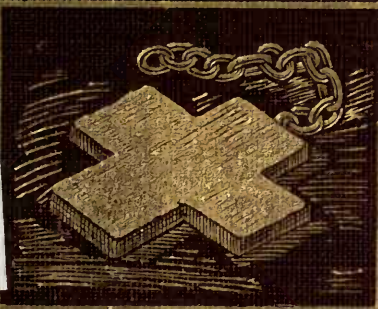


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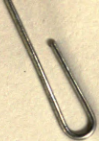


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THE FULL SERIES OF
The Mysteries of the People

:: OR ::
History of a Proletarian Family
Across the Ages

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THE SILVER CROSS

:: :: OR :: ::

THE CARPENTER OF NAZARETH

A Tale of Jerusalem

By EUGENE SUE

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH

By DANIEL DE LEON

NEW YORK LABOR NEWS COMPANY, 1909

THE SILVER CROSS

THE CARPENTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

Of the series of nineteen historic novels that comprise Eugene Sue's work entitled *The Mysteries of the People; or, History of a Proletarian Family Across the Ages*, the first four may be called the overture to the historic drama that really starts with the fifth—*The Casque's Lark; or, Victoria, the Mother of the Camps*, when the two distinct streams of the typically oppressed and typical oppressor meet—and closes with the nineteenth—*The Galley Slave's Ring; or, The Family of Lebrenn*, bringing history down to the year 1848. The introductory period closes with this, the fourth story, *The Silver Cross; or, The Carpenter of Nazareth*. While the first of the introductory stories—*The Gold Sickle; or, Hena, the Virgin of the Isle of Sen*—portrays the Gallic people, pure, brave, industrious but unorganized; while the second—*The Brass Bell; or, The Chariot of Death*—narrates the enslavement of this people, as the inevitable consequence of their unorganized condition, which not all their virtues could parry; while the third—*The Iron Collar; or, Faustina and Syomara*—describes Roman society with an eye especially to the brutality that the slave was subjected to, and the brutalizing effect thereof upon the slaveholder himself;—while these three stories unfold the gradual breakdown of society under the Roman sway, this, the fourth, summarizes the preceding ones in the grand climax of the political upheaval which the Tragedy of Calvary, though expected to, was not able to burke.

Although Sue's *Mysteries of the People; or, History of a Proletarian Family* is a "work of fiction," yet it is the best universal history extant; better than any work,

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

avowedly on history, it graphically traces the special features of the several systems of class-rule as they have succeeded each other from epoch to epoch, together with the nature of the struggle between the contending classes. The "Law," "Order," "Patriotism," "Religion," etc., etc., that each successive tyrant class, despite its change of form, hysterically sought refuge in to justify its criminal existence whenever threatened; the varying economic causes of the oppression of the toilers; the mistakes incurred by these in their struggles for redress; the varying fortunes of the conflict;—all these social dramas are therein reproduced in a majestic series of "historic novels," covering leading and successive episodes in the history of the race.

The present story—*The Silver Cross; or, The Carpenter of Nazareth*—is a marvellous presentation of one of the world's leading events in a garb without which that event is stripped of its beauty and significance. As the narrative rushes onward thrillingly from start to catastrophe, it delineates one after another the leading features of the oppressors' class—their unity of action, despite hostile politico-material interests and clashing creed tenets; the hypocrisy that typifies them all; the oneness of fundamental purpose that animates pulpit, professional chair, or public office in possession of a plundering class. Page after page holds the mirror up to the modern ruling class—its orators, pulpiteers, politicians, lawyers, together with its long train of menials of high and low degree—and, by the reflection cast, enlightens and warns.

DANIEL DE LEON.

Milford, Conn., May, 1909.

THE SILVER CROSS

INTRODUCTION.

I, Fergan, the grandson of Sylvest, unable to do better, wish to add this introduction to the following story written by my wife, Genevieve, for our family archives, as a sequel to the narrative of my grandfather.

Genevieve was my foster sister, and later became my wife. Shortly after our marriage she was hired from my master as a washerwoman by a Roman residing in Marseilles and named Gremion, a relative of my grandfather's first master, and agent of the Roman fisc.

The dominion of the Romans then extended from one end of the world to the other. Judea had become subject to them as a dependency of the province of Syria, which was governed by a Roman Prefect.

From the port of Marseilles vessels often took sail for the country of the Israelites. Gremion, a relative of the Procurator of Judea, named Pontius Pilate, was appointed the successor of the Tribune of the Treasury, whose duty it was to oversee the collection of taxes in that country. Wherever the Roman dominion planted itself, the collection of taxes was at the same time organized.

Aurelia, the wife of Gremion, who had hired my wife Genevieve as a washerwoman, was so pleased with her

kind manners and her attention to work, that she wished to keep her near her during her long voyage to the country of the Israelites. She begged her husband to purchase Genevieve, and he did so.

The gods were kind to us. Aurelia was of that small number of Roman dames who were benign towards their slaves. Young, handsome, of a lively and sportive disposition, Aurelia was not likely to render servitude too harsh to my wife. This consideration mitigated my sorrow at our separation. I had become quite skilled at my weaver's trade, and yielded large returns to the fiscal agents, who hired me out to other masters.

It was, accordingly, towards the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius that my wife departed from Marseilles with Aurelia, her mistress, for Judea.

The events in the following narrative were written by Genevieve a year ago, after her return from her voyage. My own life has been until now so monotonous and insignificant that an account of it would make a poor showing in the archives of my family. As to Genevieve's experience, although she relates some adventures that are of but little importance, and which occurred in the land of the Hebrews during her sojourn in Jerusalem, it will have at least the attraction that a very distant and little known country happens to be its theater.

CHAPTER I.

A SUPPER AT PONTIUS PILATE'S.

On that evening there was a great supper party at the mansion of Pontius Pilate, the Procurator in the country of the Israelites for the Emperor Tiberius.

Towards the decline of day the most brilliant company met at the mansion of the Roman seigneur. The house, like those of all rich persons of that country, was built of hewn stone, plastered over with chalk, and covered with a wash of a reddish color.¹

The sumptuous residence was reached through a square yard, surrounded with marble pillars that formed a gallery. In the center of the yard a fountain spouted jets of limpid water, imparting an agreeable coolness under the burning sun of Arabia. A tall palm tree, planted close to the fountain, shaded it with its foliage by day. From the square yard one stepped into a vestibule filled with servants, and from there into the banquet hall, the walls of which were panelled in sandalwood encrusted with ivory.

Around the table lay couches of cedar wood, covered with rich draperies, on which the guests sat to eat. According to the custom of the country, each of the

¹ Jeremiah, 22.14.

dames present at the supper had brought with her one of her female slaves, who stood behind her during the repast. It was in this way that Genevieve, the wife of Fergan, witnessed the scenes which she is about to describe, having accompanied her mistress Aurelia to the residence of Seigneur Pontius Pilate.

The company was select. Prominent among the men of greatest note were Seigneur Baruch, a Senator and doctor of law; Seigneur Chuza, the intendant of the residence of Herod, Tetrarch or Prince of Judea under the protection of Rome; Seigneur Gremion, recently arrived from Roman Gaul in the capacity of Tribune of the Treasury in Judea; Seigneur Jonas, one of the richest bankers of Jerusalem; and, finally, Seigneur Caiaphas, one of the Princes of the Church of the Hebrews.

Among the dames at the supper table were Lucretia, the wife of Pontius Pilate; Aurelia, the wife of Gremion; and Joanna, the wife of Chuza.¹

The two handsomest dames of the company that took supper on that evening at the mansion of Pontius Pilate were Joanna and Aurelia. Joanna had the beauty that is peculiar to Orientals—large black eyes that were at once gentle and warm, and teeth of a whiteness that her brunette complexion rendered all the more dazzling. Her turban, made of a costly Tyrian material of purple color, and held together by a thick chain of gold, the ends of which fell one on each of her shoul-

¹Luke, 8.3.

ders, framed her forehead, which two heavy braids of black hair partly concealed. She was clad in a long white robe which left exposed her arms, richly circled with gold bracelets. Over her robe, and held at the waist by a purple scarf of like material with her turban, she wore a sort of sleeveless vest of orange-colored silk. Joanna's beautiful features bore the stamp of sweetness, and her smile was expressive of charming kindness.

Aurelia, the wife of Gremion, born of Roman parents in the south of France, was also beautiful. She was dressed after the fashion of her own country—two tunics, one long and of rose color, the other short and blue. A net of gold thread held her auburn hair. Her skin was as white as Joanna's was brown. Her large blue eyes danced with delight, and her cheerful smile proclaimed unalterable good temper.

Senator Baruch, one of the most learned doctors in the law, occupied the place of honor at the supper. He seemed to be a great glutton. His green turban leaned almost the whole time over his plate. He even had to loosen two or three times the belt that held his long velvet robe, ornamented with a long silver fringe. The gluttony of the fat Senator drew several times smiles and mutual whispers from Joanna and Aurelia, new friends as they were, who sat beside each other, and behind whom stood Genevieve, losing not a word that passed between them, and no less attentive to all that the other guests said.

Seigneur Jonas, one of the wealthiest bankers of Jerusalem, with a little yellow turban on his head and clad in a brown robe, wore a grey and pointed beard. He resembled a bird of prey. Off and on he spoke in a low voice to the doctor of law, who rarely answered him, never ceasing to eat, while the High Priest Caiaphas, Gremion, Pontius Pilate and the other personages conversed among themselves.

Towards the end of the supper, the doctor of law, having at last had his fill, wiped his greasy beard with the back of his hand, and addressed the recently arrived Tribune of the Treasury, saying:

“Seigneur Gremion, are you beginning to accustom yourself to the ways of our poor country? Oh! It must be a great change to you who come from Roman Gaul—what a long voyage you have made!”

“I like to see new countries,” answered Gremion; “and I shall have frequent occasion to travel over your country overseeing the tax collectors.”

“Unfortunately for Seigneur Gremion,” put in the banker Jonas, “he arrives in Judea in sad and evil days.”

“Why so, seigneur?” asked Gremion.

“Are not times of civil disturbances always evil times?” answered the banker.

“No doubt, Seigneur Jonas; but what disturbances do you mean?”

“My friend Jonas,” replied Baruch, the doctor of law, “refers to the deplorable disorders that a vaga-

bond of Nazareth leaves behind him in his wake wherever he goes, and which grow worse every day."

"Oh, yes!" said Gremion, "that former carpenter of Galilee, who was born in a stable, and is the son of a plowmaker. I heard it said that he goes all over the country—how did you call him?"

"If he were given the name he deserves," cried the doctor of law angrily, "he would be called the Scamp—the Impious—the Seditious—but he carries the name of Jesus."

"An idle ranter," interjected Pontius Pilate, with a shrug of his shoulders after emptying his cup. "A fool prating to geese."

"Seigneur Pontius Pilate!" cried the doctor of law in a reproachful tone. "How! You who represent in this country the august Emperor Tiberius, the protector of us peaceful and honest folks, seeing that, but for your troops, the populace would long ago have risen in revolt against Herod our Prince—you remain indifferent to the acts and doings of that Nazarene! You dismiss him as a fool! Oh, Seigneur Pontius Pilate, this is not the first time I have warned you that fools like that one are political pests!"

"And I repeat it, my seigneurs," replied Pontius Pilate, holding out his empty cup to the slave behind him. "I repeat it, you alarm yourselves unnecessarily. Let the Nazarene preach at his ease, his words will blow over like the wind."

"Seigneur Baruch," asked Joanna, in her sweet

voice, "why do you entertain such a bitter hatred for that young man of Nazareth? You never hear his name mentioned without becoming enraged."

"Yes, I hate that Nazarene," answered the doctor of law. "My hatred is justified by his conduct. The wretch, who respects nothing, has not only insulted me, me, personally, but he has gone farther; he has insulted all my fellow Senators in my person. Do you know what he dared to say on the square of the Temple, as he saw me walk by?"

"Well, what did he say, Seigneur Baruch?" Joanna persisted, smiling. "It must have been something frightful!"

"It was abominable, monstrous! That is what it was," replied the doctor of law. "Well, as I said, I was crossing the square of the Temple; I was coming from dinner at my friend Samuel's. On my way I encountered a group of beggars all in rags—workmen, camel-drivers, fellows who let out asses, women of ill repute, children in tatters, and other people of the most dangerous sort. They stood listening to a young man who had mounted upon a stone and was perorating at the top of his voice. Suddenly he pointed his finger at me. All the other vagabonds turned around to see me, and I heard the Nazarene, it was he, you must know, say to his audience of rag-tag and bob-tail: 'Beware of the doctors of the law which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the market places,

and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts.'"¹

"You must admit, Seigneur Pontius Pilate," observed the banker Jonas, "that it is impossible to carry the audacity of personality any further than that—"

"To me it seems," whispered Aurelia to Joanna, laughing and calling her attention to the circumstance that the doctor of law actually occupied the place of honor at the feast, "to me it seems that Seigneur Baruch has, indeed, a fondness for the best places."

"That is why he is angry at the young man of Nazareth, who holds hypocrisy in horror," answered Joanna, while Seigneur Baruch proceeded, more and more incensed:

"But, my dear seigneurs, there are still worse abominations to follow. 'Beware,' the inciter to sedition proceeded to yell, 'beware of the doctors of the law for they devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; these shall receive greater damnation.'² Yes, those are the very words that I heard the Nazarene utter. And, now, Seigneur Pontius Pilate, I solemnly declare to you that, if you do not suppress as speedily as possible the unbridled license which dares to assail the authority of the doctors of the law, that is to say, Law and Authority themselves—if Senators can thus with impunity be pointed out to the hatred and contempt of the public—if that can be, then it is done for society!"

¹ Mark, 12.38, 39.

² Mark, 12.40.

“Let him talk,” observed Pontius Pilate with philosophic composure, and again emptying his cup. “Let him talk, and you enjoy your lives unmolested.”

“Enjoy one’s life unmolested, Seigneur Pontius Pilate, when one foresees grave disasters?” exclaimed the banker Jonas. “I must confess that the fears of my worthy friend Baruch are but too well founded. Yes, I say with him, it is done for society. The audacity of this carpenter of Nazareth transcends everything. There is nothing that he respects. Yesterday it was Law and Authority that he assailed in their representatives. To-day it is the rich against whom he arouses the dregs of the populace. Did he not venture to utter this execrable sentiment: ‘It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God?’”¹

At this citation by Seigneur Jonas all the guests exclaimed in chorus:

“Abominable!”

“We are marching towards an abyss!”

“According to that, all of us, as we sit here, who have gold in our coffers, are condemned to eternal fire!”

“The idea of comparing us to cables that can not pass through the eye of a needle!”

“And these monstrosities are said and repeated by the Nazarene to the dregs of the populace!”

“With intent to incite them to loot the rich—”

¹ Matthew, 19.24.

“Is not that a despicable way of flattering the detestable passions of the mob of tattered beggars in whom Jesus of Nazareth takes so much delight, and with whom, it is said, he gets regularly drunk?”¹

“I find it hard to blame the young fellow for loving wine,” remarked Pontius Pilate, laughing heartily, and again holding out his cup to his slave. “Guzzlers are not dangerous people.”

“But not yet is that all,” put in Caiaphas, the High Priest. “The Nazarene does not only outrage Law, and Authority, and Property—he attacks with no less brazenness the religion of our fathers. For instance, it is expressly ordered in Deuteronomy: ‘Unto the stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury.’² Note well the first words: Unto the stranger thou mayest lend upon usury. Well, now, in utter contempt for the prescriptions of our holy religion, the Nazarene arrogates to himself the right to say: ‘Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again,’³ and he takes particular care to add: ‘Ye can not serve God and mammon.’⁴ So that religion expressly declares it is permissible to draw profit on your money from strangers, and the Nazarene, blaspheming Holy Writ in one of its most important dogmas, denies what it affirms, forbids what it allows.”

“My condition of a pagan,” replied Pontius Pilate, thrown into a rollicking mood by his copious potations,

¹ Luke, 7.34.

² Deuteronomy, 23.20.

³ Luke, 6.35.

⁴ Luke, 16.13.

“does not allow me to take part in such a discussion. While you are at it, I shall silently to myself invoke our God Bacchus—wine, slave! Wine!”

“Nevertheless, Seigneur Pontius Pilate,” objected the banker Jonas, who seemed hardly able to restrain his irritation at the Roman’s indifference, “even if we pass by what there is of sacrilegious in this proposition of the Nazarene, you will have to admit that it is downright insanity. With such notions, good-bye to all commerce!”

“It means the ruin of public fortune!”

“What am I to do with the gold in my coffers if I were not to draw profit on it, if I were to lend, hoping for nothing again? It is to make one laugh—were it not so odious—”

“Nor is it the case of an isolated attack aimed at our holy religion,” proceeded Caiaphas to explain. “With the Nazarene, it is a settled policy to outrage and undermine the faith of our fathers. Let me give you another instance. The other day the sick were bathing in the pool of Bethesda. That day was the Sabbath. Now, you know, my seigneurs, how solemn and sacred is the prohibition against doing any manner of work on the Sabbath.”

“To all religious people it is impiousness.”

“Now, watch the conduct of the Nazarene,” Caiaphas proceeded. “He goes to the pool, and note in passing that, with cunning villainy, he never accepts a

denier for his cures. Among others, he finds there a man with a dislocated foot—he sets it—”

“What! On the Sabbath!”

“Abomination and desolation!”

“To heal a patient on the Sabbath—sacrilege!”

“Yes, my seigneurs,” answered the priest with a mournful voice; “he committed the sacrilege!”¹

“If the young man had failed to restore the patient to the use of his foot,” whispered Aurelia to Joanna, smiling, “I could understand their rage.”

“Such ungodliness,” added Doctor Baruch, “such ungodliness deserves the severest punishment—it is impossible to outrage religion in a more abominable manner!”

“And you must not think that the Nazarene keeps his sacrileges dark, or blushes over them—far from it! He carries blasphemy to the point of deriding the Sabbath, and of denouncing those who observe it as hypocrites!”²

A general murmur of indignation received these words of the Prince of the Church, so abominable was the Nazarene’s impiousness considered by the guests of Pontius Pilate. The latter, however, unconcernedly emptying cup upon cup, seemed no longer to be interested in the conversation that went on all around him.

“No, Seigneur Caiaphas,” remarked the banker Jonas, with a look of consternation, “if it were some

¹ Luke, 6.7-11.

² Luke, 13.15.

one else than yourself who informed me of such enormities, I would hesitate to believe them."

"What I am telling you are accurate facts. The idea occurred to me of placing near the Nazarene certain wily fellows who assume the appearance of being partisans of his. They draw him out. He then speaks without mistrust, opens his heart to my men, and then they return immediately to me and repeat everything that took place."¹

"That is an excellent plan that you hit upon, Seigneur Caiaphas," observed the banker Jonas approvingly. "All honor to you!"

"Well, thanks to these emissaries," the High Priest proceeded, "I am informed that as late as day before yesterday the Nazarene uttered incendiary language, enough to egg on the slaves who listened to him to cut the throats of their masters. He said: 'The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord; it is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord!'"²

A fresh murmur of indignation ran over the assemblage.

"You notice the kind concession that the Nazarene deigns to make to us!" cried the banker Jonas. "Indeed? It is enough that the slave be as his master!

¹ Luke, 20.20.

Dupin makes the following reflection: "Who would not be surprised to find here the odious trade of the *agent provocateur*? One may see for himself whether

I have not used the proper term to qualify the emissaries sent out about Jesus".—Dupin, Sr., *Jesus before Caiaphas*, p. 39.

² Matthew, 10.24-25.

You grant us that much, Jesus of Nazareth! You permit that the slave shall not be above his seigneur! Many thanks to you!"

"And consider," added the doctor of law, "consider the consequences of these amazing doctrines if they were to be generally spread among the masses. We may now speak freely, here among us, now that our servants have left the banquet hall. The day when the slave will consider himself the equal of his master he will say to himself: 'If I am my master's equal, he can not have the right to keep me in bondage, and I have the right to rebel.' Now, my seigneurs, you can easily imagine what such a revolt would mean!"

"It would be the end of society!"

"The end of the world!"

"Chaos!" cried Seigneur Baruch. "Only chaos can follow upon the unchaining of the most detestable passions of the populace, and the Nazarene flatters them only in order to let them loose upon us. He promises mountains and marvels to the wretches in order to make proselytes of them. He flatters their envious hatred by saying to them that on the day of justice 'the last shall be first, and the first last!'"¹

"Yes, in the kingdom of heaven," interjected Joanna, in a sweet yet firm voice. "That is the sense in which the young man understands it."

"Oh, indeed?" said Seigneur Chuza, her husband, satirically. "He means only the kingdom of heaven?"

¹ Matthew, 20.16.

Do you really believe that? If so, why then did a fellow named Peter, one of his disciples, shortly ago propound to him this categorical question: 'Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee: what shall we have therefore?'¹

"That Peter is a man of foresight," remarked the banker jeeringly. "That fellow does not allow himself to be paid with hollow words."

"To that question from Peter," replied Chuza, "what was the Nazarene's answer, couched in such terms as to incite the cupidity of the bandits whom, sooner or later, he means to turn into his instruments? He answered in these unmistakable words:

"'Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my sake shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, and shall inherit everlasting life.'²

"'Now in this time,' that is clear enough," put in Doctor Baruch. "He promises now and in this time to the men of his bands a hundred houses for the one which they give up in order to follow him; a hundred-fold larger field for the one they abandon; and, over and above all that, for the future, in the centuries to come, he assures eternal life to the reprobates!"

"Now, then, where is he to seize those hundred houses for one," inquired the banker Jonas, "or the fields that he promises to the vagabonds? He will have

¹ Matthew 19.27.

² Matthew, 19.29, Mark, 10.29,30.

to take them from us, from us, the property holders, from us, the cables for whom the entrance into Paradise is as narrow as the eye of a needle, simply because of our wealth."

"It seems to me, my seigneurs," insisted Joanna, "that you put a wrong interpretation upon the words of the young master. They are used in a figurative sense."

"Indeed!" again exclaimed Joanna's husband in ironical accents. "And what may the beautiful figure of speech be, what is the allegory?"

"When Jesus of Nazareth says that those who follow him will enjoy now a hundredfold what they give up, he means, it seems to me, that the consciousness of preaching the glad tidings, the love of our fellowmen, kindness towards the weak and suffering, will compensate a hundredfold for the earthly goods that they may have renounced."

Joanna's clever and kind words were ill received by the guests of Pontius Pilate, and the High Priest cried out:

"I pity your wife, Seigneur Chuza, for being, like so many other women, blinded by the Nazarene. So completely are his eyes fastened upon material wealth, that he has the audacity of sending the vagabonds, whom he calls his disciples, to establish themselves in other people's houses and to eat their fill there under the pretence of preaching his delectable doctrines to the inmates."

“How is that, my seigneurs!” exclaimed Gremion. “Are such highhanded deeds possible in your country, and can they be perpetrated with impunity! People establish themselves by main force in your house, and eat and drink under pretence of perorating!”

“Those who admit the disciples of the young master of Nazareth,” rejoined Joanna, “receive them voluntarily.”

“Yes, some of them,” said Jonas. “But the larger number of those who harbor the vagabonds yield to fear and to threats. According to the orders of the Nazarene whoever refuses to shelter and feed his idle tramps are consigned by them to the fires of heaven.”¹

Fresh clamors of indignation received the report of these new misdeeds of the Nazarene.

“That’s an intolerable tyranny!”

“A stop must be put to such indignities!”

“It is simply organized pillage!”

“So, you see,” said the banker Jonas, “Seigneur Baruch is perfectly right when he says that it is straight toward chaos that we are led by the Nazarene, to whom nothing is sacred. I repeat it—not satisfied with seeking to overthrow Law, Authority, Property and Religion, his infernal purpose is to destroy the family also—”

“The fellow must be the very incarnation of your own Beelzebub!” cried Gremion. “What is that you say, my seigneurs! The Nazarene miscreant contem-

¹ Luke, 10.3-12.

plates annihilating the family? The sacrosanct institution of the family?"

"Yes, to annihilate by dividing it," explained Caiaphas. "To annihilate it by sowing discord and hatred at the domestic hearth! By arousing the son against the father! Servants against their masters!"

"Seigneur," said Gremion, shaking his head doubtfully, "can so abominable a project find lodgment in a sane man's head?"

"In the head of a man, no," answered the High Priest; "in the head of a Beelzebub like the Nazarene, certainly. Here is the proof of it: According to the irrefutable report of my emissaries, whom I told you about, the accursed man uttered, only a week ago, the following horrible words in an address to the band of beggars that never leaves him:

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace but a sword. I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I if it be already kindled! Suppose you that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, nay; but rather division. I am come to set a man at variance with his father, and the daughter against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. For henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.'"¹

"But that is shocking!" cried the banker Jonas and the intendant Chuza in chorus.

¹ Matthew, 10.34-36, Luke, 12.49-53.

“It is to preach the dissolution of the family through hatred!”

“It is preaching civil war!” cried the Roman Gremion. “Social war, like that raised by the revolted slave Spartacus!”

“What, to dare say: ‘I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled!’”

“And also: ‘A man’s foes shall be they of his own household!’”

“And besides: ‘Henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three!’”

“Why, he himself has the infernal audacity to sum up his purpose saying: ‘I am come to send fire on the earth.’”

Joanna listened with distressed impatience to the numerous charges preferred against the Nazarene. Finally she cried in a firm and indignant tone:

“Oh, my seigneurs; I am weary of listening to your calumnies! You misapprehend the words of the young master of Nazareth to his disciples. When he speaks of the division that will arise in a family, he means that, while in the same house some may share his doctrine of love and good will for their fellows that he preaches with his lips and his heart, others will persist in the hardness of their hearts, and they will needs be divided. He means that the servitors will declare themselves the enemies of their master if he has been unjust and wicked. In short, he means to say that

everywhere some will be with and some against him. And could it be otherwise? He urges people to renounce wealth; he proclaims the slave the equal of his master; he consoles and forgives those who have sinned in consequence of their misery or in consequence of ignorance, rather than with evil intent. Everybody could not possibly share such generous doctrines. What new truth was ever proclaimed that did not at first divide mankind? The young master of Nazareth merely announces in his figurative language that he has kindled a fire on earth in the hope that the earth may be illumined! Oh! I believe him! The fire of which he speaks is the ardent love for humanity with which his heart is aflame."

While Joanna was uttering these sentiments in a moved and vibrating voice she seemed even more beautiful than in repose. Aurelia, her new friend, contemplated her with as much astonishment as admiration.

The other guests of Seigneur Pontius Pilate, on the contrary, uttered numerous expressions of amazement and indignation. Chuza, the husband of Joanna, addressed her with severity:

"You must be losing your senses! I am ashamed of your words. It is incredible that a self-respecting woman could dare, without dying of confusion, defend such abominable doctrines, that are preached on the public streets and in disreputable taverns among vaga-

bonds, thieves and fallen women—the habitual companionship of the Nazarene.”

“Did not the young master, in answer to those who reproached him with his evil associations, say—the whole need not a physician, but they that are sick?”¹ was Joanna’s prompt reply in her habitually sweet and sonorous voice. “By means of this parable he denoted that it was those that led evil lives who needed above all being enlightened, sustained, guided and loved. I repeat it, yes, loved and comforted in order to be regained to better ways, because kindness and mercy accomplish more than violence and punishment. This is the pious and gentle task that Jesus daily imposes upon himself.”

“And I repeat to you,” cried out Chuza in a towering rage, “that the only object of the Nazarene in thus flattering the detestable passions of the dregs of the populace, among whom he spends his time, is to cause them to revolt at a favorable hour and season, to place himself at their head, set Jerusalem and all Judea on fire, sack the land and drench it in blood. He expresses himself clearly enough. Has he not the audacity to say that he brings not peace on earth but a sword—and fire—”

These words from Herod’s intendant met with marked approval from the guests of Pontius Pilate, all of whom seemed more and more amazed at the silence and indifference of the Roman Procurator. The latter, all the time frequently emptying his cup, smiled with

¹ Matthew, 9.12.

ever increasing good nature at the mention of each fresh enormity that the young man of Nazareth was being charged with.

Aurelia, who had listened to the generous defence of the young master by the wife of Herod's steward, said to her in an undertone:

"Dear Joanna, I can not tell you how much I desire to see that Nazarene. He must be an extraordinary man—"

"Oh, indeed! Extraordinary in his kindness of heart," answered Joanna, also in a low voice. "If you only knew how tender is his voice when he addresses the weak, the afflicted, and little children. Oh! especially the little children! He loves them to the point of adoration. When he sees any of them his face assumes a celestial aspect."

"Joanna," replied Aurelia, smiling, "is he so very beautiful?"

"Oh, yes, beautiful, beautiful as an archangel!"

"How curious I am to see and hear him!" repeated Aurelia. "But, alas! How is that to be done if he is always in such bad company? A woman could hardly venture in any of the taverns where he preaches."

Joanna remained thoughtful for a moment; she then said:

"Who knows, dear Aurelia! We may, perhaps, find some means of seeing and hearing the young man of Nazareth."

“Oh!” exclaimed Aurelia, delighted. “Dear Joanna, in what way?”

“Hush! we are observed,” answered Joanna. “We shall talk about this later.”

In fact, indignant at his wife’s obstinacy in defending the Nazarene, Seigneur Chuza, no less so than Caiaphas, was casting angry glances at her from time to time.

Pontius Pilate had once more emptied his large cup. With inflamed cheeks and sparkling eyes, he seemed to be enjoying extreme internal beatitude.

After consulting in a low voice with Caiaphas and the banker, Seigneur Baruch addressed the Roman, saying:

“Seigneur Pontius Pilate, if, after all that my friends and I have just informed you of concerning the abominable projects of the Nazarene, you should fail to take extreme measures against the man—you, the representative of the august Emperor Tiberius, the natural protector of Herod our Prince—then, before next pass-over, Jerusalem, all Judea, will be a prey to sack and pillage, instigated by the Nazarene, whom the populace already is acclaiming as the King of the Jews.”

Preserving the tranquil and unconcerned manner so characteristic of him, Pontius Pilate made answer:

“Come now, my friends, do not take bushes for forests, or molehills for mountains! Is it for me to remind you of your own history? Is the lad of Nazareth, perchance, the first who ever took it into his head to

play the role of Messiah? Did you not have, before him, Judas the Galilean, who claimed the Israelites should recognize no master but God—and who even sought to arouse the populace against our power. What happened? Judas was put to death—and the same thing will happen to the young man of Nazareth if he should actually fan a rebellion into flame.”

“It is undeniable, seigneur,” replied Caiaphas, the High Priest, “that the Nazarene is not the first impostor who pretended to be the Messiah, announced by our Holy Writ so many centuries ago. Since the last fifty years, to mention only recent happenings, we have had a number of false Messiahs: Jonathas; after him, Simon, the Magician, surnamed ‘The Great Virtue of God’; and many other impostors, alleged Messiahs, or saviors, or regenerators of the land of Israel! But none of those frauds ever enjoyed the influence that the Nazarene does, or above all, had his infernal audacity. Never did any of them assail, as this one does—and assail with inveterateness—wealth, religion, in short, all the things that must be respected unless Israel is to be plunged into chaos. None of those other impostors addressed themselves especially and constantly, as does the Nazarene, to the dregs of the populace, over whom he has attained a redoubtable ascendancy. Why, only recently, when Seigneur Baruch, at the end of his patience at the public insults with which the Nazarene hounded the Pharisees, attempted to have him arrested,

he was prevented from so doing by the mob.¹ Accordingly, if you do not come to our help, you, Seigneur Pontius Pilate, who have a considerable armed force at your command, it will be done for the public peace, and even an insurrection against your troops becomes possible.”

“All that sounds very plausible, my seigneurs,” replied Pontius Pilate, laughing. “If the Nazarene should dare to cause the populace to mutiny against my troops, you will see me the first ready—casque on head, cuirass on back, sword in hand. As to all else—by Jupiter! You will yourselves have to disentangle your own skein if a kink has got into it. Such internal matters concern only you, you who are the Senators of the city. Arrest the young fellow, imprison him, crucify him if he deserves it—it is your right, exercise it. As to me, I represent here the Emperor, my master. So long as his power is not assailed, there is nothing for me to meddle with.”

“Moreover, Seigneur Procurator,” added Joanna, “did not the young master say: ‘Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s?’”²

“True, noble Joanna,” answered Pontius Pilate, “that sounds very far from wanting to arouse the people to rise against the Romans.”

“But do you not see, seigneur,” cried Doctor Baruch, impatiently, “that the fraud uses such language

¹ Mark, 12.12.

² Matthew, 22.21.

only out of hypocrisy, in order not to awaken your suspicion, but that, at the proper time, he will call the populace to arms?"

"In that event, my seigneurs," rejoined Pontius Pilate, again emptying his cup, "the Nazarene will find me ready to receive him at the head of my cohorts. Your troubles with the young fellow in nowise concern me."

That instant a Roman officer burst into the banquet hall in a state of great excitement, and said to Pontius Pilate:

"Seigneur Procurator, information has just reached us that a grave commotion is being caused by Jesus of Nazareth."

"Poor young man!" said Aurelia to Joanna, in a whisper. "He is the sport of misfortune. Everything seems to go against him!"

"Let us listen," answered Joanna, uneasy. "Let us listen."

"You see it now, Seigneur Pontius Pilate," cried at once the High Priest, the doctor of the law, and the banker. "Not a day goes by without the Nazarene's disturbing the public peace."

"Answer me," said the Procurator, addressing the officer, "what is it all about?"

"Some people who have arrived from Bethany report that three days ago Jesus of Nazareth brought a dead body to life. The whole population of the town is in indescribable commotion; bands of ragged people

are at this hour running through the streets of Jerusalem with torches, crying: "Glory to Jesus of Nazareth, who resuscitates the dead!"

"The audacious rascal!" cried Caiaphas. "The idea of pretending to be able to emulate our prophets! To emulate Elijah, who brought to life the son of the widow of Zarephath,¹ or Elisha, who resuscitated the son of the Shunammite!² Profanation! Profanation!"

"He is an impostor!" echoed the banker Jonas. "It is an impious fraud! Sacrilege! Our Holy Writ says that the Messiah will resuscitate the dead. The Nazarene is trying to play his role of Messiah."

"They even mention the name of the dead man who was brought to life," said the officer. "They say his name is Lazarus."

"An example must be made!" cried the doctor of the law. "That Lazarus should be hanged to teach him to come to life again!"³

"Do you hear them? They wish to put the poor man to death," remarked Aurelia to Joanna, shrugging her shoulders. "To lose one's life because it was regained without one's fault! At least I presume they do not accuse him of having begged to be resurrected. These men certainly are insane."

"Alas! dear Aurelia," answered Chuza's wife sadly, "these are wicked mad men."

"I repeat," Doctor Baruch was heard to declare, "that fellow Lazarus should be hanged!"

¹ I Kings, 17.9-24.

² II Kings, 4.32-35.

³ John, 12.10.

“Fudge, my seigneurs!” exclaimed Pontius Pilate. “Here was an honest corpse sleeping tranquilly in his grave, not harboring any evil thoughts; he is resuscitated without his help, and you want me to have him hanged for that!”

“Yes, seigneur!” cried Caiaphas. “The mischief must be nipped in the bud. If this Nazarene now takes to resuscitating dead bodies—”

“It would be impossible to tell where that would end!” cried Doctor Baruch. “I therefore address a formal request to Seigneur Pontius Pilate that the audacious Lazarus be put to death.”

“But, seigneur,” suggested Aurelia, “suppose you hang him, and the young master of Nazareth resuscitates him over again?”

“Then we will hang him over again, Dame Aurelia!” answered the banker Jonas angrily. “We will hang him over again! By Joshua! Do you think we are in the accommodating mood to please such vagabonds?”

“My seigneurs,” answered Pontius Pilate, “you have your militia, have that Lazarus arrested and hanged, if it pleases you. If you do, however, you would show yourselves more pitiless than we the pagans, who, like yourselves, have had our resurrected ones. But by Jupiter! We do not hang them. I heard it said quite recently that Apollonius of Tyana resuscitated a young girl whose coffin he ran against, with her betrothed walking behind and mourning.

Apollonius uttered some magical words, and the bride stepped out of her coffin fresher and more charming than ever before.¹ The marriage then took place, and the couple lived happy ever afterwards."

"Would you have caused the poor bride who came back to life to die over again, my dear seigneurs?" inquired Aurelia.

"Yes, by all means," answered Caiaphas, "if she was the accomplice of an impostor. But seeing that the seigneur Procurator leaves us in the lurch, myself and my friend Baruch shall call out the militia and issue orders for the arrest of that Lazarus."

"Go ahead, my seigneurs," said Pontius Pilate, rising.

"Seigneur Gremion," said Chuza, the intendant of the house of Herod, "I was to leave day after to-morrow on a journey of inspection that is to take me as far as Bethlehem. If you wish us to travel together, I shall hasten my departure by one day, and we may start to-morrow morning. We shall be back in four days. I shall avail myself of your escort. In these disturbed days it is well to be protected."

"I accept your offer, Seigneur Chuza," answered the Tribune of the Treasury. "I should be delighted to travel in your company."

"Dear Aurelia," Joanna whispered to her friend, "you wanted to see the young master of Nazareth?"

¹Baur, *Apollonius of Tyana and Christ*, sec. 145; cited by Straus in his *Life of Jesus*, vol. II, p. 187.

"Oh! Now more than ever, dear Joanna! Everything I hear told of that extraordinary young man redoubles my curiosity."

"Come to my house to-morrow after my husband's departure."

"To-morrow? Agreed, dear Joanna."

The two young women, together with their husbands and the slave Genevieve, left the residence of Pontius Pilate.

CHAPTER II.

JOANNA, AURELIA AND GENEVIEVE.

The tavern of the Wild Ass was a favorite gathering place for camel drivers, hirers of asses, carriers, itinerant merchants, vendors of watermelons, pomegranates, fresh dates in season, and, later, of olives and dried dates. In the tavern were also found people without any settled trade—prostitutes of low degree, beggars, vagabonds and bold fellows whose armed protection travelers purchased when they journeyed from town to town in order to be defended against highwaymen by this mercenary escort, often themselves very much suspected. There were also seen in the place Roman slaves whom their masters brought to the country of the Hebrews.

The tavern of the Wild Ass enjoyed a bad reputation. Quarrels and fights were of frequent occurrence. Towards nightfall none were seen to venture in the neighborhood of the Lambs' Gate, not far from which the haunt was situated, but men of sinister aspect or women of a disorderly life. Later, when night had fully set in, cries, peals of laughter and bacchanalian songs were heard to issue from the dreaded locality,

not infrequently plaintive moans followed the disputes. Occasionally, militiamen of the Jerusalem Guard entered the tavern under pretence of restoring order, and came out again either deeper in their cups and more turbulent than the drinkers, or driven out with sticks and stones.

On the day after the supper that took place at the residence of Pontius Pilate, towards evening, after dusk, two young men plainly dressed in white tunics and turbans of blue wool were promenading in a little winding street, at the extremity of which the door of the dreaded tavern was to be seen. They were talking together as they walked, and often turned their heads to look at the opposite end of the street as if they awaited the arrival of some one.

“Genevieve,” said one of them to his companion, stopping a moment—the two pretended young men were Aurelia and her female slave, disguised in men’s attire—“Genevieve, my new friend Joanna is very slow in joining us. I begin to feel alarmed. Besides, if I must confess it to you, I fear I am committing an indiscretion.”

“Then, dear mistress, let us return home.”

“I have a good mind to do so—and yet would such a good opportunity ever offer itself again?”

“It is true that the absence of your husband, Seigneur Gremion, who left this morning with Seigneur Chuza, the intendant of the house of Herod, leaves you entirely free, and that it may, perhaps, be long

before you have such another opportunity."

"Confess it, Genevieve, you are even more curious than I to see this extraordinary man, this young master of Nazareth; are you not?"

"If it is so, my dear mistress, there would be nothing strange in my wish. I am a slave, and the Nazarene declares there should be no more slaves."

"Am I, then, such a harsh mistress, Genevieve?"

"No! Oh, no! But, frankly, do you know many mistresses like you?"

"It is not for me to answer such a question, flatterer!"

"Then it is for me to say so. If there is exceptionally such a good mistress as you there are a hundred others who for a word, at the slightest act of negligence, have their slaves' flesh cut with the whip, or torture them with cruel delight. Is that not true?"

"I can not deny that."

"You render servitude to me as bearable as possible, my dear mistress. But, after all, I do not belong to myself. I have been obliged to tear myself from my dear Fergan, my husband, who wept so bitterly at my departure. Who tells me that I shall see him again upon my return to Marseilles? Who tells me that he may not have been sold and carried away to some other place? Who tells me that Seigneur Gremion may not sell me, and separate me from you?"

"I promised you that you shall never part from me."

“But if your husband should want to sell me, could you prevent him?”

“Alas, no!”

“And yet, only a hundred years ago, the fathers and mothers of us Gauls were free! The ancestors of Fergan were the bravest chiefs of their tribe!”

“Oh!” said Aurelia, smiling, “a Caesar’s daughter would not be any prouder for having an emperor for her father than you are of what you call the ancestors of your husband.”

“Pride is not allowed to a slave,” answered Genevieve sadly. “All I regret is our freedom. What did we do to lose it? Oh, if only the prayers of this young man of Nazareth were granted! If there were no more slavery!”

“No more slavery! Why, Genevieve, you are going crazy. Is such a thing possible? No more slaves! That their lives be made less hard to bear, that I concede is proper. But wholly to suppress slavery would be the end of the world. Do you see, Genevieve, it is just such extreme views that injure the young man of Nazareth.”

“He is not beloved by the powerful and happy. Yesterday, at the supper at Seigneur Pontius Pilate’s, as I stood behind you, I listened to all that was said. I did not lose a single word. How inveterate their hatred for the young man!”

“It can not be helped, Genevieve,” answered Aure-

lia smiling. "In a certain measure it is his own fault."

"And you, too, accuse him!"

"No, I do not. But you must remember that he assails the bankers, the doctors of the law, the priests, in short, all the hypocrites who belong to the party of the Pharisees. That should be enough to ruin him forever."

"At least it takes courage to tell the truth to wicked people when they are powerful. Besides, the young man of Nazareth is as good as he is courageous, according to your friend Joanna. She is rich and in high standing, and she is not a slave like myself. Accordingly, he does not preach in her favor, and yet, see how much she admires him!"

"Joanna's admiration, the admiration of a sweet and charming woman, does no doubt speak in the young man's favor. It would be impossible for Joanna, with her noble heart, to admire a wicked man. What a lovable friend accident has given me in her! I know nothing so tender as her looks, or so touching as her voice. She says that when the Nazarene speaks to the afflicted, the poor and to little children his aspect becomes divine. I do not know, but what is certain is that Joanna's face becomes celestial when she speaks of him."

"Is it not she who is coming from the other side, my dear mistress? I hear a light step approaching in the shadow."

"It must be she."

Indeed, Joanna, also disguised in man's garb, joined Aurelia and her slave a second later.

"You have probably been waiting for me a long time, Aurelia," said the young dame; "I could not leave my house in secret before now."

"Joanna, I do not feel very much at ease. I think I am just now more timid than curious. Only think, women of our rank in that horrible tavern, where, it is said, the dregs of the city gather!"

"Have no fear. Those people are more turbulent and frightful in appearance than they are really wicked. I have already been twice among them in this disguise with one of my female relatives, to hear the young master. The light is poor in the tavern. There is a dark gallery that runs around the court. We shall not be seen from there. We shall call for a pot of beer, and no heed will be given to us. They are occupied only with the young man of Nazareth, or in his absence, with his disciples who come to preach the glad tidings. Come, Aurelia, it is getting late—come."

"Hark! Hark!" said the Roman dame to Joanna, listening with alarm in the direction of the tavern. "Do you hear those cries? They are quarreling in the horrible place!"

"That is a sign that the young master has not yet arrived," explained Joanna. "In his presence all voices are hushed, and the most violent become like lambs."

"And besides, Joanna, look at that group of vile looking men and women gathered at the door under

the light of the lantern. Let us wait until they go in or go away."

"Come, there is nothing to fear, I assure you—"

"No, I beg of you, Joanna, wait a little longer. I certainly do admire your bravery."

"Oh! It is that Jesus of Nazareth inspires courage, as he inspires the turbulent with gentleness. Moreover, if you only knew how natural his language is! What touching and ingenious parables he hits upon to express his thoughts in a way that he can be understood by these plain people, by these poor in spirit, as he calls them, and whom he loves so dearly! Accordingly, everybody, down to the little children, for whom he entertains so much tenderness, understand his discourses, and do not lose a word. No doubt, before him, other Messiahs have prophesied the deliverance of our country from the oppression of the stranger, have explained our Holy Writ, have healed desperate diseases by means of the magic of medicine. But none of these Messiahs has until now displayed the forbearing patience with which the young master teaches the humble and the little ones—all, in short, because, to him there are no infidels or pagans. All simple hearts are good, and worthy of the kingdom of heaven. Did you ever hear his parable of the heathen? There is nothing so simple and yet so touching."

"No, Joanna, I never heard it."

"It is called The Good Samaritan."

"What is a Samaritan?"

“The Samaritans are an idolatrous people who inhabit the territory on the other side of the furthest mountains of Judea. The chief priests look upon those people as barred from the kingdom of God. This is the parable:

“‘A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed leaving him half dead.

“‘And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed on the other side.

“‘And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

“‘But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

“‘And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

“‘Which now,’ Jesus asked his disciples, ‘which now of these three, think you, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?’

“‘He that showed mercy on him,’ was the answer given.

“ ‘Go in peace and do you likewise,’ replied Jesus with a celestial smile.”¹

The slave Genevieve could not restrain her tears on hearing this story, especially seeing that Joanna laid particular emphasis, with ineffable sweetness, upon the last words of Jesus—“Go in peace, and do you likewise.”

“You are right, Joanna,” said Aurelia pensively, “even a child could understand the moral conveyed by those words. I myself feel deeply moved by them.”

“And yet this parable,” Joanna proceeded to say, “is one of those that have exasperated the chief priests and the doctors of the law most bitterly against the master of Nazareth.”

“Why so?”

“Because in that story he exhibits a Samaritan, a pagan, as more humane than the Levite, than the priest, since the idolater, seeing a brother in a poor wounded man, succored him, and thus rendered himself worthier of heaven than the two holy men of hard hearts. This is one of the things which the enemies of Jesus call his blasphemies and his sacrileges!”

“Joanna, let us proceed to the tavern. I no longer fear to enter the place. People for whom such stories are invented, and who listen to them with avidity, can not be wicked.”

“As you see, my dear Aurelia, the word of the Naza-

¹ Luke, 30.30-37.

rene already has its effect upon you. It inspires you with confidence and courage. Come! Come!"

And the young dame took her friend's arm. The two, followed by the slave Genevieve, proceeded to the tavern of the Wild Ass, where they soon arrived.

CHAPTER III.

THE TAVERN OF THE WILD ASS.

This tavern, constructed on a square plan like all other houses in the Orient, consisted of an interior court surrounded by heavy columns that supported a terrace and formed four galleries under which the drinkers could take shelter when it rained. This night, however, being clear and mild, the larger number of the patrons of the place sat around the tables in the court, lighted by the flickering glimmer of a huge iron lamp that stood in the center of the place. This solitary luminary threw hardly any light into the galleries, where also some drinkers were seated. The galleries were thus thrown almost completely in the shade.

It was to one of these somber covers that Joanna, Aurelia and Genevieve proceeded. In crossing the then noisy crowd they noticed many ragged people, or at least poorly clad, a large number of whom were disorderly women. Most of these were miserably dressed, and had for their turban only a shred of white veil around their heads; some others, however, wore dresses and head covers of rather costly but faded material, copper bracelets, necklaces and earrings studded with false

stones. Their cheeks were brilliantly painted; their haggard and sad countenances bespoke a certain bitterness of mind; their manifestations of pleasure were boisterous and exaggerated; everything about them told of the trials, agonies and shame of the sad life of courtesans.

Of the men, some seemed depressed with poverty, others looked savage and desperate. Several wore rusty weapons at their belts, or were leaning upon long sticks tipped with an iron ball. Farther away, distinguishable by their iron collars and shaven heads, stood some household slaves belonging to Roman officers. Still further off, a number of infirm, in rags, squatted beside their crutches. Mothers held in their arms their little pale and wan children whom they covered with looks of tender anxiety, as they awaited the arrival of the master of Nazareth, who was so skilled in the art of healing.

From a few words exchanged by two rather well dressed but cynical and hard-featured men, that fell upon the ear of Genevieve she guessed that the men were secret emissaries employed by the chief priests and the doctors of the law to spy upon the Nazarene, and lure him into the trap of some imprudent confidence.

Bolder than her friend, Joanna had made a passage for her through the crowd, and seeing an unoccupied table standing in the shadow and behind one of the columns of the galleries, the wife of Seigneur Chuza

seated herself there with Aurelia, and called for a pot of beer from one of the waiter-girls of the tavern, while Genevieve, taking her stand beside her mistress, did not lose sight of the two emissaries of the Pharisees, and listened with avidity to everything that was being said around her.

"The night advances," remarked sadly a young and handsome woman to one of her friends seated opposite to her, and the cheeks of whom, like her own, were covered with paint, in the style common to courtesans, "Jesus of Nazareth will not come to-night."

"It was scarcely worth the while to come," answered the other reproachfully. "We should have taken our walk in the neighborhood of the Pool. We would then have come across some half drunk Roman centurion, or some doctor of the law scraping the walls, his nose in his cloak. From either we would have got a supper. You must not complain, Oliba, if we go to bed supperless. It is your own doing."

"That bread has begun to taste so bitter to me that I do not regret it."

"Bitter or not—it is bread—and when one is hungry, one eats it."

"I would have forgotten all about my hunger, listening to the words of Jesus," replied the first courtesan in a soft voice.

"Oliba, you will yet go crazy—to feed upon words!"

"It is because the words of Jesus breathe forgiveness, mercy, love—until now there were for us only

words of aversion and contumely."

And the courtesan remained pensive, her forehead resting upon her hand.

"You are a singular girl, Oliba!" remarked the other. "At any rate, however hollow it may be, we shall not partake of even that supper of words. The Nazarene will not come now. It is too late."

"On the contrary, may the all-powerful God send him here!" exclaimed a poor woman who was seated on the ground near the two courtesans, and held a sick child in her arms. "I have come on foot all the way from Bethlehem to beg our good Jesus to heal my daughter. He has no equal as a healer of children's ailments, and, so far from demanding payment for his advice, he often gives us wherewithal to purchase the balms that he prescribes."

"By the bowels of Solomon! I also hope that our friend Jesus may not fail us this evening!" came from a large sized man of ferocious aspect with a long, stiff beard, a rag of a red turban on his head, and clad in a camel's hair skirt that hung almost in shreds from a cord that was wound around his waist and from which dangled a long sheathless and rusty cutlass. This man also held in his hand a long stick tipped with an iron ball. "If our good friend of Nazareth does not come this evening I shall have spent my night for nothing. I had bargained to escort a traveler who did not dare to entrust himself alone on the road from Jerusalem to Bethany out of fear of footpads."

“Just look at that bandit with his gallows-bird face and long cutlass! A comforting escort for a traveler, he is!” observed to his companion in a low voice one of the two secret emissaries seated not far from where Genevieve stood.

“He would cut his too confiding traveler’s throat and rob him at the first dark spot on the road,” answered the other emissary.

“As true as my name is Banaías,” the man of the long cutlass proceeded to say, “I would have gladly lost the neat godsend of escorting a traveler, if our friend of Nazareth had come! I love that man! I do! He consoles one for having to drag his rags about, by proving to us that, since they can no more enter into Paradise than a hawse could pass through the eye of a needle, all the wicked rich will some day roast like capons in the kitchen of Beelzebub. True enough, that fills neither our bellies nor our purses! But it comforts. I could spend whole days and nights listening to him belaboring the priests, the doctors of the law and the rest of the Pharisees! And right he is, my friends! You should just hear those Pharisees! If you are taken before their tribunal for some trifle, all they do is to shout: ‘Quick, to jail with him and to the whipping post!’ ‘Thief!’ ‘Criminal!’ ‘Firebrand of hell!’ ‘Son of Satan!’ and other such paternal remonstrances. By the nose of Ezekiel! Is that the way to correct a man? Do not the accursed fellows know that many a horse, that is restive to the whip, will obey the voice? Oh,

who only the other day said to us, If your brother trespass against you, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.¹ That is talking! By the ear of Melchisedech! I am not tender and benign like the pascal lamb; no, no, I have had ample time to get my heart, head and skin hardened. Twenty years ago my father drove me from his home on account of a youthful indiscretion. Ever since I have lived at the devil's expense. I am as hard to curb as a savage. And yet, by the faith of Banaïas, with a single word in his sweet voice our friend of Nazareth could make me go to the end of the world."

"If Jesus can not come himself," put in another drinker, "he will send word to us with one of his disciples, who will preach the glad tidings to us in the master's stead."

"For want of cakes made of fine wheaten flour kneaded with honey, one eats barley bread," remarked an old beggar bent down under the weight of years. "The word of the disciples is good—better is the word of the master."

"Oh, yes!" replied another beggar. "To us who have been in despair since our birth he gives eternal hope."

"Jesus teaches us that we are not lower than our masters; by what right do they keep us in bondage?"

"Is the reason that, if there are a hundred masters on one side, we are ten thousand slaves on the other?" came from a second slave. "Patience! Patience! The

¹ Luke, 17.3.

day will come when we shall count our masters, and we shall count ourselves. After which the words of Jesus will be accomplished—Many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be the first.”¹

“He said to us, workingmen, who, due to the weight of the taxes and the greed of the dealers in merchandise, often are in want for bread and raiment, ourselves and our wives and children with us: ‘Take no thought; God, our heavenly father, clothes the lilies of the field; he feeds the fowls of the air; a day will come when you shall lack for nothing.’”²

“Yes, and Jesus also added: ‘The workman is worthy of his meat.’”³

“Here comes the master! Here comes the master!” cried several persons standing near the entrance of the tavern. Aurelia, no less curious than her slave Genevieve, stepped upon a bench in order to obtain a better view of the young master.

The expectation of the crowd was disappointed. It was not yet he. It was Peter, one of his disciples.

“And Jesus?”

“Will not the Nazarene come to-night?”

“Shall we not see our friend, the friend of the afflicted?”

“Myself, Judas and Simon,” answered Peter, “were accompanying him and came as far as the city gate when a poor woman who saw us pass begged the mas-

¹ Matthew, 19.30.

² Matthew, 6.28-34.

³ Matthew, 10.10.

ter to go to her house and visit her sick daughter, and he did so. He kept Judas and Simon near him and sent me to you. Those who wish his ministration only need to wait for him here. He will come."

The words of the disciple calmed the impatience of the crowd, and Banaiās, the man with the long cutlass, said to Peter:

"While we wait for the master, tell us of the good tidings. Is the time drawing near when the gluttons, whose belly expands in the measure that ours caves in, will have only the sulphur and pitch of hell to grow fat upon?"

"Yes, that day draws near!" cried Peter, climbing upon a bench. "Yes, that day is coming as comes the stormy night charged with thunder and lightning! Did not the Lord say through the mouth of his prophet: 'Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me?'"¹

"Yes! Yes!" answered several voices.

"Who is that angel?" replied Peter. "Who is that angel, if not Jesus, our master, the Messiah—the only true Messiah!"

"He is the promised angel!"

"He is the true Messiah!"

"And that angel having prepared the way, what does the Lord say further through the mouth of the prophet?" continued Peter. "He says:

"'And I will come near to you to judgment; and I

¹ Malachi, 3.1.

will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me.”¹ And did not the Lord also add: ‘There is a generation whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men?’”²

“If that generation has knives for teeth,” exclaimed Banaïas, grasping his cutlass, “we shall bite with ours!”

“Oh, may the day come when those who oppress the hireling in his wages shall be judged! I shall deliver up the banker Jonas to the vengeance of the Lord!” solemnly declared a workingman. “He made me work secretly upon the wainscoting of his banquet hall on the Sabbath and then withheld from me the wages of those days. I wanted to lodge a complaint against him, and he threatened to denounce me to the chief priests as a profaner of holy days, and cast me into prison!”

“And do you know why the banker Jonas oppressed you in your wages?” replied Peter. “Because as saith the prophet:

“‘The horseleach has two daughters, crying, Give, give.’”³

¹ Malachi, 3.5.

² Proverbs, 30.14.

³ Proverbs, 30.15.

“And will not the fat horseleaches some day have to disgorge all the blood that they sucked from poor workingmen, widows and orphans?” loudly asked Banaïas.

“Yes, yes,” answered the disciple; “our prophets and Jesus have announced that for them shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.¹ But when the thorns which choke the grain are pulled up, the wicked kings, the avaricious and the usurers uprooted from the earth whose sap they suck up, then will arrive the day of happiness for all and justice for all. And when that day shall have arrived, say our prophets:

“‘Nations shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid.’ The work of justice shall be the security, the peace and the happiness of every one. And finally, ‘the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.’”²

The charming picture of peace and universal happiness seemed to make a profound impression upon the audience of Peter. Several voices cried:

¹ Matthew, 13.42.

² Micah, 4.3,4; Isaiah, 11.6.

“Oh, may that day come soon! Why should one race cut the throat of another race?”

“How much blood wasted!”

“And who profits by it? Only the conquering Pharaohs—the men of blood, of battle and of rapine.”

“Oh, may those days of happiness, of justice and of good will come, when, as the prophets say, ‘a little child shall lead them.’”

“Yes, a little child will be sufficient. We shall all be gentle because we shall all be happy; we shall then be peaceful and docile, while now we are so unhappy, so angry, so exasperated that a hundred giants could not hold us in.”

“And when that day shall have come,” Peter proceeded to say, “every one having his share in the fullness of the earth that will be rendered fruitful by the labor of all, all being certain of a life of peace and happiness, then no longer will the idle be seen to enjoy the fruits of others’ toil. Did not the Lord say through the mouth of the son of David, one of his elect:

“‘Yea, I hated all my labor which I had taken under the sun, because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. For there is a man whose labor is in wisdom, and in knowledge and in equity; yet to a man that hath not labored therein shall he leave it for his portion. And who knows whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? This also is vanity and a great evil.’”¹

“You know,” added the apostle, “the voice of the son of David is holy as justice itself. No, he who does

¹ Ecclesiastes, 2.18,21.

not work, should not profit by the work of others!"

"But suppose I have children," called out a voice; "if, by depriving myself of rest and of the half of my daily bread, I succeed in saving up something for them in order to save them the necessity of experiencing the hardships that I underwent, would it be wrong for me to bequeath my property to them?"

"Eh! Who speaks to you of the present?" answered Peter. "Who speaks to you of these days when the strong oppress the weak, the rich the poor, the unjust the just, the master the slave? In seasons of storms and tempests each raises a shelter for himself and his family, that is but right! But when the times promised by the prophets shall have come, benign times, when a beneficent sun will always shine; when there will be no more storms; when the birth of every child will be greeted with joyful chants as a blessing from the Lord, instead of being wept over, as happens to-day, as an affliction, because, conceived in tears, the human being of to-day lives and dies in tears, while, on the contrary, the child conceived in joy is bound to live in joy; when labor, to-day excessive, will itself be a joy, so abundant will be the fruits of the land promised by the Lord—then every one, feeling at ease about his children's future, will no longer be compelled to lay up stores, and gather treasures for them by depriving and working himself to death. No! No! When Israel will finally enjoy the kingdom of God, each will work for all, and all for each!"

“Instead of, as happens to-day,” said the working-man who complained of the iniquity of the banker Jonas, “all work for some few, who work for none and enjoy the work of all.”

“As to such people,” Peter proceeded, “our master of Nazareth has said:

“‘The son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them who do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.’”¹

“And it would be no more than just,” observed Oliba, the courtesan, “because they it is who force us to sell our bodies in order to escape the gnashings of the teeth that hunger causes.”

“It is they who compel mothers to traffic with their children sooner than to see them die of want!” exclaimed another courtesan. “We are meat for prostitution!”

“Oh! When will that day of justice come?”

“It is coming! It approaches!” answered Peter in a resounding voice. “Evil, iniquity, violence reigns everywhere, not here, in Judea, only, but throughout the world, which is the Roman world. Oh! The ills that afflict Israel are as nothing beside the frightful ills that overwhelm her sister nations! The whole universe is weeping and bleeding under the triple yoke of Roman ferocity, debauchery and greed! From one end of the world to the other, from Syria to down-

¹ Matthew, 13.41-42.

trodden Gaul, one hears the clanking of chains and the moanings of slaves, borne down with toil; wretched beings among the wretched of the earth, they sweat blood at every pore! More to be pitied than the beast of the forests that dies in his den, or than the beast of burden that dies on his litter, the slaves are tortured and thrown to the teeth of ferocious animals! If they try to break their chains they are smothered in their own blood! Verily, I say unto you, in the name of Jesus, our master, verily I say unto you that can not endure!"

"No! No!" cried several voices. "No! that can not endure!"

"Our master is sorrowful," continued the disciple. "Oh! He is sorrowful unto death thinking of the horrible deeds, the vengeance, the shocking reprisals that so many centuries of oppression and iniquity are about to unchain upon earth. Day before yesterday the master said to us:

" 'When you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, be you not troubled; for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles, and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.' "

¹ Mark, 13.7-8; Luke, 21.11 26.

A rumbling murmur of dread ran through the crowd at these prophecies of Jesus reported by Peter, and several voices cried:

“Terrific storms must be about to burst forth from heaven!”

“So much the better! The clouds of iniquity must needs burst that the heavens may be cleared, and the eternal sun shine in all its splendor!”

“And if they grind their teeth on earth before grinding them in the eternal flames, the self-seeking rich, the chief priests, the crowned Pharaohs will have brought it upon themselves!” cried Banaías.

“Yes! Yes! It is so! Vengeance!”

“Oh!” proceeded Banaías, “it is not to-day that the prophets have been shouting the warning in their ears: Repent! Be good! Be just! Be merciful! Look down to your feet instead of admiring yourselves in your pride! Begone, surfeited gluttons that you are! You reject the most delicate meats! You fall down gorged with wine beside your cups full to the brim! You ask yourselves: ‘Shall I don to-day my robe lined with gold embroidery, or my plush mantle embroidered in silver’? And all the while your neighbor, shivering with cold beneath his rags, is not allowed even a sip from your cup, or to lick up the crumbs of your feasts! By the entrails of Jeremiah! That sort of thing has endured quite long enough!”

“Yes! Yes!” cried several voices. “That sort of thing has endured too long! The most patient finally grow tired! Death to the plunderers of the people!”

“The most peaceful ox some day turns upon the goad!”

“And what a goad hunger is!”

“Yes!” resumed Peter. “Yes, this sort of thing has endured too long! This sort of thing has lasted but too long. Accordingly, Jesus our master has said:

“‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.’”¹

These words of the Nazarene, reported to the crowd by Peter, aroused fresh enthusiasm. Genevieve overheard one of the two emissaries of the law and of the chief priests say to the other:

“This time the Nazarene shall not escape us. Such prophecies render him amenable to the laws and punishments provided against the seditious.”

But a new and loud murmur was at this moment heard on the outside of the tavern of the Wild Ass, and this only cry was repeated by all:

“It is he! It is he!”

“It is our friend!”

“Here he is!”

“It is he!”

“Here he is!”

¹ Luke, 4.18,19; 21.22.

CHAPTER IV.

THE YOUNG MAN OF NAZARETH.

Upon now learning of the arrival of Jesus of Nazareth, the guests that filled the tavern struggled and crowded to meet the young master. The mothers, who held little children in their arms, strove to be the first to approach Jesus. The infirm, taking up their crutches, begged their neighbors to open a way for them. Already the moving and charitable influence of the word of Mary's son was such that the able-bodied stepped aside in order to clear a passage to him for the mothers and the cripples.

Joanna, Aurelia and her slave shared the general emotion. Above all did Genevieve, the daughter, wife, and perhaps some day mother of slaves, feel her heart beat strongly at the sight of him, who, as he said, came to announce deliverance to the captives, and set free those who were weighed down under their chains.

At last Genevieve saw him.

The son of Mary, the friend of little children, of poor mothers, of the afflicted and of the slaves, was dressed like the rest of his countrymen, the Israelites. He wore a robe of white linen held around his waist

with a leather girdle from which hung an alms bag. A square blue mantle covered his shoulders. His long, gold-blond hair fell on either side of his pale visage of an angelic sweetness. His lips and chin were slightly shaded by a light growth of beard with a golden glint like his hair. His bearing was cordial and familiar. He clasped fraternally all the hands held out to him. Several times he stooped down to embrace some ragged child who held the lappets of his robe, and smiling with benignity he said to the men and women who crowded around him:

“Suffer them—suffer the little children to come unto me!”

Judas, a man of somber and sullen countenance, together with Simon and other disciples of Jesus, accompanied him, each carrying a little casket from which, after questioning each patient and attentively listening to his answers, the son of Mary would take some medicament which he would give to the sick and the women who came to consult his science, either in their own behalf or that of their children. More than once did Jesus accompany the advice and balms which he distributed with a little money gift that he took from the alms bag hanging from his belt. So heavily and frequently did he draw upon his alms bag that, having once more thrust in his hand, he smiled sadly at finding the pouch empty. After turning the same inside out, he made a touching sign of regret, as if to announce that he had nothing more to give. As those

whom he succored with his advice, his balms and his money thanked him effusively, he answered them in his sweet voice:

"It is the Lord God, our heavenly father, whom you must thank, not me. Peace be with you!"

"If your money treasure is exhausted, my friend, there remains to you another, an inexhaustible treasure—the treasure of your good words," said Banaïas, who had elbowed his way near Jesus of Nazareth, and contemplated him with a mixture of respect and tenderness that caused one to forget his savage ugliness.

"Yes," replied another; "tell us, Jesus, the things that we humble and lowly people understand."

"The language of our holy prophets is divine—but it is frequently not to be understood of us poor people."

"Oh, yes, our good Jesus," added a handsome boy who had glided into the front ranks and held a lappet of the robe of the young master of Nazareth. "Tell us one of those parables that are so pleasant to hear, and which we retain in our memory to repeat to our mothers and brothers."

"No, No!" put in other voices. "Before the parable deliver to us one of your beautiful discourses against the wicked rich, the powerful, and the proud!"

"And, above all, our friend," interjected Banaïas, "tell us when those Pharaohs will be gathered unto Beelzebub, their lord and master."

But the son of Mary pointed with a smile to the little

child who had first asked for a parable, and took him upon his knees after seating himself near a table. Thus exhibiting his tenderness for infancy, the son of Mary seemed to say that the dear little boy should be first satisfied in his desire.

All then grouped themselves around Jesus. The children, who loved him so much, sat down at his feet. Oliba and other courtesans also sat down on the floor in Oriental fashion, with their arms around their knees, and their eyes fixed upon the young master of Nazareth in eager expectation. Banaïas, together with several others of his stamp, gathered behind the young master and ordered silence to the expectant multitude. Finally, others, further away, among whom were Joanna, Aurelia and her slave Genevieve, formed a second tier by rising on the benches.

The son of Mary, keeping upon his knees the boy, who, with one arm resting on the shoulder of his good Jesus, seemed to hang upon his lips, the son of Mary commenced the following parable:

“A certain man had two sons:

“And the younger of them said to his father: Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me. And he divided unto them his living.

“And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

“And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty

famine in that land, and he began to be in want.

“And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

“And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him.”

At this passage in the story, the boy, whom the son of Mary held upon his knees, heaved a sigh and clasped his hands pityingly.

Jesus continued:

“And when he came to himself, he said: How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare and I perish with hunger! I will rise and go unto my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before you, and am no more worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired servants.

“And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

“And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son.

“But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry, for this

my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."

"Oh! The good father!" exclaimed the child whom the young master of Nazareth held on his knees. "Oh! The good, kind father, who forgives, and embraces instead of scolding!"

Jesus smiled, kissed the boy on his forehead, and proceeded:

"And they began to be merry.

"Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing.

"And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant.

"And he said unto him, Your brother is come; and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.

"And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and threatened him.

"And he, answering, said to his father: Lo, these many years do I serve you, neither transgressed I at any time your commandment; and yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this your son was come, which has devoured your living with harlots, you have killed for him the fatted calf."

"Oh! How wicked is that elder brother!" said the child whom the young master held upon his knees. "He is envious of his younger brother, notwithstanding

he returns home so wretched. God will not love the envious brother. Not so, good Jesus?"

The son of Mary shook his head as if to answer the child that, indeed, God did not love the envious, and proceeded:

"And the father said unto his first born: Son, you are ever with me, and all that I have is yours. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad; for this your brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."¹

All the people present seemed touched to tears by this narrative. The son of Mary having stopped speaking to drink a glass of wine that Judas, his disciple, poured out to him, Banaías, who had listened to him with profound attention, cried out:

"Our friend, do you know that that somewhat resembles my own history, and is very much like that of many other people? If, after my first youthful slip, my father had acted like the father in your parable, and had stretched out his arms to me in token of forgiveness, instead of driving me out of the house with a merciless caning, I might at this hour be seated at my own honest hearth, in the midst of my family, whereas to-day the highroad is my hearth, misery my wife, and for children I have my evil thoughts, the spawn of wild-eyed Mother Misery. Oh! Why did I not have the man of that parable for my father!"

"The indulgent father forgave," observed Oliba the

¹ Luke 15.11-32.

courtesan, "because he knew that God having given youth to his creatures, these sometimes abuse the boon. But those who, disgraced, wretched and repentful, return humbly beseeching a little corner under the paternal roof, should not they, so far from being spurned, be received with mercy?"

"As to me," exclaimed another voice, "I would not give a grape-stone for that elder brother, for that sanctimonious man, so harsh, so sour and so jealous, to whom virtue cost nothing!"

Genevieve overheard one of the emissaries of the Pharisees say to his companion:

"Does not the Nazarene flatter in a dangerous manner the evil instincts of these vagabonds! Henceforth, every idle debauchee, who will have left the paternal home, will believe himself justified to consign his father to Beelzebub if the ill-advised father, instead of killing the fatted calf, chases out of doors, as he ought to, the villainous son whom only hunger drives back to the fold."

"Yes, and all wise and honest people will be considered hard-hearted and jealous."

And this same man, believing that no one would know who spoke, said aloud:

"Glory to you, Jesus of Nazareth! Glory to you, the protector and defender of us dissipators and prostitutes! It is folly to be virtuous and provident. The fatted calf must be killed for the debauched!"

Loud murmurs of disapprobation received the words

of the emissary of the Pharisees. All eyes turned in the direction whence the words had come. Threats were uttered.

“Away with these men, these inexorable beasts!”

“Oh! They are pitiless. They have no entrails, these people whom repentance never moves,” remarked the courtesan Oliba. “These cold bodies that do not realize that the blood boils with others.”

“Let the one who thus spoke show himself!” shouted Banaïas, striking the table with his heavy iron-tipped stick in a threatening manner. “Yes, let him show us his virtuous face, the scrupulous worthy, who is severer than our friend of Nazareth, the brother of the poor, of the sorrowful and of the sick, whom he supports, heals and consoles! By the ear of Zerubbabel! I would like to meet him face to face, the spotless white lamb, who bleats his virtues to us. Where is he, that immaculate lily of the valley of men? He surely smells virtue like a veritable balm,” added Banaïas, dilating his large nostrils. “By the nose of Malachi! I do not smell at all the aroma of wisdom, that perfume of honesty that surely the sweet-scented choice vase hidden among us should emit.”

The witticism of Banaïas caused great mirth to the audience, and the one of the two emissaries who had uttered the satire against the words of the son of Mary did not seem to be in a hurry to meet the wishes of the redoubtable friend of the Nazarene. On the contrary, he, as well as his companion, affected to look

around, as the other guests did, for the man from whom the words had proceeded.

The tumult was on the increase when the young master of Nazareth made a sign that he wished to speak. The tempest subsided as if by magic, and, answering to the reproach of being too indulgent towards the sinners, Jesus said in an accent of kind severity:

“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you,” added the son of Mary in a tone of grave and tender authority, “I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety-nine persons which need no repentance.”¹

These touching words of the son of Mary made a strong impression upon the crowd. It applauded with hands and words.

“Answer that, my white lambkin, my spotless lily!” again shouted Banaías, addressing the invisible interrupter of the Nazarene. “If you do not share the opinion of our friend, step forward and repeat and make good your words.”

“The wonderful merit, as Jesus says,” observed an-

¹ Luke 15.4-7.

other, "the wonderful merit for him who is neither hungry nor thirsty, to be neither gluttonous nor a drunkard!"

"Easy is virtue to him who lacks for nothing," said the courtesan Oliba. "Hunger and neglect ruin more women than dissipation."

Suddenly there was a peculiar stir among the crowd that filled the tavern, and the name of Magdalen traveled from lip to lip.

"She is one of those creatures who make a traffic of their bodies," Joanna informed Aurelia. "It is not want that plunged her, as it does so many others, into this degradation, but a first slip, followed by the desertion of the man who seduced her, and whom she truly loved. Since then, despite the disorders of her life and the venality of her amours, Magdalen has proved that her heart was not wholly corrupted. The poor never apply to her in vain, and she has passionately loved several men with a love as devoted as it was disinterested, sacrificing to them the chief priests, the doctors of the law and many a rich seigneur who vied with his fellows in the gifts that he lavished upon her. My husband, among others, was of the number of those magnificent admirers—"

"Your husband, dear Joanna?"

"He spent a good deal of money upon Magdalen—she is so beautiful," answered the young dame with an indulgent smile. "He is one of those who have enriched her. Marvels are told of her house, or rather

of the palace that she inhabits. Her coffers are filled with the rarest cloths and the most dazzling stones. Gold and silver vases, imported at a great expense from Rome, Asia and Greece, are heaped upon her sideboards. The purple and silk of Tyre ornament her residence; and her domestic servants are as numerous as those of a Princess."

"We also have in Italy and in Roman Gaul creatures like her, the insolent luxury of whom abashes the mediocre fortunes of many honest women," answered Aurelia. "But what can this Magdalen want with the young master of Nazareth?"

"No doubt she comes, like several others of her class whom you see yonder, less rich but no less degraded than herself, to listen to the words of Jesus. His sweet and tender word, which penetrates the heart with its mercifulness, affects them and causes repentance to germinate."

As she heard these words spoken by Joanna, Genevieve was reminded of the narrative of Sylvest, her husband's grandfather, a narrative that described the horrible life of Syomara the courtesan, and her frightful death.¹

"Perhaps," thought Genevieve to herself, "perhaps Syomara also might have been touched with repentance and her end might have been peaceable if, like this Magdalen that they speak about, she could have

¹The third story of this series, *Faustina and Syomara*, and entitled "The Iron Collar; or,

heard the healing instructions of this young man."

"There she is!" cried several voices. "Room for Magdalen, the beauty among the most beautiful!"

"Our Princess!" remarked her companion to Oliba, with a certain touch of pride. "After all, our Queen is Magdalen!"

"A sad royalty!" answered Oliba with a sigh. "Her shame is seen from higher up—and further away!"

"But she is so rich—so very rich!"

"To sell one's self for a denier or for a heap of gold," replied the courtesan, "where is the difference? The ignominy is the same."

"Oliba, you are completely losing your senses!"

The young woman made no answer, and sighed.

Standing, like her mistress, upon a bench, Genevieve raised herself on tip-toes, and presently saw the celebrated courtesan enter the court of the tavern.

Magdalen was of exceptional beauty. The chin-piece of her gold-fringed white silk turban framed a face of an admirable perfection. Her long-arched eyebrows, black as ebony, like the strands of her hair, traced their dainty lines upon that hitherto brazen and proud, but now sad and humble forehead. The woman seemed heart-broken. The edges of her eyelids, stained bluish after the fashion of the Orient, imparted an uncommon appearance to her tear-drowned eyes, and seemed to double their size as they shone through their tears like two black diamonds. A long robe of light blue Tyrian silk fringed with gold and embroidered

with pearls fell in a long train behind her, and around her waist she had a flowing scarf of cloth of gold studded with many-colored stones matching those of her double necklace, her ear-rings, and the bracelets which covered her bare and handsome arms in which she held a rose-colored alabaster urn from Chalcedon, more precious than gold.

“What a change has come over Magdalen!” exclaimed Joanna, addressing Aurelia. “I have seen her pass a score of times in her litter, borne by her servants dressed in rich liveries, the triumph of beauty, the intoxication and delight of youth legible on her face. Yet now, behold her timidly approaching Jesus, humble, depressed, tearful, and sadder than the most desolate of those poor women who hold their ragged children in their arms.”

“But what is she about?” inquired Aurelia, watching more and more attentively. “She is standing before the young master of Nazareth. With one hand she holds the alabaster urn close to her heaving bosom, while with the other hand she is unloosing her rich turban. She casts it far away from her. Her black, luxurious hair, tumbling down upon her breast and shoulders, unrolls like a jetty mantle, down to the ground.”

“Oh! Look! Look! her tears flow more copious!” exclaimed Joanna. “They inundate her face.”

“She has knelt down at the feet of the son of Mary,”

said Aurelia, "and bathes them with tears and covers them with kisses."

"What heart-rending sobs!"

"And the tears that she sheds upon the feet of Jesus—she is wiping them with her long hair."¹

"Watch her! Without ceasing to weep, she takes up her elaborate urn and pours upon the feet of Jesus a delicious perfume, the odor of which reaches even as far as here."

"The young master tries to raise her—she resists. She can not speak. Her sobs break her voice. She bows her head down to the floor."

Then Jesus, who could scarcely restrain his emotion, turned to Simon, one of his disciples, and addressing him, said:

"There was a certain creditor who had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty: And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him more?"

Simon answered and said:

"Master, I suppose that he whom he forgave most."

"You have rightly judged, Simon."

And pointing to the rich courtesan on her knees at his feet, Jesus said to those around him:

"See ye this woman? I say unto ye, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much."

¹ Luke 15.38.

Then addressing Magdalen in a voice instinct with kindness :

“Your sins are forgiven—your faith has saved you; go in peace.”¹

“Abomination of desolation!” exclaimed one of the emissaries of the Pharisees in a low voice to his companion. “Can brazenness and demoralization be carried to greater length! The Nazarene forgives everything that is reprehensible, absolves everything that is punishable, extols all that is low! After rehabilitating the profligate and prodigal, we now have him rehabilitating infamous harlots!”

“And what for?” replied the other emissary. “Simply in order to flatter the vices and detestable passions of the villains that he gathers around him, to the end that he may some day use them.”

“But, patience!” said the other. “Patience! Nazarene, your hour draws nigh! Your ever-increasing audacity will soon draw a terrible punishment upon your head!”

While Genevieve heard the two wicked men express these sentiments, she saw Magdalen, after the merciful words of Jesus, rise radiant. Tears still rolled down her beautiful face, but those tears no longer seemed bitter. She distributed among the poor women who surrounded her the precious stones and jewels that she was ornamented with. She even unclasped the magnificent robe that she wore over her tunic of fine Sidon

¹ Luke 7.40-50.

material, and donned the coarse brown woolen mantle of a young woman, to whom she gave in exchange her own richly pearl-embroidered robe of great value. She then said to Simon, the disciple of the young master, that she would never quit her humble vestments, and that the very next day she would distribute all her property among the needy, and among the courtesans whom only their misery kept from returning to a better life.

At these acts, which were accompanied with words of kindness, Oliba clasped her hands, and moved by an impulse of gratitude, threw herself at the feet of Magdalen, took her hands, kissed them amid sobs and said:

“Blessed be you, Magdalen! Oh! blessed be you! Your bounty will be the salvation of me and of my other companions in shame. We repented at the voice of the son of Mary. His words thrilled our hearts, and we expected forgiveness. But, alas! the necessity of living held us back in evil. Blessed be you, Magdalen, you who render possible our return to righteousness!”

“Listen, it is not me you must bless,” answered Magdalen, “but Jesus of Nazareth.”

And Magdalen mingled with the crowd to listen to the word of the young master.

Some of his disciples having informed him concerning Magdalen that she had been seduced and then deserted by a doctor of the law, the countenance of Jesus assumed a serious, severe and even menacing aspect. He said:

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Woe unto you, you blind guides! which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel!”¹

The familiar satire caused much mirth among the audience, and Banaías cried:

“Oh, how right you are, our friend! How many of those gluttons do we know who swallow camels! But such is the rigid strictness of their conscience that they digest camels like ostriches digest pebbles, and they do not seem to mind it. All is grist that comes to their mill.”

Fresh outbursts of laughter answered the sally of Banaías, and Jesus proceeded:

“Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Woe unto you which bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders, but yourselves will not move them with one of your fingers!”²

This fresh familiar comparison struck the minds of the hearers of the young master, and several voices responded:

¹ Matthew 23.24,27,28.

² Matthew 23.4,25.

“Yes! Yes! The hypocritical do-nothings say to the lowly: ‘Labor is holy—work! But we, we shall not work!’”

“Yes; ‘you alone shall carry the burden of labor—but we will not move it with one of our fingers!’”

Jesus proceeded:

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! you do all your works for to be seen of men! You make broad your phylacteries and enlarge the borders of your garments! Woe unto you which say, Whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!”¹

“Because,” interjected a voice, “to those wicked rich nothing is holy but gold! They swear by their gold as others swear by their soul—or by their honor!”

Jesus resumed:

“And, whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you pay tithe of mint, and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith. These ought you to have done, and not leave the other undone!”²

“By the two thumbs of Methuselah!” cried Banaïas, laughing. “You say so as if it could be easily done! All those hypocrites have in their coffers wherewith to pay the tithe, and they pay it. But where do you ex-

¹ Matthew 23.5,16.

² Matthew 23.18,22.

pect them to find the coin of justice, of good faith and of mercy which you demand of those whitened sepulchres, of those swallowers of camels, or those people reeking with iniquity?"

"Alas! The young master speaks truly!" said another. "To him who is moneyless, justice is deaf. The doctors of the law do not say to you in their tribunals: 'What good reason can you allege in your behalf?' but: 'How much money do you promise me?!'"

"I entrusted some savings to Joas, one of the chief priests," put in a poor old woman. "He told me he spent it in good works for my salvation. What was I to do, lone poor woman that I am, against so powerful a seigneur? I had to submit, and beg for my bread, which I do not find every day."

At this complaint Jesus cried with redoubled indignation:

"O, woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer. You serpents, you generation of vipers! how can you escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes for your salvation—but, alas!" added the son of Mary in a tone of deep sadness, "some of them you shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall you persecute from city to city, that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of the righteous Abel, unto the blood of

Zacharias, whom you slew between the Temple and the altar!"¹

"Oh! Fear not, our friend! If those swallows of camels should want to shed your blood," cried Banaïas, striking the hilt of his long and rusty cutlass, "they will first have to shed ours! And we will not run before them, either!"

"Yes! Yes!" answered the crowd almost in chorus. "Fear nothing, Jesus of Nazareth. We will defend you against your enemies!"

"We shall die for you, if necessary!"

"You shall be our leader!"

"Our King!"

But the son of Mary, as if mistrustful of these transports, shook his head with more and more profound sadness, tears welled at his eyes; and he cried in a disconsolate voice:

"O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! You that kill the prophets, and stone them which are sent unto you! How often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wing—and you would not! You would not!"²

And the accents of the son of Mary, at first cutting, severe or indignant when he referred to the Pharisees, were stamped with such heartrending grief as he pronounced those last words that almost all those present wept like the young master of Nazareth. Pres-

¹ Matthew 23.14.33.34.

² Matthew 23.37.

ently profound silence ensued; Jesus was seen with his elbows leaning on the table and weeping with his face hidden in his hands.

Genevieve could no longer restrain her own tears. She overheard one of the two emissaries say to his companion in a tone of triumph:

“The Nazarene has called the doctors of the law and the chief priests ‘serpents’ and ‘generation of vipers’! This whole evening he has done nothing but blaspheme. All that men hold most sacred he has denounced. A curse upon him!”

“Oh! You talk of crucifixion, Jesus of Nazareth!” replied the other. “We would not have you proved a liar, prophet of Beelzebub!”

Simon, one of the disciples of the young master, seeing him remain with his head leaning upon his hands, weeping in silence, stooped over him and said:

“Master, the sun will soon be rising. The peasants who bring the vegetables to the market of Jerusalem go through the Valley of Cedron. They thirst for your word. They expect to meet you on their way. Shall we not go out to them?”

Jesus rose. His sad and pensive countenance brightened as he embraced the little children, and they, seeing he was about to depart, put their arms around his neck. Jesus then clasped fraternally all the hands that were offered to him and left the Wild Ass tavern, which was situated near that gate of the city that led to the fields.

CHAPTER V.

THE VALLEY OF CEDRON.

Jesus wended his way towards the Valley of Cedron which male and female peasants crossed on their way to Jerusalem, whither they took provisions as well as vegetables to market.

Such was the attraction of the word of the young master of Nazareth that the greater part of the people who had spent the night listening to him decided to accompany him now.

Magdalen, Oliba and Banaïas were among these.

“Joanna, will you also go outside the city?” inquired Aurelia of Chuza’s wife. “Day is dawning. Let us return home. It might be imprudent to prolong our absence.”

“I shall not yet return home. I shall follow Jesus to the end of the world,” answered Joanna with exaltation.

And stepping down from her bench she drew from her pocket a heavy purse of gold which she placed in the hands of Simon just as he was leaving the tavern close upon the steps of the son of Mary.

“The young master emptied his alms bag this even-

ing," Joanna said to Simon; "here is wherewith to replenish it and enable him to alleviate the sufferings of the poor."

"You, again!" said Simon with gratitude at seeing Joanna. "Your charity never tires."

"It is your master's tenderness that is inexhaustible. He never tires of helping and consoling the poor, the repentant and the oppressed," answered Chuza's wife.

Genevieve, who watched uneasily the emissaries of the Pharisees, once more overheard the one say to the other:

"Follow and keep an eye upon the Nazarene. I shall hasten to Seigneurs Caiaphas and Baruch, and report to them the abominable blasphemies and impieties that he uttered to-night in the company of these vagabonds—of these women of ill fame—of a rabble. The Nazarene must not this time escape the fate that awaits him."

The two men parted.

Aurelia, seeming to have reflected for a moment, said to her friend:

"Joanna, I can not express to you the effect that that young man's word has upon me. His word, at times so simple, tender and lofty, other times so caustic and threatening, penetrates my heart. It is as if a new world opened to my soul, because to us 'pagans' the word Charity is something new. So far from being appeased, my curiosity and interest have been

whetted. Whatever may happen, Joanna, I am determined to go with you. Our husbands will be away four days. What will it matter, after all, whether we return home before or after sunrise?"

Genevieve was very happy at hearing her mistress thus express herself. As she thought of her fellow slaves in Gaul she also was highly desirous to hear more of the words of Jesus, the friend and liberator of bondmen.

Immediately after leaving the tavern with her mistress and the charitable wife of Seigneur Chuza, Genevieve witnessed an incident that proved to her how quickly the word of Jesus bore fruit.

Magdalen, the beautiful and repentant courtesan, now covered by a coarse woolen mantle like a pauper, followed the anxious crowd behind Jesus. Her foot struck against a stone in the street, she stumbled and would have fallen to the ground but for the timely assistance of Joanna and Aurelia, who, being accidentally near, hastened to her assistance.

"What, you, Joanna, the wife of Seigneur Chuza!" exclaimed the courtesan, who saw through Joanna's disguise and blushed with shame as, no doubt, the impure gifts she had received from Chuza came to her mind. "You, Joanna, are not afraid to lend me a helping hand, to me, wretched creature and justly despised of honest women!"

"Magdalen," Joanna answered with charming benevolence, "did not our young master say to you: 'Go

in peace,' and that 'all your sins are forgiven, for you loved much?' By what right should I be severer than Jesus of Nazareth? Give me your hand, Magdalen—your hand. It is a sister who asks you for it in token of pardon and oblivion of the past."

Magdalen took the hand that Joanna offered her, but it was to kiss it with respect, and to cover it with tears of gratitude.

"Oh! Joanna," the mistress of Genevieve said to her friend in a low voice. "The young man of Nazareth would be pleased to see you practice his precepts so generously."

Joanna, Aurelia and Magdalen soon passed through the gate of Jerusalem in the wake of the crowd.

The sun, rising at that moment in all its splendor, illuminated the distant fields of the Valley of Cedron, the Oriental aspect of which, so novel to Genevieve, struck her with surprise and admiration.

Thanks to the spring season, which, moreover, was early this year, the plains that lay at the gates of Jerusalem were as verdant and florid as those of Sharon which Genevieve had crossed with her mistress on her journey from Jaffa (her place of disembarkation) to Jerusalem. White and red roses, narcissuses, anemones, yellow gilly-flowers and odoriferous immortelles perfumed the air and enlivened the fields with their bright colors moist with the dew.

At the roadside a clump of palm trees shaded the dome of a well, whither already large black oxen, cou-

pled by their yokes, and led by drivers clad in skirts of camel skins, came to drink. Shepherds also were seen leading to the well their flocks of pendant-eared goats and long-tailed sheep; while dusky-complexioned young women, dressed in white and proceeding, no doubt, from a hamlet that could be seen at a little distance half hidden in a wood of olive trees, drew water from the well and returned to their homes carrying upon their heads, half enveloped with their white veils, large jars of the fresh water.

Further away, along the dusty road that descended in zig-zag along the near slope of a ridge of mountains, the crest of which was barely disengaging itself from the azure mists of the morning, a long caravan was seen, slowly wending its way, with the long necks of the camels towering above the baskets and bales with which the animals were laden.

All along the road followed by Genevieve blue pigeons, larks and wagtails, nestled in the copse of nopal and turpentine-shrubs, sang their songs, while here and there a white stork with red legs rose in the air with a captured snake in its beak.

Several herdsmen and laborers, learning from the people who followed the Nazarene that he was going to the hill of Cedron to preach the glad tidings, turned their herds in that direction, and increased the crowd attached to the steps of the son of Mary.

Joanna, Aurelia and Genevieve thus drew near the

hamlet that lay half hidden in the wood of olive trees, which had to be crossed in order to reach the hill.

Suddenly a large number of men and women were seen rushing out of the wood and uttering cries and imprecations.

At the head of the crowd were several doctors of the law and priests. Two of the latter dragged along a handsome young woman in bare feet and arms, and barely clad in a tunic. Shame and terror were depicted on her tear-stained face. Her disheveled hair fell down upon her shoulders. From time to time, and praying for mercy between her sobs, she threw herself in her despair upon her knees on the stones that strewed the road, despite the efforts of the two priests, who, each holding her by an arm, trailed her through the dust, and forced her to rise again to her feet and proceed with them.

The crowd at their heels showered hisses, imprecations and insults upon the unfortunate woman, who was as livid and terrified as a woman would be who was being led to death.

The priests and doctors of the law, who, no doubt, recognized the young master of Nazareth, made a sign to the villagers, whose imprecations and ire were at every step redoubling in fury, to halt for a moment. The angry mob whom they addressed and which consisted of men and women, immediately picked up heavy stones and, armed with them, broke out every

little while in coarse insults and threats of death against the weeping prisoner.

The priests and the doctors of the law dragged the unfortunate woman to the very feet of Jesus, whom, in her terror, she immediately began to implore for mercy, raising up to him her face bathed in tears and her bruised hands clotted with blood and dust.

Then, one of the priests, intending to tempt Jesus and hoping to destroy him should his verdict be different from theirs, said to him :

“This woman was taken in adultery in the very act. Now, Moses in the law commanded that such should be stoned ; but what say you ?”

But instead of answering, Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground in the dust :

“He that is without sin among you, let him cast a first stone at her.”

And as the astonished Pharisees continued asking him, he raised himself, and read unto them in a loud voice what he had written.

Loud applause broke from the crowd behind the son of Mary at these words from his mouth.

Banaïas laughed uproariously and cried :

“Well answered, our friend!—I am no prophet, but if only unsullied hands may stone this poor sinner to death, then, by the heels of Gideon! I swear we shall presently see all these furiously virtuous people, all these frenetically chaste, all these diabolically modest folks, beginning with the seigneurs priests and the

seigneurs doctors of the law, turn their sandals around and tuck up their robes in order that they may run all the faster. Look at them! What did I tell you! Behold them dispersing like a herd of swine pursued by a wolf!"

"And swine they are!" said another. "As to the wolf at their heels, it is their own conscience."

In fact, after having heard those words of Jesus—He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at this woman—the doctors of the law, the high priests, as well as those who had first intended to stone the adulteress, fearing a rough handling by the crowd that followed the young master of Nazareth, left so precipitately that when the son of Mary, who had stooped down again and continued to write, again looked up, the mob, only shortly before so threateningly clamorous, was far away, fleeing towards the hamlet. There was none left behind but the accused woman, still upon her knees, suppliant and weeping at his feet.

Smiling shrewdly and with kindness, and pointing to the empty space left around her through the dispersion of those who wanted to stone her, Jesus said to the woman:

"Woman, where are those your accusers? Has no man condemned you?"

"No man, Lord," she said breaking into tears.

“Neither do I condemn you,” Jesus said; “go, and sin no more.”¹

And leaving the adulteress on her knees in the transport of having been saved from death and forgiven, the son of Mary arrived, followed by his disciples and the crowd behind him, at the foot of a hill where already a large number of country people were congregated, impatiently awaiting his arrival, some with their provisions upon donkeys or zebras, others in wagons drawn by oxen, and still others in baskets that they carried upon their heads. The herdsmen who, when the Nazarene went by, were watering their flocks at the fountain, also arrived in turn. When this large assemblage stood silent and expectant at the foot of the hill, Jesus of Nazareth climbed up its slope with the view of being better heard by all.

As the rising sun bathed with its radiant beams the son of Mary clad in his white tunic and blue mantle, caused his celestial visage to shine resplendent, and sported in his long blonde hair, his head seemed crowned with an aureola of gold. Then, addressing himself to the simple in heart whom he loved with a love equal to his love for the little children, Jesus said to them in his sonorous and gentle voice:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven!

“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

¹ John 8.4-12.

“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.¹

“But woe unto you that are rich! for you have received your consolation.

“Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger.

“Woe unto you that laugh! for ye shall mourn and weep.

“Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.²

“Love your neighbor as yourself.

“Take heed that you do not your alms before men, to be seen of them!

“Therefore when you do your alms, do not sound a trumpet before as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward.³

“The other day I sat in the synagogue over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in

¹ Matthew 5.2-10.

² Luke 6.24-26.

³ Matthew 10.19; 6.1-2.

much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And I called unto me my disciples, and I said unto them:

“Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.”¹

“When you do your alms, let not your left hand know what your right hand does.

“And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets that they may be seen of men. But you, when you pray, enter into your closet, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father which is, in secret.

“Moreover, when you fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast.

“But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face, that you appear not unto men to fast, but unto your Father which is, in secret.”²

“Above all do not you do like the two men of this parable:

“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself:

“God, I thank you that I am not as other men are,

¹ Mark 12.41-44.

² Matthew 6.3,5,6,16,18.

extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican, whom I see yonder. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.'

"The publican, on the contrary, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast saying:

" 'God be merciful unto me a sinner!'

"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other: for everyone that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted.¹

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust do corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust do corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also!²

"Do unto others as you wish to be done by; that is the law and the prophets.

"Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you.

"And if any man will sue you at the law, and take away your coat, let him have your cloak also.

"Give unto him that asks.³

"He that has two coats, let him impart to him that has none, and he that has meat let him do likewise.⁴

"When the day of judgment shall have come, the Lord shall say unto them on the left hand:

¹ Luke 18.10-14.
² Matthew 6.19-21.

³ Matthew 5.40,42,44.
⁴ Luke 3.11.

“Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

“For I was an hungered and you gave me no meat!

“I was thirsty and you gave me no drink!

“I was a stranger, and you took me not in!

“I was naked, and you clothed me not!

“I was sick and in prison, and you visited me not!’

“Then shall the wicked make answer to the Lord:

“Lord, when saw we you an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto you?’

“Then shall the Lord answer them, saying:

“Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not unto me.’”¹

To the great regret of the assembled multitude that listened moved and deeply affected by the divine precepts of the son of Mary, precepts that the poorest in spirit could understand, the discourse was suddenly interrupted in consequence of a violent tumult.

It happened in this way: A troop of mounted men, coming down from the mountain and riding in haste to Jerusalem, found its way blocked by the large gathering of people standing at the foot of the hill where the young master of Nazareth was preaching.

In their impatience, the riders brutally ordered the

¹ Matthew 25.41-46.

crowd to disperse and open a passage to Seigneur Chuza, the intendant of the house of Prince Herod, and Seigneur Gremion, the Roman Tribune of the Treasury.

At sight of the soldiers of the escort, Aurelia, the wife of Seigneur Gremion, grew pale and said to Joanna :

“Our husbands! Returned so soon! They must have turned back. They will find us absent from home—they will learn that we are away since last evening—we are lost!”

“Have we anything to reproach ourselves with? Why should we feel alarmed?” asked Joanna. “Have we not been listening to teachings that render good hearts still better?”

“Dear mistress,” said Genevieve to Aurelia, “I believe that Seigneur Gremion has recognized us from his horse. I see him whispering to Seigneur Chuza, and pointing in this direction.”

“Oh, I tremble!” exclaimed Aurelia. “What are we to do? What will come of this? Oh, a curse upon my curiosity!”

“On the contrary, blessings upon it!” answered Joanna. “You will carry home treasures in your heart. Come, let us boldly go to our husbands. Only the wicked hide and drop their heads. Come, Aurelia, come—and let us walk with heads erect!”

At that moment, Magdalen the penitent approached the two women, and said to Joanna with tears in her eyes :

“Adieu; you who gave me your hand when I was despised, your memory will ever be present to Magdalen in her seclusion—”

“What seclusion do you mean?” asked Joanna, surprised. “Where do you intend going, beautiful Magdalen?”

“Into the desert!” answered the penitent, extending both her arms towards the crags of the arid mountains, on the other side of which spread the desolate solitudes of the Dead Sea. “I am going to the desert to weep over my sins, but carrying in my heart a treasure of hope! Blessed be the son of Mary, to whom I owe that treasure!”

And the crowd parting respectfully before the distinguished penitent, she departed in the direction of the arid mountains that she had pointed to.

Hardly had Magdalen disappeared when Joanna, leading her friend almost against her will, moved towards the riders through the crowd that already began to give signs of irritation at the uncivil language of the men of the escort.

Herod, the Prince of Judea, who would have been driven from the throne but for the protection of the Roman arms, was generally abhorred. He was cruel and dissolute, and crushed the Israelitish people with the weight of his taxes. Consequently, as soon as it was known that one of the horsemen was Seigneur Chuza, the intendant of the execrated Prince, the hatred entertained for the master was visited upon his

intendant as well as upon the latter's companion, Seigneur Gremion, who, in the name of the Roman fisc, gleaned where Herod had reaped.

While Joanna, Aurelia and Genevieve the slave were with difficulty crossing the dense crowd to reach the riders, hooting broke out from all parts against Seigneurs Chuza and Gremion, and these were forced to hear, while they shook with rage, such invectives as these—weak echoes of the young master's anathemas against the wicked:

“Woe unto you, intendant of Herod! who crush us with taxes and devour the houses of widows and orphans.”

“Woe unto you, Roman! who come to share our spoils.”

Banaïas, brandishing in one hand his cutlass with a threatening and enraged mien, drew near the two seigneurs and shaking his other fist at them bellowed:

“The fox is cowardly and cruel, and he called to his aid his friend the wolf, whose teeth are longer and have more strength. The cruel and cowardly fox is your master Herod, Seigneur Chuza! The ferocious wolf is Tiberius, the master of you, Roman, who have come to help the fox with his prey!”

And as Seigneur Chuza, pale with rage, seemed to be about to draw his sword in order to strike Banaïas, the latter raised his cutlass and cried:

“By the bowels of Goliath! I'll slice you in two

like a watermelon if you dare set hand to your sword!"

Having for their only escort five or six outriders, the two seigneurs restrained their anger and sought to disengage themselves from the crowd which was waxing more and more threatening.

"Yes, woe unto you, ye men of the fisc of Herod and Tiberius! Woe unto you! We are hungry and you tear away from our lips with your taxes the bread moistened in our sweat."

"Woe unto you! you overwhelm defenceless people with privations."

"Woe unto you! the day of judgment is at hand."

"Yes, yes! soon there will be for you, the wicked and oppressors, weeping and gnashing of teeth."

"Then the first will be the last—and the last the first—"

More and more frightened, Chuza and Gremion consulted each other with their eyes, unable to see a way of escaping from the threatening mob. The more angered among the crowd already began to pick up stones, and armed with an enormous rock, Banaïas cried out:

"This morning our master, speaking of that poor woman whom the Pharisaic hypocrites meant to stone, said: He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her. And I, my friends say to you: Let him who has been flayed by the fisc throw the first

stone at the flayers!—and let that stone be followed by a good many others—”

“Yes!—Yes!” came from a hundred throats in the crowd. “Let them be buried under a heap of stones!—”

“Stone them!—”

“To the stones!—To the stones!—”

“Our husbands are in great danger; that is an additional reason to draw near them,” said Joanna to Aurelia, redoubling her efforts to reach the men on horseback.

Suddenly the sweet and vibrating voice of the Nazarene was heard above the tumult, uttering these words:

“Verily, I say unto you, If these men have sinned, may they not repent before the day of judgment? Let them sin no more and go in peace!”

At these words of the son of Mary the popular tempest subsided as if by enchantment. The clamor was stilled. The crowd became silent, and, by a spontaneous movement parted to open a passage to the steward of Herod, Seigneur Gremion, and their escort. Joanna and Aurelia then succeeded in joining their husbands.

At the sight of his wife, Seigneur Gremion said to Chuza angrily: “Indeed, it is my wife—and in man’s clothes—”

“And mine accompanies her!” cried Chuza, no less irritated. “And, like yours, in man’s disguise.—It is the abomination of desolation!”

“And the feast is complete,” added Gremion; “there is my wife’s slave—”

Perfectly composed and sweet, Joanna said to her husband:

“Seigneur, make room for me; I shall mount on the crupper of your horse and ride home with you.”

“Yes,” answered Chuza, grinding his teeth with rage; “you shall ride home with me—but, by the pillars of the Temple! you never again shall leave the house without me.”

Joanna made no answer, but reached up her hand to her husband in order that he help her to mount on the crupper. With a light bound she sat herself upon the horse.

“You may also jump on the crupper of my horse,” said Gremion angrily to his wife. “Your slave Genevieve—and, by Jupiter! she will pay dearly for her complicity in this indignity—your slave Genevieve can mount on the crupper behind one of the men of my escort.”

It was done so, and the troupe pursued its route to Jerusalem.

The rider who carried Genevieve on the crupper of his horse rode close behind the Seigneurs Gremion and Chuza. She could hear the two scolding their wives angrily.

“No, by Hercules!” cried the Roman. “To find my wife in man’s disguise in the midst of that pack of tattered beggars, vagabonds and seditious villains!—It

is hard to believe.—No, by Hercules! I must come all the way to Judea to see such an enormity!”

“And I, who am of Judea, seigneur,” echoed Chuza, “I am no more accustomed to such enormities than yourself. I was well aware that mendicants, thieves, and courtesans of the lowest stamp followed the accursed Nazarene. But may the wrath of the Lord strike me down this instant, if I ever heard it said that self-respecting women stooped to the indignity of mingling among the dregs of the populace that the fellow leads at his heels all over the country—a vile populace that would have stoned us to death a minute ago but for our resolute bearing!” added Seigneur Chuza haughtily.

“Yes, fortunately, we were able to cow the miscreants with our courage,” grunted Seigneur Gremion. “Otherwise, it would have been done for us.—Ah! You were right—this is a fresh proof of the hatred and resentment kindled by the incendiary sermons of that Nazarene. All he does is to excite the poor against the rich!”

“Did not the young master, on the contrary, appease the fury of the crowd?” suggested Joanna in a sweet and firm voice. “Did he not say: ‘Let these men go, and let them sin no more’?”

“If that is not audacity!” cried Chuza, addressing Gremion. “Did you hear what my wife said? Would one not think that a seigneur can no longer travel the roads in peace without the consent of the Nazarene—

of that son of Beelzebub! And that if we escaped the fury of the villains, it was thanks to the promise he made for us that we would sin no more!—By the pillars of the holy Temple!—That is impudence for you!”

“The young master of Nazareth,” replied Joanna, “cannot answer for what is said or done in his name.—The crowd was unjustly enraged at you—he appeased it with a word—what more could he do?”

“Worse still!” again cried Seigneur Chuza. “And by what right does that Nazarene calm or arouse the populace at his pleasure?—Do you know why we are returning to Jerusalem so soon?—It is because we have been assured that, in consequence of the abominable sermons of that fellow, the mountain people of Judea and the peasants of Sharon would stone us to death if we presented ourselves to collect the taxes—”

“The young master said: ‘Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s,’”¹ replied Joanna. “Can he be blamed if the people, crushed down by the fisc, are not in a condition to pay excessive imposts?”

“By Hercules! They will have to pay, all the same!” cried Seigneur Gremion. “We return to Jerusalem to fetch an escort of sufficient soldiers to crush the rebellion. Woe to them who resist us—we shall exterminate every one of them!”

“And, above all, woe to the Nazarene!” put in Seig-

¹ Matthew 22.21.

neur Chuza. "He alone is the cause of all the trouble. I mean to notify King Herod, and the Seigneurs Pontius Pilate and Caiaphas of the increasing audacity of the vagabond, and demand his execution."

"Do him to death," replied Joanna, "he will pardon you, and pray to God to pardon you!"

In this way Joanna, Aurelia and Genevieve were carried back to Jerusalem on the crupper of their husbands' steeds and escorted by the soldiers.

CHAPTER VI.

GENEVIEVE'S MARTYRDOM.

The instant Genevieve and her mistress arrived at the residence of Seigneur Gremion, he ordered his wife to her room.

Aurelia lowered her head with a sigh, and obeyed, casting a sad look of adieu to her slave.

Gremion then seized Genevieve by the arm and dragged her into a lower apartment, a sort of cellar, in which leather bottles filled with oil and wine, besides other provisions, were stored. The darksome place was reached by a short and steep staircase. Genevieve's master pushed her down so rudely that she fell over and tumbled down from step to step to the bottom, while Gremion bolted the door from the outside.

The young woman rose bruised at every joint, sat down upon the ground, and wept bitterly. Presently her tears became almost comforting, as she thought that she suffered for having gone to hear the word of the young master of Nazareth, who was so kind to the poor and the slaves, so merciful towards the penitent, so severe with the rich and wicked.

Brought up in the druid faith which her mother had transmitted to her, so to say, with life, Genevieve reposed no less trust in the words of the son of Mary. Although he professed another religion than that of the druids, Jesus believed with the druids, it was said, that in departing from the world, life continued beyond in body and soul, seeing that, according to his faith, he spoke of the resurrection of the dead. Finally, despite the loftiness of the druid faith, which freed man of the fear of death by teaching him that he never died, Genevieve missed in the precepts of the Gallic religion that feeling of brotherhood and mercifulness that stamped the words of the young man of Nazareth.

The slave was indulging in these reflections when she saw the door of the cellar in which she was locked up swing open. Gremion, her master, was coming back, followed by two other men. One of these held a bundle of cords in his hand, the other a couple of scourges of many thongs.

Genevieve had never seen these men before. They were oddly clad.

Seigneur Gremion descended the first few stairs and said to Genevieve:

“Undress yourself!—”

The slave looked up at her master with as much surprise as terror, hardly trusting her ears. He repeated:

“Undress yourself—if you do not, these men, they are the assistants of the executioner of the city, will

themselves strip off your clothes—in order to give you a whipping.”

That degrading punishment, so often inflicted upon female slaves, Genevieve had never before undergone, thanks to the goodness of the gods and of her mistresses. Overcome with terror, Genevieve could now only join her hands, stretch them out to her master, and fall upon her knees imploring mercy.

But Seigneur Gremion, standing aside to make room for the two men to pass who had remained at the head of the staircase, said to them :

“Strip her naked—and whip her to the quick that the blood may run.—She shall not forget that she assisted at the preaching of the accursed Nazarene.”

Genevieve was then hardly twenty-three years old, and often had Fergan, her husband, told her that she was beautiful. Despite her tears, her prayers and her impotent resistance, her clothing was removed from her, she was tied fast to a post in the cellar, and immediately her body was cut with the strokes of the whip.

Genevieve had at first hoped that shame and horror would deprive her of consciousness. It happened otherwise. But she forget the pain of the strokes in the shame that overpowered her at finding herself a prey to the lascivious looks of the executioner’s men, and at the jokes that they exchanged as they struck.

Standing by with his arms crossed, Seigneur Gremion remarked, laughing and jeering ::

“Did the Nazarene, the famous Messiah who dabbles

in soothsaying, foretell you what is now happening to you, Genevieve?—Do you still think he was right to proclaim that the slave is the equal of his master?—By Jupiter! I begin to feel sorry I did not have you whipped in the center of the public square—it would have been a good lesson taught over your shoulders to the bandits who place reliance upon the insolences of their friend Jesus!”

When the executioner's assistants were tired of striking one of them was ordered by Gremion to untie Genevieve, and her master then said to her :

“You shall not leave this cellar for eight days. During this time my wife shall have to help herself without you. That shall be her punishment.”

And Gremion, together with the executioner's assistants, went out of the cellar, leaving Genevieve alone. Not, then, was it a remembrance of the tender and merciful utterances of the son of Mary that recurred to the mind of the lacerated slave, as happened before her punishment. It was the remembrance of the words of anathema, which likewise he had uttered that very morning against the wicked and the oppressors. During the long hours that she spent alone with the recollection of her shame, she swore to herself that, if ever it should be the pleasure of the gods that she should be a mother, and that she could keep her child near her, it would be her endeavor to inspire him at once with love for the weak and the oppressed, and horror for slavery, and hatred for the

rich and the oppressors, instead of allowing such proud sentiments to degenerate in his soul as they had cooled down in the soul of her husband Fergan, whom she so dearly loved, despite the weakness of his nature.

Genevieve had been locked up three days in the cellar of the house, whither, every morning, her master brought her some food, when one evening, at a rather advanced hour, the door of the slave's prison was opened. She saw Aurelia, her mistress, appear at the opening, holding a lamp in one hand and a bundle in the other.

Aurelia descended the stairs and placed the bundle on the floor.

"Poor woman! You have suffered a good deal on my account," said Aurelia, whose eyes grew dim with tears as she approached Genevieve. "My poor, dear Genevieve!"

Despite her mistress's kindness, Genevieve could not help answering her with bitterness:

"If you had a daughter, and if men stripped her naked to whip her at her master's command, what would you think of slavery?"

"Genevieve, you blame me!—"

"I am not blaming you. I am blaming slavery. You are kind to me. And yet, see how I have been treated!—"

"Verily have I these three days begged pardon for you with my husband," replied Aurelia in a voice replete with compassion. "He denied my prayers. I

implored him to allow me to visit you; he remained obdurate. He carries with him the key of your prison, and places it under his pillow at night. This is the first night that I succeeded in capturing it when he fell asleep.—And here I have come.”

“I have suffered greatly—more with shame than with pain,” said Genevieve, vanquished by the sweetness of her mistress, “but your words console me.”

“Listen, Genevieve, I am not here simply to console you. You can flee from this house, and render a great service to the young man of Nazareth—perhaps even save his life!”

“What say you, dear mistress!” cried Genevieve, thinking less of her own freedom than of the service that she might be able to render to the son of Mary. “O, speak! I am ready to give you my life, if necessary, for him who says that one day the chains of the slaves shall be broken.”

“Since that day when we spent the night out of the house to hear the sermons of Jesus, Joanna and I did not see each other. Seigneur Chuza forbade her to leave her premises. But, to-day, yielding finally to her entreaties, he brought her here—and while he conversed with my husband she informed me that the young master of Nazareth had been betrayed, and that he was to be arrested this very night, and put to death.”

“Betrayed!—He!—By whom!”

“By one of his own disciples—”

“O, the infamous wretch!—”

Already triumphing over the death of the poor Nazarene, Seigneur Chuza had revealed the whole plot to Joanna, in order to derive a wicked joy from the grief that such sad news would cause her. This is what happened: The Pharisees, the doctors of the law, the Senators and the chief priests—all of them being exasperated by the precepts and prophecies of the young man, gathered at the residence of the High Priest Caiaphas, and there plotted to capture the Nazarene by surprise. "Fearing an uproar among the people in case he was arrested yesterday, a holyday in Jerusalem, they postponed the execution of their evil designs for to-night," concluded Aurelia.

"What? To-night?—This very night?—"

"Yes, one of his own disciples, one named Judas, is to deliver him."

"One of those who, a few nights ago, accompanied him to the Wild Ass tavern?"

"The very one whose somber and sullen face called your attention that night.—Well, Judas went to the chief priests and the doctors of the law, and he said to them: 'Give me money, and I shall deliver the Nazarene to you'—"

"The wretch!—"

"The Pharisees covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver, and at this very hour, may be, the poor young man who mistrusts nobody, may have fallen a victim to treason."

“Alas, if so it is, what service could I render to him?”

“Listen—these were Joanna’s words to me this evening: ‘It was on our way to you, dear Aurelia, that my husband informed me with cruel delight of the doom that threatens Jesus. Under surveillance as I am, I have no means of warning him. My servants stand in such dread of Seigneur Chuza, that not all the entreaties or money bribes that I might offer them could induce any to leave the house on such an errand as taking a word of warning to the son of Mary. A thought struck me. Your slave Genevieve seems to be endowed with as much courage as devotedness. Might she not be of service to us at this emergency?’ I informed Joanna of the cruel vengeance that my husband had taken upon you. But so far from giving up her project, Joanna inquired from me where Gremion kept the key of your prison. ‘Under his pillow at night,’ I answered her. ‘Try to get it while he is asleep,’ suggested Joanna; ‘if you succeed in securing it, set Genevieve free; you will have no difficulty in helping her out of the house; let her go straight to the Wild Ass tavern; she will probably be able to meet someone there who can tell her where the young master is.’”

“Oh, dear mistress,” cried Genevieve, “I shall prove myself worthy of the confidence that you repose in me. Let us open the house-door quickly.”

“One moment. Before proceeding any further with

our project, we must guard against my husband's anger. It is not for my sake that I fear the same—but for your sake. You may judge, poor Genevieve, from the atrocious treatment that you received, what you would have to expect when you return home—”

“Let us not think of me!”

“On the contrary, we did think of you! Listen further. My friend's nurse lives near the Judicial Gate. She sells woolen goods and is called Veronica, wife of Samuel.—Can you remember those names?”

“Yes;—yes.—Veronica, the wife of Samuel, merchant of woolen goods near the Judicial Gate.—But, dear mistress, let us make haste; time passes; every minute lost may be fatal to the young master.—Oh, I entreat you, let us hasten to open the street-door.”

“No, not before I shall have at least informed you where you can find a safe refuge. Under no circumstances could you come back to this house. I shudder at the thought of the punishment that my husband would inflict upon you.”

“What, leave you! Leave you forever, my dear mistress!”

“Would you prefer to undergo some infamous punishment, and still worse torture, perhaps?”

“I would prefer death to such disgrace!”

“My husband would not kill you. A slave represents a sum of money.—So, you see, there is no help for it, we must separate. It grieves me greatly—I may never again find a slave in whom I can trust like

you—but after I heard the words of that young man, I share the enthusiasm that he inspires in Joanna. If you agree to save him—”

“Do you doubt that, dear mistress?”

“No; I know your devotedness and courage.—This, then, is what you must do: If you succeed in finding the young master of Nazareth, you shall warn him that he has been betrayed by Judas, one of his disciples, and that there is nothing for him to do but flee from Jerusalem in order to escape the Pharisees, who have sworn his death! Joanna is of the opinion that by withdrawing to Galilee, his native country, the son of Mary will be safe, because his enemies would not dare to pursue him so far away.”

“But, dear mistress, even here, in Jerusalem, all he would have to do would be to call the people to his defence. His disciples, who worship him, will place themselves at the head of the revolt, and not all the Pharisees combined would be strong enough to effect his arrest, even with the help of the militiamen.”

“Joanna also thought of that. But, in order for him to arouse the people in his behalf it is necessary that he, or his disciples, be made aware of the danger that threatens them.”

“Therefore, dear mistress, we have not a minute to lose.”

“Once more, poor Genevieve, you are forgetting the risks that you run. As soon as you shall have warned the young master or any of his disciples, go to the

house of Veronica, the wife of Samuel. You will tell her that you come from Joanna, and, as a proof, you will give her this ring which my friend took from her finger, and which her nurse will recognize. You will request Veronica to conceal you in her house, and to repair later to Joanna, who will inform her of the further plans that we shall have matured for your safety. Veronica, my friend said to me, is a good and accommodating woman. She, as well as her husband, feel very grateful towards the young man of Nazareth, because he healed one of their children. You will be in perfect safety with those people, until Joanna and I shall have arrived at some proper plan for you.—That's not yet all. You must go in man's disguise. Now get ready quick to run to the Wild Ass tavern."

"Dear, dear mistress—you think of everything!"

"Get ready quick—I shall go out and unlock the street door."

CHAPTER VII.

THE GARDEN OF OLIVES.

Aurelia left the cellar and returned almost immediately. She found Genevieve buckling on a leather belt around her tunic.

"I cannot unlock the door!" exclaimed Aurelia in despair. "The key will not turn in the lock, as usual! Can it have been plugged?"

"Dear mistress," answered Genevieve, "come with me. We two, together, may succeed in turning the key."

And the two crossed the courtyard, and arrived at the outer gate. Genevieve's efforts proved as futile as those of her mistress. The key refused to turn in the lock. The gate was surmounted by an open half-arch. But it was impossible to reach that opening without a ladder. Genevieve suddenly turned to Aurelia:

"In the family narratives left to Fergan I read that one of my ancestresses named Meroë, the wife of a mariner, managed, with the aid of her husband, to climb up quite a high tree."¹

"How?"

¹The incident referred to occurs in "The Brass Bell," the second of this series.

“Be good enough, dear mistress, to place your back firmly against the gate. Now, clasp your hands and hold them tight, so that I may rest my foot in their hollow; I shall then place my other foot on your shoulder, reach the opening, and leap from there down into the street.”

Suddenly the slave was startled by the voice of Seigneur Gremion, who, from the terrace, called out angrily:

“Aurelia! Aurelia!”

“My husband!” cried the young woman in a tremble. “Oh! Genevieve, you are lost!”

“Your hands, your hands, dear mistress!” said the slave hurriedly. “If I can only climb up to the opening I am safe.”

Aurelia obeyed Genevieve almost mechanically. The threatening voice of Seigneur Gremion drew nearer and nearer. After placing one foot in the hollow of her mistresses’s two hands, the slave leaped up, gently supported her other foot upon Aurelia’s shoulder, reached the height of the opening, managed to sit herself upon the wall, and remained crouched for a moment under the half-arch.

“But,” suddenly exclaimed Aurelia in fear, “you may hurt yourself, poor Genevieve, in jumping down into the street.”

That instant Seigneur Gremion arrived upon the scene, pale and enraged, and holding a lamp in his hand.

“What are you doing here?” he shouted, addressing his wife. “Answer! Answer!” And immediately perceiving the slave crouching above the gate he added:

“Ah! The wretch! The rascal! The infamous beggar! You are trying to escape from my house, are you! And my unworthy wife is seconding your flight!”

“Yes!” answered Aurelia boldly. “Yes! Even if you were to kill me on the spot, she shall escape your ill treatment!”

After having surveyed the street from the height of the opening in which she was cowering, Genevieve saw that she had to leap down a distance of twice her height. For an instant she hesitated. She heard Seigneur Gremion, who brutally shook his wife by the arm in order to pull her away from the chain of the gate to which she clung with desperation, bellowing:

“By Hercules! Will you let me through! I shall go outside and wait there for your miserable slave. If she does not break her neck in jumping out into the street, I shall myself break every bone in her body with a club!”

“Try—jump down and save yourself, Genevieve!” Aurelia called out. “Be not afraid! He will have to trample me under his feet before he can open the door!”

Genevieve raised her eyes to heaven to invoke the protection of the gods, gathered herself together, leaped

down from the half-arch, and was lucky enough to strike ground without hurting herself. Nevertheless, for an instant the fall dazed her; but she speedily rose and fled rapidly, her heart aching at the cries emitted from within by her mistress, whom her husband was striking.

After first running precipitately in order to be as far as possible from her master's house, the slave stopped a moment for breath, and then pursued her way in the direction of the Wild Ass tavern, where she expected to ascertain the whereabouts of the young master of Nazareth, whom she was to warn of the danger that threatened him.

Her expectations were not deceived. The tavern-keeper to whom she addressed herself informed her that Jesus had left the place a few hours before her arrival, leading several of his disciples in the direction of the Torrent of Cedron to a garden planted with olive trees, where he often repaired at night to meditate and pray.

Genevieve started in haste towards the place designated. As she was passing through the city gate, she saw at a little distance behind her in the dark the light of several torches shimmering upon the casques and armors of a considerable troop of soldiers. They marched in disorder, and emitted confused clamors. Fearing they might have been sent out by the Phari-sees to seize the son of Mary, the slave began to run,

hoping to be beforehand with them, and arrive in time to give the alarm to Jesus or his disciples.

She was but a little distance away from these armed men, whom she recognized as Jerusalem militiamen, people who enjoyed but a poor reputation for courage, when, by a ray of light from the torches that they carried, she noticed on one side of the highway and winding in the same direction, a narrower path lined with turpentine-trees. She struck into the path in order to escape being seen by the soldiers, at the head of whom she distinguished Judas, the disciple of the young master whom she had noticed at the Wild Ass tavern on the night of her previous sally with her mistress. She now heard him say in a loud voice to the militia officer in command of the escort:

“Seigneur, whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is the Nazarene.”

“Oh! This time,” answered the officer, “he shall not escape us, and to-morrow, before the sun is down, the seditious fellow will have paid the penalty of his crimes.—Let us hurry.—Let us hurry. Someone of his disciples might notify him of our approach. Let us be cautious—lest we fall into some ambush—and let us be particularly cautious when on the point of seizing the Nazarene.—He might employ against us some magical or diabolical charm.—In recommending prudence to you,” explained the militia officer affecting a bold voice, “it is not because I am afraid of danger—but in order to insure the success of our enterprise.”

The militiamen did not seem greatly reassured by these words of their officer, and they slackened their pace out of fear of falling into ambush. Genevieve profited by this circumstance, and starting to run, she arrived at the banks of the Torrent of Cedron. She noticed a little hill planted with olives at a short distance from where she stood. This wood, wrapt in the shade, was hardly distinguishable from the surrounding darkness of the night. She listened.—Silence all around. Only at a distance behind her the measured steps were heard of the soldiers who drew slowly near. For a moment Genevieve gathered hope, thinking that, perhaps, warned in time, the young master of Nazareth had left the place. She was advancing cautiously in the dark when she stumbled against a body that lay at the foot of an olive tree. She could not withhold a cry of fear, when the man against whom her feet had struck awoke with a start, saying:

“Master, forgive me, but this time again I could not overcome the sleep that fell upon me.”

“A disciple of Jesus!” cried the slave, anew alarmed. “He must be here!”

And addressing herself to the man:

“Since you are a disciple of Jesus, save him—it is still time.—Look yonder, in the distance,—the torches!—Do you hear confused clamors?—They want to arrest him—and do him to death.—Save him! Save the young master!”

“Who?” answered the disciple, still half numb with

sleep. "Whom do they want to do to death?—Who are you?"

"It matters not who I am!—Save your master!—They are coming to seize him—the soldiers are approaching—"

"Yes!" answered the disciple in a tone of surprise and fear, being now finally thoroughly awake. "I see at a distance the shimmer of casques in the light of torches. But," he added, looking around him, "where are my companions?"

"Probably asleep like yourself," said Genevieve. "And your master, where is he?"

"Yonder, in the Garden of Olives, whither he frequently withdraws to meditate. This night his soul felt exceeding sorrowful—he wished to be alone, and withdrew under those trees, after recommending to us all that we watch—"

"He must have anticipated the danger that threatened him," cried Genevieve, "and you had not the strength to resist sleep?"

"No. I and my companions struggled in vain—our master came twice and woke us up, kindly reproaching us for having fallen asleep—and then he retired again to meditate and pray under the trees—"

"The militiamen!" cried Genevieve, seeing that the light of the torches drew nearer and nearer. "They are here!—He is lost!—unless he can hide in the wood—or that you die in his defence—Are you armed?"

"We have no arms with us," answered the disciple

beginning to tremble. "Besides, it would be senseless to think of resisting the soldiers!—"

"No arms!" cried Genevieve indignant. "Are arms necessary? Are not the stones on the road, is not courage enough to crush those men?"

"We are not men of the sword," said the disciple looking around uneasily, seeing that the militiamen were near enough to where he stood partly to light up Genevieve, the disciple and several of his companions whom she then began to distinguish lying here and there asleep at the feet of the trees.

The militiamen hastened to the spot tumultuously. Descrying by the light of their torches several men, some still asleep on the ground, others rising, and some standing, they precipitated themselves upon them, threatening them with their swords and staves, several of them being armed only with staves, and all shouting:

"Where is the Nazarene?—Tell us, Judas, where is he?"

The traitor and infamous disciple, after examining by the light of the torches the countenances of his old companions, the disciples of Jesus, who were now held prisoners, said to the officer:

"The young master is not among these."

"Is he to escape us this time again?" cried the officer. "By the pillars of the Temple! You received the price of his blood, traitor! You shall deliver him to us!"

Genevieve held herself aloof in the shadow. Suddenly she noticed a few steps from her, on the side of the Garden of Olives, something resembling a white figure and clearly distinguishable from the darkness, approaching the soldiers. Genevieve's heart felt like breaking. Undoubtedly it was the young master, whom the noise of the loud voices was attracting to the spot. She was not mistaken. She soon recognized Jesus by the light of the torches. On his sweet, sad face neither fear nor surprise was depicted.

Judas made a sign of intelligence to the officer, ran forward to meet the young man of Nazareth, and said :

“Hail, master;”—and he kissed him.

At these words, those of the militiamen not engaged in holding the disciples who vainly struggled to escape, remembering the recommendations of their officer on the subject of the infernal sorceries that Jesus would be inclined to use against them, looked at him with fear, and hesitated to approach and seize their prisoner. The officer himself kept at a safe distance behind his soldiers, and urged them to lay hands on Jesus, without himself daring to set them the example.

Calm and pensive, the young master took a few steps towards the armed men, and said to them in his sweet voice :

“Whom seek you?”

“We seek Jesus of Nazareth,” answered the officer,

without coming from behind his soldiers. "We seek Jesus of Nazareth."

"I am he," said the young master, taking another step towards the soldiers.

The latter went backward, afraid.

Jesus repeated:

"I ask you again, whom seek you?"

"Jesus of Nazareth!" they all answered in chorus. "We want to seize Jesus of Nazareth."

And again they went back.

"I told you that I am he," answered the young master, stepping nearer to them. "If therefore you seek me, let those go their way," he added, pointing to his disciples, who were still held fast by the soldiers.

The officer made a sign to the militiamen, who still wavered. Nevertheless two of them approached Jesus to bind him, while he remarked to them in a kind voice:

"Are you come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the Temple, and you laid no hold on me."¹

Then voluntarily he extended his hands to the cords with which he was bound. The cowardly disciples of the young master did not have the courage to defend him. They dared not even accompany him as far as the prison. The instant they were no longer held by the soldiers they fled in all directions.

A sad smile flitted over the lips of Jesus, as he saw

¹ John 18.6-8; Matthew 26.55-56.

himself thus betrayed and forsaken by those whom he had loved so dearly, and whom he took to be his friends.

Hidden in the shadow of an olive-tree, Genevieve could not hold back tears of grief and indignation at seeing those men thus abandon the young master like cravens. She now understood why the doctors of the law and the chief priests, instead of arresting him in plain day, waited for the night to seize him. They feared the anger of the people, and of such resolute men as Banaïas. These never would have allowed the friend of the poor to be carried away without offering resistance.

CHAPTER VIII.

BEFORE CAIAPHAS.

The militiamen marched out of the Garden of Olives leading their prisoner in their midst. They returned to the city. After a while Genevieve noticed that a man, whose face she could not see clearly in the dark, followed at a little distance behind her, and several times she heard the man sigh and sob aloud.

After re-entering Jerusalem through silent and deserted streets, as these usually are at this hour of the night, the soldiers proceeded to the palace of Caiaphas, the High Priest, whither they took Jesus. Perceiving a large number of domestic servants at Caiaphas' door, Genevieve mingled among them when the soldiers went in, and remained for a while in the vestibule which was lighted by torches. It was only then that, in the light shed by the torches, she recognized the man who had followed the friend of the oppressed from the Garden of Olives. He looked at once grieved and afraid. Tears inundated his face. Genevieve at first believed that at least one of the friends of the young master had remained true to him, and that he would surely prove his loyalty by accompanying Jesus before

the tribunal of Caiaphas. Alas! The slave was mistaken. Hardly had Peter crossed the threshold when, instead of walking on and joining the son of Mary, he sat down upon one of the benches in the vestibule among the servants of Caiaphas, and hid his face in his hands.

Seeing at the farther end of the courtyard a bright light escaping from a door outside of which pressed the soldiers of the escort, Genevieve approached them. The door belonged to a spacious hall, in the center of which rose a tribunal lighted by numerous flambeaux. She recognized, seated behind the tribunal, many faces that she had seen at the supper party of Pontius Pilate. Seigneur Caiaphas, the High Priest; Baruch, the doctor of the law; Jonas, the Senator and banker were among the judges of the young master of Nazareth. The prisoner was led before them with his hands bound. His face preserved its habitual serenity, sadness and sweetness. A short distance from him stood the tip-staves. Behind these, and mixed with the militiamen and domestics of the household of Caiaphas, were the two spies whom Genevieve had noticed at the tavern of the Wild Ass.

The countenance of the friend of the afflicted was tranquil and dignified. His judges looked irritated. Their features expressed the triumph of a spiteful joy. They spoke in a low voice among themselves, and off and on they pointed their fingers threateningly at

the son of Mary, who patiently waited to be interrogated.

Unnoticed among the audience that crowded the hall, Genevieve could hear all that the enemies of the young master said among themselves.

“Caught, at last, this Nazarene who preached sedition!”

“Ha! He now looks less insolent than when he was at the head of his band of villains and prostitutes!”

“He preaches against the rich!” exclaimed one of the domestics of the High Priest. “He commands the renunciation of riches—but if our masters were to keep poor cheer, we servants would then be reduced to the lot of hungry mendicants, instead of fattening upon the abundant scraps of delicate feasts, and getting drunk on the leavings in the bottles of delicate wines.”

“And that’s not all,” came from another servant. “If the accursed Nazarene were to have his way, our masters, after voluntarily impoverishing themselves, would have to renounce all magnificence and all enjoyments. They could not cast off every day superb robes or tunics, the color or the embroidery of which pleased them no longer.—Now, who profits by the whims of our fastidious seigneurs but we?—Tunics and robes fall to our share!—”

“And if our masters were to renounce pleasure in order to live amid fasts and prayers, they would no longer keep handsome concubines; they would not have occasion to entrust us with their amorous mes-

sages, or to engage our services in brokerages that are so magnificently rewarded when successful!"

"Yes—yes—" cried several of them together, "death to the Nazarene, who would turn us, who live in idleness, abundance and joy, into mendicants, or beasts of burden!"

Genevieve heard a good many other remarks made in an undertone, and all ominous to the life of the friend of the afflicted. One of the two secret emissaries, behind whom she happened to stand, said to his fellow:

"Our evidence will suffice to convict the hellish Nazarene. I have arranged matters with Seigneur Caiaphas."

At that moment, one of the High Priest's tip-staves, who was placed beside the young master of Nazareth, and charged to keep watch over him, struck the slab-stones of the hall with his mace. Immediately there was a dead silence.

Thereupon, after exchanging a few words in a low voice with the other Pharisees who constituted the tribunal, Caiaphas addressed the audience:

"Is there any present who has come to depose against the man named Jesus of Nazareth?"

One of the emissaries stepped to the foot of the tribunal and said in a solemn voice:

"I swear that I heard this man affirm that the high priests and the doctors of the law were all a lot of

hypocrites, and that he spoke of them as a generation of vipers and serpents."

A murmur of indignation ran through the ranks of the militiamen and domestic servants of the High Priest. The judges looked at one another, as though they asked whether it were possible for such words to have been uttered.

The other emissary then stepped forward beside his accomplice, and, raising his hand above his head, added in a no less solemn voice:

"I swear I heard this man affirm that the people should rise against Prince Herod, and also against the Emperor Tiberius, the august protector of Judea, and proclaim himself King of the Jews."

While a smile of pity flitted over the lips of the son of Mary at these false charges, seeing he had distinctly said: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's," the Pharisees of the tribunal raised their hands to heaven in order to take it to witness of such enormities.

One of the domestic servants of Caiaphas now stepped forward, and, in turn, said to the judges:

"I swear I heard this man say that all the Pharisees should be massacred, their houses should be sacked, and their wives violated!"

A fresh movement of horror was manifested among the judges and their devoted partisans in the audience.

“Pillage! Massacre! Violation of women!” cried out some.

“Just think of what the Nazarene proposes!” cried others.

“Abomination and desolation!” came from another set of throats.

“That is why he always leads a gang of villains at his heels!—”

“He surely meant to set fire some day to Jerusalem!—”

“And sack the city!—”

“And put the people to the sword!—”

Caiaphas the High Priest, who presided, made a sign to one of the tip-staves to order silence. The officer struck the slab with his mace. Everyone kept quiet.

Then, addressing the young master in a threatening voice, he said:

“Why answer you not to what these witnesses have testified against you?”

Jesus answered in an accent that breathed sweetness and dignity:

“I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the Temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why ask you me? Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them; behold, they know what I said.”

Hardly had he spoken when Genevieve saw one of the tip-staves, furious at this so just and calm answer,

raise his hand and strike Jesus in the face with the palm of it, crying:

“Answer you the High Priest so?”

At so infamous an outrage, to strike a man whose hands were bound, Genevieve felt her heart leap, and tears welled out of her eyes, while among the soldiers and domestic servants of the High Priest, on the contrary, loud roars of laughter rent the air.

The son of Mary remained imperturbably placid. He only turned toward the tip-staff and said to him gently:

“If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smite me?”¹

These words, this angelical meekness did not disarm the persecutors of the young man. Fresh peals of coarse laughter broke out throughout the hall, and insulting jeers were recommenced from all sides.

“Ha! The Nazarene, the man of peace, the enemy of war does not belie himself! He is a coward and suffers his face to be smitten!—”

“Why call you not to your disciples!—Let them come to your deliverance and to revenge you!—”

“His disciples!” came mockingly from one of the militiamen who had arrested Jesus. “His disciples! Ha! Had you only seen them! At the mere sight of our lances and torches, the cowards fled like a brood of owls!”

“They were only too happy to escape from the spell

¹ John 18.20-23.

of the Nazarene, who held them bound to him by magic!"

"The proof that they hate and despise him is clear—not one of them, not a single, solitary one dared to come in here with him!"

"Oh!" thought Genevieve. "How much must not Jesus suffer from this cowardly ingratitude of his friends! That must be more painful to him than the insults that he bends under."

And turning her head in the direction of the street door, she saw Peter at a distance. He was still seated on the bench with his face buried in his hands, and too cowardly to step forward to the defence of his kind master before the tribunal of blood.

The uproar caused by the tip-staff's act of violence subsided by little and little. One of the emissaries then resumed in a stentorian voice:

"Finally, I swear that this abominable man blasphemed by calling himself the Christ, the son of God!"

Caiaphas, then, again addressing Jesus, said to him in a still more menacing voice:

"Answer you nothing? What is it which these witness against you?"

But the young master slightly shrugged his shoulders and held his peace.

The silence of Jesus enraged Caiaphas; he rose in his seat, and shaking his fist at the son of Mary, cried:

“I adjure you by the living God, that you tell us whether you be the Christ, the son of God!—”

“You have said; I am;” answered the young master with a sad smile.

Genevieve had heard Jesus say that all men were the sons of God, in the same spirit that the druids teach that all men are children of one God. What, then, was the astonishment of the slave when she now saw the High Priest, the moment Jesus answered him that he was the son of God, rise, rend his clothes with all the signs of terror and horror, and, addressing himself to the members of the tribunal, exclaim:

“He speaks blasphemy!—What further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye?”

“He is guilty of death!”

That was the answer of all the judges of that tribunal of iniquity.

But the voices of Doctor Baruch and of the banker Jonas were heard above all others. Striking the marble of the tribunal, they cried aloud:

“Death to the Nazarene! He deserves death!”

“Yes!—Yes!” responded the militiamen and domestic servants of the High Priest. “He deserves death! Death to the villain!”

“Take the criminal before the judgment seat of Pontius Pilate, the Governor of Judea for the Emperor Tiberius!” ordered Caiaphas to the soldiers. “Only he

can issue the order to put the condemned man to death.”

At these words of the High Priest, the son of Mary was dragged out of the house, in order to be taken before Pontius Pilate.¹

¹ Matthew 26.62-66.

CHAPTER IX.

ON, TO PONTIUS PILATE!

To the cry of: "On, to Pontius Pilate!" the mob of menials followed the soldiers who took Jesus to the Roman magistrate.

Mixing among the servants Genevieve also followed the soldiers. As she passed under the vault of the outer door she saw Peter, the cowardly disciple of the young master, although less cowardly than all the rest, seeing that he alone had followed Jesus so far. She saw Peter turn his head away as Jesus, who sought to catch his disciple's eye, passed before him in the custody of the soldiers.

One of the female servants of the house, thinking she recognized Peter, said to him:

"You also were with Jesus of Galilee."

But Peter, blushing and dropping his eyes answered: "I know not what you say."

Another servant, who heard Peter's answer, said unto them that were there:

"I tell you this fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth."

"I swear," cried Peter, "I swear I do not know Jesus of Nazareth."

Genevieve's heart revolted with indignation and disgust. Peter, who either through a cowardly weakness, or, perhaps, fearing to share his master's fate, denied him twice with perjury, was in her estimation the lowest of men. More than ever did she pity the son of Mary for having been betrayed, deserted and then denied by the very ones who were so near to his heart.

In this way she explained to herself the heart-rending look of sadness that she had observed on the face of Jesus. A great soul like his could not fear death, he could only feel distressed at the ingratitude of those whom he took for his dearest friends.

The slave left the house of the High Priest where Peter the renegade and foremost disciple had remained behind, and speedily rejoined the soldiers who carried Jesus away. Day was beginning to dawn. A number of mendicants and vagabonds who spent the night upon the benches, placed on either side of the doors of the houses, awoke at the noise made by the tramp of the approaching soldiers who led Jesus captive. For a moment Genevieve hoped that these poor people, who had followed the young master everywhere, who called him their friend, and for whom they now seemed to have so much pity, would hasten to notify their acquaintances, gather them together, and free the young master of Nazareth from his captors.

She addressed one of these:

“Are you aware that those soldiers have seized the young master of Nazareth, the friend of the poor and

afflicted? They mean to put him to death. Run to his defence!—Free him! Arouse the people! The soldiers will flee before you.”

But the man answered in a timorous voice:

“The Jerusalem militia may, perhaps, flee. But the soldiers of Pontius Pilate are veterans. They have strong lances, thick cuirasses, and sharp-edged swords. What could we do against them?”

“But you may rise in mass! You may arm yourselves with stones and sticks!” cried Genevieve. “At least you could die in attempting to revenge a man who consecrated himself to your cause!”

The mendicant shook his head and answered as one of his friends drew near him:

“However wretched life may be, a man holds fast to it. It would be like rushing into the jaws of death to rub our rags against the cuirasses of the Roman soldiers.”

“Besides,” put in the other vagabond, “if Jesus of Nazareth is a Messiah, like so many others who preceded and so many more who will follow him, it would be, indeed, a misfortune if he is killed. But we never run short of Messiahs in Israel.”

“But if he is done to death,” cried Genevieve in despair, “it is because he has loved you—it is because he took pity upon your distress—it is because he cast up to the rich the hypocrisy and the hardness of their hearts towards those who suffer.”

“That’s all very true. He has unceasingly predicted

to us the coming of the kingdom of God upon earth," answered the vagabond, stretching himself out again upon his bench in order to enjoy the warmth of the rising sun. "Nevertheless the happy days which he promises us do not arrive—we are beggars to-day, as much so as we were yesterday."

"And who tells you but that those happy days which he promises will arrive to-morrow?" inquired Genevieve. "Do not the crops need time to germinate, to grow and to ripen? Poor impatient blind men that you are!—Consider that if you suffer him whom you call your friend to be killed before he has fecundated the good seed that he sowed in the hearts of the people, you thereby suffer a harvest, that may become bountiful, to be trampled under foot and destroyed in the bud."

The two vagabonds remained silent and shook their heads. Genevieve left them, thinking to herself with redoubled sorrow:

"Am I to meet on all hands nothing but ingratitude, oblivion, cowardice and treachery! Oh, it is not the body of Jesus that will be crucified; it will be his heart!"

The slave hastened to come up with the soldiers who were rapidly drawing near the palace of Pontius Pilate. At the moment when she began to quicken her pace she observed a sort of tumult among the Jerusalem militiamen who made a sudden halt. She mounted upon a stone bench, and then saw Banaïas standing alone

and intercepting the passage of the soldiers in a narrow arcade which the troop had to cross in order to reach the Governor's palace. Banaïas barred the passage with audacity, whirling his iron-tipped stick over his head.

"Oh! He at any rate did not desert the man whom he called his friend!" thought poor Genevieve.

"By the shoulders of Sampson!" bellowed Banaïas. "If you do not set our friend free on the spot, you militiamen of Beelzebub, I shall rain blows upon you as hard as the flail beats the wheat on the barn-floor! Ah! If I only had had time to gather a band of my companions who are as determined as myself to defend our friend of Nazareth, I would issue an order instead of addressing a request to you, and that request I now repeat—let go our friend! If you don't, by the jawbone that Sampson helped himself with, I shall brain everyone of you, even as Sampson brained the Philistines!"

"Do you hear the villain? He calls such an insolent threat a request!" cried the officer in command of the militiamen, prudently keeping himself in the midst of his soldiers. "Run the wretch through with your lances! Smite him with your swords, if he does not clear the way!"

The Jerusalem militiamen were not a very valiant set of men. They had hesitated considerably before seizing Jesus, who advanced towards them alone and unarmed in the Garden of Olives. Despite the orders

of their chief they remained undecided for a moment before the threatening attitude of Banaías. In vain did Jesus, whose sweet yet firm voice Genevieve could hear, seek to appease his defender and request him to withdraw.

Banaías' only answer to the entreaties of the young master was to bellow still louder and more threateningly at the latter's captors, and addressing him said:

"Take no thought of me, our friend. You are a man of peace and harmony. I, on the contrary, am a man of violence and struggle. When a weak man is to be protected leave that to me. I shall block the path of these soldiers until the noise of the affray reaches my friends and fetches them to my support. Then—by the five hundred concubines of Solomon who danced naked before him! you will then see the jig that these militiamen of the devil will be put through, to the tune of our iron-headed sticks beating time upon their casques and shining cuirasses!"

"How long are you going to allow yourselves to be insulted by a single man, my brave soldiers!" cried the officer of the militiamen. "Oh! If only my orders were not to stick close as his shadow to the Nazarene—then—then I would show you what to do—my long sword would long ago have cut the bandit's throat!"

"By the navel of Abraham! It is I who will run through your bowels and tear our friend from your clutches;" responded Banaías. "I am all alone—but

one good falcon is worth more than a hundred black-birds!"

Saying this Banaías rushed upon the militiamen, whirling his iron-headed stick over his head, despite the entreaties of Jesus.

Taken at first off their guard and thrown into disorder by such audacity, several soldiers in the front ranks of the escort took to their heels. But presently ashamed of their cowardice and realizing that there was only one man to contend with, they rallied and attacked Banaías in turn. Galled from all sides and overwhelmed by superior numbers, Banaías finally dropped dead, cut to pieces, despite the heroic resistance that he offered. Genevieve saw the enraged soldiers thereupon pick up and throw the bleeding, mangled body of the only defender of the son of Mary into a pit that stood near the arcade. After this exploit the officer, brandishing his long sword, placed himself valorously at the head of his troop, and the whole body proceeded on its march to the residence of Seigneur Pontius Pilate, where Genevieve had accompanied her mistress Aurelia a few days previous.

The sun was now high in the sky. Attracted by the noise of the struggle between Banaías and the soldiers, a large number of the inhabitants of Jerusalem had come out of their houses and followed the troop of militiamen.

The residence of the Roman Governor was situated in one of the richest quarters of the city. The people

who, attracted by curiosity, accompanied Jesus, so far from taking pity upon him, overwhelmed him with insults and hootings.

“At last!” cried out some. “The Nazarene who threw our city into commotion and alarm is caught!—”

“The seditious fellow strove to drive the beggars to mutiny against the rich and the bourgeois!—”

“The impious villain blasphemed against our holy religion in every address that he delivered!—”

“The audacious miscreant sought to overturn our families by glorifying the prodigal and debauched sons!” shouted one of the two emissaries who kept himself near the skirts of the troop.

“The infamous scamp tried to corrupt our wives,” cried the other emissary, “by glorifying adultery! He snatched one of those sinners, a shameless woman, from the death that she deserved!”

“Thanks be to the Lord!” added a money-changer. “If the Nazarene is put to death, which would be no more than just, we shall be able to set up again our stalls under the colonnade of the Temple, whence the profanator and his band of vagabonds drove us away!—”

“What fools we were to stand in fear of his mob of beggars who clung around him!” exclaimed still another. “Not one of the lot dared resist the arrest of the Nazarene, by whose name they had been continuously swearing—and whom they called their friend!”

“Let short work be made of the abominable inciter to riot! Crucify him, and be done with him!—”

“Yes!—Yes!—Death to the Nazarene!” cried the mob that surrounded Genevieve.

And the crowd, that was steadily swelling in numbers, repeated with increasing fury the ominous cry:

“Death to the Nazarene!—”

“Alas!” said the slave to herself. “Can there be any lot more horrible than that of this young man—deserted by the poor whom he cherished, hated by the rich to whom he preached abnegation and charity! How bitter must not be the grief that tears at his heartstrings!”

Ever followed by the mob, the body of militiamen arrived in front of the residence of Pontius Pilate. Several chief priests, doctors of the law, Senators and other patricians, among whom were Caiaphas, Doctor Baruch and the banker Jonas had joined the troop, and now marched at its head.

One of these Pharisees cried out:

“Seigneur, let us go in to Pontius Pilate and demand of him the immediate sentence of death upon the Nazarene!”

But the High Priest Caiaphas answered with a pious air:

“My seigneurs! We cannot this day set foot in the house of a pagan. Such a defilement would prevent us from eating the passover to-day. Are we to violate our religious laws?”¹

¹John 18.28.

“No!” exclaimed Doctor Baruch. “We cannot commit such an act of abominable impiety!”

“Do you hear them?” said one of the spies in accents of admiration. “Do you hear the saintly men? How profound their respect for the commandments of our religion!—Ah! They are not like that impious Nazarene, who mocks and utters blasphemy at the most sacred things! He dared to say that the Sabbath need not be observed!”

“Oh! The infamous hypocrites!” thought Genevieve to herself. “How well did Jesus know them! How right he was to unmask them! Just look at them—afraid to defile their sandals by stepping into the house of a pagan during the passover, and yet they do not fear to defile their souls by demanding of the same pagan that he spill the blood of a just man and one of their own countrymen, at that! Oh! Poor young master of Nazareth! They will make you pay with your life for your courage to attack the wicked frauds!”

CHAPTER X.

BEFORE PONTIUS PILATE.

The officer of the militiamen entered the palace of Pontius Pilate, leaving the escort on the street with the prisoner in their custody. Genevieve in the meantime climbed up behind a wagon that was hitched to a yoke of oxen and that the crowd had stopped. From her position the slave commanded a full view of the young man of Nazareth.

She saw him standing erect in the center of the squad of soldiers, with his hands bound behind his back, his head bare, his long blonde hair falling down over his shoulders, his looks calm, with a smile of resignation upon his lips. He contemplated the tumultuous and threatening crowd with a sort of grieved commiseration, as if he pitied these people for their blindness and iniquity. From all sides insults were hurled at him. Even the militiamen treated him with extreme brutality, and had torn almost to shreds the blue mantle that he wore over his white tunic. To all these outrages and ill treatment Jesus opposed an unalterable placidity. Only, from time to time, he raised his eyes to heaven. But Genevieve did not see the least sign

of impatience or the slightest sign of anger betrayed upon his pale and beautiful countenance.

Suddenly these words ran over the crowd:

“Here comes Seigneur Pontius Pilate!—”

“He will now pronounce the sentence of death upon the accursed Nazarene—”

“At last we shall see him crucified on Golgotha, where the criminals are executed—”

In fact, Genevieve soon saw Seigneur Pontius Pilate appear at the door of his house. He evidently had been roused from his bed, seeing he was wrapped in a morning robe. His hair and beard were in disorder. His red and swollen eyes seemed dazzled by the rays of the rising sun. He had hard work to suppress his yawns, and seemed greatly annoyed at having been awakened so early in the morning; when, according to his habit, he probably had prolonged the previous evening's supper far into the small hours of the night. Accordingly, addressing Doctor Baruch in a brusque and ill-natured tone, Pontius Pilate said to him:

“What accusation bring you against this man?”

Doctor Baruch looked hurt at the brusqueness and ill-nature of Pontius Pilate, and answered angrily:

“If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto you.”

Pontius Pilate, in turn offended at the angry tone of Doctor Baruch, replied testily:

“Very well, since you say he sinned against the Law, take him and try him according to your own Law.”

And the Governor turned his back upon Doctor Baruch, shrugging his shoulders, and withdrew into his house.

For a moment Genevieve believed the young man of Nazareth was safe, seeing the answer of Pontius Pilate aroused widespread murmurs among the crowd.

“Just like the Romans!” said some. “All they want is to promote disturbances in our country, in order to dominate it and levy increased contributions—”

“That Pontius Pilate seems to protect the accursed Nazarene!—”

“As for me, I feel quite sure the Nazarene is a secret agent of the Romans,” put in one of the spies. “They ever utilize such seditious wretches to carry out their dark projects!—”

“There can be no doubt about it,” answered the other spy; “the Nazarene has sold himself to the Romans. He is an agent provocateur.”

As this fresh insult fell upon the ears of Jesus, Genevieve saw him raise his eyes to heaven with a distressful look, while the mob proceeded to repeat:

“Yes!—Yes!—He is a traitor!—”

“He is an agent of the Romans!—”

“Death to the traitor!—”

“Death to the spy!—”

Doctor Baruch was not ready to let slip his prey.

Upon seeing Pontius Pilate withdraw into his house, he and several chief priests ran after him, and having entreated him to come out again, they led him forward amid great plaudits from the mob.

Seigneur Pontius Pilate seemed to continue the interrogatory very much against his will. He again asked Doctor Baruch impatiently, pointing at Jesus:

“What accusation bring you against this man?”

The doctor of the law answered in a loud voice:

“This man stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.”

At this accusation Genevieve overheard one of the spies say to the other in an undertone:

“Doctor Baruch is a sly fox. This accusation amounts to a charge of sedition. He will thereby compel the Roman Governor to find the Nazarene guilty.”

Pontius Pilate having beckoned Jesus to approach, they exchanged a few words. At each answer made by the young master of Nazareth with his habitual serenity and dignity, Pontius Pilate looked more and more convinced of his innocence. Finally he resumed aloud, addressing the chief priests:

“You have brought this man unto me, as one that perverts the people; and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof you accuse him. I do not deem him worthy of death. I will therefore chastise him and release him.”¹

¹ John 18.29-31; Luke 23.14-16,

And smothering a last yawn he made a sign to one of his servants, who left, running.

Not satisfied with the verdict of Pontius Pilate, the crowd first murmured, and then broke out into loud complaints.

“It was not merely to chastise the Nazarene that he was brought here,” clamored some, “but to have him sentenced to death!—”

“After he is chastised, he will resume his seditious conduct and will continue to stir up the people!—”

“We do not ask for the chastisement of Jesus, but for his death!—”

“Yes!—Yes!” clamored several voices. “Death! Death!”

Pontius Pilate made no answer to these clamors and cries except to shrug his shoulders, and he went in once more.

“If the Governor is convinced of the innocence of the young master,” thought Genevieve, “why chastise him at all? That is at once cowardice and cruelty.—Perhaps he hopes by such a concession to allay the wrath of the enemies of Jesus.—Alas! He is mistaken. He can appease them only with the death of the just man!”

Hardly had Pilate issued the orders for the chastisement of the son of Mary when the militiamen seized him; tore from his shoulders the last remaining shreds of his mantle; pulled off his linen and his woolen tunic; rolled the same down to his leather girdle; and thus

left the upper part of his body bare. They then bound him fast to one of the pillars that ornamented the entrance of the Roman Governor's residential palace.

Jesus offered no resistance; he uttered no complaint. He only turned his celestial countenance towards the crowd, and contemplated the same in sadness, without seeming to hear the insults, the hootings and the denunciations of him, that increased in volume and bitterness.

Someone had gone for the city executioner, who was to administer the whipping to Jesus with switches. While awaiting the arrival of the executioner, the vociferations, incited by the emissaries of the Pharisees, continued unabated:

"Pontius Pilate thinks he will satisfy us by having the villain scourged. He is mistaken!" said some.

"The guilty negligence of the Roman Governor," suggested one of the spies, "shows quite clearly that he has a secret understanding with the Nazarene.—"

"Oh! my friends—what are you complaining about?" came from a third. "Pontius Pilate is granting us more than we even asked for. We asked only for the death of the Nazarene. Now he will be flogged before being put to death.—Glory to the generous Pontius Pilate!—"

"Yes!—Yes!—He is bound to pronounce the death sentence. We shall see to it that he does so!—"

"Ha!—Here comes the executioner!" cried several

voices. "Here is the executioner, and his two assistants.—"

Genevieve recognized the two men, who, three days before, had scourged her at her master's house. Tears involuntarily welled to her eyes at the thought that the young man, who was all love and mercifulness, was about to undergo the ignominious chastisement reserved for slaves.

The executioners carried under their arms, each, a bundle of hazel switches, long, flexible and of about the thickness of a thumb. Each executioner took one, and, at a sign given by Caiaphas, the strokes began to rain, hard and thick, upon the shoulders of the young man of Nazareth. Each time a switch broke, a fresh one was taken.

At first, Genevieve turned her face away from the cruel spectacle. But she could not help hearing the ferocious jests of the mob, which could not but be an even more painful suffering to the son of Mary than the chastisement itself.

"You who said: 'Love ye one another,' you accursed Nazarene!" cried several voices, "here is a sample of how we love you!—"

"You who said: 'Share your bread and your cloak with him who has neither bread nor cloak'—take note, our honest executioners follow your precepts—they share their switches to break them on your back!—"

"You who said it was easier for a hawser to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter

paradise, don't you think it would be easier to go through the eye of a needle than to escape the switches that are caressing your loins?—”

“You who glorified vagabonds, thieves, courtesans and other gallows-birds—no doubt you loved the villains!—Well, you knew that some day you would be whipped like any of them!—”

Jesus emitted not a cry; he uttered not a complaint. He was so impassive that Genevieve feared he had fainted away with pain. She turned her face anxiously towards him.

Alas! Horrible was the spectacle that met her eyes. The young master's back was but one broad bleeding wound, broken here and there by long bluish welts. Only at such places was the skin not cut. Jesus turned his head heavenward, and shut his eyes, no doubt to escape the sight of the pitiless mob. His countenance, livid and bathed in perspiration, revealed horrible sufferings as each fresh flagellation lashed his skin, already cut to the quick.—This notwithstanding, at times it was noticeable that he strove to smile with angelic resignation.

The chief priests, the doctors of the law, the Senators and all the rest of the wicked Pharisees followed with triumphant and greedy eyes the process of the torture. Among the most eager to feast upon the young man's agony were Doctor Baruch, Caiaphas and the banker Jonas. The executioners' arms began to tire. They had broken almost all the switches of their bun-

dles on the back of Jesus. They questioned Doctor Baruch with a look, as if to ask whether it was not time to stop the torture. But the doctor of the law cried:

“No! Use up your switches, to the very last one!”

The order of the Pharisee was carried out. The last switches were broken upon the shoulders of the young master, bespattering the executioners' faces with blood. It no longer was the skin that they flagellated—it was a bleeding wound. So excessive was the chastisement that, despite his courage, Jesus fainted away and dropped his head with a dull thud upon his left shoulder. His knees bent under him, and he would have fallen to the ground but for the cords that held him fast by the waist to the column of the portico.

After having ordered the chastisement Pontius Pilate had again withdrawn into his house. At this moment he came out once more, and ordered the executioners to unbind the condemned man. They unfastened the cords and held him up. One of them threw his woolen tunic over his shoulders. The contact of the coarse material with the quivering flesh caused such a sharp pain to Jesus that a tremor ran over his frame. The very excess of the pain recalled him to consciousness. He raised his head, sought to steady himself upon his legs, opened his eyes, and cast a merciful look upon the crowd.

Pontius Pilate, believing he had satisfied the hatred

of the Pharisees, said to the crowd after Jesus was unbound:

“Behold the man!”

With these words he motioned his officers to return into the house. He was about to follow them when Caiaphas, the High Priest, after taking a hurried council with Doctor Baruch and the banker Jonas, cried out aloud, holding the Governor by his robe:

“Seigneur Pilate, if you let this man go, you are not Caesar’s friend. The Nazarene calls himself King. Whosoever makes himself a King, speaks against Caesar!”

“Pontius Pilate will now fear to be taken for a traitor to his master Tiberius,” said to his accomplice one of the spies who stood near Genevieve. “He will be obliged to condemn the Nazarene.”

Whereupon that wicked man cried out aloud:

“Death to the Nazarene, the enemy of the Emperor Tiberius, protector of Judea!”

“Yes!—Yes!” answered a chorus of voices. “The Nazarene calls himself King of the Jews!—”

“He means to overthrow the supremacy of Emperor Tiberius!—”

“He means to declare himself King by a popular uprising against the Romans, our friends, our protectors and allies.—”

“Answer me this question. Pontius Pilate!” cried one of the spies from the midst of the crowd. “How

does it happen that we Hebrews show ourselves more devoted than you to the Emperor your master?"

"How does it happen," screamed the other spy, "that it is we, the Hebrews, who demand the death of the seditious villain who aims at overthrowing the authority of Rome, while you, the Governor in Tiberius's name, look with favor upon the rebel and inciter to rebellion?"

This apostrophe seemed to affect Pilate all the more, seeing that from all parts of the crowd the cry now resounded:

"Yes! Yes! To set the Nazarene free is to betray the Emperor!"

"Or, perhaps to betray a secret understanding with the rebel!"

"Yes!—Is Pontius Pilate his accomplice?"

Despite his possible desire to save the young man of Nazareth, Pilate looked more and more troubled at the reproaches that issued from the mob, reproaches that seemed to impeach his loyalty to Tiberius.¹ He stepped towards the Pharisees, spoke with them in a low voice, while the militiamen kept Jesus safely in their midst with his hands pinioned behind him.

Caiaphas then spoke up aloud, addressing Pontius Pilate so as to be heard by the whole mob, and pointing at Jesus;

"We have found that this man perverts our people, that he prevents them from paying tribute to Caesar,

¹ *Jesus Before Caiaphas and Pilate*, Dupin, Sr.; p. 105.

and that he proclaims himself the King of the Jews, by virtue of being the son of God."

Pontius Pilate thereupon turned towards the young man of Nazareth and said:

"Are you the King of the Jews?"

"Do you say this thing of yourself?" answered Jesus in a voice weakened by pain, "or did others tell it you of me?"

"The chief priests and the Senators have delivered you unto me," answered Pontius Pilate. "What have you done?—Do you pretend to be the King of the Jews?"

Jesus shook his head gently and answered:

"My kingdom is not of this world—if my kingdom were of this world, then would my friends fight, that I should not be delivered to you—but I repeat to you—my kingdom is not from hence."

Pilate looked again at the Pharisees as if taking themselves to witness of the answer that Jesus made, an answer that spoke him guiltless, seeing that he proclaimed his kingdom was not of this world.

"His kingdom," thought Genevieve to herself, "is surely in those unknown worlds where, as our druid faith teaches us, we shall rejoin those whom we have loved here. How can they venture to sentence Jesus, as a rebel to the Emperor, he who has so often said: 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's'?"

But, alas, Genevieve forgot that the hatred of the

Pharisees was implacable. The seigneurs Baruch, Jonas and Caiaphas having again spoken in a low voice to Pontius Pilate, he once more asked Jesus:

“Are you the son of God—yes or no?”

“Yes,” answered Jesus in his sweet and firm voice; “yes, I am.”

At this answer the priests, the doctors and Senators grew indignant and uttered loud exclamations which the mob promptly echoed:

“He speaks blasphemy!—”

“He says he is the son of God!” yelled one of the spies.

“He who calls himself the son of God thereby calls himself the King of the Jews!”

“He is an enemy of the Emperor!—”

“Death to the Nazarene!—”

“Sentence him!—”

“Order him crucified!—”

Pontius Pilate, a singular mixture of cowardly weakness and of equity, wishing, no doubt, to make a last effort to save Jesus, addressed the crowd saying that it was the custom on that holyday to set a criminal free, and that the people would now have to choose for this act of clemency between a prisoner named Barrabas and Jesus, who already had been whipped with switches. And he added:

“Which of the two will you, therefore, that I release unto you—Jesus or Barrabas?”

Genevieve saw the agents of the Pharisees run from group to group among the mob, saying :

“Let us demand the release of Barrabas!—Let us demand the release of Barrabas!”

Soon the whole mob was crying :

“Release Barrabas, not Jesus!”

“But,” replied Pilate, “what shall I do with Jesus?”

“Crucify him!” came from thousands of throats.

“Crucify him!” they repeated.

“But,” Pontius Pilate still objected, “what evil has he done?”

“Crucify him!” was the only answer that came from the mob that grew more and more furious.

“Crucify him!—”

“Death to the Nazarene!—”

Lacking the courage to protect Jesus whom he found innocent, Pontius Pilate made a sign to one of his domestics. The man ran into the Governor’s house while the mob cried with increasing fury :

“Crucify the Nazarene!—”

“Crucify him!—”

Jesus, ever calm, sad, and pensive, seemed a stranger to what was happening around him.

“No doubt,” thought Genevieve, “his thoughts already roam in those mysterious worlds where we are re-born when we depart from this world.”

The domestic servant of Pontius Pilate returned, holding a silver pitcher in one hand and a basin in the

other. A second domestic servant took the basin and, as the first servant poured water into it out of the pitcher, Pontius Pilate dipped his hands in the water and said aloud:

“I am innocent of the blood of this just person. See you to it. As for me, I wash my hands of this affair.”

“Let the blood of the Nazarene be on us!” cried one of the spies.

“Yes! Let his blood be on us and on our children!”

“Then,” said Pontius Pilate, “take Jesus and crucify him yourselves. And as you so wish it, Barrabas shall be released.”¹

Saying this Pontius Pilate went into his house followed by the loud acclamations of the mob, while Caiaphas, Doctor Baruch, the banker Jonas, and the other now triumphant Pharisees shook their fists at Jesus.

The officer in command of the squad of militiamen which was charged to arrest the son of Mary in the Garden of Olives, approached Caiaphas and remarked:

“Seigneur, in order to take the Nazarene to Golgotha, where criminals are executed, we shall have to cross the crowded quarter of the Judicial Gate. It may be that the present quietness on the part of the partisans of the rebel is only in seeming—and that, as soon as we arrive in that quarter of the slums they will

¹ John 19.12-16;
Matthew 27.11-26;

Luke 23.21-23;
Mark 15.9-12.

rise to set the Nazarene free. I answer for the bravery of my good militiamen. Already this morning they sustained a stubborn fight, and put to flight a large gang of desperadoes commanded by a bandit named Banaias, who insisted that we release Jesus. Not one of the rebels escaped—despite the furious resistance that they offered.”

“The cowardly liar!” said Genevieve to herself, as she heard the boastfulness of the militiamen’s officer, who proceeded:

“Nevertheless, Seigneur Caiaphas, despite the tried bravery of our militia, it might be more prudent to entrust the Roman guard with the duty of conveying the Nazarene to the place of execution.”

“I think so, too,” answered the High Priest. “I shall request one of the officers of Pontius Pilate to keep the Nazarene in the Praetorium of the Roman cohort until the hour of execution.”

While the High Priest proceeded to make his proposed arrangements with one of the officers of Pontius Pilate, Genevieve saw the commander of the militiamen step towards Jesus, and a moment later she heard him, in answer to some words spoken by the young master, say to him mockingly:

“You seem to be in a great hurry to stretch out your limbs upon the cross.—It must first be built, and that is not done in the shake of a lamb’s tail. You ought to know that better than anyone else, since you are a carpenter yourself.”

The officer of Pontius Pilate, with whom the High Priest had just been speaking, now returned to Jesus and said :

“I shall take you to the Praetorium of our soldiers. When the cross is ready it will be brought there, and you will thereupon proceed to Calvary under our escort.—Now, follow me!”

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE COURT OF THE PRAETORIUM.

Jesus, still pinioned, was conducted by the militiamen to a near-by hall in the court of a building where the Roman soldiers were quartered. The door, before which a sentinel was slowly pacing, stood open. Several people, who, like Genevieve, had followed the Nazarene looked in from the street to see what happened within.

When the young master was taken to the court of the Praetorium—this is the name given to the barracks of the Roman soldiers—the men were scattered in several groups among themselves. Some were furbishing their arms; others were playing at a variety of games; still others were being exercised in the use of the lance under the direction of an officer; finally, not a few lay stretched out on the benches in the sun, and sang, or chatted together. From their faces, bronzed in the sun; from their martial and savage bearing; from the military character of their weapons and their raiment;—from all these tokens the brave, veteran but pitiless soldiers were recognizable who had conquered the world, leaving behind them in their wake massacre, spoliation and slavery.

The instant the Romans heard the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and saw him brought to the court of the Praetorium by one of their officers, all dropped their games, and ran to see him.

Genevieve realized, when she noticed the mocking and hardened mien of the soldiery, that the son of Mary was about to undergo fresh outrages. The slave remembered having read in the narratives, left to her husband Fergan by his ancestors, of the horrors committed by the soldiers of Caesar, the scourge of Gaul. She made no doubt but that the men who now surrounded the young master were as cruel as those of former days.

There stood in the very center of the court of the Praetorium a stone bench upon which the Romans immediately made Jesus sit down, with his hands left pinioned behind his back. Thereupon, planting themselves in a semi-circle around him, they began to mock and insult him:

“Look at the famous prophet!” said one of them. “Look at the prophet who announced that the day will come when the sword will be turned into a pruning hook, and there will be no more war, and no more battles!”

“No more war? By brave Mars, no more war?” cried several soldiers, deeply indignant. “Ha! That is the kind of stuff that you prophesy, is it? Prophet of misfortune!”

“Think of it, no more war! Which means to say, no

more clarions, no more floating ensigns, no more shining cuirasses, no more casques with cockades to attract the women!"

"No more war! Why that means no more conquests, no more plunder, no more rapes!"

"What! No more wiping our iron spiked shoes upon the heads of conquered people!"

"No more drinking their wine while making love to their daughters—as we do here—as we did in Gaul—as we did in Britain—as we did in Spain—in short, as we have done all over the universe!"

"No more war! By Hercules! And what would become of the strong and the brave, accursed Nazarene? I presume you would have them plow the earth from early dawn to dusk, or spin cloth like base slaves, instead of dividing their time between battle, idleness, the tavern and love!"

"You who cause yourself to be styled the son of God," said one of the Romans, shaking his fist at the young master, "you must be the son of God Fear, poltroon that you are!"

"You who now cause yourself to be called the King of the Jews, do you contemplate having yourself acclaimed the King of all the cowards in the universe?"

"Comrades!" cried one of the soldiers, bursting into uproarious laughter. "Since he is King of the poltroons, he should be crowned!—"

The suggestion was received with insulting mirth. Several voices cried out on the spot:

“Yes!—Yes!—Since he is King he should be invested with the purple!”

“We must put a scepter in his hand—a crown on his head—a royal mantle on his shoulders! Let us glorify him! Let us render homage to him as unto our august Emperor Tiberius!”

And while their companions continued to crowd around and to insult the young master of Nazareth, who remained indifferent to the outrages that they heaped upon him, several of the soldiers went away. One went after a rider's red cloak, a second in search of a centurion's cane, a third, seeing in a corner a heap of brush, destined to kindle fire with, started to plait a crown.

Thereupon several voices cried out:

“And now, let us proceed to the coronation of the King of the Jews!”

“Yes! Let us crown the King of the Cowards!”

“The son of God!”

“Friends, the coronation must be done with pomp, as if he were a veritable Caesar!”

“I am the crown-bearer!”

“I the scepter-bearer!”

“I the bearer of the imperial mantle!”

And in the midst of hootings and coarse jests, the Romans formed themselves into a sort of mock procession.

The crown-bearer marched first, holding aloft the crown of thorns with a solemn air and followed by sev-

eral soldiers. Next came the scepter-bearer, also followed by a suite of soldiers. Last came the one who held the mantle.

And all sang in chorus:

“Hail to the King of the Jews!—”

“Hail to the Messiah!—”

“Hail to the Son of God!—”

“Hail to the Caesar of the poltroons—hail!—”

Meekly seated on the stone bench Jesus looked at the preparations for the insulting ceremony with unalterable serenity.

The crown-bearer was the first to approach the young master of Nazareth; he raised the thorny braid over his head, and said:

“I crown thee, O, King!”

And the Roman slammed the crown so brutally upon the head of Jesus that the thorns lacerated his forehead. Thick drops of blood flowed like bloody tears down the face of the victim. But, excepting the first involuntary quiver, caused by the pain, the features of the young master preserved their habitual meekness, and betrayed neither resentment nor anger.

“And I invest thee with the imperial purple, O, King!” added the next Roman, while one of his companions tore away the tunic that had been thrown over the lacerated back and shoulders of Jesus. No doubt the wool of the garment had already stuck to the living flesh. When it was violently torn off the shoulders of Jesus he uttered a deep cry of pain. But that was

all. He quietly suffered himself to be clad in the red mantle.

“And, now, grasp thy scepter, O, great King!” said the third Roman, kneeling down before the young master, and placing in his hand the centurion’s vine-stock.

Thereupon all shouted in chorus amid great roars of laughter:

“Hail, O, King of the Jews, hail!”

A large number of them went even so far as to kneel down before him in mockery while they repeated:

“Hail, O, great King!”

Jesus held in his hand the mock scepter and uttered not a word. Such imperturbable resignation and angelic sweetness at first struck the Romans so forcibly that they remained stupefied. But speedily their rage boiled at the young master’s display of patience, and they vied with one another to irritate him, crying:

“It is not a man; it is a statue!—”

“All the blood he had in his veins has flowed out under the switches of the executioners!—”

“The coward! He dares not even complain!—”

“Coward?” said a veteran with a thoughtful mien after having long contemplated Jesus, although he was himself, at first, one of his bitter tormentors. “No! That man is no coward. No, in order to endure patiently all that we have made him suffer, it requires more courage than to rush head down and sword in

hand upon the enemy.—No," he repeated stepping aside, "no, that man is no coward!"

And Genevieve believed she saw a tear roll down upon the grey moustache of the old soldier.

The other Romans, however, sneered at the compassion of their comrade and cried:

"He does not perceive that this Nazarene affects resignation in order to inspire us with sympathy."

"That's so! Within he is all rage and hatred, while externally he shows himself kind and patient."

"He is a slinking tiger, covered with a lamb's skin."

At these words Jesus merely smiled sadly and shook his head. The movement caused a spray of blood to rain down around him, seeing that the wounds cut into his forehead by the thorns were still bleeding.

At the sight of the blood of that just man, Genevieve could not help murmuring to herself the refrain of the song of the Sons of the Mistletoe—

Oh, flow, flow, thou blood of the captive!
 Drop, drop, thou dew of gore!
 Germinate, sprout up, thou avenging harvest!
 Hasten, you mower, it is ripe!
 Whet your scythe, whet it—
 Whet your scythe!

"Oh!" thought Genevieve, "the blood of this innocent man, of this martyr, who has been so shamefully deserted by his friends, by that mass of poor and oppressed people whom he loved—that blood will surely fall upon them and their children.—May it also fructify the bloody crop of vengeance!"

Exasperated by the celestial patience of Jesus, the Roman soldiers were at their wits' end to overcome it. Insults and threats being unable to shake it, one of the soldiers pulled out of his hands the vine-stock which he still calmly held, and broke it over his head, crying:

“This may make you give some sign of life, statue of flesh and bone!”

But Jesus, having first bowed his aching head under the blow, raised it again and cast a look of forgiveness upon the man who had struck him.

Undoubtedly this ineffable sweetness must have either intimidated or embarrassed the barbarians. One of them untied his own scarf, bandaged the eyes of the young master of Nazareth and said to him:

“O, great King, your respectful subjects are unworthy to bear your looks!”

The eyes of Jesus being thus bandaged, a thought of savage cowardice struck one of the Romans. He approached his victim, smote him on the face, and said with a peal of laughter:

“O, great prophet, now tell us the name of the one who struck you!”

A horrible sport began thereupon.

Those robust and armed men walked up in turn, one after the other, laughing their loudest, and smote the face of the young pinioned man, broken by so many tortures. As each one smote the face of Jesus he shouted:

“Can you guess this time who struck you?”

Jesus—and these were the only words that Genevieve heard him utter during that protracted martyrdom—Jesus exclaimed in a merciful voice, raising heavenward his bandaged face:

“Oh! Lord, my God—pardon them—they know not what they do!”

That was the single and tender wail that the victim uttered—and it was not even a wail—it was a prayer that he addressed to the gods, imploring their pardon for his tormentors, who knew not what they were doing!

So far from being appeased by such divine meekness, the Romans redoubled their acts of violence and outrages.

The most infamous ones among them spat in the face of Jesus.

Genevieve would not have been able longer to endure the sight of these monstrosities if it had not pleased the gods to put an end to them. A great uproar was heard from the side of the street, and she saw Doctor Baruch, the banker Jonas and the High Priest Caiaphas drawing near. Two men behind them carried a heavy cross considerably larger than a man's size. At the sight of the instrument of death, the people who had crowded outside of the door, and among whom was Genevieve, cried out triumphantly:

“At last!—”

“Here is the cross!—”

“Here is the cross!—”

“A spick and span brand new cross!—”

“A cross worthy of a King!—”

When the Romans heard the announcement that the cross was coming, they seemed vexed at the prospect of their victim's escaping them.

Jesus, on the contrary, when he heard the cries of: “Here comes the cross!” “Here comes the cross!” rose from his stone bench with a kind of relief, no doubt anxious to depart soon as possible from this world.

The soldiers unbandaged his eyes and removed the red mantle from his shoulders, leaving only the crown of thorns upon his head. Thus he remained half naked. In this condition he was taken to the door of the Praetorium, where stood the men who had brought the cross.

CHAPTER XII.

GOLGOTHA.

In their still unglutted hatred, Doctor Baruch, the banker Jonas, and the High Priest Caiaphas exchanged looks of triumph among themselves as they pointed to the young master of Nazareth standing before them pale and bleeding, and whose strength seemed about exhausted. The pitiless Pharisees could not resist the cruel delight of heaping some fresh insults upon their victim.

The banker Jonas said to him:

“Audacious fraud, now you see what abusing the rich leads to! You have now stopped mocking them, I notice! You no longer compare them to hawsers, incapable of passing through a needle’s eye! It is a pity your taste for satire is all gone!”

“Are you now satisfied,” put in Doctor Baruch, “with having spoken of the doctors of the law as cheats and hypocrites, who like to have the upper seats at feasts? They, at least, will not dispute your place on the cross!”

“And the priests!” added Caiaphas. “They also were a lot of frauds who devoured widows’ houses and for a pretence made long prayers—hardened men, more merciless than the heathen Samaritans—a lot of dullards, narrow-minded enough to observe the Sabbath

piously—proud fellows, who caused trumpets to be sounded before them in order to proclaim the alms that they gave!—You thought yourself well entrenched! You struck a bold poise at the head of your band of beggars, skip-jacks and prostitutes, whom you recruited in the taverns, where you spent your days and nights! Where are all your partisans now? What has become of them? Why do you not summon them to your help? Let them come to your deliverance!”

The hatred of the mob was less patient than that of the Pharisees, who delighted in slowly torturing their victim. Furious cries soon burst all restraint:

“Death!—”

“Death to the Nazarene!—”

“Hurry up!—”

“Do they mean to afford him a chance of escape by delaying his execution!—”

“He will not expire the instant he is nailed to the cross!—”

“No! There will be plenty of time to chat with him after that is done!—”

“Yes! Hurry up!—”

“His band of criminals may have been scared only for a moment!—”

“Yes! And they may regain courage and try to take him away from us!—”

“Anyhow, what is the sense of addressing him? It is clear that he does not mean to answer!—”

“Death!—”

“To death! To death!—”

“And he shall himself carry his cross all the way to the place of execution!—”

The proposition of this fresh barbarity was received with general applause. Jesus was taken out of the Praetorium court, and the cross was laid upon one of his bleeding shoulders. So sharp was the pain, and the weight of the cross so heavy, that the unhappy young man's knees for a moment faltered under him, and he was about to fall to the ground. But drawing fresh strength from his own courage and resignation, he seemed to steel himself against weakness and pain, and, bent under his burden, he peacefully commenced his march.

The mob at his heels, together with the escort of Roman soldiers, cried out aloud:

“Room there!”

“Room for the triumphal march of the King of the Jews!”

The mournful procession started for the place of execution, which was situated outside of the Judicial Gate. It soon left the rich quarter of the Temple behind it, and proceeded on its route through a less wealthy and much more populous part of the city. In the measure that the procession entered the quarter of the poor, Jesus began to receive at least some tokens of interest.

Genevieve saw a large number of women standing at their doors, who lamented the fate of the young master of Nazareth. They remembered that he was the friend of the poor and of the little children. Many of these innocents wept and threw kisses to the good Jesus, whose simple and touching parables they ~~know~~ by heart.

But, alas! Almost at every step, overcome with pain and crushed under the weight that he carried, the son of Mary stumbled and stopped. Finally, strength wholly failing him, he fell upon his knees, then on his hands, and his forehead struck the ground.

Genevieve thought he was dead or dying; she could not repress a cry of grief and terror; but he was not dead. His martyrdom and agony were destined to be still prolonged.

The Roman soldiers of his escort, as well as the Pharisees, cried out to him:

“Stand up!”

“Stand up, lazy fellow!”

“Rise! You are only pretending to faint, in order to escape carrying your cross to the place of execution!”

“You reproached the chief priests with binding upon the backs of men burdens too heavy to bear, but which they themselves would not touch with their fingers,” said Doctor Baruch, “and here you are doing no better than you blamed others for doing—refusing to carry your cross!”

Jesus, still upon his knees and his forehead bent towards the ground, helped himself with his two hands to rise, which he finally succeeded in doing with great effort. Then, still staggering, he waited for the cross to be placed back upon his shoulders. But hardly was his burden laid upon him anew, when, despite his courage and good will, he succumbed and fell down a second time all of a heap.

“Come!” cried out the Roman officer, brutally. “He is pretending!”

“Seigneur Baruch!” cried one of the spies, who, like the Pharisees, had not quitted their victim, “do you see that man, yonder, in a brown mantle, who is passing so quickly, turning his head away, as if he desired not to be recognized? I have often seen him at the meetings of the Nazarene. Suppose we make him carry the cross!”

“Yes!” said Baruch. “Call him!”

“Halloa, there, Simon!” cried the emissary. “Halloa, there, Simon the Cyrenean! You took part in the sermonizings of the Nazarene, now come and take part in carrying his burden!”

No sooner had this man called Simon, than several voices in the mob joined him:

“Halloa, there, Simon!—”

“Simon!—”

At first, when summoned by the spy, Simon had hastened his pace as if he did not hear; when, however, a large number of voices began to call his name, he

turned back, walked toward the spot where Jesus lay, and approached with a troubled mien.

“We are going to crucify Jesus of Nazareth, whose preachings you liked to hear so well,” said the banker Jonas to him, jeeringly; “he is your friend. You surely will not refuse to help him carry his cross?”

“I shall carry it all alone,” answered the Cyrenean, who now mustered up courage enough to cast a look of pity at the young master, who, still recumbent upon his knees, seemed ready to faint.

Having taken charge of the cross, Simon marched ahead of Jesus, and the procession resumed its way.

About a hundred steps further, at the entrance of the street that led to the Judicial Gate, and passing before the shop of a dealer in woolen goods, Genevieve saw a woman of venerable aspect step out. At the sight of Jesus, pale, broken and bleeding, the woman could not repress her tears. It was only then that the slave, who had so far forgotten that she might be hunted for by orders of her master, Seigneur Gremion, recalled the address given to her by her mistress, Aurelia, on the part of Joanna, telling her that Veronica, her nurse, who kept a shop near the Judicial Gate, could give her a temporary asylum, where she would be safe.

But Genevieve thought not at that moment of her own safety. An invincible power held her fast to the steps of the young master of Nazareth, whom she wished to follow to the end. She saw Veronica in tears approach Jesus, whose face was bathed in a bloody

sweat, and wipe with a linen napkin the visage of the poor martyr, who thanked Veronica with a smile of celestial kindness.

Several steps further, and still on the same street that led to the Judicial Gate, Jesus passed before several women who bewailed and lamented him. He stopped for a moment and said to those women in an accent of profound sadness:

“Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children; for, behold, the days are coming in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck!”

And, although broken with suffering, drawing himself up with an inspired air, his features stamped with heart-rending grief as if conscious of the frightful misfortunes that he foresaw, Jesus cried out in a prophetic tone that made even the Pharisees themselves tremble:

“Yes, for, behold, the days are coming when in their horror men will begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us!”¹

And dropping his head upon his breast, Jesus painfully pursued his march amidst the silence of stupor and dread that followed those prophetic words. The procession proceeded up the steep street that led to the Judicial Gate under which you pass to ascend Golgotha, a hill that lies outside of the city and on the

¹ Luke 23.28-30.

top of which the crosses of condemned criminals are raised.

Genevieve noticed that the mob, at first so cowardly hostile to Jesus, began, as the hour of execution drew near, to feel moved to bemoan the lot of the victim. The unfortunate people undoubtedly understood, but, alas! too late, that by suffering the friend of the poor to be done to death, not only were they about to be deprived of a defender, but their shameful ingratitude might have for its consequence to dishearten those who would otherwise have been inclined to continue the work of the young master of Nazareth, and devote themselves to the poor and afflicted.

After the procession passed under the vault of the Judicial Gate it began to ascend Mount Calvary. The ascent was so steep that more than once was Simon the Cyrenean, who still carried the cross of Jesus, as well as the young master himself, compelled to stop for rest.

Jesus seemed to have preserved hardly strength enough to reach the top of that barren ridge, that was littered with rolling stones, and on which here and there grew briars and a few stunted bushes of a pale green.

The sky was now overcast with thick clouds. A somber and lugubrious day threw a pall of sadness upon all things around.

To her great surprise Genevieve observed towards the summit of Calvary two other crosses already

erected, besides the one that was to be erected for Jesus, the young master of Nazareth. In her surprise, she inquired from a man in the crowd what the purpose of those two other crosses was.

“The two crosses,” she was answered, “are intended for the thieves, who are to be crucified together with the Nazarene.”

“And why are the thieves to be crucified at the same time as the young master?” inquired the slave.

“Because the Pharisees, men of justice, wisdom, and piety, wished that the Nazarene be accompanied unto death by the sort of wretches with whom he associated in life.”

Genevieve turned around and looked into the face of the man from whom this explanation came. She recognized one of the two spies.

“Oh! The merciless men!” thought the slave. “They find means to outrage Jesus even unto death.”

When the Roman soldiers who escorted the young master arrived at the summit of Mount Calvary, followed by the now more and more silent and pitying mob, besides Doctor Baruch, the banker Jonas and the High Priest Caiaphas, all the three anxious to assist at the agony and death of their victim, Genevieve saw the two thieves who were destined for execution at the same time as the young master. Surrounded by their guards, they stood pinioned and ashy pale, and awaited death with a terror mixed with wrath and impotent rage.

At a sign from the Roman officer in command of the escort, the executioners took down the two crosses from the holes into which they had been temporarily stuck, and laid them down flat upon the ground. The soldiers then seized the two criminals, and despite their loud cries, blasphemies and desperate resistance, stripped them of their clothes and stretched them out upon the two crosses. While the soldiers held the two thieves down, the executioners, equipped with long nails and heavy hammers, nailed fast upon the crosses by their hands and feet the wretched men, who uttered piercing cries of pain. By means of this refinement of barbarity the young master of Nazareth was made to taste in advance the bitter fate that he was soon to undergo himself. Indeed, at the sight of the torments experienced by his two companions in punishment, Jesus could not repress his tears. He raised his eyes to heaven, and then hid his face in his hands to keep away the painful spectacle.

So soon as the two thieves were nailed down, the crosses on which they writhed and moaned were raised, were replaced into the ground and steadied with stones and stakes.

“Come, now, Nazarene,” said one of the executioners to Jesus, stepping to the young master, and holding his heavy hammer in one hand and several long, strong nails in the other. “Come, now, are you ready? Shall we have to use force with you also, as we had to do with your friends?”

“I don’t know what they have to complain of,” stolidly remarked the other executioner; “one lies so comfortably on a cross with one’s arms stretched out, like a man who stretches out his limbs after a long sleep!”

Jesus made no answer. He removed his clothes, placed himself upon his instrument of death, extended his arms over the crossbeams, and looked up to heaven with his eyes bathed in tears.

Genevieve then saw the two executioners kneel down on either side of the master and take up their hammers and nails. The slave shut her eyes, but she could hear the dull strokes of the hammers as they drove the nails into the quivering flesh, while the two thieves continued rending the air with pitiful cries of pain. The sound of the hammer strokes ceased. Genevieve opened her eyes. The cross to which the young master of Nazareth had been nailed was raised and set up between the crosses of the other two crucified men.

Jesus, his brow crowned with thorns, his long blonde hair matted and glued to his temples by sweat mixed with blood, his face livid and bearing the stamp of ominous suffering, and his lips turning bluish, seemed to be on the point of expiring. With the weight of his whole body resting on his two hands nailed to the cross, as well as upon his feet, from which drops of blood trickled down, his arms suddenly stiffened in convulsive paroxysms, while his half-bent knees knocked against each other.

At that moment the almost dying voice of the two thieves reached Genevieve's ears as they addressed themselves to Jesus:

“A curse upon you—Nazarene!—A curse upon you—you who told us that the first would be last and the last first! Here we are—crucified!—what can you now do for us?”

“A curse upon you who promised consolation to the afflicted!” responded the other thief. “Here we are crucified—where is our consolation?”

“A curse upon you who told us that only the sick need the physician!—We are sick—sorely sick—where is our physician?”

“A curse upon you who told us that the good shepherd would leave his flock to seek for a single lamb gone astray!—We went astray, and you leave us in the hands of the executioners!”

Nor were those wretches the only ones to insult the agony of Jesus. Horrible to say, and hardly believable by Genevieve herself at the hour when she writes this account, Doctor Baruch, the banker Jonas, and Caiaphas the Prince of the Church, vied with one another in mockeries and objurgations, hurled at the young man of Nazareth at the moment when he was about to render up his soul:

“Oh! Jesus of Nazareth! Jesus the Messiah! Jesus the Prophet! Jesus the Savior of the world!” said Caiaphas, laughing. “How comes it you did not fore-

tell your own fate? Why do you not begin by saving yourself, you who were to save all the world?"

"You call yourself the Son of God, O, Nazarene!" added the banker Jonas. "We shall take stock in your celestial power if you now come down from that cross!—Son of God, come down!—What! You prefer to remain nailed to those beams like a nightbird on a barn door?—You may be called Jesus the Crucified, but not Jesus the Son of God!"

"You always seemed so reliant upon the Lord as your special protector," exclaimed Doctor Barueh; "why do you not call him now to your help? If he is your special protector, if you are, indeed, his son, why does he not thunder against us? Why does he not transform your cross into a rose-bush, whence you could fly, radiant, to heaven?"

Hootings and mockeries from the Roman soldiers accompanied the cowardly outrages of the Pharisees. Suddenly Genevieve noticed the body of Jesus quiver at every limb, and he made one last effort to turn his heavy head heavenward. A last glimmer of life illumined his celestial visage, a heart-rending smile contracted his lips, and he murmured in an expiring voice:

"Lord!—Lord!—Have mercy upon me!"

His head then sank upon his breast—the friend of the poor and the afflicted had ceased to live.

Genevieve fell upon her knees and burst into tears.

That instant she heard an angry voice cry out behind her:

“Here is my fugitive slave! Oh! I felt certain I would find her in the tracks of the accursed Nazarene, whom final justice has been at last meted out to. Seize her! Bind her hands behind her back! Oh! This time my revenge shall be terrible!”

Genevieve turned around and saw her master, Seigneur Gremion.

“Now,” said Genevieve, “I can die—since he is dead who promised the slaves to break their chains!”

* * * * *

Although she had to undergo the most cruel torments at the hands of her master, Genevieve did not die, seeing it is she who wrote this account for her husband Fergan.

After having narrated what she heard and what she knew of the life and death of the young master of Nazareth, Genevieve would deem it preposterous on her part to dare speak of what happened to herself, after the sad day when she saw the friend of the poor and the afflicted expire upon the cross.

All that Genevieve will say is that, taking for example the resignation of Jesus, she endured patiently the cruelties of Seigneur Gremion. Out of attachment for her mistress Aurelia, Genevieve submitted to everything, not to be separated from her dear mistress. Thus she remained a slave of Seigneur Gremion's wife during the two years of her sojourn in Judea.

Alas! As a natural sequel of human ingratitude, six months after the death of the poor young man of

Nazareth, his memory was effaced from the people's mind. Only a few of his disciples piously preserved his remembrance.¹

Often did Genevieve say to herself with a sigh:

"Poor young master of Nazareth! When he announced that one day the fetters of the slaves would be broken, he only listened to the aspirations of his angelic soul. The future was to give the lie to that generous hope."

In fact, when, after two years spent in Judea with her mistress Aurelia, Genevieve returned to Gaul, she found there slavery still in force, as atrocious, perhaps even more atrocious than it had been before.

To this narrative which she wrote for her husband Fergan, Genevieve has attached a little silver cross given to her by Joanna, the wife of Seigneur Chuza, shortly after the death of the young man of Nazareth. Some few people, Joanna being of their number, who preserved a pious respect for the memory of the friend of the afflicted, had little crosses made in commemoration of the instrument of the death of Jesus, and either

¹ The sentence that smote the master carried immediately widespread discouragement among his followers. The large crowds, apparently so devoted, that had been seen running from all sides to hear his voice, dispersed. They had believed in the external and sudden formation of the Kingdom of God, of a new social order, which, according to the word of the son of Mary, would have carried *the last to the first place*. The natural course of

events once more upset their expectations, and caused them to confound the new Christ with all the previous Messiahs, the promises and the efforts of whom had remained without lasting effect. The emotion produced by the death of Jesus left hardly any traces behind it in the country. It was lost in a mass of other emotions." — Salvador, *Jesus Christ and His Doctrine*, vol. II, p. 212.

carried the same, or distributed them among their friends after having deposited them on the summit of Mount Calvary, upon the ground on which that just man's blood had flowed.

Genevieve knows not whether she is some day to be a mother. If such happiness should fall to her lot—but is it happiness to the slave to bring to life other slaves?—she will join this little silver cross to the family relics that the descendants of Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak, are bid to transmit to themselves from generation to generation.

May this little cross be the symbol of the future emancipation of our old and heroic Gallic race!

May one day the words of Jesus be realized for our children's children—**THE CHAINS OF THE SLAVES WILL BE BROKEN.**

EPILOGUE

I, Fergan, the husband of Genevieve, add these few words to the preceding narrative of Genevieve's:

Forty years have elapsed since my well beloved, and ever lamented wife wrote down the things she had seen during her sojourn in Judea.

The hope Genevieve had gathered from the words of Jesus—The chains of the slaves will be broken—has not been realized, and never will be realized. More than forty years have elapsed since that promise was made, and slavery still prevails. During all these forty and odd years I have continued unceasingly to turn my wheel for my masters, just as my son Judicaël now does, seeing that he, like his father, is a weaver slave.

Poor child of my old age—it is now twelve years since Genevieve died in giving life to you—you are, if anything, still more frail of body and timid of disposition than myself!

Alas! As was foreseen by my grandfather Sylvest, our race has degenerated more and more.

Poor child of my old age, I have not, as our ancestors, whether free or slave, but ever brave, any heroic or tragic account to hand down to you of my life—

My life you are acquainted with, my son; should I

live a hundred years, it will continue to be what it has hitherto been, as far back as I can recollect. It can be summed up in these words:

“To rise early every morning to weave cloth; and go to bed at night. To interrupt the long hours of my monotonous work in order to eat a meager pittance. Sometimes to be beaten, either on account of my master’s whim, or his bad temper.”

Such has been my condition since I knew myself, my poor child! Such, no doubt, will be yours! Alas! Degenerate Gauls, neither you nor I will have aught to add to the worthy traditions of our ancestors.

I write and sign this forty and odd years after my wife Genevieve saw the young man of Nazareth done to death.

To you, my son Judicaël, I, Fergan, the son of Pearon, bequeath, in order that you may preserve and transmit to your descendants, these narratives of our family, accompanied with these following relics:—

The gold sickle of our ancestress Hena;

The brass bell of my great-grandfather Guilhern;

The iron collar of my grandfather Sylvest; and

The little silver cross that Genevieve left to me.

• • • • •

I Gomer, the son of Judicaël, was seventeen years old when my father died—that is fifty years ago from the date when I write these lines. As my grandfather and my father foresaw, my slave’s life has been, like theirs, monotonous and gloomy.

I blush with shame at the thought that neither I, nor you, my son Mederick, no doubt, will, in turn, have aught to add to the narratives of our ancestors. Alas! They have not yet come, perhaps never will, those days of which our grandmother Genevieve spoke upon the faith of a man whom she calls in her narrative the young master of Nazareth, who foretold that one day the chains of the slaves would be broken.

To you, then, my son Mederick, I, Gomer, the son of Judicaël, bequeath for you to preserve, and transmit to our descendants, these family relics and narratives.

THE END.

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