing the march: they threw down their arms, and lay down beside them. Just as they had given this proof of insubordination, fresh murmurs, sounding like an approaching storm, rose from the rear of the army: they were caused by the sight of Souvarow, who was riding from the rear to the vanguard, and who arrived at the front accompanied by this terrible proof of mutiny and insubordination. When he reached the head of the column, the murmurings had developed into imprecations.

Then Souvarow addressed his soldiers with that savage eloquence to which he owed the miracles he had effected with them, but cries of "Retreat! Retreat!" drowned his voice. Then he chose out the most mutinous, and had them thrashed until they were overcome by this shameful punishment: But the thrashings had no more influence than the exhortation, and the shouts continued. Souvarow saw that all was lost if he did not employ some powerful and unexpected means of regaining the mutineers. He advanced towards Foedor. "Captain," said he, "leave these fools here, take eight non-commissioned officers and dig a grave." Foedor,

astonished, gazed at his general as though demanding an explanation of this strange order. "Obey orders," said Souvarow.

Foedor obeyed, and the eight men set to work; and ten minutes later the grave was dug, greatly to the astonishment of the whole army, which had gathered in a semicircle on the rising slopes of the two hills which bordered the road, standing as if on the steps of a huge amphitheatre.

Souvarow dismounted from his horse, broke his sword in two and threw it into the grave, detached his epaulets one by one and threw them after his sword, dragged off the decorations which covered his breast and cast these after the sword and epaulets, and then, stripping himself naked, he lay down in the grave himself, crying in a loud voice—

"Cover me with earth! Leave your general here. You are no longer my children, and I am no longer your father; nothing remains to me but death."

At these strange words, which were uttered in so powerful a voice that they were heard by the whole army, the Russian grenadiers threw themselves weeping into the grave, and, raising their general, asked pardon of him, entreating him to lead them again against the enemy.

"At last," cried Souvarow, "I recognise my children again. To the enemy!"

Not cries but yells of joy greeted his words. Souvarow dressed himself again, and whilst he was dressing the leaders of the mutiny crept in the dust to kiss his feet. Then, when his epaulets were replaced on his shoulders, and when his decorations again shone on his breast, he remounted his horse, followed by the army, the soldiers swearing with one voice that they would all die rather than abandon their father.

The same day Souvarow attacked Alerolo; but his luck had turned: the conqueror of Cassano, Trebia, and Novi had left his good-fortune behind in the plains of Italy. For twelve hours six hundred French opposed three thousand Russian grenadiers beneath the walls of the town, and so successfully that night fell without Souvarow being able to defeat them. Next day he marched the whole of his troops against this handful of brave men, but the sky clouded over and the wind blew a bitter rain into the faces of the Russians; the French profited by this circumstance to beat a retreat, evacuating the valley of Ursern, crossing the Reuss, and taking up their position on the heights of the Furka and Grimsel. One

portion of the Russian army's design had been achieved, they were masters of the St. Gothard. It is true that as soon as they marched farther on, the French would retake it and cut off their retreat; but what did this matter to Souvarow? Did he not always march forward?

He marched on, then, without worrying about that which was behind him, reached Andermatt, cleared Trou d'Ury, and found Lecourbe guarding the defile of the Devil's Bridge with fifteen hundred men. There the struggle began again; for three days fifteen hundred Frenchmen kept thirty thousand Russians at bay. Souvarow raged like a lion trapped in a snare, for he could not understand this change of fortune. At last, on the fourth day, he heard that General Korsakoff, who had preceded him and who was to rejoin him later, had been beaten by Molitor, and that Massena had recaptured Zurich and occupied the canton of Glaris. Souvarow now gave up the attempt to proceed up the valley of the Reuss, and wrote to Korsakoff and Jallachieh, "I hasten to retrieve your losses; stand firm as ramparts: you shall answer to me with your heads for every step in retreat that you take." The aide-de-camp was also charged to communicate to the Russian and Austrian generals a verbal plan of battle. Generals Linsken and Jallachieh were to attack the French troops separately and then to join the forces in the valley of Glaris, into which Souvarow himself was to descend by the Klön-Thal, thus hemming Molitor in between two walls of iron.

Souvarow was so sure that this plan would be successful, that when he arrived on the borders of the lake of Klön-Thal, he sent a bearer with a flag of truce, summoning Molitor to surrender, seeing that he was surrounded on every side.

Molitor replied, to the field-marshal that his proposed meeting with his generals had failed, as he had beaten them one after the other, and driven them back into the Grisons, and that moreover, in retaliation, as Massena was advancing by Muotta, it was he, Souvarow, who was between two fires, and therefore he called upon him to lay down his arms instead.

On hearing this strange reply, Souvarow thought that he must be dreaming, but soon recovering himself and realising the danger of his position in the defiles, he threw himself on General Molitor, who received him at the point of the bayonet, and then closing up the pass with twelve hundred men, the French succeeded in holding fifteen to eighteen thousand Russians in check for eight hours. At length night came, and Molitor evacuated the Klön Thal, and retired towards the Linth, to defend the bridges of Noefels and Mollis.

The old field-marshal rushed like a torrent over Glaris and Miltodi; there he learnt that Molitor had told him the truth, and that Jallachieh and Linsken had been beaten and dispersed, that Massena was advancing on Schwitz, and that General Rosenberg, who had been given the defence of the bridge of Muotta, had been forced to retreat, so that he found himself in the position in which he had hoped to place Molitor.

No time was to be lost in retreating. Souvarow hurried through the passes of Engi, Schwauden, and Elm. His flight was so hurried that he was obliged to abandon his wounded and part of his artillery. Immediately the French rushed in pursuit among the precipices and clouds. One saw whole armies passing over places where chamois-hunters took off their shoes and walked barefoot, holding on by their hands to prevent themselves from falling. Three nations had come from three different parts to a meeting-place in the home of the eagles, as if to allow those nearest God to judge the justice of their cause. There were times when the frozen mountains changed into volcanoes, when cascades now filled with blood fell into the valleys, and avalanches of human beings rolled down the deepest precipices. Death reaped such a harvest there where human life had never been before, that the vultures, becoming fastidious through the abundance, picked out only the eyes of the corpses to carry to their young—at least so says the tradition of the peasants of these mountains.

Souvarow was able to rally his troops at length in the neighbourhood of Lindau. He recalled Korsakoff, who still occupied Bregenz; but all his troops together did not number more than thirty thousand men—all that remained of the eighty thousand whom Paul had furnished as his contingent in the coalition. In fifteen days Massena had defeated three separate armies, each numerically stronger than his own. Souvarow, furious at having been defeated by these same Republicans whom he had sworn to exterminate, blamed the Austrians for his defeat, and declared that he awaited orders from his emperor, to whom he had made known the treachery of the allies, before attempting anything further with the coalition.

Paul's answer was that he should immediately return to Russia with his soldiers, arriving at St. Petersburg as soon as possible, where a triumphal entry awaited them.

The same ukase declared that Souvarow should be quartered in the imperial palace for the rest of his life, and lastly that a monument should be raised to him in one of the public places of St. Petersburg.

Foedor was thus about to see Vaninka once more. Throughout the campaign, where there was a chance of danger, whether in the plains of Italy, in the defiles of Tesino, or on the glaciers of Mount Pragal, he was the first to throw himself into it, and his name had frequently been mentioned as worthy of distinction. Souvarow was too brave himself to be prodigal of honours where they were not merited. Foedor was returning, as he had promised, worthy of his noble protector's friendship, and who knows, perhaps worthy of Vaninka's love. Field-Marshal Souvarow had made a friend of him, and none could know to what this friendship might not lead; for Paul honoured Souvarow like one of the ancient heroes.

But no one could rely upon Paul, for his character was made up of extreme impulses. Without having done anything to offend his master, and without knowing the cause of his disgrace, Souvarow, on arriving at Riga, received a private letter which informed him, in the emperor's name, that, having tolerated an infraction of the laws of discipline among his soldiers, the emperor deprived him of all the honours with which he had been invested, and also forbade him to appear before him.

Such tidings fell like a thunderbolt upon the old warrior, already embittered by his reverses: he was heartbroken that such storm-clouds should tarnish the end of his glorious day.

In consequence of this order, he assembled all his officers in the marketplace of Riga, and took leave of them sorrowfully, like a father taking leave of his family. Having embraced the generals and colonels, and having shaken hands with the others, he said goodbye to them once more, and left them free to continue their march to their destination.

Souvarow took a sledge, and, travelling night and day, arrived incognito in the capital, which he was to have entered in triumph, and was driven to a distant suburb, to the house of one of his nieces, where he died of a broken heart fifteen days afterwards.

On his own account, Foedor travelled almost as rapidly as his general, and entered St. Petersburg without having sent any letter to announce his arrival. As he had no parent in the capital, and as his entire existence was concentrated in one person, he drove direct to the general's house, which was situated in the Prospect of Niewski, at an angle of the Catherine Canal.

Having arrived there, he sprang out of his carriage, entered the courtyard, and bounded up the steps. He opened the antechamber door, and precipitated himself into the midst of the servants and subordinate household officers. They cried out with surprise upon seeing him: he asked them where the general was; they replied by pointing to the door of the diningroom; he was in there, breakfasting with his daughter.

Then, through a strange reaction, Foedor felt his knees failing him, and he was obliged to lean against a wall to prevent himself from falling. At this moment, when he was about to see Vaninka again, this soul of his soul, for whom alone he had done so much, he dreaded lest he should not find her the same as when he had left her. Suddenly the diningroom door opened, and Vaninka appeared. Seeing the young man, she uttered a cry, and, turning to the general, said, "Father, it is Foedor"; and the expression of her voice left no doubt of the sentiment which inspired it.

"Foedor!" cried the general, springing forward and holding out his arms.

Foedor did not know whether to throw himself at the feet of Vaninka or into the arms of her father. He felt that his first recognition ought to be devoted to respect and gratitude, and threw himself into the general's arms. Had he acted otherwise, it would have been an avowal of his love, and he had no right to avow this love till he knew that it was reciprocated.

Foedor then turned, and as at parting, sank on his knee before Vaninka; but a moment had sufficed for the haughty girl to banish the feeling she had shown. The blush which had suffused her cheek had disappeared, and she had become again cold and haughty like an alabaster statue—a masterpiece of pride begun by nature and finished by education. Foedor kissed her hand; it was trembling but cold he felt his heart sink, and thought he was about to die.

"Why, Vaninka," said the general—"why are you so cool to a friend who has caused us so much anxiety and yet so much pleasure? Come, Fordor, kiss my daughter."

Foedor rose entreatingly, but waited motionless, that another permission might confirm that of the general.

"Did you not hear my father?" said Vaninka, smiling, but nevertheless possessing sufficient self-control to prevent the emotion she was feeling from

appearing in her voice.

Foedor stooped to kiss Vaninka, and as he held her hands it seemed to him that she lightly pressed his own with a nervous, involuntary movement. A feeble cry of joy nearly escaped him, when, suddenly looking at Vaninka, he was astonished at her pallor: her lips were as white as death.

The general made Foedor sit down at the table: Vaninka took her place again, and as by chance she was seated with her back to the light, the general noticed nothing.

Breakfast passed in relating and listening to an account of this strange campaign which began under the burning sun of Italy and ended in the glaciers of Switzerland. As there are no journals in St. Petersburg which publish anything other than that which is permitted by the emperor, Souvarow's successes were spread abroad, but his reverses were ignored. Foedor described the former with modesty and the latter with frankness.

One can imagine, the immense interest the general took in Foedor's story. His two captain's epaulets and the decorations on his breast proved that the young man had modestly suppressed his own part in the story he had told. But the general, too courageous to fear that he might share in Souvarow's disgrace, had already visited the dying field-marshal, and had heard from him an account of his young protege's bravery. Therefore, when Foedor had finished his story, it was the general's turn to enumerate all the fine things Foedor had done in a campaign of less than a year. Having finished this enumeration, he added that he intended next day to ask the emperor's permission to take the young captain for his aide-de-camp. Foedor hearing this wished to throw himself at the general's feet, but he received him again in his arms, and to show Foedor how certain he was that he would be successful in his request, he fixed the rooms that the young man was to occupy in the house at once.

The next day the general returned from the palace of St. Michel with the pleasant news that his request had been granted.

Foedor was overwhelmed with joy: from this time he was to form part of the general's family. Living under the same roof as Vaninka, seeing her constantly, meeting her frequently in the rooms, seeing her pass like an apparition at the end of a corridor, finding himself twice a day at the same table with her, all this was

more than Foedor had ever dared hope, and he thought for a time that he had attained complete happiness.

For her part, Vaninka, although she was so proud, at the bottom of her heart took a keen interest in Foedor. He had left her with the certainty that he loved her, and during his absence her woman's pride had been gratified by the glory he had acquired, in the hope of bridging the distance which separated them. So that, when she saw him return with this distance between them lessened, she felt by the beating of her heart that gratified pride was changing into a more tender sentiment, and that for her part she loved Foedor as much as it was possible for her to love anyone.

She had nevertheless concealed these feelings under an appearance of haughty indifference, for Vaninka was made so: she intended to let Foedor know some day that she loved him, but until the time came when it pleased her to reveal it, she did not wish the young man to discover her love. Things went on in this way for several months, and the circumstances which had at first appeared to Foedor as the height of happiness soon became awful torture.

To love and to feel his heart ever on the point of avowing its love, to be from morning till night in the company of the beloved one, to meet her hand at the table, to touch her dress in a narrow corridor, to feel her leaning on his arm when they entered a salon or left a ballroom, always to have ceaselessly to control every word, look, or movement which might betray his feelings, no human power could endure such a struggle.

Vaninka saw that Foedor could not keep his secret much longer, and determined to anticipate the avowal which she saw every moment on the point of escaping his heart.

One day when they were alone, and she saw the hopeless efforts the young man was making to hide his feelings from her, she went straight up to him, and, looking at him fixedly, said:

“You love me!”

“Forgive me, forgive me,” cried the young man, clasping his hands.

“Why should you ask me to forgive you, Foedor? Is not your love genuine?”

“Yes, yes, genuine but hopeless.”

“Why hopeless? Does not my father love you as a son?” said Vaninka.

“Oh, what do you mean?” cried Foedor. “Do you mean that if your father will bestow your hand upon me, that you will then consent—?”

“Are you not both noble in heart and by birth, Foedor? You are not wealthy, it is true, but then I am rich enough for both.”

“Then I am not indifferent to you?”

“I at least prefer you to anyone else I have met.”

“Vaninka!” The young girl drew herself away proudly.

“Forgive me!” said Foedor. “What am I doing? You have but to order: I have no wish apart from you. I dread lest I shall offend you. Tell me what to do, and I will obey.”

“The first thing you must do, Foedor, is to ask my father’s consent.”

“So you will allow me to take this step?”

“Yes, but on one condition.”

“What is it? Tell me.”

“My father, whatever his answer, must never know that I have consented to your making this application to him; no one must know that you are following my instructions; the world must remain ignorant of the confession I have just made to you; and, lastly, you must not ask me, whatever happens, to help you in any other way than with my good wishes.”

“Whatever you please. I will do everything you wish me to do. Do you not grant me a thousand times more than I dared hope, and if your father refuses me, do I not know myself that you are sharing my grief?” cried Foedor.

“Yes; but that will not happen, I hope,” said Vaninka, holding out her hand to the young officer, who kissed it passionately.

“Now be hopeful and take courage;” and Vaninka retired, leaving the young man a hundred times more agitated and moved than she was herself, woman though she was.

The same day Foedor asked for an interview with the general. The general received his aide-de-camp as usual with a genial and smiling countenance, but with the first words Foedor uttered his face darkened. However, when he heard the young man’s description of the love, so true, constant, and passionate, that he felt for Vaninka, and when he heard that this passion had been the motive power of those glorious deeds he had praised so often, he held out his hand to Foedor, almost as moved as the young soldier.

And then the general told him, that while he had been away, and ignorant of his love for Vaninka, in whom he had observed no trace of its being reciprocated, he had, at the emperor’s desire, promised her hand to the son of a privy councillor. The only stipulation that the general had made was, that he should not be separated from his daughter until she had attained the age of eighteen. Vaninka had only five months more to spend under her father’s roof. Nothing more could be said: in Russia the emperor’s wish is an order, and from the moment that it is expressed, no subject would oppose it, even in thought. However, the refusal had imprinted such despair on the young man’s face, that the general, touched by his silent and resigned sorrow, held out his arms to him. Foedor flung himself into them with loud sobs.

Then the general questioned him about his daughter, and Foedor answered, as he had promised, that Vaninka was ignorant of everything, and that the proposal came from him alone, without her knowledge. This assurance calmed the general: he had feared that he was making two people wretched.

At dinnertime Vaninka came downstairs and found her father alone. Foedor had not enough courage to be present at the meal and to meet her again, just when he had lost all hope: he had taken a sleigh, and driven out to the outskirts of the city.

During the whole time dinner lasted Vaninka and the general hardly exchanged a word, but although this silence was so expressive, Vaninka controlled her face with her usual power, and the general alone appeared sad and dejected.

That evening, just when Vaninka was going downstairs, tea was brought to her room, with the message that the general was fatigued and had retired. Vaninka

asked some questions about the nature of his indisposition, and finding that it was not serious, she told the servant who had brought her the message to ask her father to send for her if he wanted anything. The general sent to say that he thanked her, but he only required quiet and rest. Vaninka announced that she would retire also, and the servant withdrew.

Hardly had he left the room when Vaninka ordered Annouschka, her foster-sister, who acted as her maid, to be on the watch for Foedor's return, and to let her know as soon as he came in.

At eleven o'clock the gate of the mansion opened: Foedor got out of his sleigh, and immediately went up to his room. He threw himself upon a sofa, overwhelmed by his thoughts. About midnight he heard someone tapping at the door: much astonished, he got up and opened it. It was Annouschka, who came with a message from her mistress, that Vaninka wished to see him immediately. Although he was astonished at this message, which he was far from expecting, Foedor obeyed.

He found Vaninka seated, dressed in a white robe, and as she was paler than usual he stopped at the door, for it seemed to him that he was gazing at a marble statue.

"Come in," said Vaninka calmly.

Foedor approached, drawn by her voice like steel to a magnet. Annouschka shut the door behind him.

"Well, and what did my father say?" said Vaninka.

Foedor told her all that had happened. The young girl listened to his story with an unmoved countenance, but her lips, the only part of her face which seemed to have any colour, became as white as the dressing-gown she was wearing. Foedor, on the contrary, was consumed by a fever, and appeared nearly out of his senses.

"Now, what do you intend to do?" said Vaninka in the same cold tone in which she had asked the other questions.

"You ask me what I intend to do, Vaninka? What do you wish me to do? What can I do, but flee from St. Petersburg, and seek death in the first corner of Russia

where war may break out, in order not to repay my patron's kindness by some infamous baseness?"

"You are a fool," said Vaninka, with a mixed smile of triumph and contempt; for from that moment she felt her superiority over Foedor, and saw that she would rule him like a queen for the rest of her life.

"Then order me—am I not your slave?" cried the young soldier.

"You must stay here," said Vaninka.

"Stay here?"

"Yes; only women and children will thus confess themselves beaten at the first blow: a man, if he be worthy of the name, fights."

"Fight!—against whom?—against your father? Never!"

"Who suggested that you should contend against my father? It is against events that you must strive; for the generality of men do not govern events, but are carried away by them. Appear to my father as though you were fighting against your love, and he will think that you have mastered yourself. As I am supposed to be ignorant of your proposal, I shall not be suspected. I will demand two years' more freedom, and I shall obtain them. Who knows what may happen in the course of two years? The emperor may die, my betrothed may die, my father—may God protect him!—my father himself may die—!"

"But if they force you to marry?"

"Force me!" interrupted Vaninka, and a deep flush rose to her cheek and immediately disappeared again. "And who will force me to do anything? Father? He loves me too well. The emperor? He has enough worries in his own family, without introducing them into another's. Besides, there is always a last resource when every other expedient fails: the Neva only flows a few paces from here, and its waters are deep."

Foedor uttered a cry, for in the young girl's knit brows and tightly compressed lips there was so much resolution that he understood that they might break this child but that they would not bend her. But Foedor's heart was too much in harmony with the plan Vaninka had proposed; his objections once removed, he

did not seek fresh ones. Besides, had he had the courage to do so; Vaninka's promise to make up in secret to him for the dissimulation she was obliged to practise in public would have conquered his last scruples.

Vaninka, whose determined character had been accentuated by her education, had an unbounded influence over all who came in contact with her; even the general, without knowing why, obeyed her. Foedor submitted like a child to everything she wished, and the young girl's love was increased by the wishes she opposed and by a feeling of gratified pride.

It was some days after this nocturnal decision that the knouting had taken place at which our readers have assisted. It was for some slight fault, and Gregory had been the victim; Vaninka having complained to her father about him. Foedor, who as aide-de-camp had been obliged to preside over Gregory's punishment, had paid no more attention to the threats the serf had uttered on retiring.

Ivan, the coachman, who after having been executioner had become surgeon, had applied compresses of salt and water to heal up the scarred shoulders of his victim. Gregory had remained three days in the infirmary, and during this time he had turned over in his mind every possible means of vengeance. Then at the end of three days, being healed, he had returned to his duty, and soon everyone except he had forgotten the punishment. If Gregory had been a real Russian, he would soon have forgotten it all; for this punishment is too familiar to the rough Muscovite for him to remember it long and with rancour. Gregory, as we have said, had Greek blood in his veins; he dissembled and remembered. Although Gregory was a serf, his duties had little by little brought him into greater familiarity with the general than any of the other servants. Besides, in every country in the world barbers have great licence with those they shave; this is perhaps due to the fact that a man is instinctively more gracious to another who for ten minutes every day holds his life in his hands. Gregory rejoiced in the immunity of his profession, and it nearly always happened that the barber's daily operation on the general's chin passed in conversation, of which he bore the chief part.

One day the general had to attend a review: he sent for Gregory before daybreak, and as the barber was passing the razor as gently as possible over his master's cheek, the conversation fell, or more likely was led, on Foedor. The barber praised him highly, and this naturally caused his master to ask him, remembering the correction the young aide-de-camp had superintended, if he could not find

some fault in this model of perfection that might counterbalance so many good qualities. Gregory replied that with the exception of pride he thought Foedor irreproachable.

“Pride?” asked the astonished general. “That is a failing from which I should have thought him most free.”

“Perhaps I should have said ambition,” replied Gregory.

“Ambition!” said the general. “It does not seem to me that he has given much proof of ambition in entering my service; for after his achievements in the last campaign he might easily have aspired to the honour of a place in the emperor’s household.”

“Oh yes, he is ambitious,” said Gregory, smiling. “One man’s ambition is for high position, another’s an illustrious alliance: the former will owe everything to himself, the latter will make a stepping-stone of his wife, then they raise their eyes higher than they should.”

“What do you mean to suggest?” said the general, beginning to see what Gregory was aiming at.

“I mean, your excellency,” replied Gregory, “there are many men who, owing to the kindness shown them by others, forget their position and aspire to a more exalted one; having already been placed so high, their heads are turned.”

“Gregory,” cried the general, “believe me, you are getting into a scrape; for you are making an accusation, and if I take any notice of it, you will have to prove your words.”

“By St. Basilus, general, it is no scrape when you have truth on your side; for I have said nothing I am not ready to prove.”

“Then,” said the general, “you persist in declaring that Foedor loves my daughter?”

“Ah! I have not said that: it is your excellency. I have not named the lady Vaninka,” said Gregory, with the duplicity of his nation.

“But you meant it, did you not? Come, contrary to your custom, reply frankly.”

“It is true, your excellency; it is what I meant.”

“And, according to you, my daughter reciprocates the passion, no doubt?”

“I fear so, your excellency.”

“And what makes you think this, say?”

“First, Mr. Foedor never misses a chance of speaking to the lady Vaninka.”

“He is in the same house with her, would you have him avoid her?”

“When the lady Vaninka returns late, and when perchance Mr. Foedor has not accompanied you, whatever the hour Mr. Foedor is there, ready, to help her out of the carriage.”

“Foedor attends me, it is his duty,” said the general, beginning to believe that the serf’s suspicions were founded on slight grounds. “He waits for me,” he, continued, “because when I return, at any hour of the day or night, I may have orders to give him.”

“Not a day passes without Mr. Foedor going into my lady Vaninka’s room, although such a favour is not usually granted to a young man in a house like that of your excellency.”

“Usually it is I who send him to her,” said the general.

“Yes, in the daytime,” replied Gregory, “but at night?”

“At night!” cried the general, rising to his feet, and turning so pale that, after a moment, he was forced to lean for support on a table.

“Yes, at night, your excellency,” answered Gregory quietly; “and since, as you say, I have begun to mix myself up in a bad business, I must go on with it; besides, even if there were to result from it another punishment for me, even more terrible than that I have already endured, I should not allow so good, a master to be deceived any longer.”

“Be very careful about what you are going to say, slave; for I know the men of your nation. Take care, if the accusation you are making by way of revenge is

not supported by visible, palpable, and positive proofs, you shall be punished as an infamous slanderer.”

“To that I agree,” said Gregory.

“Do you affirm that you have seen Foedor enter my daughter’s chamber at night?”

“I do not say that I have seen him enter it, your excellency. I say that I have seen him come out.”

“When was that?”

“A quarter of an hour ago, when I was on my way to your excellency.”

“You lie!” said the general, raising his fist.

“This is not our agreement, your excellency,” said the slave, drawing back. “I am only to be punished if I fail to give proofs.”

“But what are your proofs?”

“I have told you.”

“And do you expect me to believe your word alone?”

“No; but I expect you to believe your own eyes.”

“How?”

“The first time that Mr. Foedor is in my lady Vaninka’s room after midnight, I shall come to find your excellency, and then you can judge for yourself if I lie; but up to the present, your excellency, all the conditions of the service I wish to render you are to my disadvantage.”

“In what way?”

“Well, if I fail to give proofs, I am to be treated as an infamous slanderer; but if I give them, what advantage shall I gain?”

“A thousand roubles and your freedom.”

“That is a bargain, then, your excellency,” replied Gregory quietly, replacing the razors on the general’s toilet-table, “and I hope that before a week has passed you will be more just to me than you are now.”

With these words the slave left the room, leaving the general convinced by his confidence that some dreadful misfortune threatened him.

From this time onward, as might be expected, the general weighed every word and noticed every gesture which passed between Vaninka and Foedor in his presence; but he saw nothing to confirm his suspicions on the part of the aide-de-camp or of his daughter; on the contrary, Vaninka seemed colder and more reserved than ever.

A week passed in this way. About two o’clock in the morning of the ninth day, someone knocked at the general’s door. It was Gregory.

“If your excellency will go into your daughter’s room,” said Gregory, “you will find Mr. Foedor there.”

The general turned pale, dressed himself without uttering a word, and followed the slave to the door of Vaninka’s room. Having arrived there, with a motion of his hand he dismissed the informer, who, instead of retiring in obedience to this mute command, hid himself in the corner of the corridor.

When the general believed himself to be alone, he knocked once; but all was silent. This silence, however, proved nothing; for Vaninka might be asleep. He knocked a second time, and the young girl, in a perfectly calm voice, asked, “Who is there?”

“It is I,” said the general, in a voice trembling with emotion.

“Annouschka!” said the girl to her foster-sister, who slept in the adjoining room, “open the door to my father. Forgive me, father,” she continued; “but Annouschka is dressing, and will be with you in a moment.”

The general waited patiently, for he could discover no trace of emotion in his daughter’s voice, and he hoped that Gregory had been mistaken.

In a few moments the door opened, and the general went in, and cast a long look around him; there was no one in this first apartment.

Vaninka was in bed, paler perhaps than usual, but quite calm, with the loving smile on her lips with which she always welcomed her father.

“To what fortunate circumstance,” asked the young girl in her softest tones, “do I owe the pleasure of seeing you at so late an hour?”

“I wished to speak to you about a very important matter,” said the general, “and however late it was, I thought you would forgive me for disturbing you.”

“My father will always be welcome in his daughter’s room, at whatever hour of the day or night he presents himself there.”

The general cast another searching look round, and was convinced that it was impossible for a man to be concealed in the first room—but the second still remained.

“I am listening,” said Vaninka, after a moment of silence.

“Yes, but we are not alone,” replied the general, “and it is important that no other ears should hear what I have to say to you.”

“Annauschka, as you know, is my foster-sister,” said Vaninka.

“That makes no difference,” said the general, going candle in hand into the next room, which was somewhat smaller than his daughter’s. “Annouschka,” said he, “watch in the corridor and see that no one overhears us.”

As he spoke these words, the general threw the same scrutinizing glance all round the room, but with the exception of the young girl there was no one there.

Annouschka obeyed, and the general followed her out, and, looking eagerly round for the last time, reentered his daughter’s room, and seated himself on the foot of her bed. Annouschka, at a sign from her mistress, left her alone with her father. The general held out his hand to Vaninka, and she took it without hesitation.

“My child,” said the general, “I have to speak to you about a very important matter.”

“What is it, father?” said Vaninka.

“You will soon be eighteen,” continued the general, “and that is the age at which the daughters of the Russian nobility usually marry.” The general paused for a moment to watch the effect of these words upon Vaninka, but her hand rested motionless in his. “For the last year your hand has been engaged by me,” continued the general.

“May I know to whom?” asked Vaninka coldly.

“To the son of the Councillor-in-Ordinary,” replied the general. “What is your opinion of him?”

“He is a worthy and noble young man, I am told, but I can have formed no opinion except from hearsay. Has he not been in garrison at Moscow for the last three months?”

“Yes,” said the general, “but in three months’ time he should return.”

Vaninka remained silent.

“Have you nothing to say in reply?” asked the general.

“Nothing, father; but I have a favour to ask of you.”

“What is it?”

“I do not wish to marry until I am twenty years old.”

“Why not?”

“I have taken a vow to that effect.”

“But if circumstances demanded the breaking of this vow, and made the celebration of this marriage imperatively necessary?”

“What circumstances?” asked Vaninka.

“Foedor loves you,” said the general, looking steadily at Vaninka.

“I know that,” said Vaninka, with as little emotion as if the question did not concern her.

“You know that!” cried the general.

“Yes; he has told me so.”

“When?”

“Yesterday.”

“And you replied—?”

“That he must leave here at once.”

“And he consented?”

“Yes, father.”

“When does he go?”

“He has gone.”

“How can that be?” said the general: “he only left me at ten o’clock.”

“And he left me at midnight,” said Vaninka.

“Ah!” said the general, drawing a deep breath of relief, “you are a noble girl, Vaninka, and I grant you what you ask—two years more. But remember it is the emperor who has decided upon this marriage.”

“My father will do me the justice to believe that I am too submissive a daughter to be a rebellious subject.”

“Excellent, Vaninka, excellent,” said the general. “So, then, poor Foedor has told you all?”

“Yes,” said Vaninka.

“You knew that he addressed himself to me first?”

“I knew it.”

“Then it was from him that you heard that your hand was engaged?”

“It was from him.”

“And he consented to leave you? He is a good and noble young man, who shall always be under my protection wherever he goes. Oh, if my word had not been given, I love him so much that, supposing you did not dislike him, I should have given him your hand.”

“And you cannot recall your promise?” asked Vaninka.

“Impossible,” said the general.

“Well, then, I submit to my father’s will,” said Vaninka.

“That is spoken like my daughter,” said the general, embracing her. “Farewell, Vaninka; I do not ask if you love him. You have both done your duty, and I have nothing more to exact.”

With these words, he rose and left the room. Annouschka was in the corridor; the general signed to her that she might go in again, and went on his way. At the door of his room he found Gregory waiting for him.

“Well, your excellency?” he asked.

“Well,” said the general, “you are both right and wrong. Foedor loves my daughter, but my daughter does not love him. He went into my daughter’s room at eleven o’clock, but at midnight he left her for ever. No matter, come to me tomorrow, and you shall have your thousand roubles and your liberty.”

Gregory went off, dumb with astonishment.

Meanwhile, Annouschka had reentered her mistress's room, as she had been ordered, and closed the door carefully behind her.

Vaninka immediately sprang out of bed and went to the door, listening to the retreating footsteps of the general. When they had ceased to be heard, she rushed into Annouschka's room, and both began to pull aside a bundle of linen, thrown down, as if by accident, into the embrasure of a window. Under the linen was a large chest with a spring lock. Annouschka pressed a button, Vaninka raised the lid. The two women uttered a loud cry: the chest was now a coffin; the young officer, stifled for want of air, lay dead within.

For a long time the two women hoped it was only a swoon. Annouschka sprinkled his face with water; Vaninka put salts to his nose. All was in vain. During the long conversation which the general had had with his daughter, and which had lasted more than half an hour, Foedor, unable to get out of the chest, as the lid was closed by a spring, had died for want of air. The position of the two girls shut up with a corpse was frightful. Annouschka saw Siberia close at hand; Vaninka, to do her justice, thought of nothing but Foedor. Both were in despair. However, as the despair of the maid was more selfish than that of her mistress, it was Annouschka who first thought of a plan of escaping from the situation in which they were placed.

"My lady," she cried suddenly, "we are saved." Vaninka raised her head and looked at her attendant with her eyes bathed in tears.

"Saved?" said she, "saved? We are, perhaps, but Foedor!"

"Listen now," said Annouschka: "your position is terrible, I grant that, and your grief is great; but your grief could be greater and your position more terrible still. If the general knew this."

"What difference would it make to me?" said Vaninka. "I shall weep for him before the whole world."

"Yes, but you will be dishonoured before the whole world! Tomorrow your slaves, and the day after all St. Petersburg, will know that a man died of suffocation while concealed in your chamber. Reflect, my lady: your honour is the honour of your father, the honour of your family."

"You are right," said Vaninka, shaking her head, as if to disperse the gloomy

thoughts that burdened her brain,—“you are right, but what must we do?”

“Does my lady know my brother Ivan?”

“Yes.”

“We must tell him all.”

“Of what are you thinking?” cried Vaninka. “To confide in a man? A man, do I say? A serf! a slave!”

“The lower the position of the serf and slave, the safer will our secret be, since he will have everything to gain by keeping faith with us.”

“Your brother is a drunkard,” said Vaninka, with mingled fear and disgust.

“That is true,” said Annouschka; “but where will you find a slave who is not? My brother gets drunk less than most, and is therefore more to be trusted than the others. Besides, in the position in which we are we must risk something.”

“You are right,” said Vaninka, recovering her usual resolution, which always grew in the presence of danger. “Go and seek your brother.”

“We can do nothing this morning,” said Annouschka, drawing back the window curtains. “Look, the dawn is breaking.”

“But what can we do with the body of this unhappy man?” cried Vaninka.

“It must remain hidden where it is all day, and this evening, while you are at the Court entertainment, my brother shall remove it.”

“True,” murmured Vaninka in a strange tone, “I must go to Court this evening; to stay away would arouse suspicion. Oh, my God! my God!”

“Help me, my lady,” said Annouschka; “I am not strong enough alone.”

Vaninka turned deadly pale, but, spurred on by the danger, she went resolutely up to the body of her lover; then, lifting it by the shoulders, while her maid raised it by the legs, she laid it once more in the chest. Then Annouschka shut down the lid, locked the chest, and put the key into her breast. Then both threw

back the linen which had hidden it from the eyes of the general. Day dawned, as might be expected, ere sleep visited the eyes of Vaninka.

She went down, however, at the breakfast hour; for she did not wish to arouse the slightest suspicion in her father's mind. Only it might have been thought from her pallor that she had risen from the grave, but the general attributed this to the nocturnal disturbance of which he had been the cause.

Luck had served Vaninka wonderfully in prompting her to say that Foedor had already gone; for not only did the general feel no surprise when he did not appear, but his very absence was a proof of his daughter's innocence. The general gave a pretext for his aide-de-camp's absence by saying that he had sent him on a mission. As for Vaninka, she remained out of her room till it was time to dress. A week before, she had been at the Court entertainment with Foedor.

Vaninka might have excused herself from accompanying her father by feigning some slight indisposition, but two considerations made her fear to act thus: the first was the fear of making the general anxious, and perhaps of making him remain at home himself, which would make the removal of the corpse more difficult; the second was the fear of meeting Ivan and having to blush before a slave. She preferred, therefore, to make a superhuman effort to control herself; and, going up again into her room, accompanied by her faithful Annouschka, she began to dress with as much care as if her heart were full of joy. When this cruel business was finished, she ordered Annouschka to shut the door; for she wished to see Foedor once more, and to bid a last farewell to him who had been her lover. Annouschka obeyed; and Vaninka, with flowers in her hair and her breast covered with jewels, glided like a phantom into her servant's room.

Annouschka again opened the chest, and Vaninka, without shedding a tear, without breathing a sigh, with the profound and deathlike calm of despair, leant down towards Foedor and took off a plain ring which the young man had on his finger, placed it on her own, between two magnificent rings, then kissing him on the brow, she said, "Goodbye, my betrothed."

At this moment she heard steps approaching. It was a groom of the chambers coming from the general to ask if she were ready. Annouschka let the lid of the chest fall, and Vaninka going herself to open the door, followed the messenger, who walked before her, lighting the way.

Such was her trust in her foster-sister that she left her to accomplish the dark and terrible task with which she had burdened herself.

A minute later, Annouschka saw the carriage containing the general and his daughter leave by the main gate of the hotel.

She let half an hour go by, and then went down to look for Ivan. She found him drinking with Gregory, with whom the general had kept his word, and who had received the same day one thousand roubles and his liberty. Fortunately, the revellers were only beginning their rejoicings, and Ivan in consequence was sober enough for his sister to entrust her secret to him without hesitation.

Ivan followed Annouschka into the chamber of her mistress. There she reminded him of all that Vaninka, haughty but generous, had allowed his sister to do for him. The, few glasses of brandy Ivan had already swallowed had predisposed him to gratitude (the drunkenness of the Russian is essentially tender). Ivan protested his devotion so warmly that Annouschka hesitated no longer, and, raising the lid of the chest, showed him the corpse of Foedor. At this terrible sight Ivan remained an instant motionless, but he soon began to calculate how much money and how many benefits the possession of such a secret would bring him. He swore by the most solemn oaths never to betray his mistress, and offered, as Annouschka had hoped, to dispose of the body of the unfortunate aide-de-camp.

The thing was easily done. Instead of returning to drink with Gregory and his comrades, Ivan went to prepare a sledge, filled it with straw, and hid at the bottom an iron crowbar. He brought this to the outside gate, and assuring himself he was not being spied upon, he raised the body of the dead man in his arms, hid it under the straw, and sat down above it. He had the gate of the hotel opened, followed Niewski Street as far as the Zunamenie Church, passed through the shops in the Rejestwenskoi district, drove the sledge out on to the frozen Neva, and halted in the middle of the river, in front of the deserted church of *Ste. Madeleine*. There, protected by the solitude and darkness, hidden behind the black mass of his sledge, he began to break the ice, which was fifteen inches thick, with his pick. When he had made a large enough hole, he searched the body of Foedor, took all the money he had about him, and slipped the body head foremost through the opening he had made. He then made his way back to the hotel, while the imprisoned current of the Neva bore away the corpse towards the Gulf of Finland. An hour after, a new crust of ice had formed, and not even a

trace of the opening made by Ivan remained.

At midnight Vaninka returned with her father. A hidden fever had been consuming her all the evening: never had she looked so lovely, and she had been overwhelmed by the homage of the most distinguished nobles and courtiers. When she returned, she found Annouschka in the vestibule waiting to take her cloak. As she gave it to her, Vaninka sent her one of those questioning glances that seem to express so much. "It is done," said the girl in a low voice. Vaninka breathed a sigh of relief, as if a mountain had been removed from her breast. Great as was her self-control, she could no longer bear her father's presence, and excused herself from remaining to supper with him, on the plea of the fatigues of the evening. Vaninka was no sooner in her room, with the door once closed, than she tore the flowers from her hair, the necklace from her throat, cut with scissors the corsets which suffocated her, and then, throwing herself on her bed, she gave way to her grief. Annouschka thanked God for this outburst; her mistress's calmness had frightened her more than her despair. The first crisis over, Vaninka was able to pray. She spent an hour on her knees, then, yielding to the entreaties of her faithful attendant, went to bed. Annouschka sat down at the foot of the bed.

Neither slept, but when day came the tears which Vaninka had shed had calmed her.

Annouschka was instructed to reward her brother. Too large a sum given to a slave at once might have aroused suspicion, therefore Annouschka contented herself with telling Ivan that when he had need of money he had only to ask her for it.

Gregory, profiting by his liberty and wishing to make use of his thousand roubles, bought a little tavern on the outskirts of the town, where, thanks to his address and to the acquaintances he had among the servants in the great households of St. Petersburg, he began to develop an excellent business, so that in a short time the Red House (which was the name and colour of Gregory's establishment) had a great reputation. Another man took over his duties about the person of the general, and but for Foedor's absence everything returned to its usual routine in the house of Count Tchermayloff.

Two months went by in this way, without anybody having the least suspicion of what had happened, when one morning before the usual breakfast-hour the

general begged his daughter to come down to his room. Vaninka trembled with fear, for since that fatal night everything terrified her. She obeyed her father, and collecting all her strength, made her way to his chamber, The count was alone, but at the first glance Vaninka saw she had nothing to fear from this interview: the general was waiting for her with that paternal smile which was the usual expression of his countenance when in his daughter's presence.

She approached, therefore, with her usual calmness, and, stooping down towards the general, gave him her forehead to kiss.

He motioned to her to sit down, and gave her an open letter. Vaninka looked at him for a moment in surprise, then turned her eyes to the letter.

It contained the news of the death of the man to whom her hand had been promised: he had been killed in a duel.

The general watched the effect of the letter on his daughter's face, and great as was Vaninka's self-control, so many different thoughts, such bitter regret, such poignant remorse assailed her when she learnt that she was now free again, that she could not entirely conceal her emotion. The general noticed it, and attributed it to the love which he had for a long time suspected his daughter felt for the young aide-de-camp.

"Well," he said, smiling, "I see it is all for the best."

"How is that, father?" asked Vaninka.

"Doubtless," said the general. "Did not Foedor leave because he loved you?"

"Yes," murmured the young girl.

"Well, now he may return," said the general.

Vaninka remained silent, her eyes fixed, her lips trembling.

"Return!" she said, after a moment's silence.

"Yes, certainly return. We shall be most unfortunate," continued the general, smiling, "if we cannot find someone in the house who knows where he is. Come, Vaninka, tell me the place of his exile, and I will undertake the rest."

“Nobody knows where Foedor is,” murmured Vaninka in a hollow voice; “nobody but God, nobody!”

“What!” said the general, “he has sent you no news since the day he left?”

Vaninka shook her head in denial. She was so heartbroken that she could not speak.

The general in his turn became gloomy. “Do you fear some misfortune, then?” said he.

“I fear that I shall never be happy again on earth,” cried Vaninka, giving way under the pressure of her grief; then she continued at once, “Let me retire, father; I am ashamed of what I have said.”

The general, who saw nothing in this exclamation beyond regret for having allowed the confession of her love to escape her, kissed his daughter on the brow and allowed her to retire. He hoped that, in spite of the mournful way in which Vaninka had spoken of Foedor, that it would be possible to find him. The same day he went to the emperor and told him of the love of Foedor for his daughter, and requested, since death had freed her from her first engagement, that he might dispose of her hand. The emperor consented, and the general then solicited a further favour. Paul was in one of his kindly moods, and showed himself disposed to grant it. The general told him that Foedor had disappeared for two months; that everyone, even his daughter, was ignorant of his whereabouts, and begged him to have inquiries made. The emperor immediately sent for the chief of police, and gave him the necessary orders.

Six weeks went by without any result. Vaninka, since the day when the letter came, was sadder and more melancholy than ever. Vainly from time to time the general tried to make her more hopeful. Vaninka only shook her head and withdrew. The general ceased to speak, of Foedor.

But it was not the same among the household. The young aide-de-camp had been popular with the servants, and, with the exception of Gregory, there was not a soul who wished him harm, so that, when it became known that he had not been sent on a mission, but had disappeared, the matter became the constant subject of conversation in the antechamber, the kitchen, and the stables. There was another place where people busied themselves about it a great deal—this was the Red House.

From the day when he heard of Foedor's mysterious departure Gregory had his suspicions. He was sure that he had seen Foedor enter Vaninka's room, and unless he had gone out while he was going to seek the general, he did not understand why the latter had not found him in his daughter's room. Another thing occupied his mind, which it seemed to him might perhaps have some connection with this event—the amount of money Ivan had been spending since that time, a very extraordinary amount for a slave. This slave, however, was the brother of Vaninka's cherished foster-sister, so that, without being sure, Gregory already suspected the source from whence this money came. Another thing confirmed him in his suspicions, which was that Ivan, who had not only remained his most faithful friend, but had become one of his best customers, never spoke of Foedor, held his tongue if he were mentioned in his presence, and to all questions, however pressing they were, made but one answer: "Let us speak of something else."

In the meantime the Feast of Kings arrived. This is a great day in St. Petersburg, for it is also the day for blessing the waters.

As Vaninka had been present at the ceremony, and was fatigued after standing for two hours on the Neva, the general did not go out that evening, and gave Ivan leave to do so. Ivan profited by the permission to go to the Red House.

There was a numerous company there, and Ivan was welcomed; for it was known that he generally came with full pockets. This time he did not belie his reputation, and had scarcely arrived before he made the sorok-kopecks ring, to the great envy of his companions.

At this warning sound Gregory hastened up with all possible deference, a bottle of brandy in each hand; for he knew that when Ivan summoned him he gained in two ways, as innkeeper and as boon companion. Ivan did not disappoint these hopes, and Gregory was invited to share in the entertainment. The conversation turned on slavery, and some of the unhappy men, who had only four days in the year of respite from their eternal labour, talked loudly of the happiness Gregory had enjoyed since he had obtained his freedom.

"Bah!" said Ivan, on whom the brandy had begun to take effect, "there are some slaves who are freer than their masters."

"What do you mean?" said Gregory, pouring him out another glass of brandy.

“I meant to say happier,” said Ivan quickly.

“It is difficult to prove that,” said Gregory doubtfully.

“Why difficult? Our masters, the moment they are born, are put into the hands of two or three pedants, one French, another German, and a third English, and whether they like them or not, they must be content with their society till they are seventeen, and whether they wish to or not, must learn three barbarous languages, at the expense of our noble Russian tongue, which they have sometimes completely forgotten by the time the others are acquired. Again, if one of them wishes for some career, he must become a soldier: if he is a sublieutenant, he is the slave of the lieutenant; if he is a lieutenant, he is the slave of the captain, and the captain of the major, and so on up to the emperor, who is nobody’s slave, but who one fine day is surprised at the table, while walking, or in his bed, and is poisoned, stabbed, or strangled. If he chooses a civil career, it is much the same. He marries a wife, and does not love her; children come to him he knows not how, whom he has to provide for; he must struggle incessantly to provide for his family if he is poor, and if he is rich to prevent himself being robbed by his steward and cheated by his tenants. Is this life? While we, gentlemen, we are born, and that is the only pain we cost our mothers—all the rest is the master’s concern. He provides for us, he chooses our calling, always easy enough to learn if we are not quite idiots. Are we ill? His doctor attends us gratis; it is a loss to him if we die. Are we well? We have our four certain meals a day, and a good stove to sleep near at night. Do we fall in love? There is never any hindrance to our marriage, if the woman loves us; the master himself asks us to hasten our marriage, for he wishes us to have as many children as possible. And when the children are born, he does for them in their turn all he has done for us. Can you find me many great lords as happy as their slaves?”

“All this is true,” said Gregory, pouring him out another glass of brandy; “but, after all, you are not free.”

“Free to do what?” asked Ivan.

“Free to go where you will and when you will.”

“I am as free as the air,” replied Ivan.

“Nonsense!” said Gregory.

“Free as air, I tell you; for I have good masters, and above all a good mistress,” continued Ivan, with a significant smile, “and I have only to ask and it is done.”

“What! if after having got drunk here to-day, you asked to come back tomorrow to get drunk again?” said Gregory, who in his challenge to Ivan did not forget his own interests,—“if you asked that?”

“I should come back again,” said Ivan.

“Tomorrow?” said Gregory.

“Tomorrow, the day after, every day if I liked....”

“The fact is, Ivan is our young lady’s favourite,” said another of the count’s slaves who was present, profiting by his comrade Ivan’s liberality.

“It is all the same,” said Gregory; “for supposing such permission were given you, money would soon run short.”

“Never!” said Ivan, swallowing another glass of brandy, “never will Ivan want for money as long as there is a kopeck in my lady’s purse.”

“I did not find her so liberal,” said Gregory bitterly.

“Oh, you forget, my friend; you know well she does not reckon with her friends: remember the strokes of the knout.”

“I have no wish to speak about that,” said Gregory. “I know that she is generous with blows, but her money is another thing. I have never seen the colour of that.”

“Well, would you like to see the colour of mine?” said Ivan, getting more and more drunk. “See here, here are kopecks, sorok-kopecks, blue notes worth five roubles, red notes worth twenty five roubles, and tomorrow, if you like, I will show you white notes worth fifty roubles. A health to my lady Vaninka!” And Ivan held out his glass again, and Gregory filled it to the brim.

“But does money,” said Gregory, pressing Ivan more and more,—“does money make up for scorn?”

“Scorn!” said Ivan,—“scorn! Who scorns me? Do you, because you are free?”

Fine freedom! I would rather be a well-fed slave than a free man dying of hunger.”

“I mean the scorn of our masters,” replied Gregory.

“The scorn of our masters! Ask Alexis, ask Daniel there, if my lady scorns me.”

“The fact is,” said the two slaves in reply, who both belonged to the general’s household, “Ivan must certainly have a charm; for everyone talks to him as if to a master.”

“Because he is Annouschka’s brother,” said Gregory, “and Annouschka is my lady’s foster-sister.”

“That may be so,” said the two slaves.

“For that reason or for some other,” said Ivan; “but, in short, that is the case.”

“Yes; but if your sister should die?” said Gregory. “Ah!”

“If my sister should die, that would be a pity, for she is a good girl. I drink to her health! But if she should die, that would make no difference. I am respected for myself; they respect me because they fear me.”

“Fear my lord Ivan!” said Gregory, with a loud laugh. “It follows, then, that if my lord Ivan were tired of receiving orders, and gave them in his turn, my lord Ivan would be obeyed.”

“Perhaps,” said Ivan.

“He said ‘perhaps,’ repeated Gregory, laughing louder than ever,—“he said ‘perhaps.’ Did you hear him?”

“Yes,” said the slaves, who had drunk so much that they could only answer in monosyllables.

“Well, I no longer say ‘perhaps,’ I now say ‘for certain.’”

“Oh, I should like to see that,” said Gregory; “I would give something to see that.”

“Well, send away these fellows, who are getting drunk like pigs, and for nothing, you will find.”

“For nothing?” said Gregory. “You are jesting. Do you think I should give them drink for nothing?”

“Well, we shall see. How much would be their score, for your atrocious brandy, if they drank from now till midnight, when you are obliged to shut up your tavern?”

“Not less than twenty roubles.”

“Here are thirty; turn there out, and let us remain by ourselves.”

“Friends,” said Gregory, taking out his watch as if to look at the time, “it is just upon midnight; you know the governor’s orders, so you must go.” The men, habituated like all Russians to passive obedience, went without a murmur, and Gregory found himself alone with Ivan and the two other slaves of the general.

“Well, here we are alone,” said Gregory. “What do you mean to do?”

“Well, what would you say,” replied Ivan, “if in spite of the late hour and the cold, and in spite of the fact that we are only slaves, my lady were to leave her father’s house and come to drink our healths?”

“I would say that you ought to take advantage of it,” said Gregory, shrugging his shoulders, “and tell her to bring at the same time a bottle of brandy. There is probably better brandy in the general’s cellar than in mine.”

“There is better,” said Ivan, as if he was perfectly sure of it, “and my lady shall bring you a bottle of it.”

“You are mad!” said Gregory.

“He is mad!” repeated the other two slaves mechanically.

“Oh, I am mad?” said Ivan. “Well, will you take a wager?”

“What will you wager?”

“Two hundred roubles against a year of free drinking in your inn.”

“Done!” said Gregory.

“Are your comrades included?” said the two moujiks.

“They are included,” said Ivan, “and in consideration of them we will reduce the time to six months. Is that agreed?”

“It is agreed,” said Gregory.

The two who were making the wager shook hands, and the agreement was perfected. Then, with an air of confidence, assumed to confound the witnesses of this strange scene, Ivan wrapped himself in the fur coat which, like a cautious man, he had spread on the stove, and went out.

At the end of half an hour he reappeared.

“Well!” cried Gregory and the two slaves together.

“She is following,” said Ivan.

The three tipplers looked at one another in amazement, but Ivan quietly returned to his place in the middle of them, poured out a new bumper, and raising his glass, cried—

“To my lady’s health! It is the least we can do when she is kind enough to come and join us on so cold a night, when the snow is falling fast.”

“Annouschka,” said a voice outside, “knock at this door and ask Gregory if he has not some of our servants with him.”

Gregory and the two other slaves looked at one another, stupefied: they had recognised Vaninka’s voice. As for Ivan, he flung himself back in his chair, balancing himself with marvellous impertinence.

Annouschka opened the door, and they could see, as Ivan had said, that the snow was falling heavily.

“Yes, madam,” said the girl; “my brother is there, with Daniel and Alexis.”

Vaninka entered.

“My friends,” said she, with a strange smile, “I am told that you were drinking my health, and I have come to bring you something to drink it again. Here is a bottle of old French brandy which I have chosen for you from my father’s cellar. Hold out your glasses.”

Gregory and the slaves obeyed with the slowness and hesitation of astonishment, while Ivan held out his glass with the utmost effrontery.

Vaninka filled them to the brim herself, and then, as they hesitated to drink, “Come, drink to my health, friends,” said she.

“Hurrah!” cried the drinkers, reassured by the kind and familiar tone of their noble visitor, as they emptied their glasses at a draught.

Vaninka at once poured them out another glass; then putting the bottle on the table, “Empty the bottle, my friends,” said she, “and do not trouble about me. Annouschka and I, with the permission 2668 of the master of the house, will sit near the stove till the storm is over.”

Gregory tried to rise and place stools near the stove, but whether he was quite drunk or whether some narcotic had been mixed with the brandy, he fell back on his seat, trying to stammer out an excuse.

“It is all right,” said Vaninka: “do not disturb yourselves; drink, my friends, drink.”

The revellers profited by this permission, and each emptied the glass before him. Scarcely had Gregory emptied his before he fell forward on the table.

“Good!” said Vaninka to her maid in a low voice: “the opium is taking effect.”

“What do you mean to do?” said Annouschka.

“You will soon see,” was the answer.

The two moujiks followed the example of the master of the house, and fell down side by side on the ground. Ivan was left struggling against sleep, and trying to sing a drinking song; but soon his tongue refused to obey him, his eyes closed in

spite of him, and seeking the tune that escaped him, and muttering words he was unable to pronounce, he fell fast asleep near his companions.

Immediately Vaninka rose, fixed them with flashing eyes, and called them by name one after another. There was no response.

Then she clapped her hands and cried joyfully, "The moment has come!" Going to the back of the room, she brought thence an armful of straw, placed it in a corner of the room, and did the same in the other corners. She then took a flaming brand from the stove and set fire in succession to the four corners of the room.

"What are you doing?" said Annouschka, wild with terror, trying to stop her.

"I am going to bury our secret in the ashes of this house," answered Vaninka.

"But my brother, my poor brother!" said the girl.

"Your brother is a wretch who has betrayed me, and we are lost if we do not destroy him."

"Oh, my brother, my poor brother!"

"You can die with him if you like," said Vaninka, accompanying the proposal with a smile which showed she would not have been sorry if Annouschka had carried sisterly affection to that length.

"But look at the fire, madam—the fire!"

"Let us go, then," said Vaninka; and, dragging out the heartbroken girl, she locked the door behind her and threw the key far away into the snow.

"In the name of Heaven," said Annouschka, "let us go home quickly: I cannot gaze upon this awful sight!"

"No, let us stay here!" said Vaninka, holding her back with a grasp of almost masculine strength. "Let us stay until the house falls in on them, so that we may be certain that not one of them escapes."

“Oh, my God!” cried Annouschka, falling on her knees, “have mercy upon my poor brother, for death will hurry him unprepared into Thy presence.”

“Yes, yes, pray; that is right,” said Vaninka. “I wish to destroy their bodies, not their souls.”

Vaninka stood motionless, her arms crossed, brilliantly lit up by the flames, while her attendant prayed. The fire did not last long: the house was wooden, with the crevices filled with oakum, like all those of Russian peasants, so that the flames, creeping out at the four corners, soon made great headway, and, fanned by the wind, spread rapidly to all parts of the building. Vaninka followed the progress of the fire with blazing eyes, fearing to see some half-burnt spectral shape rush out of the flames. At last the roof fell in, and Vaninka, relieved of all fear, then at last made her way to the general’s house, into which the two women entered without being seen, thanks to the permission Annouschka had to go out at any hour of the day or night.

The next morning the sole topic of conversation in St. Petersburg was the fire at the Red House. Four half-consumed corpses were dug out from beneath the ruins, and as three of the general’s slaves were missing, he had no doubt that the unrecognisable bodies were those of Ivan, Daniel, and Alexis: as for the fourth, it was certainly that of Gregory.

The cause of the fire remained a secret from everyone: the house was solitary, and the snowstorm so violent that nobody had met the two women on the deserted road. Vaninka was sure of her maid. Her secret then had perished with Ivan. But now remorse took the place of fear: the young girl who was so pitiless and inflexible in the execution of the deed quailed at its remembrance. It seemed to her that by revealing the secret of her crime to a priest, she would be relieved of her terrible burden. She therefore sought a confessor renowned for his lofty charity, and, under the seal of confession, told him all. The priest was horrified by the story. Divine mercy is boundless, but human forgiveness has its limits. He refused Vaninka the absolution she asked. This refusal was terrible: it would banish Vaninka from the Holy Table; this banishment would be noticed, and could not fail to be attributed to some unheard-of and secret crime. Vaninka fell at the feet of the priest, and in the name of her father, who would be disgraced by her shame, begged him to mitigate the rigour of this sentence.

The confessor reflected deeply, then thought he had found a way to obviate such

consequences. It was that Vaninka should approach the Holy Table with the other young girls; the priest would stop before her as before all the others, but only say to her, "Pray and weep"; the congregation, deceived by this, would think that she had received the Sacrament like her companions. This was all that Vaninka could obtain.

This confession took place about seven o'clock in the evening, and the solitude of the church, added to the darkness of night, had given it a still more awful character. The confessor returned home, pale and trembling. His wife Elizabeth was waiting for him alone. She had just put her little daughter Arina, who was eight years old, to bed in an adjoining room. When she saw her husband, she uttered a cry of terror, so changed and haggard was his appearance. The confessor tried to reassure her, but his trembling voice only increased her alarm. She asked the cause of his agitation; the confessor refused to tell her. Elizabeth had heard the evening before that her mother was ill; she thought that her husband had received some bad news. The day was Monday, which is considered an unlucky day among the Russians, and, going out that day, Elizabeth had met a man in mourning; these omens were too numerous and too strong not to portend misfortune.

Elizabeth burst into tears, and cried out, "My mother is dead!"

The priest in vain tried to reassure her by telling her that his agitation was not due to that. The poor woman, dominated by one idea, made no response to his protestations but this everlasting cry, "My mother is dead!"

Then, to bring her to reason, the confessor told her that his emotion was due to the avowal of a crime which he had just heard in the confessional. But Elizabeth shook her head: it was a trick, she said, to hide from her the sorrow which had fallen upon her. Her agony, instead of calming, became more violent; her tears ceased to flow, and were followed by hysterics. The priest then made her swear to keep the secret, and the sanctity of the confession was betrayed.

Little Arina had awakened at Elizabeth's cries, and being disturbed and at the same time curious as to what her parents were doing, she got up, went to listen at the door, and heard all.

The day for the Communion came; the church of St. Simeon was crowded. Vaninka came to kneel at the railing of the choir. Behind her was her father and

his aides-de-camp, and behind them their servants.

Arina was also in the church with her mother. The inquisitive child wished to see Vaninka, whose name she had heard pronounced that terrible night, when her father had failed in the first and most sacred of the duties imposed on a priest. While her mother was praying, she left her chair and glided among the worshippers, nearly as far as the railing.

But when she had arrived there, she was stopped by the group of the general's servants. But Arina had not come so far to be, stopped so easily: she tried to push between them, but they opposed her; she persisted, and one of them pushed her roughly back. The child fell, struck her head against a seat, and got up bleeding and crying, "You are very proud for a slave. Is it because you belong to the great lady who burnt the Red House?"

These words, uttered in a loud voice, in the midst of the silence which preceded, the sacred ceremony, were heard by everyone. They were answered by a shriek. Vaninka had fainted. The next day the general, at the feet of Paul, recounted to him, as his sovereign and judge, the whole terrible story, which Vaninka, crushed by her long struggle, had at last revealed to him, at night, after the scene in the church.

The emperor remained for a moment in thought at the end of this strange confession; then, getting up from the chair where he had been sitting while the miserable father told his story, he went to a bureau, and wrote on a sheet of paper the following sentence:

"The priest having violated what should have been inviolable, the secrets of the confessional, is exiled to Siberia and deprived of his priestly office. His wife will follow him: she is to be blamed for not having respected his character as a minister of the altar. The little girl will not leave her parents.

"Annouschka, the attendant, will also go to Siberia for not having made known to her master his daughter's conduct.

"I preserve all my esteem for the general, and I mourn with him for the deadly blow which has struck him.

"As for Vaninka, I know of no punishment which can be inflicted upon her. I only see in her the daughter of a brave soldier, whose whole life has been

devoted to the service of his country. Besides, the extraordinary way in which the crime was discovered, seems to place the culprit beyond the limits of my severity. I leave her punishment in her own hands. If I understand her character, if any feeling of dignity remains to her, her heart and her remorse will show her the path she ought to follow.”

Paul handed the paper open to the general, ordering him to take it to Count Pahlen, the governor of St. Petersburg.

On the following day the emperor’s orders were carried out.

Vaninka went into a convent, where towards the end of the same year she died of shame and grief.

The general found the death he sought on the field of Austerlitz.

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CELEBRATED CRIMES VOLUME 8 (of 8), Part 3

By Alexander Dumas, Pere

THE MARQUISE DE GANGES

Toward the close of the year 1657, a very plain carriage, with no arms painted on it, stopped, about eight o’clock one evening, before the door of a house in the rue Hautefeuille, at which two other coaches were already standing. A lackey at once got down to open the carriage door; but a sweet, though rather tremulous voice stopped him, saying, “Wait, while I see whether this is the place.”

Then a head, muffled so closely in a black satin mantle that no feature could be

distinguished, was thrust from one of the carriage windows, and looking around, seemed to seek for some decisive sign on the house front. The unknown lady appeared to be satisfied by her inspection, for she turned back to her companion.

“It is here,” said she. “There is the sign.”

As a result of this certainty, the carriage door was opened, the two women alighted, and after having once more raised their eyes to a strip of wood, some six or eight feet long by two broad, which was nailed above the windows of the second storey, and bore the inscription, “Madame Voison, midwife,” stole quickly into a passage, the door of which was unfastened, and in which there was just so much light as enabled persons passing in or out to find their way along the narrow winding stair that led from the ground floor to the fifth storey. The two strangers, one of whom appeared to be of far higher rank than the other, did not stop, as might have been expected, at the door corresponding with the inscription that had guided them, but, on the contrary, went on to the next floor.

Here, upon the landing, was a kind of dwarf, oddly dressed after the fashion of sixteenth-century Venetian buffoons, who, when he saw the two women coming, stretched out a wand, as though to prevent them from going farther, and asked what they wanted.

“To consult the spirit,” replied the woman of the sweet and tremulous voice.

“Come in and wait,” returned the dwarf, lifting a panel of tapestry and ushering the two women into a waiting-room.

The women obeyed, and remained for about half an hour, seeing and hearing nothing. At last a door, concealed by the tapestry, was suddenly opened; a voice uttered the word “Enter,” and the two women were introduced into a second room, hung with black, and lighted solely by a three-branched lamp that hung from the ceiling. The door closed behind them, and the clients found themselves face to face with the sibyl.

She was a woman of about twenty-five or twenty-six, who, unlike other women, evidently desired to appear older than she was. She was dressed in black; her hair hung in plaits; her neck, arms, and feet were bare; the belt at her waist was clasped by a large garnet which threw out sombre fires. In her hand she held a wand, and she was raised on a sort of platform which stood for the tripod of the ancients, and from which came acrid and penetrating fumes; she was, moreover,

fairly handsome, although her features were common, the eyes only excepted, and these, by some trick of the toilet, no doubt, looked inordinately large, and, like the garnet in her belt, emitted strange lights.

When the two visitors came in, they found the soothsayer leaning her forehead on her hand, as though absorbed in thought. Fearing to rouse her from her ecstasy, they waited in silence until it should please her to change her position. At the end of ten minutes she raised her head, and seemed only now to become aware that two persons were standing before her.

“What is wanted of me again?” she asked, “and shall I have rest only in the grave?”

“Forgive me, madame,” said the sweet-voiced unknown, “but I am wishing to know—”

“Silence!” said the sibyl, in a solemn voice. “I will not know your affairs. It is to the spirit that you must address yourself; he is a jealous spirit, who forbids his secrets to be shared; I can but pray to him for you, and obey his will.”

At these words, she left her tripod, passed into an adjoining room, and soon returned, looking even paler and more anxious than before, and carrying in one hand a burning chafing dish, in the other a red paper. The three flames of the lamp grew fainter at the same moment, and the room was left lighted up only by the chafing dish; every object now assumed a fantastic air that did not fail to disquiet the two visitors, but it was too late to draw back.

The soothsayer placed the chafing dish in the middle of the room, presented the paper to the young woman who had spoken, and said to her—

“Write down what you wish to know.”

The woman took the paper with a steadier hand than might have been expected, seated herself at a table, and wrote:—

“Am I young? Am I beautiful? Am I maid, wife, or widow? This is for the past.

“Shall I marry, or marry again? Shall I live long, or shall I die young? This is for the future.”

Then, stretching out her hand to the soothsayer, she asked—

“What am I to do now with this?”

“Roll that letter around this ball,” answered the other, handing to the unknown a little ball of virgin wax. “Both ball and letter will be consumed in the flame before your eyes; the spirit knows your secrets already. In three days you will have the answer.”

The unknown did as the sibyl bade her; then the latter took from her hands the ball and the paper in which it was wrapped, and went and threw both into the chafing pan.

” And now all is done as it should be,” said the soothsayer. “Comus!”

The dwarf came in.

“See the lady to her coach.”

The stranger left a purse upon the table, and followed Comus. He conducted her and her companion, who was only a confidential maid, down a back staircase, used as an exit, and leading into a different street from that by which the two women had come in; but the coachman, who had been told beforehand of this circumstance, was awaiting them at the door, and they had only to step into their carriage, which bore them rapidly away in the direction of the rue Dauphine.

Three days later, according to the promise given her, the fair unknown, when she awakened, found on the table beside her a letter in an unfamiliar handwriting; it was addressed “To the beautiful Provencale,” and contained these words—

“You are young; you are beautiful; you are a widow. This is for the present.

“You will marry again; you will die young, and by a violent death. This is for the future. THE SPIRIT.”

The answer was written upon a paper like that upon which the questions had been set down.

The marquise turned pale and uttered a faint cry of terror; the answer was so perfectly correct in regard to the past as to call up a fear that it might be equally accurate in regard to the future.

The truth is that the unknown lady wrapped in a mantle whom we have escorted into the modern sibyl's cavern was no other than the beautiful Marie de Rossan, who before her marriage had borne the name of Mademoiselle de Chateaublanc, from that of an estate belonging to her maternal grandfather, M. Joannis de Nocheres, who owned a fortune of five to six hundred thousand livres. At the age of thirteen—that is to say, in 1649—she had married the Marquis de Castellane, a gentleman of very high birth, who claimed to be descended from John of Castille, the son of Pedro the Cruel, and from Juana de Castro, his mistress. Proud of his young wife's beauty, the Marquis de Castellane, who was an officer of the king's galleys, had hastened to present her at court. Louis XIV, who at the time of her presentation was barely twenty years old, was struck by her enchanting face, and to the great despair of the famous beauties of the day danced with her three times in one evening. Finally, as a crowning touch to her reputation, the famous Christina of Sweden, who was then at the French court, said of her that she had never, in any of the kingdoms through which she had passed, seen anything equal to "the beautiful Provencale." This praise had been so well received, that the name of "the beautiful Provencale" had clung to Madame de Castellane, and she was everywhere known by it.

This favour of Louis XIV and this summing up of Christina's had been enough to bring the Marquise de Castellane instantly into fashion; and Mignard, who had just received a patent of nobility and been made painter to the king, put the seal to her celebrity by asking leave to paint her portrait. That portrait still exists, and gives a perfect notion of the beauty which it represents; but as the portrait is far from our readers' eyes, we will content ourselves by repeating, in its own original words, the one given in 1667 by the author of a pamphlet published at Rouen under the following title: True and Principal Circumstances of the Deplorable Death of Madame the Marquise de Ganges:

[Note: It is from this pamphlet, and from the Account of the Death of Madame the Marquise de Ganges, formerly Marquise de Castellane, that we have borrowed the principal circumstances of this tragic story. To these documents we must add—that we may not be constantly referring our readers to original sources—the Celebrated Trials by Guyot de Pitaval, the Life of Marie de Rossan, and the Lettres galantes of Madame Desnoyers.]

“Her complexion, which was of a dazzling whiteness, was illumined by not too brilliant a red, and art itself could not have arranged more skilfully the gradations by which this red joined and merged into the whiteness of the complexion. The brilliance of her face was heightened by the decided blackness of her hair, growing, as though drawn by a painter of the finest taste, around a well proportioned brow; her large, well opened eyes were of the same hue as her hair, and shone with a soft and piercing flame that rendered it impossible to gaze upon her steadily; the smallness, the shape, the turn of her mouth, and, the beauty of her teeth were incomparable; the position and the regular proportion of her nose added to her beauty such an air of dignity, as inspired a respect for her equal to the love that might be inspired by her beauty; the rounded contour of her face, produced by a becoming plumpness, exhibited all the vigour and freshness of health; to complete her charms, her glances, the movements of her lips and of her head, appeared to be guided by the graces; her shape corresponded to the beauty of her face; lastly, her arms, her hands, her bearing, and her gait were such that nothing further could be wished to complete the agreeable presentment of a beautiful woman.”

[Note: All her contemporaries, indeed, are in agreement as to her marvellous beauty; here is a second portrait of the marquise, delineated in a style and manner still more characteristic of that period:—

“You will remember that she had a complexion smoother and finer than a mirror, that her whiteness was so well commingled with the lively blood as to produce an exact admixture never beheld elsewhere, and imparting to her countenance the tenderest animation; her eyes and hair were blacker than jet; her eyes, I say, of which the gaze could scarce, from their excess of lustre, be supported, which have been celebrated as a miracle of tenderness and sprightliness, which have given rise, a thousand times, to the finest compliments of the day, and have been the torment of many a rash man, must excuse me, if I do not pause longer to praise them, in a letter; her mouth was the feature of her face which compelled the most critical to avow that they had seen none of equal perfection, and that, by its shape, its smallness, and its brilliance, it might furnish a pattern for all those others whose sweetness and charms had been so highly vaunted; her nose conformed to the fair proportion of all her features; it was, that is to say, the

finest in the world; the whole shape of her face was perfectly round, and of so charming a fullness that such an assemblage of beauties was never before seen together. The expression of this head was one of unparalleled sweetness and of a majesty which she softened rather by disposition than by study; her figure was opulent, her speech agreeable, her step noble, her demeanour easy, her temper sociable, her wit devoid of malice, and founded upon great goodness of heart.”]

It is easy to understand that a woman thus endowed could not, in a court where gallantry was more pursued than in any other spot in the world, escape the calumnies of rivals; such calumnies, however, never produced any result, so correctly, even in the absence of her husband, did the marquise contrive to conduct herself; her cold and serious conversation, rather concise than lively, rather solid than brilliant, contrasted, indeed, with the light turn, the capricious and fanciful expressions employed by the wits of that time; the consequence was that those who had failed to succeed with her, tried to spread a report that the marquise was merely a beautiful idol, virtuous with the virtue of a statue. But though such things might be said and repeated in the absence of the marquise, from the moment that she appeared in a drawing-room, from the moment that her beautiful eyes and sweet smile added their indefinable expression to those brief, hurried, and sensible words that fell from her lips, the most prejudiced came back to her and were forced to own that God had never before created anything that so nearly touched perfection.

She was thus in the enjoyment of a triumph that backbiters failed to shake, and that scandal vainly sought to tarnish, when news came of the wreck of the French galleys in Sicilian waters, and of the death of the Marquis de Castellane, who was in command. The marquise on this occasion, as usual, displayed the greatest piety and propriety: although she had no very violent passion for her husband, with whom she had spent scarcely one of the seven years during which their marriage had lasted, on receipt of the news she went at once into retreat, going to live with Madame d’Ampus, her mother-in-law, and ceasing not only to receive visitors but also to go out.

Six months after the death of her husband, the marquise received letters from her grandfather, M. Joannis de Nocheres, begging her to come and finish her time of mourning at Avignon. Having been fatherless almost from childhood, Mademoiselle de Chateaublanc had been brought up by this good old man,

whom she loved dearly; she hastened accordingly to accede to his invitation, and prepared everything for her departure.

This was at the moment when la Voisin, still a young woman, and far from having the reputation which she subsequently acquired, was yet beginning to be talked of. Several friends of the Marquise de Castellane had been to consult her, and had received strange predictions from her, some of which, either through the art of her who framed them, or through some odd concurrence of circumstances, had come true. The marquise could not resist the curiosity with which various tales that she had heard of this woman's powers had inspired her, and some days before setting out for Avignon she made the visit which we have narrated. What answer she received to her questions we have seen.

The marquise was not superstitious, yet this fatal prophecy impressed itself upon her mind and left behind a deep trace, which neither the pleasure of revisiting her native place, nor the affection of her grandfather, nor the fresh admiration which she did not fail to receive, could succeed in removing; indeed, this fresh admiration was a weariness to the marquise, and before long she begged leave of her grandfather to retire into a convent and to spend there the last three months of her mourning.

It was in that place, and it was with the warmth of these poor cloistered maidens, that she heard a man spoken of for the first time, whose reputation for beauty, as a man, was equal to her own, as a woman. This favourite of nature was the sieur de Lenide, Marquis de Ganges, Baron of Languedoc, and governor of Saint-Andre, in the diocese of Uzes. The marquise heard of him so often, and it was so frequently declared to her that nature seemed to have formed them for each other, that she began to allow admission to a very strong desire of seeing him. Doubtless, the sieur de Lenide, stimulated by similar suggestions, had conceived a great wish to meet the marquise; for, having got M. de Nocheres who no doubt regretted her prolonged retreat—to entrust him with a commission for his granddaughter, he came to the convent parlour and asked for the fair recluse. She, although she had never seen him, recognised him at the first glance; for having never seen so handsome a cavalier as he who now presented himself before her, she thought this could be no other than the Marquis de Ganges, of whom people had so often spoken to her.

That which was to happen, happened: the Marquise de Castellane and the Marquis de Ganges could not look upon each other without loving. Both were

young, the marquis was noble and in a good position, the marquise was rich; everything in the match, therefore, seemed suitable: and indeed it was deferred only for the space of time necessary to complete the year of mourning, and the marriage was celebrated towards the beginning of the year 1558. The marquis was twenty years of age, and the marquise twenty-two.

The beginnings of this union were perfectly happy; the marquis was in love for the first time, and the marquise did not remember ever to have been in love. A son and a daughter came to complete their happiness. The marquise had entirely forgotten the fatal prediction, or, if she occasionally thought of it now, it was to wonder that she could ever have believed in it. Such happiness is not of this world, and when by chance it lingers here a while, it seems sent rather by the anger than by the goodness of God. Better, indeed, would it be for him who possesses and who loses it, never to have known it.

The Marquis de Ganges was the first to weary of this happy life. Little by little he began to miss the pleasures of a young man; he began to draw away from the marquise and to draw nearer to his former friends. On her part, the marquise, who for the sake of wedded intimacy had sacrificed her habits of social life, threw herself into society, where new triumphs awaited her. These triumphs aroused the jealousy of the marquis; but he was too much a man of his century to invite ridicule by any manifestation; he shut his jealousy into his soul, and it emerged in a different form on every different occasion. To words of love, so sweet that they seemed the speech of angels, succeeded those bitter and biting utterances that foretell approaching division. Before long, the marquis and the marquise only saw each other at hours when they could not avoid meeting; then, on the pretext of necessary journeys, and presently without any pretext at all, the marquis would go away for three-quarters of a year, and once more the marquise found herself widowed. Whatever contemporary account one may consult, one finds them all agreeing to declare that she was always the same—that is to say, full of patience, calmness, and becoming behaviour—and it is rare to find such a unanimity of opinion about a young and beautiful woman.

About this time the marquis, finding it unendurable to be alone with his wife during the short spaces of time which he spent at home, invited his two brothers, the chevalier and the abbe de Ganges, to come and live with him. He had a third brother, who, as the second son, bore the title of comte, and who was colonel of the Languedoc regiment, but as this gentleman played no part in this story we shall not concern ourselves with him.

The abbe de Ganges, who bore that title without belonging to the Church, had assumed it in order to enjoy its privileges: he was a kind of wit, writing madrigals and 'bouts-rimes' [Bouts-rimes are verses written to a given set of rhymes.] on occasion, a handsome man enough, though in moments of impatience his eyes would take a strangely cruel expression; as dissolute and shameless to boot, as though he had really belonged to the clergy of the period.

The chevalier de Ganges, who shared in some measure the beauty so profusely showered upon the family, was one of those feeble men who enjoy their own nullity, and grow on to old age inapt alike for good and evil, unless some nature of a stronger stamp lays hold on them and drags them like faint and pallid satellites in its wake. This was what befell the chevalier in respect of his brother: submitted to an influence of which he himself was not aware, and against which, had he but suspected it, he would have rebelled with the obstinacy of a child, he was a machine obedient to the will of another mind and to the passions of another heart, a machine which was all the more terrible in that no movement of instinct or of reason could, in his case, arrest the impulse given.

Moreover, this influence which the abbe had acquired over the chevalier extended, in some degree also, to the marquis. Having as a younger son no fortune, having no revenue, for though he wore a Churchman's robes he did not fulfil a Churchman's functions, he had succeeded in persuading the marquis, who was rich, not only in the enjoyment of his own fortune, but also in that of his wife, which was likely to be nearly doubled at the death of M. de Nocheres, that some zealous man was needed who would devote himself to the ordering of his house and the management of his property; and had offered himself for the post. The marquis had very gladly accepted, being, as we have said, tired by this time of his solitary home life; and the abbe had brought with him the chevalier, who followed him like his shadow, and who was no more regarded than if he had really possessed no body.

The marquise often confessed afterwards that when she first saw these two men, although their outward aspect was perfectly agreeable, she felt herself seized by a painful impression, and that the fortune-teller's prediction of a violent death, which she had so long forgotten, gashed out like lightning before her eyes. The effect on the two brothers was not of the same kind: the beauty of the marquise struck them both, although in different ways. The chevalier was in ecstasies of admiration, as though before a beautiful statue, but the impression that she made upon him was that which would have been made by marble, and if the chevalier

had been left to himself the consequences of this admiration would have been no less harmless. Moreover, the chevalier did not attempt either to exaggerate or to conceal this impression, and allowed his sister-in-law to see in what manner she struck him. The abbe, on the contrary, was seized at first sight with a deep and violent desire to possess this woman—the most beautiful whom he had ever met; but being as perfectly capable of mastering his sensations as the chevalier was incapable, he merely allowed such words of compliment to escape him as weigh neither with him who utters nor her who hears them; and yet, before the close of this first interview, the abbe had decided in his irrevocable will that this woman should be his.

As for the marquise, although the impression produced by her two brothers-in-law could never be entirely effaced, the wit of the abbe, to which he gave, with amazing facility, whatever turn he chose, and the complete nullity of the chevalier brought her to certain feelings of less repulsion towards them: for indeed the marquise had one of those souls which never suspect evil, as long as it will take the trouble to assume any veil at all of seeming, and which only recognise it with regret when it resumes its true shape.

Meanwhile the arrival of these two new inmates soon spread a little more life and gaiety through the house. Furthermore; greatly to the astonishment of the marquise, her husband, who had so long been indifferent to her beauty, seemed to remark afresh that she was too charming to be despised; his words accordingly began little by little to express an affection that had long since gradually disappeared from them. The marquise had never ceased to love him; she had suffered the loss of his love with resignation, she hailed its return with joy, and three months elapsed that resembled those which had long ceased to be more to the poor wife than a distant and half-worn- out memory.

Thus she had, with the supreme facility of youth, always ready to be happy, taken up her gladness again, without even asking what genius had brought back to her the treasure which she had thought lost, when she received an invitation from a lady of the neighbourhood to spend some days in her country house. Her husband and her two brothers-in-law, invited with her, were of the party, and accompanied her. A great hunting party had been arranged beforehand, and almost immediately upon arriving everyone began to prepare for taking part in it.

The abbe, whose talents had made him indispensable in every company, declared that for that day he was the marquise's cavalier, a title which his sister-in-law,

with her usual amiability, confirmed. Each of the huntsmen, following this example, made choice of a lady to whom to dedicate his attentions throughout the day; then, this chivalrous arrangement being completed, all present directed their course towards the place of meeting.

That happened which almost always happens the dogs hunted on their own account. Two or three sportsmen only followed the dogs; the rest got lost. The abbe, in his character of esquire to the marquise, had not left her for a moment, and had managed so cleverly that he was alone with her—an opportunity which he had been seeking for a month previously with no less care—than the marquise had been using to avoid it. No sooner, therefore, did the marquise believe herself aware that the abbe had intentionally turned aside from the hunt than she attempted to gallop her horse in the opposite direction from that which she had been following; but the abbe stopped her. The marquise neither could nor would enter upon a struggle; she resigned herself, therefore, to hearing what the abbe had to say to her, and her face assumed that air of haughty disdain which women so well know how to put on when they wish a man to understand that he has nothing to hope from them. There was an instant's silence; the abbe was the first to break it.

“Madame,” said he, “I ask your pardon for having used this means to speak to you alone; but since, in spite of my rank of brother-in-law, you did not seem inclined to grant me that favour if I had asked it, I thought it would be better for me, to deprive you of the power to refuse it me.”

“If you have hesitated to ask me so simple a thing, monsieur,” replied the marquise, “and if you have taken such precautions to compel me to listen to you, it must, no doubt, be because you knew beforehand that the words you had to say to me were such as I could not hear. Have the goodness, therefore, to reflect, before you open this conversation, that here as elsewhere I reserve the right—and I warn you of it—to interrupt what you may say at the moment when it may cease to seem to me befitting.”

“As to that, madame,” said the abbe, “I think I can answer for it that whatever it may please me to say to you, you will hear to the end; but indeed the matters are so simple that there is no need to make you uneasy beforehand: I wished to ask you, madame, whether you have perceived a change in the conduct of your husband towards you.”

“Yes, monsieur,” replied the marquise, “and no single day has passed in which I have not thanked Heaven for this happiness.”

“And you have been wrong, madame,” returned the abbe, with one of those smiles that were peculiar to himself; “Heaven has nothing to do with it. Thank Heaven for having made you the most beautiful and charming of women, and that will be enough thanksgiving without despoiling me of such as belong to my share.”

“I do not understand you, monsieur,” said the marquise in an icy tone.

“Well, I will make myself comprehensible, my dear sister-in-law. I am the worker of the miracle for which you are thanking Heaven; to me therefore belongs your gratitude. Heaven is rich enough not to rob the poor.”

“You are right, monsieur: if it is really to you that I owe this return, the cause of which I did not know, I will thank you in the first place; and then afterwards I will thank Heaven for having inspired you with this good thought.”

“Yes,” answered the abbe, “but Heaven, which has inspired me with a good thought, may equally well inspire me with a bad one, if the good thought does not bring me what I expect from it.”

“What do you mean, monsieur?”

“That there has never been more than one will in the family, and that will is mine; that the minds of my two brothers turn according to the fancy of that will like weathercocks before the wind, and that he who has blown hot can blow cold.”

“I am still waiting for you to explain yourself, monsieur.”

“Well, then, my dear sister-in-law, since you are pleased not to understand me, I will explain myself more clearly. My brother turned from you through jealousy; I wished to give you an idea of my power over him, and from extreme indifference I have brought him back, by showing him that he suspected you wrongly, to the ardours of the warmest love. Well, I need only tell him that I was mistaken, and fix his wandering suspicions upon any man whatever, and I shall take him away from you, even as I have brought him back. I need give you no proof of what I say; you know perfectly well that I am speaking the truth.”

“And what object had you, in acting this part?”

“To prove to you, madame, that at my will I can cause you to be sad or joyful, cherished or neglected, adored or hated. Madame, listen to me: I love you.”

“You insult me, monsieur!” cried the marquise, trying to withdraw the bridle of her horse from the abbe’s hands.

“No fine words, my dear sister-in-law; for, with me, I warn you, they will be lost. To tell a woman one loves her is never an insult; only there are a thousand different ways of obliging her to respond to that love. The error is to make a mistake in the way that one employs—that is the whole of the matter.”

“And may I inquire which you have chosen?” asked the marquise, with a crushing smile of contempt.

“The only one that could succeed with a calm, cold, strong woman like you, the conviction that your interest requires you to respond to my love.”

“Since you profess to know me so well,” answered the marquise, with another effort, as unsuccessful as the former, to free the bridle of her horse, “you should know how a woman like me would receive such an overture; say to yourself what I might say to you, and above all, what I might say to my husband.”

The abbe smiled.

“Oh, as to that,” he returned, “you can do as you please, madame. Tell your husband whatever you choose; repeat our conversation word for word; add whatever your memory may furnish, true or false, that may be most convincing against me; then, when you have thoroughly given him his cue, when you think yourself sure of him, I will say two words to him, and turn him inside out like this glove. That is what I had to say to you, madame I will not detain you longer. You may have in me a devoted friend or a mortal enemy. Reflect.”

At these words the abbe loosed his hold upon the bridle of the marquise’s horse and left her free to guide it as she would. The marquise put her beast to a trot, so as to show neither fear nor haste. The abbe followed her, and both rejoined the hunt.

The abbe had spoken truly. The marquise, notwithstanding the threat which she

had made, reflected upon the influence which this man had over her husband, and of which she had often had proof she kept silence, therefore, and hoped that he had made himself seem worse than he was, to frighten her. On this point she was strangely mistaken.

The abbe, however, wished to see, in the first place, whether the marquise's refusal was due to personal antipathy or to real virtue. The chevalier, as has been said, was handsome; he had that usage of good society which does instead of mind, and he joined to it the obstinacy of a stupid man; the abbe undertook to persuade him that he was in love with the marquise. It was not a difficult matter. We have described the impression made upon the chevalier by the first sight of Madame de Ganges; but, owing beforehand the reputation of austerity that his sister-in-law had acquired, he had not the remotest idea of paying court to her. Yielding, indeed, to the influence which she exercised upon all who came in contact with her, the chevalier had remained her devoted servant; and the marquise, having no reason to mistrust civilities which she took for signs of friendliness, and considering his position as her husband's brother, treated him with less circumspection than was her custom.

The abbe sought him out, and, having made sure they were alone, said, "Chevalier, we both love the same woman, and that woman is our brother's wife; do not let us thwart each other: I am master of my passion, and can the more easily sacrifice it to you that I believe you are the man preferred; try, therefore, to obtain some assurance of the love which I suspect the marquise of having for you; and from the day when you reach that point I will withdraw, but otherwise, if you fail, give up your place civilly to me, that I may try, in my turn, whether her heart is really impregnable, as everybody says."

The chevalier had never thought of the possibility of winning the marquise; but from the moment in which his brother, with no apparent motive of personal interest, aroused the idea that he might be beloved, every spark of passion and of vanity that still existed in this automaton took fire, and he began to be doubly assiduous and attentive to his sister-in-law. She, who had never suspected any evil in this quarter, treated the chevalier at first with a kindness that was heightened by her scorn for the abbe. But, before long, the chevalier, misunderstanding the grounds of this kindness, explained himself more clearly. The marquise, amazed and at first incredulous, allowed him to say enough to make his intentions perfectly clear; then she stopped him, as she had done the abbe, by some of those galling words which women derive from their

indifference even more than from their virtue.

At this check, the chevalier, who was far from possessing his brother's strength and determination, lost all hope, and came candidly to own to the latter the sad result of his attentions and his love. This was what the abbe had awaited, in the first place for the satisfaction of his own vanity, and in the second place for the means of carrying out his schemes. He worked upon the chevalier's humiliation until he had wrought it into a solid hatred; and then, sure of having him for a supporter and even for an accomplice, he began to put into execution his plan against the marquise.

The consequence was soon shown in a renewal of alienation on the part of M. de Ganges. A young man whom the marquise sometimes met in society, and to whom, on account of his wit, she listened perhaps a little more willingly than to others, became, if not the cause, at least the excuse of a fresh burst of jealousy. This jealousy was exhibited as on previous occasions, by quarrels remote from the real grievance; but the marquise was not deceived: she recognised in this change the fatal hand of her brother-in-law. But this certainty, instead of drawing her towards him, increased her repulsion; and thenceforward she lost no opportunity of showing him not only that repulsion but also the contempt that accompanied it.

Matters remained in this state for some months. Every day the marquise perceived her husband growing colder, and although the spies were invisible she felt herself surrounded by a watchfulness that took note of the most private details of her life. As to the abbe and the chevalier, they were as usual; only the abbe had hidden his hate behind a smile that was habitual, and the chevalier his resentment behind that cold and stiff dignity in which dull minds enfold themselves when they believe themselves injured in their vanity.

In the midst of all this, M. Joannis de Nocheres died, and added to the already considerable fortune of his granddaughter another fortune of from six to seven hundred thousand livres.

This additional wealth became, on accruing to the marquise, what was then called, in countries where the Roman law prevailed, a 'paraphernal' estate that is to say that, falling in, after marriage? it was not included in the dowry brought by the wife, and that she could dispose freely both of the capital and the income, which might not be administered even by her husband without a power of

attorney, and of which she could dispose at pleasure, by donation or by will. And in fact, a few days after the marquise had entered into possession of her grandfather's estate, her husband and his brothers learned that she had sent for a notary in order to be instructed as to her rights. This step betokened an intention of separating this inheritance from the common property of the marriage; for the behaviour of the marquis towards his wife—of which within himself he often recognised the injustice—left him little hope of any other explanation.

About this time a strange event happened. At a dinner given by the marquise, a cream was served at dessert: all those who partook of this cream were ill; the marquis and his two brothers, who had not touched it, felt no evil effects. The remainder of this cream, which was suspected of having caused illness to the guests, and particularly to the marquise, who had taken of it twice, was analysed, and the presence of arsenic in it demonstrated. Only, having been mixed with milk, which is its antidote, the poison had lost some of its power, and had produced but half the expected effect. As no serious disaster had followed this occurrence, the blame was thrown upon a servant, who was said to have mistaken arsenic for sugar, and everybody forgot it, or appeared to forget it.

The marquis, however, seemed to be gradually and naturally drawing nearer again to his wife; but this time Madame de Ganges was not deceived by his returning kindness. There, as in his alienation, she saw the selfish hand of the abbe: he had persuaded his brother that seven hundred thousand livres more in the house would make it worth while to overlook some levities of behaviour; and the marquis, obeying the impulse given, was trying, by kind dealing, to oppose his wife's still unsettled intention of making a will.

Towards the autumn there was talk of going to spend that season at Ganges, a little town situated in Lower Languedoc, in the diocese of Montpellier, seven leagues from that town, and nineteen from Avignon. Although this was natural enough, since the marquis was lord of the town and had a castle there, the marquise was seized by a strange shudder when she heard the proposal. Remembrance of the prediction made to her returned immediately to her mind. The recent and ill explained attempt to poison her, too, very naturally added to her fears.

Without directly and positively suspecting her brothers-in-law of that crime, she knew that in them she had two implacable enemies. This journey to a little town, this abode in a lonely castle, amid new, unknown neighbours, seemed to her of

no good omen; but open opposition would have been ridiculous. On what grounds, indeed, could she base resistance? The marquise could only own her terrors by accusing her husband and her brothers-in-law. And of what could she accuse them? The incident of the poisoned cream was not a conclusive proof. She resolved accordingly to lock up all her fears in her heart, and to commit herself to the hands of God.

Nevertheless, she would not leave Avignon without signing the will which she had contemplated making ever since M. de Nocheres' death. A notary was called in who drew up the document. The Marquise de Ganges made her mother, Madame de Rossan, her sole inheritor, and left in her charge the duty of choosing between the testatrix's two children as to which of them should succeed to the estate. These two children were, one a boy of six years old, the other a girl of five. But this was not enough for the marquise, so deep was her impression that she would not survive this fatal journey; she gathered together, secretly and at night, the magistrates of Avignon and several persons of quality, belonging to the first families of the town, and there, before them, verbally at first, declared that, in case of her death, she begged the honourable witnesses whom she had assembled on purpose, not to recognise as valid, voluntary, or freely written anything except the will which she had signed the day before, and affirmed beforehand that any later will which might be produced would be the effect of fraud or of violence. Then, having made this verbal declaration, the marquise repeated it in writing, signed the paper containing it, and gave the paper to be preserved by the honour of those whom she constituted its guardians. Such a precaution, taken with such minute detail, aroused the lively curiosity of her hearers. Many pressing questions were put to the marquise, but nothing could be extracted from her except that she had reasons for her action which she could not declare. The cause of this assemblage remained a secret, and every person who formed part of it promised the marquise not to reveal it.

On the next day, which was that preceding her departure for Ganges, the marquise visited all the charitable institutions and religious communities in Avignon; she left liberal alms everywhere, with the request that prayers and masses should be said for her, in order to obtain from God's grace that she should not be suffered to die without receiving the sacraments of the Church. In the evening, she took leave of all her friends with the affection and the tears of a person convinced that she was bidding them a last farewell; and finally she spent the whole night in prayer, and the maid who came to wake her found her kneeling in the same spot where she, had left her the night before.

The family set out for Ganges; the journey was performed without accident. On reaching the castle, the marquise found her mother-in-law there; she was a woman of remarkable distinction and piety, and her presence, although it was to be but temporary, reassured the poor fearful marquise a little. Arrangements had been made beforehand at the old castle, and the most convenient and elegant of the rooms had been assigned to the marquise; it was on the first floor, and looked out upon a courtyard shut in on all sides by stables.

On the first evening that she was to sleep here, the marquise explored the room with the greatest attention. She inspected the cupboards, sounded the walls, examined the tapestry, and found nothing anywhere that could confirm her terrors, which, indeed, from that time began to decrease. At the end of a certain time; however, the marquis's mother left Ganges to return to Montpellier. Two, days after her departure, the marquis talked of important business which required him to go back to Avignon, and he too left the castle. The marquise thus remained alone with the abbe, the chevalier, and a chaplain named Perette, who had been attached for five-and-twenty years to the family of the marquis. The rest of the household consisted of a few servants.

The marquise's first care, on arriving at the castle, had been to collect a little society for herself in the town. This was easy: not only did her rank make it an honour to belong to her circle, her kindly graciousness also inspired at first-sight the desire of having her for a friend. The marquise thus endured less dulness than she had at first feared. This precaution was by no means uncalled for; instead of spending only the autumn at Ganges, the marquise was obliged, in consequence of letters from her husband, to spend the winter there. During the whole of this time the abbe and the chevalier seemed to have completely forgotten their original designs upon her, and had again resumed the conduct of respectful, attentive brothers. But with all this, M. de Ganges remained estranged, and the marquise, who had not ceased to love him, though she began to lose her fear, did not lose her grief.

One day the abbe entered her room suddenly enough to surprise her before she had time to dry her tears; the secret being thus half surprised, he easily obtained a knowledge of the whole. The marquise owed to him that happiness in this world was impossible for her so long as her husband led this separate and hostile life. The abbe tried to console her; but amid his consolations he told her that the grief which she was suffering had its source in herself; that her husband was naturally wounded by her distrust of him—a distrust of which the will, executed

by her, was a proof, all the more humiliating because public, and that, while that will existed, she could expect no advances towards reconciliation from her husband. For that time the conversation ended there.

Some days later, the abbe came into the marquise's room with a letter which he had just received from his brother. This letter, supposed confidential, was filled with tender complaints of his wife's conduct towards him, and showed, through every sentence, a depth of affection which only wrongs as serious as those from which the marquis considered himself to be feeling could counterbalance. The marquise was, at first, very much touched by this letter; but having soon reflected that just sufficient time had elapsed since the explanation between herself and the abbe for the marquis to be informed of it, she awaited further and stronger proofs before changing her mind.

From day to day, however, the abbe, under the pretext of reconciling the husband and wife, became more pressing upon the matter of the will, and the marquise, to whom this insistence seemed rather alarming, began to experience some of her former fears. Finally, the abbe pressed her so hard as to make her reflect that since, after the precautions which she had taken at Avignon, a revocation could have no result, it would be better to seem to yield rather than irritate this man, who inspired her with so great a fear, by constant and obstinate refusals. The next time that he returned to the subject she accordingly replied that she was ready to offer her husband this new proof of her love if it would bring him back to her, and having ordered a notary to be sent for, she made a new will, in the presence of the abbe and the chevalier, and constituted the marquis her residuary legatee. This second instrument bore date the 5th of May 1667. The abbe and the chevalier expressed the greatest joy that this subject of discord was at last removed, and offered themselves as guarantees, on their brother's behalf, of a better future. Some days were passed in this hope, which a letter from the marquis came to confirm; this letter at the same time announced his speedy return to Ganges.

On the 16th of May; the marquise, who for a month or two had not been well, determined to take medicine; she therefore informed the chemist of what she wanted, and asked him to make her up something at his discretion and send it to her the next day. Accordingly, at the agreed hour in the morning, the draught was brought to the marquise; but it looked to her so black and so thick that she felt some doubt of the skill of its compounder, shut it up in a cupboard in her room without saying anything of the matter, and took from her dressing-case some

pills, of a less efficacious nature indeed, but to which she was accustomed, and which were not so repugnant to her.

The hour in which the marquise was to take this medicine was hardly over when the abbe and the chevalier sent to know how she was. She replied that she was quite well, and invited them to a collation which she was giving about four o'clock to the ladies who made up her little circle. An hour afterwards the abbe and the chevalier sent a second time to inquire after her; the marquise, without paying particular attention to this excessive civility, which she remembered afterwards, sent word as before that she was perfectly well. The marquise had remained in bed to do the honours of her little feast, and never had she felt more cheerful. At the hour named all her guests arrived; the abbe and the chevalier were ushered in, and the meal was served. Neither one nor the other would share it; the abbe indeed sat down to table, but the chevalier remained leaning on the foot of the bed. The abbe appeared anxious, and only roused himself with a start from his absorption; then he seemed to drive away some dominant idea, but soon the idea, stronger than his will, plunged him again into a reverie, a state which struck everyone the more particularly because it was far from his usual temper. As to the chevalier, his eyes were fixed constantly upon his sister-in-law, but in this there was not, as in his brother's behaviour, anything surprising, since the marquise had never looked so beautiful.

The meal over, the company took leave. The abbe escorted the ladies downstairs; the chevalier remained with the marquise; but hardly had the abbe left the room when Madame de Ganges saw the chevalier turn pale and drop in a sitting position—he had been standing on the foot of the bed. The marquise, uneasy, asked what was the matter; but before he could reply, her attention was called to another quarter. The abbe, as pale and as disturbed as the chevalier, came back into the room, carrying in his hands a glass and a pistol, and double-locked the door behind him. Terrified at this spectacle, the marquise half raised herself in her bed, gazing voiceless and wordless. Then the abbe approached her, his lips trembling; his hair bristling and his eyes blazing, and, presenting to her the glass and the pistol, “Madame,” said he, after a moment of terrible silence, “choose, whether poison, fire, or”—he made a sign to the chevalier, who drew his sword—“or steel.”

The marquise had one moment's hope: at the motion which she saw the chevalier make she thought he was coming to her assistance; but being soon undeceived, and finding herself between two men, both threatening her, she

slipped from her bed and fell on her knees.

“What have I done,” she cried, “oh, my God? that you should thus decree my death, and after having made yourselves judges should make yourselves executioners? I am guilty of no fault towards you except of having been too faithful in my duty to my husband, who is your brother.”

Then seeing that it was vain to continue imploring the abbe, whose looks and gestures spoke a mind made up, she turned towards the chevalier.

“And you too, brother,” said she, “oh, God, God! you, too! Oh, have pity on me, in the name of Heaven!”

But he, stamping his foot and pressing the point of his sword to her bosom, answered—

“Enough, madam, enough; take your choice without delay; for if you do not take it, we will take it for you.”

The marquise turned once again to the abbe, and her forehead struck the muzzle of the pistol. Then she saw that she must die indeed, and choosing of the three forms of death that which seemed to her the least terrible, “Give me the poison, then,” said she, “and may God forgive you my death!”

With these words she took the glass, but the thick black liquid of which it was full aroused such repulsion that she would have attempted a last appeal; but a horrible imprecation from the abbe and a threatening movement from his brother took from her the very last gleam of hope. She put the glass to her lips, and murmuring once more, “God! Saviour! have pity on me!” she swallowed the contents.

As she did so a few drops of the liquid fell upon her breast, and instantly burned her skin like live coals; indeed, this infernal draught was composed of arsenic and sublimate infused in aqua-fortis; then, thinking that no more would be required of her, she dropped the glass.

The marquise was mistaken: the abbe picked it up, and observing that all the sediment had remained at the bottom, he gathered together on a silver bodkin all that had coagulated on the sides of the glass and all that had sunk to the bottom, and presenting this ball, which was about the size of a nut, to the marquise, on

the end of the bodkin, he said, "Come, madame, you must swallow the holy-water sprinkler."

The marquise opened her lips, with resignation; but instead of doing as the abbe commanded, she kept this remainder of the poison in her mouth, threw herself on the bed with a scream, and clasping the pillows, in her pain, she put out the poison between the sheets, unperceived by her assassins; and then turning back to them, folded her hands in entreaty and said, "In the name of God, since you have killed my body, at least do not destroy my soul, but send me a confessor."

Cruel though the abbe and the chevalier were, they were no doubt beginning to weary of such a scene; moreover, the mortal deed was accomplished—after what she had drunk, the marquise could live but a few minutes; at her petition they went out, locking the door behind them. But no sooner did the marquise find herself alone than the possibility of flight presented itself to her. She ran to the window: this was but twenty-two feet above the ground, but the earth below was covered with stones and rubbish. The marquise, being only in her nightdress, hastened to slip on a silk petticoat; but at the moment when she finished tying it round her waist she heard a step approaching her room, and believing that her murderers were returning to make an end of her, she flew like a madwoman to the window. At the moment of her setting foot on the window ledge, the door opened: the marquise, ceasing to consider anything, flung herself down, head first.

Fortunately, the newcomer, who was the castle chaplain, had time to reach out and seize her skirt. The skirt, not strong enough to bear the weight of the marquise, tore; but its resistance, slight though it was, sufficed nevertheless to change the direction of her body: the marquise, whose head would have been shattered on the stones, fell on her feet instead, and beyond their being bruised by the stones, received no injury. Half stunned though she was by her fall, the marquise saw something coming after her, and sprang aside. It was an enormous pitcher of water, beneath which the priest, when he saw her escaping him, had tried to crush her; but either because he had ill carried out his attempt or because the marquise had really had time to move away, the vessel was shattered at her feet without touching her, and the priest, seeing that he had missed his aim, ran to warn the abbe and the chevalier that the victim was escaping.

As for the marquise, she had hardly touched the ground, when with admirable presence of mind she pushed the end of one of her long plaits so far down her

throat as to provoke a fit of vomiting; this was the more easily done that she had eaten heartily of the collation, and happily the presence of the food had prevented the poison from attacking the coats of the stomach so violently as would otherwise have been the case. Scarcely had she vomited when a tame boar swallowed what she had rejected, and falling into a convulsion, died immediately.

As we have said, the room looked upon an enclosed courtyard; and the marquise at first thought that in leaping from her room into this court she had only changed her prison; but soon perceiving a light that flickered from an upper window of one of the stables, she ran thither, and found a groom who was just going to bed.

“In the name of Heaven, my good man,” said she to him, “save me! I am poisoned! They want to kill me! Do not desert me, I entreat you! Have pity on me, open this stable for me; let me get away! Let me escape!”

The groom did not understand much of what the marquise said to him; but seeing a woman with disordered hair, half naked, asking help of him, he took her by the arm, led her through the stables, opened a door for her, and the marquise found herself in the street. Two women were passing; the groom put her into their hands, without being able to explain to them what he did not know himself. As for the marquise, she seemed able to say nothing beyond these words: “Save me! I am poisoned! In the name of Heaven, save me!”

All at once she escaped from their hands and began to run like a mad woman; she had seen, twenty steps away, on the threshold of the door by which she had come, her two murderers in pursuit of her.

Then they rushed after her; she shrieking that she was poisoned, they shrieking that she was mad; and all this happening amid a crowd which, not knowing what part to take, divided and made way for the victim and the murderers. Terror gave the marquise superhuman strength: the woman who was accustomed to walk in silken shoes upon velvet carpets, ran with bare and bleeding feet over stocks and stones, vainly asking help, which none gave her; for, indeed, seeing her thus, in mad flight, in a nightdress, with flying hair, her only garment a tattered silk petticoat, it was difficult not to—think that this woman was, as her brothers-in-law said, mad.

At last the chevalier came up with her, stopped her, dragged her, in spite of her screams, into the nearest house, and closed the door behind them, while the abbe, standing at the threshold with a pistol in his hand, threatened to blow out the brains of any person who should approach.

The house into which the chevalier and the marquise had gone belonged to one M. Desprats, who at the moment was from home, and whose wife was entertaining several of her friends. The marquise and the chevalier, still struggling together, entered the room where the company was assembled: as among the ladies present were several who also visited the marquise, they immediately arose, in the greatest amazement, to give her the assistance that she implored; but the chevalier hastily pushed them aside, repeating that the marquise was mad. To this reiterated accusation—to which, indeed, appearances lent only too great a probability—the marquise replied by showing her burnt neck and her blackened lips, and wringing her hands in pain, cried out that she was poisoned, that she was going to die, and begged urgently for milk, or at least for water. Then the wife of a Protestant minister, whose name was Madame Brunel, slipped into her hand a box of orvietan, some pieces of which she hastened to swallow, while another lady gave her a glass of water; but at the instant when she was lifting it to her mouth, the chevalier broke it between her teeth, and one of the pieces of glass cut her lips. At this, all the women would have flung themselves upon the chevalier; but the marquise, fearing that he would only become more enraged, and hoping to disarm him, asked, on the contrary, that she might be left alone with him: all the company, yielding to her desire, passed into the next room; this was what the chevalier, on his part, too, asked.

Scarcely were they alone, when the marquise, joining her hands, knelt to him and said in the gentlest and most appealing voice that it was possible to use, “Chevalier, my dear brother, will you not have pity upon me, who have always had so much affection for you, and who, even now, would give my blood for your service? You know that the things I am saying are not merely empty words; and yet how is it you are treating me, though I have not deserved it? And what will everyone say to such dealings? Ah, brother, what a great unhappiness is mine, to have been so cruelly treated by you! And yet—yes, brother—if you will deign to have pity on me and to save my life, I swear, by my hope of heaven, to keep no remembrance of what has happened; and to consider you always as my protector and my friend.”

All at once the marquise rose with a great cry and clasped her hand to her right side. While she was speaking, and before she perceived what he was doing, the chevalier had drawn his sword, which was very short, and using it as a dagger, had struck her in the breast; this first blow was followed by a second, which came in contact with the shoulder blade, and so was prevented from going farther. At these two blows the marquise rushed towards the door, of the room into which the ladies had retired, crying, "Help! He is killing me!"

But during the time that she took to cross the room the chevalier stabbed her five times in the back with his sword, and would no doubt have done more, if at the last blow his sword had not broken; indeed, he had struck with such force that the fragment remained embedded in her shoulder, and the marquise fell forward on the floor, in a pool of her blood, which was flowing all round her and spreading through the room.

The chevalier thought he had killed her, and hearing the women running to her assistance, he rushed from the room. The abbe was still at the door, pistol in hand; the chevalier took him by the arm to drag him away, and as the abbe hesitated to follow, he said:—

"Let us go, abbe; the business is done."

The chevalier and the abbe had taken a few steps in the street when a window opened and the women who had found the marquise expiring called out for help: at these cries the abbe stopped short, and holding back the chevalier by the arm, demanded

"What was it you said, chevalier? If they are calling help, is she not dead, after all?"

"'Ma foi', go and see for yourself," returned the chevalier. "I have done enough for my share; it is your turn now."

"'Pardieu', that is quite my opinion," cried the abbe; and rushing back to the house, he flung himself into the room at the moment when the women, lifting the marquise with great difficulty, for she was so weak that she could no longer help herself, were attempting to carry her to bed. The abbe pushed them away, and arriving at the marquise, put his pistol to her heart; but Madame Brunel, the same who had previously given the marquise a box of orvietan, lifted up the barrel with her hand, so that the shot went off into the air, and the bullet instead

of striking the marquise lodged in the cornice of the ceiling. The abbe then took the pistol by the barrel and gave Madame Brunet so violent a blow upon the head with the butt that she staggered and almost fell; he was about to strike her again, but all the women uniting against him, pushed him, with thousands of maledictions, out of the room, and locked the door behind him. The two assassins, taking advantage of the darkness, fled from Ganges, and reached Aubenas, which is a full league away, about ten in the evening.

Meanwhile the women were doing all they could for the marquise. Their first intention, as we have already said, was to put her to bed, but the broken sword blade made her unable to lie down, and they tried in vain to pull it out, so deeply had it entered the bone. Then the marquise herself showed Madame Brunet what method to take: the operating lady was to sit on the bed, and while the others helped to hold up the marquise, was to seize the blade with both hands, and pressing her—knees against the patient's back, to pull violently and with a great jerk. This plan at last succeeded, and the marquise was able to get to bed; it was nine in the evening, and this horrible tragedy had been going on for nearly three hours.

The magistrates of Ganges, being informed of what had happened, and beginning to believe that it was really a case of murder, came in person, with a guard, to the marquise. As soon as she saw them come in she recovered strength, and raising herself in bed, so great was her fear, clasped her hands and besought their protection; for she always expected to see one or the other of her murderers return. The magistrates told her to reassure herself, set armed men to guard all the approaches to the house, and while physicians and surgeons were, summoned in hot haste from Montpellier, they on their part sent word to the Baron de Trissan, provost of Languedoc, of the crime that had just been committed, and gave him the names and the description of the murderers. That official at once sent people after them, but it was already too late: he learned that the abbe and the chevalier had slept at Aubenas on the night of the murder, that there they had reproached each other for their unskilfulness, and had come near cutting each other's throats, that finally they had departed before daylight, and had taken a boat, near Agde, from a beach called the "Gras de Palaval."

The Marquis de Ganges was at Avignon, where he was prosecuting a servant of his who had robbed him of two hundred crowns; when he heard news of the event. He turned horribly pale as he listened to the messenger's story, then falling into a violent fury against his brothers, he swore that they should have no

executioners other than himself. Nevertheless, though he was so uneasy about the marquise's condition, he waited until the next day in the afternoon before setting forth, and during the interval he saw some of his friends at Avignon without saying anything to them of the matter. He did not reach Ganges until four days after the murder, then he went to the house of M. Desprats and asked to see his wife, whom some kind priests had already prepared for the meeting; and the marquise, as soon as she heard of his arrival, consented to receive him. The marquis immediately entered the room, with his eyes full of tears, tearing his hair, and giving every token of the deepest despair.

The marquise received her husband like a forgiving wife and a dying Christian. She scarcely even uttered some slight reproaches about the manner in which he had deserted her; moreover, the marquis having complained to a monk of these reproaches, and the monk having reported his complaints to the marquise, she called her husband to her bedside, at a moment when she was surrounded by people, and made him a public apology, begging him to attribute the words that seemed to have wounded him to the effect of her sufferings, and not to any failure in her regard for him. The marquis, left alone with his wife, tried to take advantage of this reconciliation to induce her to annul the declaration that she had made before the magistrates of Avignon; for the vice-legate and his officers, faithful to the promises made to the marquise, had refused to register the fresh donation which she had made at Ganges, according to the suggestions of the abbe, and which the latter had sent off, the very moment it was signed, to his brother. But on this point the marquise was immovably resolute, declaring that this fortune was reserved for her children and therefore sacred to her, and that she could make no alteration in what had been done at Avignon, since it represented her genuine and final wishes. Notwithstanding this declaration, the marquis did not cease to—remain beside his wife and to bestow upon her every care possible to a devoted and attentive husband.

Two days later than the Marquis de Ganges arrived Madame de Rossan great was her amazement, after all the rumours that were already in circulation about the marquis, at finding her daughter in the hands of him whom she regarded as one of her murderers. But the marquise, far from sharing that opinion, did all she could, not only to make her mother feel differently, but even to induce her to embrace the marquis as a son. This blindness on the part of the marquise caused Madame de Rossan so much grief that notwithstanding her profound affection for her daughter she would only stay two days, and in spite of the entreaties that the dying woman made to her, she returned home, not allowing anything to stop

her. This departure was a great grief to the marquise, and was the reason why she begged with renewed entreaties to be taken to Montpellier. The very sight of the place where she had been so cruelly tortured continually brought before her, not only the remembrance of the murder, but the image of the murderers, who in her brief moments of sleep so haunted her that she sometimes awoke suddenly, uttering shrieks and calling for help. Unfortunately, the physician considered her too weak to bear removal, and declared that no change of place could be made without extreme danger.

Then, when she heard this verdict, which had to be repeated to her, and which her bright and lively complexion and brilliant eyes seemed to contradict, the marquise turned all her thoughts towards holy things, and thought only of dying like a saint after having already suffered like a martyr. She consequently asked to receive the last sacrament, and while it was being sent for, she repeated her apologies to her husband and her forgiveness of his brothers, and this with a gentleness that, joined to her beauty, made her whole personality appear angelic. When, however, the priest bearing the viaticum entered, this expression suddenly changed, and her face presented every token of the greatest terror. She had just recognised in the priest who was bringing her the last consolations of Heaven the infamous Perette, whom she could not but regard as an accomplice of the abbe and the chevalier, since, after having tried to hold her back, he had attempted to crush her beneath the pitcher of water which he had thrown at her from the window, and since, when he saw her escaping, he had run to warn her assassins and to set them on her track. She recovered herself quickly, however, and seeing that the priest, without any sign of remorse, was drawing near to her bedside, she would not cause so great a scandal as would have been caused by denouncing him at such a moment. Nevertheless, bending towards him, she said, "Father, I hope that, remembering what has passed, and in order to dispel fears that—I may justifiably entertain, you will make no difficulty of partaking with me of the consecrated wafer; for I have sometimes heard it said that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, while remaining a token of salvation, has been known to be made a principle of death."

The priest inclined his head as a sign of assent.

So the marquise communicated thus, taking a sacrament that she shared with one of her murderers, as an evidence that she forgave this one like the others and that she prayed God to forgive them as she herself did.

The following days passed without any apparent increase in her illness, the fever by which she was consumed rather enhancing her beauties, and imparting to her voice and gestures a vivacity which they had never had before. Thus everybody had begun to recover hope, except herself, who, feeling better than anyone else what was her true condition, never for a moment allowed herself any illusion, and keeping her son, who was seven years old, constantly beside her bed, bade him again and again look well at her, so that, young as he was, he might remember her all his life and never forget her in his prayers. The poor child would burst into tears and promise not only to remember her but also to avenge her when he was a man. At these words the marquise gently reproved him, telling him that all vengeance belonged to the king and to God, and that all cares of the kind must be left to those two great rulers of heaven and of earth.

On the 3rd of June, M. Catalan, a councillor, appointed as a commissioner by the Parliament of Toulouse, arrived at Ganges, together with all the officials required by his commission; but he could not see the marquise that night, for she had dozed for some hours, and this sleep had left a sort of torpor upon her mind, which might have impaired the lucidity of her depositions. The next morning, without asking anybody's opinion, M. Catalan repaired to the house of M. Desprats, and in spite of some slight resistance on the part of those who were in charge of her, made his way to the presence of the marquise. The dying woman received him with an admirable presence of mind, that made M. Catalan think there had been an intention the night before to prevent any meeting between him and the person whom he was sent to interrogate. At first the marquise would relate nothing that had passed, saying that she could not at the same time accuse and forgive; but M. Catalan brought her to see that justice required truth from her before all things, since, in default of exact information, the law might go astray, and strike the innocent instead of the guilty. This last argument decided the marquise, and during the hour and a half that he spent alone with her she told him all the details of this horrible occurrence. On the morrow M. Catalan was to see her again; but on the morrow the marquise was, in truth, much worse. He assured himself of this by his own eyes, and as he knew almost all that he wished to know, did not insist further, for fear of fatiguing her.

Indeed, from that day forward, such atrocious sufferings laid hold upon the marquise, that notwithstanding the firmness which she had always shown, and which she tried to maintain to the end, she could not prevent herself from uttering screams mingled with prayers. In this manner she spent the whole day of the 4th and part of the 5th. At last, on that day, which was a Sunday, towards

four o'clock in the afternoon, she expired.

The body was immediately opened, and the physicians attested that the marquise had died solely from the power of the poison, none of the seven sword cuts which she had received being, mortal. They found the stomach and bowels burned and the brain blackened. However, in spite of that infernal draught, which, says the official report, "would have killed a lioness in a few hours," the marquise struggled for nineteen days, so much, adds an account from which we have borrowed some of these details, so much did nature lovingly defend the beautiful body that she had taken so much trouble to make.

M. Catalan, the very moment he was informed of the marquise's death, having with him twelve guards belonging to the governor, ten archers, and a poqueton, —despatched them to the marquis's castle with orders to seize his person, that of the priest, and those of all the servants except the groom who had assisted the marquise in her flight. The officer in command of this little squad found the marquis walking up and down, melancholy and greatly disturbed, in the large hall of the castle, and when he signified to him the order of which he was the bearer, the marquis, without making any resistance, and as though prepared for what was happening to him, replied that he was ready to obey, and that moreover he had always intended to go before the Parliament to accuse the murderers of his wife. He was asked for the key of his cabinet, which he gave up, and the order was given to conduct him, with the other persons accused, to the prisons of Montpellier. As soon as the marquis came into that town, the report of his arrival spread with incredible rapidity from street to street. Then, as it was dark, lights came to all the windows, and people coming out with torches formed a torchlight procession, by means of which everybody could see him. He, like the priest, was mounted on a sorry hired horse, and entirely surrounded by archers, to whom, no doubt, he owed his life on this occasion; for the indignation against him was so great that everyone was egging on his neighbours to tear him limb from limb, which would certainly have come to pass had he not been so carefully defended and guarded.

Immediately upon receiving news of her daughter's death, Madame de Rossan took possession of all her property, and, making herself a party to the case, declared that she would never desist from her suit until her daughter's death was avenged. M. Catalan began the examination at once, and the first interrogation to which he submitted the marquis lasted eleven hours. Then soon afterwards he and the other persons accused were conveyed from the prisons of Montpellier to

those of Toulouse. A crushing memorial by Madame de Rossan followed them, in which she demonstrated with absolute clearness that the marquis had participated in the crime of his two brothers, if not in act, in thought, desire, and intention.

The marquis's defence was very simple: it was his misfortune to have had two villains for brothers, who had made attempts first upon the honour and then upon the life of a wife whom he loved tenderly; they had destroyed her by a most atrocious death, and to crown his evil fortune, he, the innocent, was accused of having had a hand in that death. And, indeed, the examinations in the trial did not succeed in bringing any evidence against the marquis beyond moral presumptions, which, it appears, were insufficient to induce his judges to award a sentence of death.

A verdict was consequently given, upon the 21st of August, 1667, which sentenced the abbe and the chevalier de Ganges to be broken alive on the wheel, the Marquis de Ganges to perpetual banishment from the kingdom, his property to be confiscated to the king, and himself to lose his nobility and to become incapable of succeeding to the property of his children. As for the priest Perette, he was sentenced to the galleys for life, after having previously been degraded from his clerical orders by the ecclesiastical authorities.

This sentence made as great a stir as the murder had done, and gave rise, in that period when "extenuating circumstances" had not been invented, to long and angry discussions. Indeed, the marquis either was guilty of complicity or was not: if he was not, the punishment was too cruel; if he was, the sentence was too light. Such was the opinion of Louis XIV., who remembered the beauty of the Marquis de Ganges; for, some time afterwards, when he was believed to have forgotten this unhappy affair, and when he was asked to pardon the Marquis de la Douze, who was accused of having poisoned his wife, the king answered, "There is no need for a pardon, since he belongs to the Parliament of Toulouse, and the Marquis de Ganges did very well without one."

It may easily be supposed that this melancholy event did not pass without inciting the wits of the day to write a vast number of verses and bouts-rimes about the catastrophe by which one of the most beautiful women of the country was carried off. Readers who have a taste for that sort of literature are referred to the journals and memoirs of the times.

Now, as our readers, if they have taken any interest at all in the terrible tale just narrated, will certainly ask what became of the murderers, we will proceed to follow their course until the moment when they disappeared, some into the night of death, some into the darkness of oblivion.

The priest Perette was the first to pay his debt to Heaven: he died at the oar on the way from Toulouse to Brest.

The chevalier withdrew to Venice, took service in the army of the Most Serene Republic, then at war with Turkey, and was sent to Candia, which the Mussulmans had been besieging for twenty years; he had scarcely arrived there when, as he was walking on the ramparts of the town with two other officers, a shell burst at their feet, and a fragment of it killed the chevalier without so much as touching his companions, so that the event was regarded as a direct act of Providence.

As for the abbe, his story is longer and stranger. He parted from the chevalier in the neighbourhood of Genoa, and crossing the whole of Piedmont, part of Switzerland, and a corner of Germany, entered Holland under the name of Lamartelliere. After many hesitations as to the place where he would settle, he finally retired to Viane, of which the Count of Lippe was at that time sovereign; there he made the acquaintance of a gentleman who presented him to the count as a French religious refugee.

The count, even in this first conversation, found that the foreigner who had come to seek safety in his dominions possessed not only great intelligence but a very solid sort of intelligence, and seeing that the Frenchman was conversant with letters and with learning, proposed that he should undertake the education of his son, who at that time was nine years old. Such a proposal was a stroke of fortune for the abbe de Ganges, and he did not dream of refusing it.

The abbe de Ganges was one of those men who have great mastery over themselves: from the moment when he saw that his interest, nay, the very safety of his life required it, he concealed with extreme care whatever bad passions existed within him, and only allowed his good qualities to appear. He was a tutor who supervised the heart as sharply as the mind, and succeeded in making of his pupil a prince so accomplished in both respects, that the Count of Lippe, making use of such wisdom and such knowledge, began to consult the tutor upon all matters of State, so that in course of time the so-called Lamartelliere, without

holding any public office, had become the soul of the little principality.

The countess had a young relation living with her, who though without fortune was of a great family, and for whom the countess had a deep affection; it did not escape her notice that her son's tutor had inspired this poor young girl with warmer feelings than became her high station, and that the false Lamartelliere, emboldened by his own growing credit, had done all he could to arouse and keep up these feelings. The countess sent for her cousin, and having drawn from her a confession of her love, said that she herself had indeed a great regard for her son's governor, whom she and her husband intended to reward with pensions and with posts for the services he had rendered to their family and to the State, but that it was too lofty an ambition for a man whose name was Lamartelliere, and who had no relations nor family that could be owned, to aspire to the hand of a girl who was related to a royal house; and that though she did not require that the man who married her cousin should be a Bourbon, a Montmorency, or a Rohan, she did at least desire that he should be somebody, though it were but a gentleman of Gascony or Poitou.

The Countess of Lippe's young kinswoman went and repeated this answer, word for word, to her lover, expecting him to be overwhelmed by it; but, on the contrary, he replied that if his birth was the only obstacle that opposed their union, there might be means to remove it. In fact, the abbe, having spent eight years at the prince's court, amid the strongest testimonies of confidence and esteem, thought himself sure enough of the prince's goodwill to venture upon the avowal of his real name.

He therefore asked an audience of the countess, who immediately granted it. Bowing to her respectfully, he said, "Madame, I had flattered myself that your Highness honoured me with your esteem, and yet you now oppose my happiness: your Highness's relative is willing to accept me as a husband, and the prince your son authorises my wishes and pardons my boldness; what have I done to you, madame, that you alone should be against me? and with what can you reproach me during the eight years that I have had the honour of serving your Highness?"

"I have nothing to reproach you with, monsieur," replied the countess: "but I do not wish to incur reproach on my own part by permitting such a marriage: I thought you too sensible and reasonable a man to need reminding that, while you confined yourself to suitable requests and moderate ambitions, you had reason to

be pleased with our gratitude. Do you ask that your salary shall be doubled? The thing is easy. Do you desire important posts? They shall be given you; but do not, sir, so far forget yourself as to aspire to an alliance that you cannot flatter yourself with a hope of ever attaining.”

“But, madame,” returned the petitioner, “who told you that my birth was so obscure as to debar me from all hope of obtaining your consent?”

“Why, you yourself, monsieur, I think,” answered the countess in astonishment; “or if you did not say so, your name said so for you.”

“And if that name is not mine, madame?” said the abbe, growing bolder; “if unfortunate, terrible, fatal circumstances have compelled me to take that name in order to hide another that was too unhappily famous, would your Highness then be so unjust as not to change your mind?”

“Monsieur,” replied the countess, “you have said too much now not to go on to the end. Who are you? Tell me. And if, as you give me to understand, you are of good birth, I swear to you that want of fortune shall not stand in the way.”

“Alas, madame,” cried the abbe, throwing himself at her feet, “my name, I am sure, is but too familiar to your Highness, and I would willingly at this moment give half my blood that you had never heard it uttered; but you have said it, madame, have gone too far to recede. Well, then, I am that unhappy abbe de Ganges whose crimes are known and of whom I have more than once heard you speak.”

“The abbe de Ganges!” cried the countess in horror,—“the abbe de Ganges! You are that execrable abbe de Ganges whose very name makes one shudder? And to you, to a man thus infamous, we have entrusted the education of our only son? Oh, I hope, for all our sakes, monsieur, that you are speaking falsely; for if you were speaking the truth I think I should have you arrested this very instant and taken back to France to undergo your punishment. The best thing you can do, if what you have said to me is true, is instantly to leave not only the castle, but the town and the principality; it will be torment enough for the rest of my life whenever I think that I have spent seven years under the same roof with you.”

The abbe would have replied; but the countess raised her voice so much, that the young prince, who had been won over to his tutor’s interests and who was listening at his mother’s door, judged that his protegee’s business was taking an

unfavourable turn; and went in to try and put things right. He found his mother so much alarmed that she drew him to her by an instinctive movement, as though to put herself under his protection, and beg and pray as he might; he could only obtain permission for his tutor to go away undisturbed to any country of the world that he might prefer, but with an express prohibition of ever again entering the presence of the Count or the Countess of Lippe.

The abbe de Ganges withdrew to Amsterdam, where he became a teacher of languages, and where his lady-love soon after came to him and married him: his pupil, whom his parents could not induce, even when they told him the real name of the false Lamartelliere, to share their horror of him, gave him assistance as long as he needed it; and this state of things continued until upon his wife attaining her majority he entered into possession of some property that belonged to her. His regular conduct and his learning, which had been rendered more solid by long and serious study, caused him to be admitted into the Protestant consistory; there, after an exemplary life, he died, and none but God ever knew whether it was one of hypocrisy or of penitence.

As for the Marquis de Ganges, who had been sentenced, as we have seen, to banishment and the confiscation of his property, he was conducted to the frontier of Savoy and there set at liberty. After having spent two or three years abroad, so that the terrible catastrophe in which he had been concerned should have time to be hushed up, he came back to France, and as nobody—Madame de Rossan being now dead—was interested in prosecuting him, he returned to his castle at Ganges, and remained there, pretty well hidden. M. de Baille, indeed, the Lieutenant of Languedoc, learned that the marquis had broken from his exile; but he was told, at the same time, that the marquis, as a zealous Catholic, was forcing his vassals to attend mass, whatever their religion might be: this was the period in which persons of the Reformed Church were being persecuted, and the zeal of the marquis appeared to M. de Baille to compensate and more than compensate for the peccadillo of which he had been accused; consequently, instead of prosecuting him, he entered into secret communication with him, reassuring him about his stay in France, and urging on his religious zeal; and in this manner twelve years passed by.

During this time the marquise's young son, whom we saw at his mother's deathbed, had reached the age of twenty, and being rich in his father's possessions—which his uncle had restored to him—and also by his mother's inheritance, which he had shared with his sister, had married a girl of good

family, named Mademoiselle de Moissac, who was both rich and beautiful. Being called to serve in the royal army, the count brought his young wife to the castle of Ganges, and, having fervently commended her to his father, left her in his charge.

The Marquis de Ganges was forty-two years old, and scarcely seemed thirty; he was one of the handsomest men living; he fell in love with his daughter-in-law and hoped to win her love, and in order to promote this design, his first care was to separate from her, under the excuse of religion, a maid who had been with her from childhood and to whom she was greatly attached.

This measure, the cause of which the young marquise did not know, distressed her extremely. It was much against her will that she had come to live at all in this old castle of Ganges, which had so recently been the scene of the terrible story that we have just told. She inhabited the suite of rooms in which the murder had been committed; her bedchamber was the same which had belonged to the late marquise; her bed was the same; the window by which she had fled was before her eyes; and everything, down to the smallest article of furniture, recalled to her the details of that savage tragedy. But even worse was her case when she found it no longer possible to doubt her father-in-law's intentions; when she saw herself beloved by one whose very name had again and again made her childhood turn pale with terror, and when she was left alone at all hours of the day in the sole company of the man whom public rumour still pursued as a murderer. Perhaps in any other place the poor lonely girl might have found some strength in trusting herself to God; but there, where God had suffered one of the fairest and purest creatures that ever existed to perish by so cruel a death, she dared not appeal to Him, for He seemed to have turned away from this family.

She waited, therefore, in growing terror; spending her days, as much as she could, with the women of rank who lived in the little town of Ganges, and some of whom, eye-witnesses of her mother-in-law's murder, increased her terrors by the accounts which they gave of it, and which she, with the despairing obstinacy of fear, asked to hear again and again. As to her nights, she spent the greater part of them on her knees, and fully dressed, trembling at the smallest sound; only breathing freely as daylight came back, and then venturing to seek her bed for a few hours' rest.

At last the marquis's attempts became so direct and so pressing, that the poor young woman resolved to escape at all costs from his hands. Her first idea was

to write to her father, explain to him her position and ask help; but her father had not long been a Catholic, and had suffered much on behalf of the Reformed religion, and on these accounts it was clear that her letter would be opened by the marquis on pretext of religion, and thus that step, instead of saving, might destroy her. She had thus but one resource: her husband had always been a Catholic; her husband was a captain of dragoons, faithful in the service of the king and faithful in the service of God; there could be no excuse for opening a letter to him; she resolved to address herself to him, explained the position in which she found herself, got the address written by another hand, and sent the letter to Montpellier, where it was posted.

The young marquis was at Metz when he received his wife's missive. At that instant all his childish memories awoke; he beheld himself at his dying mother's bedside, vowing never to forget her and to pray daily for her. The image presented itself of this wife whom he adored, in the same room, exposed to the same violence, destined perhaps to the same fate; all this was enough to lead him to take positive action: he flung himself into a post-chaise, reached Versailles, begged an audience of the king, cast himself, with his wife's letter in his hand, at the feet of Louis XIV, and besought him to compel his father to return into exile, where he swore upon his honour that he would send him everything he could need in order to live properly.

The king was not aware that the Marquis de Ganges had disobeyed the sentence of banishment, and the manner in which he learned it was not such as to make him pardon the contradiction of his laws. In consequence he immediately ordered that if the Marquis de Ganges were found in France he should be proceeded against with the utmost rigour.

Happily for the marquis, the Comte de Ganges, the only one of his brothers who had remained in France, and indeed in favour, learned the king's decision in time. He took post from Versailles, and making the greatest haste, went to warn him of the danger that was threatening; both together immediately left Ganges, and withdrew to Avignon. The district of Venaissin, still belonging at that time to the pope and being governed by a vice-legate, was considered as foreign territory. There he found his daughter, Madame d'Urban, who did all she could to induce him to stay with her; but to do so would have been to flout Louis XIV's orders too publicly, and the marquis was afraid to remain so much in evidence lest evil should befall him; he accordingly retired to the little village of l'Isle, built in a charming spot near the fountain of Vaucluse; there he was lost

sight of; none ever heard him spoken of again, and when I myself travelled in the south of France in 1835, I sought in vain any trace of the obscure and forgotten death which closed so turbulent and stormy an existence.

As, in speaking of the last adventures of the Marquis de Ganges, we have mentioned the name of Madame d'Urban, his daughter, we cannot exempt ourselves from following her amid the strange events of her life, scandalous though they may be; such, indeed, was the fate of this family, that it was to occupy the attention of France through well-nigh a century, either by its crimes or by its freaks.

On the death of the marquise, her daughter, who was barely six years old, had remained in the charge of the dowager Marquise de Ganges, who, when she had attained her twelfth year, presented to her as her husband the Marquis de Perrant, formerly a lover of the grandmother herself. The marquis was seventy years of age, having been born in the reign of Henry IV; he had seen the court of Louis XIII and that of Louis XIV's youth, and he had remained one of its most elegant and favoured nobles; he had the manners of those two periods, the politest that the world has known, so that the young girl, not knowing as yet the meaning of marriage and having seen no other man, yielded without repugnance, and thought herself happy in becoming the Marquise de Perrant.

The marquis, who was very rich, had quarrelled With his younger brother, and regarded him with such hatred that he was marrying only to deprive his brother of the inheritance that would rightfully accrue to him, should the elder die childless. Unfortunately, the marquis soon perceived that the step which he had taken, however efficacious in the case of another man, was likely to be fruitless in his own. He did not, however, despair, and waited two or three years, hoping every day that Heaven would work a miracle in his favour; but as every day diminished the chances of this miracle, and his hatred for his brother grew with the impossibility of taking revenge upon him, he adopted a strange and altogether antique scheme, and determined, like the ancient Spartans, to obtain by the help of another what Heaven refused to himself.

The marquis did not need to seek long for the man who should give him his revenge: he had in his house a young page, some seventeen or eighteen years old, the son of a friend of his, who, dying without fortune, had on his deathbed particularly commended the lad to the marquis. This young man, a year older than his mistress, could not be continually about her without falling passionately

in love with her; and however much he might endeavour to hide his love, the poor youth was as yet too little practised in dissimulation to succeed in concealing it from the eyes of the marquis, who, after having at first observed its growth with uneasiness, began on the contrary to rejoice in it, from the moment when he had decided upon the scheme that we have just mentioned.

The marquis was slow to decide but prompt to execute. Having taken his resolution, he summoned his page, and, after having made him promise inviolable secrecy, and having undertaken, on that condition, to prove his gratitude by buying him a regiment, explained what was expected of him. The poor youth, to whom nothing could have been more unexpected than such a communication, took it at first for a trick by which the marquis meant to make him own his love, and was ready to throw himself at his feet and declare everything; but the marquis seeing his confusion, and easily guessing its cause, reassured him completely by swearing that he authorised him to take any steps in order to attain the end that the marquis had in view. As in his inmost heart the aim of the young man was the same, the bargain was soon struck: the page bound himself by the most terrible oaths to keep the secret; and the marquis, in order to supply whatever assistance was in his power, gave him money to spend, believing that there was no woman, however virtuous, who could resist the combination of youth, beauty, and fortune: unhappily for the marquis, such a woman, whom he thought impossible, did exist, and was his wife.

The page was so anxious to obey his master, that from that very day his mistress remarked the alteration that arose from the permission given him—his prompt obedience to her orders and his speed in executing them, in order to return a few moments the sooner to her presence. She was grateful to him, and in the simplicity of her heart she thanked him. Two days later the page appeared before her splendidly dressed; she observed and remarked upon his improved appearance, and amused herself in conning over all the parts of his dress, as she might have done with a new doll. All this familiarity doubled the poor young man's passion, but he stood before his mistress, nevertheless, abashed and trembling, like Cherubino before his fair godmother. Every evening the marquis inquired into his progress, and every evening the page confessed that he was no farther advanced than the day before; then the marquis scolded, threatened to take away his fine clothes, to withdraw his own promises, and finally to address himself to some other person. At this last threat the youth would again call up his courage, and promise to be bolder tomorrow; and on the morrow would spend the day in making a thousand compliments to his mistress's eyes, which she, in

her innocence, did not understand. At last, one day, Madame de Perrant asked him what made him look at her thus, and he ventured to confess his love; but then Madame de Perrant, changing her whole demeanour, assumed a face of sternness and bade him go out of her room.

The poor lover obeyed, and ran, in despair, to confide his grief to the husband, who appeared sincerely to share it, but consoled him by saying that he had no doubt chosen his moment badly; that all women, even the least severe, had inauspicious hours in which they would not yield to attack, and that he must let a few days pass, which he must employ in making his peace, and then must take advantage of a better opportunity, and not allow himself to be rebuffed by a few refusals; and to these words the marquis added a purse of gold, in order that the page might, if necessary, win over the marquise's waiting-woman.

Guided thus by the older experience of the husband, the page began to appear very much ashamed and very penitent; but for a day or two the marquise, in spite of his apparent humility, kept him at a distance: at last, reflecting no doubt, with the assistance of her mirror and of her maid, that the crime was not absolutely unpardonable, and after having reprimanded the culprit at some length, while he stood listening with eyes cast down, she gave him her hand, forgave him, and admitted him to her companionship as before.

Things went on in this way for a week. The page no longer raised his eyes and did not venture to open his mouth, and the marquise was beginning to regret the time in which he used to look and to speak, when, one fine day while she was at her toilet, at which she had allowed him to be present, he seized a moment when the maid had left her alone, to cast himself at her feet and tell her that he had vainly tried to stifle his love, and that, even although he were to die under the weight of her anger, he must tell her that this love was immense, eternal, stronger than his life. The marquise upon this wished to send him away, as on the former occasion, but instead of obeying her, the page, better instructed, took her in his arms. The marquise called, screamed, broke her bell-rope; the waiting-maid, who had been bought over, according to the marquis's advice, had kept the other women out of the way, and was careful not to come herself. Then the marquise, resisting force by force, freed herself from the page's arms, rushed to her husband's room, and there, bare-necked, with floating hair, and looking lovelier than ever, flung herself into his arms and begged his protection against the insolent fellow who had just insulted her. But what was the amazement of the marquise, when, instead of the anger which she expected to see break forth, the

marquis answered coldly that what she was saying was incredible, that he had always found the young man very well behaved, and that, no doubt, having taken up some frivolous ground of resentment against him, she was employing this means to get rid of him; but, he added, whatever might be his love for her, and his desire to do everything that was agreeable to her, he begged her not to require this of him, the young man being his friend's son, and consequently his own adopted child. It was now the marquise who, in her turn, retired abashed, not knowing what to make of such a reply, and fully resolving, since her husband's protection failed her, to keep herself well guarded by her own severity.

Indeed, from that moment the marquise behaved to the poor youth with so much prudery, that, loving her as he did, sincerely, he would have died of grief, if he had not had the marquis at hand to encourage and strengthen him. Nevertheless, the latter himself began to despair, and to be more troubled by the virtue of his wife than another man might have been by the levity of his. Finally, he resolved, seeing that matters remained at the same point and that the marquise did not relax in the smallest degree, to take extreme measures. He hid his page in a closet of his wife's bedchamber, and, rising during her first sleep, left empty his own place beside her, went out softly, double-locked the door, and listened attentively to hear what would happen.

He had not been listening thus for ten minutes when he heard a great noise in the room, and the page trying in vain to appease it. The marquis hoped that he might succeed, but the noise increasing, showed him that he was again to be disappointed; soon came cries for help, for the marquise could not ring, the bell-ropes having been lifted out of her reach, and no one answering her cries, he heard her spring from her high bed, run to the door, and finding it locked rush to the window, which she tried to open: the scene had come to its climax.

The marquis decided to go in, lest some tragedy should happen, or lest his wife's screams should reach some belated passer-by, who next day would make him the talk of the town. Scarcely did the marquise behold him when she threw herself into his arms, and pointing to the page, said:—

“Well, monsieur, will you still hesitate to free me from this insolent wretch?”

“Yes, madame,” replied the marquis; “for this insolent wretch has been acting for the last three months not only with my sanction but even by my orders.”

The marquise remained stupefied. Then the marquis, without sending away the page, gave his wife an explanation of all that had passed, and besought her to yield to his desire of obtaining a successor, whom he would regard as his own child, so long as it was hers; but young though she was, the marquise answered with a dignity unusual at her age, that his power over her had the limits that were set to it by law, and not those that it might please him to set in their place, and that however much she might wish to do what might be his pleasure, she would yet never obey him at the expense of her soul and her honour.

So positive an answer, while it filled her husband with despair, proved to him that he must renounce the hope of obtaining an heir; but since the page was not to blame for this, he fulfilled the promise that he had made, bought him a regiment, and resigned himself to having the most virtuous wife in France. His repentance was not, however, of long duration; he died at the end of three months, after having confided to his friend, the Marquis d'Urban, the cause of his sorrows.

The Marquis d'Urban had a son of marriageable age; he thought that he could find nothing more suitable for him than a wife whose virtue had come triumphantly through such a trial: he let her time of mourning pass, and then presented the young Marquis d'Urban, who succeeded in making his attentions acceptable to the beautiful widow, and soon became her husband. More fortunate than his predecessor, the Marquis d'Urban had three heirs to oppose to his collaterals, when, some two years and a half later, the Chevalier de Bouillon arrived at the capital of the county of Venaissin.

The Chevalier de Bouillon was a typical rake of the period, handsome, young, and well-grown; the nephew of a cardinal who was influential at Rome, and proud of belonging to a house which had privileges of suzerainty. The chevalier, in his indiscreet fatuity, spared no woman; and his conduct had given some scandal in the circle of Madame de Maintenon, who was rising into power. One of his friends, having witnessed the displeasure exhibited towards him by Louis XIV, who was beginning to become devout, thought to do him a service by warning him that the king “gardait une dent” against him. [Translator's note. —“Garder une dent,” that is, to keep up a grudge, means literally “to keep a tooth” against him.]

“Pardieu!” replied the chevalier, “I am indeed unlucky when the only tooth left to him remains to bite me.”

This pun had been repeated, and had reached Louis XIV, so that the chevalier presently heard, directly enough this time, that the king desired him to travel for some years. He knew the danger of neglecting—such intimations, and since he thought the country after all preferable to the Bastille, he left Paris, and arrived at Avignon, surrounded by the halo of interest that naturally attends a handsome young persecuted nobleman.

The virtue of Madame d'Urban was as much cried up at Avignon as the ill-behaviour of the chevalier had been reprobated in Paris. A reputation equal to his own, but so opposite in kind, could not fail to be very offensive to him, therefore he determined immediately upon arriving to play one against the other.

Nothing was easier than the attempt. M. d'Urban, sure of his wife's virtue, allowed her entire liberty; the chevalier saw her wherever he chose to see her, and every time he saw her found means to express a growing passion. Whether because the hour had come for Madame d'Urban, or whether because she was dazzled by the splendour of the chevalier's belonging to a princely house, her virtue, hitherto so fierce, melted like snow in the May sunshine; and the chevalier, luckier than the poor page, took the husband's place without any attempt on Madame d'Urban's part to cry for help.

As all the chevalier desired was public triumph, he took care to make the whole town acquainted at once with his success; then, as some infidels of the neighbourhood still doubted, the chevalier ordered one of his servants to wait for him at the marquise's door with a lantern and a bell. At one in the morning, the chevalier came out, and the servant walked before him, ringing the bell. At this unaccustomed sound, a great number of townspeople, who had been quietly asleep, awoke, and, curious to see what was happening, opened their windows. They beheld the chevalier, walking gravely behind his servant, who continued to light his master's way and to ring along the course of the street that lay between Madame d'Urban's house and his own. As he had made no mystery to anyone of his love affair, nobody took the trouble even to ask him whence he came. However, as there might possibly be persons still unconvinced, he repeated this same jest, for his own satisfaction, three nights running; so that by the morning of the fourth day nobody had any doubts left.

As generally happens in such cases, M. d'Urban did not know a word of what was going on until the moment when his friends warned him that he was the talk of the town. Then he forbade his wife to see her lover again. The prohibition

produced the usual results: on the morrow, as, soon as M. d'Urban had gone out, the marquise sent for the chevalier to inform him of the catastrophe in which they were both involved; but she found him far better prepared than herself for such blows, and he tried to prove to her, by reproaches for her imprudent conduct, that all this was her fault; so that at last the poor woman, convinced that it was she who had brought these woes upon them, burst into tears. Meanwhile, M. d'Urban, who, being jealous for the first time, was the more seriously so, having learned that the chevalier was with his wife, shut the doors, and posted himself in the antechamber with his servants, in order to seize him as he came out. But the chevalier, who had ceased to trouble himself about Madame d'Urban's tears, heard all the preparations, and, suspecting some ambush, opened the window, and, although it was one o'clock in the afternoon and the place was full of people, jumped out of the window into the street, and did not hurt himself at all, though the height was twenty feet, but walked quietly home at a moderate pace.

The same evening, the chevalier, intending to relate his new adventure in all its details, invited some of his friends to sup with him at the pastrycook Lecoq's. This man, who was a brother of the famous Lecoq of the rue Montorgueil, was the cleverest eating-house-keeper in Avignon; his own unusual corpulence commended his cookery, and, when he stood at the door, constituted an advertisement for his restaurant. The good man, knowing with what delicate appetites he had to deal, did his very best that evening, and that nothing might be wanting, waited upon his guests himself. They spent the night drinking, and towards morning the chevalier and his companions, being then drunk, espied their host standing respectfully at the door, his face wreathed in smiles. The chevalier called him nearer, poured him out a glass of wine and made him drink with them; then, as the poor wretch, confused at such an honour, was thanking him with many bows, he said:—

“Pardieu, you are too fat for Lecoq, and I must make you a capon.”

This strange proposition was received as men would receive it who were drunk and accustomed by their position to impunity. The unfortunate pastrycook was seized, bound down upon the table, and died under their treatment. The vice-legat being informed of the murder by one of the waiters, who had run in on hearing his master's shrieks, and had found him, covered with blood, in the hands of his butchers, was at first inclined to arrest the chevalier and bring him conspicuously to punishment. But he was restrained by his regard for the

Cardinal de Bouillon, the chevalier's uncle, and contented himself with warning the culprit that unless he left the town instantly he would be put into the hands of the authorities. The chevalier, who was beginning to have had enough of Avignon, did not wait to be told twice, ordered the wheels of his chaise to be greased and horses to be brought. In the interval before they were ready the fancy took him to go and see Madame d'Urban again.

As the house of the marquise was the very last at which, after the manner of his leaving it the day before, the chevalier was expected at such an hour, he got in with the greatest ease, and, meeting a lady's-maid, who was in his interests, was taken to the room where the marquise was. She, who had not reckoned upon seeing the chevalier again, received him with all the raptures of which a woman in love is capable, especially when her love is a forbidden one. But the chevalier soon put an end to them by announcing that his visit was a visit of farewell, and by telling her the reason that obliged him to leave her. The marquise was like the woman who pitied the fatigue of the poor horses that tore Damien limb from limb; all her commiseration was for the chevalier, who on account of such a trifle was being forced to leave Avignon. At last the farewell had to be uttered, and as the chevalier, not knowing what to say at the fatal moment, complained that he had no memento of her, the marquise took down the frame that contained a portrait of herself corresponding with one of her husband, and tearing out the canvas, rolled, it up and gave it to the chevalier. The latter, so far from being touched by this token of love, laid it down, as he went away, upon a piece of furniture, where the marquise found it half an hour later. She imagined that his mind being so full of the original, he had forgotten the copy, and representing to herself the sorrow which the discovery of this forgetfulness would cause him, she sent for a servant, gave him the picture, and ordered him to take horse and ride after the chevalier's chaise. The man took a post-horse, and, making great speed, perceived the fugitive in the distance just as the latter had finished changing horses. He made violent signs and shouted loudly, in order to stop the postillion. But the postillion having told his fare that he saw a man coming on at full speed, the chevalier supposed himself to be pursued, and bade him go on as fast as possible. This order was so well obeyed that the unfortunate servant only came up with the chaise a league and a half farther on; having stopped the postillion, he got off his horse, and very respectfully presented to the chevalier the picture which he had been bidden to bring him. But the chevalier, having recovered from his first alarm, bade him go about his business, and take back the portrait—which was of no use to him—to the sender. The servant, however, like a faithful messenger, declared that his orders were positive, and that he should

not dare go back to Madame d'Urban without fulfilling them. The chevalier, seeing that he could not conquer the man's determination, sent his postillion to a farrier, whose house lay on the road, for a hammer and four nails, and with his own hands nailed the portrait to the back of his chaise; then he stepped in again, bade the postillion whip up his horses, and drove away, leaving Madame d'Urban's messenger greatly astonished at the manner in which the chevalier had used his mistress's portrait.

At the next stage, the postillion, who was going back, asked for his money, and the chevalier answered that he had none. The postillion persisted; then the chevalier got out of his chaise, unfastened Madame d'Urban's portrait, and told him that he need only put it up for sale in Avignon and declare how it had come into his possession, in order to receive twenty times the price of his stage; the postillion, seeing that nothing else was to be got out of the chevalier, accepted the pledge, and, following his instructions precisely, exhibited it next morning at the door of a dealer in the town, together with an exact statement of the story. The picture was bought back the same day for twenty-five Louis.

As may be supposed, the adventure was much talked of throughout the town. Next day, Madame d'Urban disappeared, no one knew whither, at the very time when the relatives of the marquis were met together and had decided to ask the king for a 'lettre-de-cachet'. One of the gentlemen present was entrusted with the duty of taking the necessary steps; but whether because he was not active enough, or whether because he was in Madame d'Urban's interests, nothing further was heard in Avignon of any consequences ensuing from such steps. In the meantime, Madame d'Urban, who had gone to the house of an aunt, opened negotiations with her husband that were entirely successful, and a month after this adventure she returned triumphantly to the conjugal roof.

Two hundred pistoles, given by the Cardinal de Bouillon, pacified the family of the unfortunate pastrycook, who at first had given notice of the affair to the police, but who soon afterwards withdrew their complaint, and gave out that they had taken action too hastily on the strength of a story told in joke, and that further inquiries showed their relative to have died of an apoplectic stroke.

Thanks—to this declaration, which exculpated the Chevalier de Bouillon in the eyes of the king, he was allowed, after travelling for two years in Italy and in Germany, to return undisturbed to France.

Thus ends, not the family of Ganges, but the commotion which the family made in the world. From time to time, indeed, the playwright or the novelist calls up the pale and bloodstained figure of the marquise to appear either on the stage or in a book; but the evocation almost always ceases at her, and many persons who have written about the mother do not even know what became of the children. Our intention has been to fill this gap; that is why we have tried to tell what our predecessors left out, and try offer to our readers what the stage—and often the actual world—offers; comedy after melodrama.

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